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# IN MEMORIAM

Vitimir Belaj

8. 11. 1937–19. 8. 2023

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## Andrej Pleterski

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Brez Vitimirja Belaja bi moja raziskovalna pot in pot številnih drugih potekala drugače. Zato tu ne bom ponavljal formalnih podatkov o njegovem življenju in delu, vsakdo si jih lahko prebere kadarkoli na svetovem spletu (<https://www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi1017450/>). Želim prikazati, kako so se prepletle najine raziskave mitične pokrajine.

A pred tem bi vseeno rad dopolnil navedeni formalni življenjepis z drobno anekdoto. Ko je videl uredniški obrazec Slovenskega biografskega leksikona, v katerega naj bi se vpisal, mi je obupano zaupal, da se počuti kot pri izpolnjevanju davčne napovedi in da bo zelo hvaležen, če se z uredniškimi željami spopadem sam. Ko sem mu dal osnutek biografije v pregled, ni imel pripomb, dodal je samo osebni opis svojega porekla, ki pojasnjuje njegovo kulturno mnogostranost: »Ne znam z malo besedami povedati bistveno: rojen sem v Mariboru, kot otrok trijezičen, generacija dedov in babic so Slovenci, Hrvati in Nemci, dva pradedna sta Čeha priseljena na Štajersko. 1941. smo bili izgnani na Hrvaško, 1945. in 1946. smo v Lovrencu na Pohorju in od jeseni 1946 naprej v Zagrebu.« In kot je sam nekoč zapisal, bi šlo njegovo življenje lahko v katerokoli smer. Splet nepredvidljivih okoliščin je doprinesel k temu, da je večino življenja preživel na Hrvaškem. A ostal je trojezičen.

In če se odpovem nizanju letnic in podatkov, ostane osebni pogled. Ko zaprem oči, vidim lik sivolasega profesorja, ki s tihim, vendar odločnim in razločnim glasom pripoveduje do skrajnosti napeto raziskovalno zgodbo. Tako sem ga doživel jeseni leta 1988, ko je v Ljubljani na Oddelku za etnologijo Filozofske fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani začel predavati slovansko in primerjalno mitologijo. Z izjemno tankočutnostjo je v predavanjih povzemal rekonstruiranje odlomkov mitične zgodbe, ki jih je tedaj in še več desetletij luščil Radoslav Katičič. Bil je mojster dramaturgije predavanja in v snov sem skočil kot žaba v vodo. Mojo radovednost za njegova predavanja je podžgala *Stara vjera Srba i Hrvata* Natka Nodila, ki sem jo takrat premleval večer za večerom. Belajeva predavanja so mi dala drugačen uvid in razširila razmišljanja.

Zapiske njegovih dvoletnih predavanj, ki so se mi zdela zanimiva in pomembna, sem zložil v nekakšno skripto in mu predlagal, da iz tega naredi knjigo. Izziv je resno

sprejel, a seveda takoj ugotovil, da je v zapiskih toliko napak, da so kot izhodišče knjige neuporabni. Zadeve se je lotil drugače in potem je čez nekaj let izšla njegova velika monografija *Hod kroz godinu*, s katero je utemeljil raziskovanje mitičnega prostorčasa. V njej ne gre samo za ugotovitev, da hoja skozi čas pomeni hkrati hojo skozi prostor, gre tudi za temeljne sestavine koledarskega sistema.

Belajeva predavanja in pedagoško delo v Ljubljani pa so imela posreden pomen tudi za nastanek revije *Studia Mythologica Slavica*. Res se v njej ni nikoli pojavil kot avtor, vendar je bil soustvarjalec strokovne klime in zanimanj, iz katerih je revija zrastle.

Mitična pokrajina se nam danes kaže kot starodavno orodje za obvladovanje sil narave, kot prizorišče mitične zgodbe, ki se ponovi vsako leto. Že pred stoletjem je v njej Jan Peisker videl dva protagonista, Vjačeslav V. Ivanov in Vladimir N. Toporov sta v njej pozneje rekonstruirala tri protagoniste. Njuno zgodbo je Belaj do podrobnosti dodelal. Na predavanjih jo je pripovedno gnetel tako dolgo, da sem v njej zagledal zapise mitične pokrajine in njenih trojnih struktur. Da ne gre za fatamorgano, so pozneje potrdila izročila posoških starovercev o t. i. tročanih.

Ne samo, da je bila Belaju povezava med mitično zgodbo in mitično pokrajino všeč, vzal jo je tudi za svoje raziskovalno izhodišče in orisal vrsto trodelnih struktur mitične pokrajine na Hrvaškem. To smer svojih raziskav je kronal z monografijo *Sveti trokuti*, ki sta jo napisala skupaj s sinom Jurajem; slednji je skrbel za arheološki vidik problematike. Belajev vstop v polje raziskav mitične pokrajine je zanje pomenil pomembno podporo v vzdušju posmehovanja in nejeverje, ki so ju širili in ju širijo vsi tisti, ki jim lastna kognitivna disonanca onemogoča, da bi na snov pogledali zunaj uveljavljenih raziskovalnih okvirov. Belajev nastop je vnesel ustvarjalni mir.

Danes vemo, da je število mitičnih protagonistov lahko še večje, štirje, pet, sedem. Zato imajo tudi kipi bogov polabskih Slovanov toliko obrazov in glav. Toda vsi so samo del enotnega prapočela, kar ponazarja Zbruški idol. Pot do tega spoznanja je tlakoval tudi Vitomir Belaj.



## PERSONALIA

# Ob devetdesetletnici dr. Emily Lyle

— Mirjam Mencej —

19. decembra 2022 je dr. Emily Lyle, mednarodno prepoznavna škotska folkloristka, praznovala svoj devetdeseti jubilej.

Emily je leta 1954 diplomirala na Univerzi St. Andrews iz angleškega jezika in literature. Bila je izjemno uspešna študentka, vendar raziskovalne pozicije na univerzi takrat ni bilo, zato je na kolidžu Jordanhill v Glasgowu opravila tečaj za poučevanje in nekaj časa poučevala angleščino na Škotskem, v Angliji in zatem tudi na Novi Zelandiji. Leta 1961 je končno dobila mesto na kolidžu Ripon, kjer je lahko začela ob pedagoškem delu uresničevati tudi svoje raziskovalne ambicije: delna raziskovalna zaposlitev ji je omogočila, da je lahko vpisala doktorski študij na Univerzi v Leedsu in se začela poglobljeno ukvarjati z raziskavo škotskih ljudskih balad. Po končanem doktoratu je dobila mesto raziskovalke na Univerzi v Edinburgu, in sicer na Oddelku za škotske študije. Na tem oddelku, ki se je pozneje združil z Oddelkom za keltske študije, danes pa se imenuje Oddelek za keltske in škotske študije (*School of Celtic and Scottish Studies*), je kot raziskovalka in sodelavka na podiplomskem študiju ostala vse do upokojitve – a tudi po njej ni tam prav nič manj aktivna.

V mednarodnem okolju je Emily Lyle danes morda še najbolj prepoznavna kot raziskovalka balad in urednica mnogih izdaj škotskih ljudskih pesmi. (So)uredila je znamenito obsežno zbirko osmih knjig pesmi z naslovom *Greig-Duncan Folk Song Collection*, ki je izhajala med letoma 1981 in 2002 in vsebuje pesmi s severovzhodne Škotske, ki sta jih na prelomu 19. in 20. stoletja zbrala Gavin Greig in James Bruce Duncan. Prav tako je uredila dvodelno zbirko balad in pesmi iz Renfrewja in Ayrshira z naslovom *Andrew Crawford's Collection of Ballads and Songs* (1996) in souredila *The Song Repertoire of Amelia and Jane Harris* (2002), družinsko zbirko pesmi iz Perthshira in Angusa, ki jih je zbiral sloviti raziskovalec balad Francis James Child. Emily Lyle je zbirko raziskovala na Univerzi Harvard, kjer so bili rokopisi shranjeni. Leta 2020 je v njenem souredništvu izšla tudi prva kritična izdaja zbirke pesmi *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border Complete First Edition, 1802*, ki jih je na začetku 19. stoletja izdal sloviti Walter Scott.

Ob uredniškem delu se je z baladami ukvarjala tudi raziskovalno: v svoji knjigi *Fairies and Folk: Approaches to the Scottish Ballad Tradition*, ki je leta 2007 izšla kot

prva v novoustanovljeni zbirki, posvečeni prav baladam (izhaja na Univerzi v Mainzu in je plod sodelovanja med univerzama v Edinburgu in Mainzu v Nemčiji), je raziskovala »nadnaravno« v baladah. V njej je škotske »vilinske balade«, kot sta recimo sloviti baladi »Thomas the Rhymer« in »Tam Lin«, obravnavala v kontekstu škotskih tradicijskih verovanj in ljudske kulture skozi zgodovinsko perspektivo.

Drugo področje njenega dela so letne šege. Emily je bila pobudnica in predsednica ustanovitve posebne delovne skupine Ritual Year Working Group v okviru SIEF. Delovna skupna je od leta 2004 organizirala že štirinajst mednarodnih konferenc v različnih krajih Evrope. Prav tako je izdala mnoge znanstvene članke, ki so se tako ali drugače navezovali na tradicijske šege.

Njena zanimanja za tradicijska verovanja, folkloro in šege, ki jih je primerjalno raziskovala tudi v kontekstu indoevropske mitologije, so jo nadalje raziskovalno vodila na še tretje znanstveno področje, s katerim se poglobljeno ukvarja – področje indoevropske mitologije. Številne članke na to temo je izdajala v specializiranih znanstvenih revijah (glej npr. Narrative Form and the Structure of Myth, *Folklore* 32 (2006); The law of succession established by Eochaid Fedlech and its implications for the theme of the Irish sovereignty goddess, *Etudes celtiques* 42 (2016); The Hero Who Releases the Waters and Defeats the Flood Dragon, *Comparative Mythology* 1 (2015); The “Order, chaos, order” theoretical approach to reconstructing the mythology of a remote past, *Cosmos: the yearbook of the Traditional Cosmology Society* 30 (2014); *The Good Man’s Croft*, *Scottish Studies* 36 (2013), med drugim tudi v *Studia mythologica Slavica* (A Structure for the Gods: The Indo-European Pantheon Reconsidered (2006); Time and the Indo-European Gods in the Slavic Context (2008); Indo-European Time and the Perun-Veles Combat (2009). Leta 2012 je izšla njena knjiga *Ten Gods: A New Approach to Defining the Mythological Structures of the Indo-Europeans*, v kateri je predstavila novo teoretsko perspektivo proučevanja indoevropske mitologije (Mlakar 2017), plod njenega dolgotnega poglobljenega ukvarjanja z mitologijo.

Tudi na področju raziskav mitologije se je izkazala kot angažirana organizatorica in povezovalka raziskovalcev v mednarodnem prostoru. Že leta 1984 je ustanovila mednarodno društvo Traditional Cosmology Society, katerega predsednica je bila dolga leta, pozneje pa je bila tudi ena od pobudnic ustanovitve in podpredsednica zveze International Association for Comparative Mythology, ki ima sedež na Univerzi Harvard.

Ob naštevanju njenih raznolikih znanstvenih interesov in izjemnega znanstvenega opusa pa na tem mestu ni mogoče iti mimo Emily kot osebnosti. Emily Lyle sem osebno spoznala na prvem mednarodnem znanstvenem kongresu mednarodnega folklorističnega društva International Society for Folk Narrative Research v Tartuju v Estoniji leta 2005, ki sem se ga udeležila kot njegova nova članica. Emily je imela takrat kot uveljavljena predavateljica plenarno predavanje na temo mitologije, jaz sem prišla na kongres kot novopečena doktorica znanosti, a zanimanje za mitologijo naju je takoj povezal. Nekaj tednov po vrnitvi domov me je presenetilo prijazno sporočilo Traditional Cosmology Society (TCS), da mi (nedvomno na Emilyjino pobudo) ponujajo štipendijo za raziskovalno bivanje v Edinburgu. Še več, Emily se je tudi prijazno ponudila, da v tem času bivam pri njej doma. Oboje sem seveda z veseljem sprejela. V treh tednih, ki sem jih preživela pri



<https://projects.handsupfortrad.scot/hall-of-fame/dr-emily-lyle/>

Emily, sem lahko v živo spremljala njeno delovno etiko: vsako jutro se je peš odpravila na drugi konec mesta na univerzo in se vračala domov šele pozno zvečer. Kljub temu sva vsak večer, zleknjeni na kavču njene prijetne dnevne sobe, dolgo v noč premlevali mitološka vprašanja. Njeno navdušenje in znanje, njena pronicljiva razmišljanja in otroška iskričnost njenega duha so bili tako inspirativni, da sem komaj čakala večere, ki so bili zame vsaj tako pomembni kot dnevi, ki sem jih preživela med brskanjem po arhivih in knjižnici na Oddelku za keltske in škotske študije.

Moje sodelovanje z Emily se ni končalo po mojem odhodu iz Edinburga – kot urednica revije *Cosmos* (tudi na to mesto me je predlagala Emily) sem vseh pet let svojega uredniškega dela sodelovala z njo pri mnogih odločitvah glede revije, sodelovala sem na konferenci, ki jo je TCS organiziral na Univerzi v Edinburgu, kot je tudi Emily sodelovala na konferenci *The Concept of Space and Time in European Folklore*, ki sem jo leta 2007 v Ljubljani organizirala sama. Na mojo pobudo je naslednje leto izvedla tudi predavanje s področja mitologije za študente Oddelka za etnologijo in kulturno antropologijo Filozofske fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani, na Univerzi v Edinburgu pa sem v naslednjih letih tudi sama izvedla tri predavanja.

Toda moja osebna zgodba z Emily je le ena od mnogih osebnih zgodb raziskovalk in raziskovalcev, ki jim je Emily, tako kot meni, utirala pot v raziskovalno delo in mednarodni prostor. V izdaji revije *Yearbook of Balkan and Baltic Studies*, kjer so ob njeni devetdesetletnici izšla spominska pričevanja njenih kolegov in kolegic z vsega sveta, iz prav vseh vejejo omembe njene gostoljubnosti in prijaznosti, naklonjenosti in prijazne pomoči mlajšim na njihovi znanstveni poti. Čeprav se v zadnjih letih, odkar me je raziskovalno zaneslo stran od mitologije in je pandemija nekoliko prekinila možnosti mednarodnih srečevanj na konferencah in kongresih, najini poti nista več križali, se vsakega decembra v času njenega rojstnega dne še vedno z nostalgijo spominjam tistih čarobnih večerov v Edinburgu. Ob njenem jubileju ji želim, da je njena neusahljiva in optimistična energija, po kateri slovi, še ne bi kmalu zapustila, da bi še naprej ostala vir občudovanja in da bi ji zdravje čim dlje omogočalo nadaljnje delo na področju, ki ji je bilo od nekdaj najbolj pri srcu – indoevropske mitologije.

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## PERSONALIA

# Школа Н.И. Толстого и украинская славистическая фольклористика – направления, темы, методы

— Oksana Mykytenko —

В 2023 г. мировая славистика отмечала 100-летие со дня рождения Никиты Ильича Толстого (1923–1996), вклад которого не оценим также в развитии славистической фольклористики. Деятельность ученого пришлась (и во многом способствовала) на период расцвета сравнительных комплексных междисциплинарных исследований в славистике, в том числе в Украине. В трудах самого Н.И. Толстого, а также работах созданной им школы этнолингвистика, оформилась и получила всестороннее рассмотрение идея интегральности культуры. Понимание семантического единства всех форм фольклора было достигнуто в результате многолетнего комплексного экспедиционного изучения одной из наиболее архаичных зон Славии – Полесья, что нашло отражение в целом ряде исследований и легло в основу фундаментального этнолингвистического словаря «Славянские древности» (тт. 1–5; Москва, 1995–2012). Подчеркивая, что «вся народная культура диалектна», Н.И. Толстой способствовал развитию этнолингвистической ареалогии как междисциплинарного направления в изучении и реконструкции славянской духовной культуры, всестороннего анализа специфики культурного текста фольклорной традиции. Общеславянский масштаб проблем, решением которых занимался Н.И. Толстой, остается актуальным для современной славистики также в Украине, особенно в свете современного методологического плюрализма и расширения предметного поля фольклористики.

**КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА:** Н.И. Толстой, этнолингвистика, славистика, фольклористика, Украина.

Данную тему Украинский комитет славистов принял в качестве заявки моего доклада на очередном XIX Международном съезде славистов, который должен был состояться в 2023 г. В связи с широкомасштабным военным вторжением РФ в Украину 24 февраля 2022 г. съезд был отложен. Представить свой доклад в онлайн формате я смогла на Международной конференции «Слово и человек», которая в рамках юбилейных Толстовских чтений состоялась 5–8 июня 2023 г. в Ясной Поляне. Для

меня было важно не только почтить память моего Учителя (я была аспиранткой Толстого), но еще раз подчеркнуть роль деятельности, трудов Н.И. Толстого и созданной им этнолингвистической школы для развития украинской славистики и фольклористики. Осознаю всю условность, говоря об украинской славистической фольклористике, поскольку невозможно вычленить часть из всего комплекса рассмотрения восточнославянского, шире – славянского этнокультурного континуума, как и вывести направление фольклорных исследований за рамки широкого междисциплинарного масштаба. И тем не менее, говоря о значении трудов, идей Н.И. Толстого для украинской науки, а что мне, естественно, ближе – славистической фольклористики, я позволяю себе такое упрощение, при всей неизбежной его неполноте и фрагментарности. Для меня лично работы Учителя представляют неисчерпаемый источник идей, без которых не обходится ни один проект, к которым обращаешься постоянно, с которыми сверяешь все свои мысли, планы и выводы.

В одном из писем Леонтия Копецкого к Н. Толстому (от 14.XI.1971 г.) приводятся слова, поразительным образом созвучные нашему времени: «Наша филологическая жизнь характеризуется неопределенностью... Раньше были центрирующие моменты, вернее – персоны. Теперь они исчезли, и сразу никто ничего не стал знать (...)» (Из переписки 2013: 493).

Такой «центрирующей» личностью в науке всегда был и остается Н.И. Толстой. Вклад ученого в создание многих направлений в науке поистине неисчерпаем и так же широк, как и

«круг тем и проблем, которые интересовали Никиту Ильича и которым он посвятил свои труды, – славянская лексикология и семасиология, диалектология и лингвистическая география, история славянских литературных языков и письменности, фольклор, мифологические основы народной культуры славян, семиотика культуры, история славистики» (Толстая 2023: 7).

Деятельность Н.И. Толстого пришлось на период расцвета сравнительных междисциплинарных комплексных исследований в славистике, значительно углубила и совершенствовала их применительно к различным направлениям гуманитаристики. В трудах Никиты Ильича и Светланы Михайловны Толстых, их учеников и последователей было сформировано и получило всестороннее выражение новое направление в гуманитаристике – славянская этнолингвистика, ставящая своей целью изучение языка и культуры в их органической связи (Толстая 2013: 17). Тем самым была поставлена задача провести реконструкцию славянской духовной культуры, отраженной в славянской языковой картине мира.

Представленное как целостное направление, где «объяснительной силой» обладает «весь комплекс духовной культуры», этнолингвистика в качестве исходного принципа утверждает «интегральность» культуры. Теоретическая квадриада «язык – словесность – культура – самосознание» (Запольская 2023: 136) стала обобщающей теоретической формулой комплексных исследований лексики и фразеологии, обрядов

и верований, вербальных фольклорных текстов и прочих проявлений традиционной духовной культуры. Понимание изоморфизма языка и культуры позволило говорить о семантическом единстве всех форм культурного текста. По замечанию С.М. Толстой, в концепции славянской этнолингвистики нашли свое «органическое соединение» два главных принципа – «общеславянское измерение и единство языка и культуры», которые стали «путеводной звездой» на пути научного познания Толстого, чему во многом способствовали личные качества ученого, способность «не только знать, но и чувствовать славянское единство» (Толстая 2013: 18). Исследования различных форм традиционной культуры как текста стало предметом анализа различных измерений фольклорной традиции, всестороннего ее изучения, многомерных задач реконструкции славянской духовной культуры и задач славянского этногенеза.

Замечательную характеристику «школы» Толстого, которая во многом предопределила успешность пройденного пути, дал в свое время В.Н. Топоров:

«Реальная задача синтеза целого, – отмечал он, – потребовала отказа от отвлекающих частных, преодоления авторского эгоизма, своего рода самоотречения ради этого целого и вступления на путь не в гордом одиночестве, но «артельно», в расчете на помощь спутников – не случайных попутчиков, но именно спутников-помощников, спутников-товарищей, спутников-подвижников. Воспитание нескольких поколений славистов со студенческой скамьи, привитие им вкуса к общему делу [...], соби́рание славистических сил вокруг ключевых проблем науки – все это составляет одну из самых больших его заслуг перед наукой» (В.Т. 1993: 4–5).

Для многих учеников и последователей Н. Толстого, как и для него самого, началом «трепетного и долгого вхождения» в «богатейший мир древней славянской духовной культуры» стало знакомство с «деревнями и весями полесской глуши» (Толстой 1997: 9). По инициативе Никиты Ильича в 1962 г. была начата программа последовательных и планомерных экспедиций в Полесье, с целью сбора материала – вначале для Полесского диалектного словаря, затем для этнолингвистического атласа. В 1970-е гг. экспедиции носили уже сугубо этнолингвистический характер, чему способствовали и составленные подробные программы для изучения различных сфер народной культуры. «Границы современных славянских языков, наречий, народов и этнических групп, – отмечал Н.И. Толстой, – относительно позднего происхождения. Внимание к локальным явлениям позволит увидеть предшествующие, более ранние этноязыковые и культурные слои на карте современной Славии» (Толстой 1995: 51). Архаичность полесских диалектов, в частности среднеполесского, подтвердило картографирование материалов в ОЛА. Исследования в Полесье – одной из архаических зон Славии, продолжалась почти четверть века и стали для многих, в том числе в Украине, «центром научного притяжения» и «полигоном диалектологической», позже и этнолингвистической полевой работы как «самостоятельной области гуманитарной славистики» (Толстая 2013: 16–19; Узенева 2023: 540). Экспедиции

подтвердили «латеральность до недавнего времени полесского диалектного массива», что «в значительной мере способствовало сохранению его в более архаичном, минимально трансформированном состоянии» (Гриценко 1993: 290).

Значимость собранного в те годы экспедиционного материала во много раз возросла после техногенной чернобыльской катастрофы 1986 г., которая кардинально изменила демографическую ситуацию в регионе и привела к прекращению существования среднеполесского языкового ареала как диалектной целостности, когда само понятие «среднеполесский диалект» в пределах ареальной структуры украинского языка уже принадлежит прошлому (Гриценко 1999: 5). Сохранить Полесский культурный диалект в координатах истории архаических культурных ареалов был призван фундаментальный труд этнолингвистической школы – пятитомный словарь «Славянские древности».

На «постчернобыльском» этапе подвижническую работу в течение многих лет проводят в Зоне члены Историко-культурологической экспедиции Министерства чрезвычайных ситуаций Украины – этнографы, историки, музейщики, буквально подвижники своего дела, львовские, киевские, ровенские ученые, половина из которых женщины, восстанавливая виртуальную уже Украину (Костенко 2004: 479). Исследования по выявлению, сохранению и защите историко-культурного наследия региона проводятся, в частности, в рамках создания Чернобыльского научно-информационного фонда, в котором предусмотрено отразить как современное состояние диалектной культурно-языковой системы, так и ее динамику (Гриценко 1999: 13).

В 1980-е гг. экспедиции в различные регионы Полесья стали особенно массовыми и популярными, в них принимали активное участие украинские исследователи. В одном из писем С.М. Толстая (от 25 мая 1985 г.) делится планами относительно экспедиционного лета: «... надвинулось лето с его экспедиционными заботами – опять ожидается огромная по численности экспедиция. На этот раз – в Черниговщину, а затем еще на Брестщину и в Волынскую область (соответственно с минчанами и львовянами)» (Хроленко 2023: 686). Годом ранее, в экспедиции 1984 г. также участвовали группы из Львовского государственного университета и Житомирского пединститута (там же: 683). Полесские экспедиции для многих стали «отправной точкой на исследовательском пути, откуда начались все дальнейшие дороги и тропы» (Белова 2023: 594). В этой связи я хочу привести выдержку из письма Никиты Ильича (от 24 мая 1980 г.), в котором он сообщает мне о предстоящей экспедиции в Черниговское Полесье и предлагает присоединиться к участию в ней:

«Милая Оксана!

[...] В июне мы едем в экспедицию на Черниговщину (20 человек из МГУ, ЛГУ, ОдесГУ, Ин-та слав-ия и балканистики). Работать будем с 3. VI до конца месяца. Я буду с 3.VI по 13.VI, затем меня сменит Светлана Михайловна, а вся компания, разделившись на три отряда, будет работать где-то поблизости друг от друга. Где – это будет знать Андрей Андреевич Берлизов – доцент Черниговского пединститута



(адрес..., тел...). Таким образом, Вы едете подальше от Киева, а мы поближе к Киеву. Координаты я Вам даю на тот случай, если вдруг Вам захочется навестить нас или написать нам в Черниговское Полесье.

Возможно, я успею до экспедиции написать Вам и послать небольшую программу о дожде и граде, чтобы просить Вас проверить как она работает в Закарпатье.

В Москве у меня, как всегда, уйма дел и я едва-едва с ними справляюсь. Живем мы бурной научной жизнью. Каждую неделю доклады, сборища, проекты. Налаживаем контакт с музыковедами и готовимся издавать «Словарь славянских народных древностей».

С добрым и сердечным приветом

Н. Толстой

Бог Вам в помощь!»

Мне не пришлось, к сожалению, принять участие в экспедиции, так как на этот период уже была запланирована экспедиция нашего института в села Ивано-Франковской области. Узнав об этом, Никита Ильич прислал, вместе с небольшим письмом, подробную (на 5 страницах) Программу по теме «дождь – гром – град», дополненную не менее подробным «Приложением» («что делали во время засухи – обход, тканье рушника, магия у колодца, причины засухи» и пр.):

«Милая Оксана!

Желаю Вам добрый путь на Карпаты. Сегодня уезжаю в Чернигов. Очень прошу Вас на Карпатах попробовать поспросить по моим программам дождь – гром – град. Имейте в виду, что целые блоки программ на Карпатах не будут работать (т.е. не дадут ответа). Но мне интересно что там есть, а чего нет.

Заранее благодарный Вам

Н.Т.»

Письмо, отправленное непосредственно в день отъезда Н.И. Толстого в Чернигов 3.VI, свидетельствовало как о значении, которое для него имели полевые данные из различных регионов, так и о уважении и высоком доверии к начинающим исследователям. Приводя впервые хранящиеся у меня письма Никиты Ильича, написанные его «фирменным» каллиграфическим почерком, всецело разделяю

слова А.Т. Хроленко, сказанные по поводу его переписки с Никитой Ильичем: «... только слову на листе почтовой бумаги суждено оставаться свидетельством ума и сердца, документом эпохи и памятником научного труда» (Хроленко 2023: 686).

Экспедиции способствовали оформлению этнолингвистических направлений в целом ряде регионов (в частности, самостоятельная «интересно работающая», по словам С.М. Толстой, лингвогеографическая школа сложилась в Житомире). Это во многом определило направления и задачи изучения славянской традиционной культуры, результаты которого в дальнейшем нашли наиболее широкое отражение в этнолингвистическом словаре славянских древностей.

Необходимо подчеркнуть, что на каждом из отдельных этапов широкомасштабная работа, как экспедиционная, так и научная аналитическая, которая проводилась под руководством Н.И. Толстого в Секторе этнолингвистики и фольклора Института славяноведения РАН, находила поддержку и продолжение на уровне национальных академических программ в Украине. Такая работа развивалась благодаря координационной деятельности институтов и вследствие значимости исследовательских задач, а также благодаря высокому научному авторитету Н.И. Толстого.

Огромное значение имел совместный доклад Н.И. и С.М. Толстых на IX Международном съезде славистов в Киеве (1983 г.). [Выступление] продолжило поставленной на предыдущем съезде в Загребе (1978 г.) проблемы реконструкции древней славянской духовной культуры и территориального культурного диалекта, непосредственно касался принципов и задач составления этнолингвистического словаря (Толстые Н.И. и С.М. 1983). В качестве «первой практической задачи» был выдвинут принцип составления инвентаря основных значимых элементов с учетом описания парадигматики культуры, что дало бы «полное представление о структуре обряда в каждой локальной традиции». Подчеркивая, что «надежная реконструкция» должна учитывать «все территориальные разновидности каждого элемента или фрагмента культуры в пределах славянского мира и их внеславянских связей» (Толстые 1983: 220), авторы излагали проверенный методологический подход научного анализа, базирующийся, в первую очередь, на ареальной характеристике фактического материала. Определив в качестве объекта описания все формы, разновидности и жанры традиционной культуры, Н.И. и С.М. Толстые обозначили четкие структурные рубрики их систематизации, каждая из которых соответствовала определенному фрагменту народной модели мира. Относительно фольклора была подчеркнута необходимость «использовать фольклорные источники [...] для характеристики обрядового и мифологического круга фактов». В качестве таких источников выступал обрядовый фольклор, былички, предания, заговоры, малые жанры фольклора (загадки, пословицы, приговоры, заклинания, словесные формулы и клише), другие жанры, непосредственно отражающие народное мировоззрение (Толстые 1983: 229).

Внутренняя связь лексической (семантической) типологии и этнолингвистики как дисциплины культурологической направленности была подчеркнута в целом ряде работ, получивших широкое признание. Ярким примером была статья о славянских названиях радуги (1976), в которой был представлен весь спектр народного сознания славян (верования, обрядность, фольклор) об этом природном явлении.

Незадолго до съезда вышел из печати «Полесский этнолингвистический сборник», тираж которого в последний момент сократили с 3000 до 1000, и его невозможно было достать. Во многих городах, в том числе в Киеве, сборник был распродан, и все были заняты охотой на него, в то же время авторский коллектив был обеспокоен, чтобы он «дошел до всех, кого интересует Полесье» (Хроленко 2023: 683). Если возможности приобрести интересующую книгу не представлялось, на помощь всегда приходили Н.И. и С.М. Толстые, неизменно снабжавшие коллег-славистов книгами и разнообразными материалами. В коротком письме (от 29.XI.1984 г.) Н.И. Толстому от киевского этнографа Л.Ф. Артюх речь идет о присланных книгах, высказывается предложение взаимного книгообмена и надежда на будущие встречи в Киеве:

«Глубокоуважаемый Никита Ильич! Сердечно тронута Вашим вниманием, благодарю за присланные Ваши книги, которые мне так хотелось иметь. Материалы Полесской конференции я держала в руках, а вот этнолингвистический словарь до нас еще не дошел. Спасибо Вам большое. Буду рада, если смогу быть Вам полезной еще когда-нибудь (может быть, Вам понадобятся какие-либо киевские издания). Спасибо Андрею [Топоркову – О.М.] за его любезное посредничество, которое позволило нам познакомиться с Вами. В Киеве Вас хорошо знают. Будем надеяться, что Ваши пути пройдут в ближайшее время через Киев (он ведь тоже на границе Полесья). Будем искренне рады Вас видеть.

С глубоким уважением

искренне

Л. Артюх» (Из переписки 2023: 711–712).

Перечисление работ украинских исследователей, которые встречаем в трудах Н.И. Толстого, заняло бы не одну страницу, равно, как и указание на публикации самого Никиты Ильича в различных украинских изданиях, материалах совещаний по Общеславянскому лингвистическому атласу, конференций, многочисленные рецензии и пр. Он часто приезжает в Украину, выступает с докладами на различных совещаниях, принимает участие в славистических конференциях, выступает оппонентом на защитах докторских и кандидатских диссертаций и т.д. С одним из таких выступлений в Институте языкознания им. А.А. Потемни связано и мое, в те первые годы моей работы в Институте искусствоведения, фольклора и этнографии, знакомство с Н.И. Толстым, после которого я определенно знала, хочу попасть в аспирантуру именно в Сектор этнолингвистики и фольклора Института славяноведения.

В 70–80-е гг. XX ст. в Киеве – в Институте языкознания им. А.А. Потемни и в Институте искусствоведения, фольклора и этнографии им. М.Ф. Рильского проводились,

хотя и немногочисленные, но близкие по направленности диалектологические ареальные полевые исследования, имеющие для этнолингвистики «принципиально важное значение» (Толстые 1983: 227). Признавая этнолингвистическую ареалогическую направленность одним из важнейших направлений, Никита Ильич и Светлана Михайловна в те годы справедливо отмечали, что, «к сожалению, в области изучения славянской духовной культуры ареальный подход еще не получил должного применения» (Толстые 1983: 220). Тем значимее были работы, которые, развивая опыт предшественников (А. Крымского, К. Михальчука, А. Ковалевского, В. Ганцова), выполнялись в рамках составления Атласа украинского языка, в частности, в Полесье и Чернобыльской зоне. Наблюдения диалектологического, общелингвистического и историко-этногенетического характера были представлены в работах целого ряда украинских славистов (Т.В. Назаровой, И.М. Железняк, В.С. Ващенко, В.Т. Коломиец, В.М. Никончука, А.М. Залесского, П.С. Лысенко и др.).

Одной из первых значительных работ этнолингвистического направления была монография Т.В. Назаровой *Лінгвістичний атлас нижньої Прип'яті* (Київ, 1985). Н.И. Толстой, всегда проявлявший самый живой интерес к «водным именам припятско-днепровского бассейна» (Толстой 1997: 9), очень тепло встретил появление этой работы и высоко оценил ее научное значение. Меньше, чем за двадцать лет, которые были отведены ей судьбой, Татьяна Викторовна Назарова совершила, без преувеличения, научный подвиг – собирая, описывая, исследуя диалектные особенности ареала нижней Припяти, и в результате представила всестороннюю характеристику украинского языка Чернобыльской зоны (Грещук, Кононенко 2020: 97).

В этом ряду работы: И.М. Железняк *Рось і етнолінгвістичні процеси Середньо-наддніпряньського правобережжя* (Київ, 1987), А.М. Залесского *Говірки Київського Полісся // Київське Полісся. Етнолінгвістичне дослідження*. – Київ, 1989. – С. 41–75; М.В. Никончука *Лексичний атлас правобережного Полісся* (Київ-Житомир, 1994), П.Е. Гриценко *Ареальне варіювання лексики* (Київ, 1990), кандидатская диссертация Л.И. Дорошенко *Ареалогія будівельної лексики східнополіського діалекту* (1999) и др., в которых получил дальнейшее развитие теоретический и практический опыт ареального изучения языка и культуры.

В Институте искусствоведения, фольклора и этнографии АН в то время в близком к этнолингвистическому направлению выходит ряд заметных работ историко-этнографического характера, основанных на методике ареальных исследований. В них представлены различные сферы обрядовой традиции и материальной культуры украинцев: Л.Ф. Артюх. *Українська народна кулінарія. Історико-етнографічне дослідження* (Київ, 1977); она же: *Ареальна характеристика поминального хліба на українському Поліссі // Проблеми сучасної ареалогії* (Київ, 1994. – С. 318–323); Т.В. Космина. *Сільське житло Поділля. Кінець XIX – поч. XX ст. Історико-етнографічне дослідження* (Київ, 1980); Н.К. Гаврилюк. *Картографирование явлений духовной культуры (по материалам родильной обрядности украинцев* (Киев, 1981).

В монографии Н.К. Гаврилюк впервые была применена методика картографирования традиционной обрядности для анализа мало изученного раздела духовной культуры украинцев – родильных обычаев и обрядов. Экспедиционные исследования

проводились в 20 областях Украины, охватив 163 населенных пункта. Было прослежено распространение и развитие явлений и комплексов традиционно-бытовой родильной обрядности конца XIX – начала XX века, изменения, произошедшие в второй половине XX в. Ряд статей Н.К. Гаврилюк касался метода картографирования для составления регионального историко-этнографического атласа, с учетом специально составленной программы-вопросника (Гаврилюк Н.К. *З досвіду складання карт Атласу* // НТЕ, 1970, № 3; она же: *Принципи картографування явищ народної культури / Регіональний історико-етнографічний атлас України, Білорусії та Молдавії* // НТЕ, 1973, № 5).

Основываясь на положении Н.И. и С.М. Толстых относительно необходимости выработки иерархии картографических (ареальных) сопоставлений, Н.К. Гаврилюк подчеркивала, что интенсивность изменения изучаемых явлений на исследуемой территории возрастала с переходом от севера к югу, где точкой отсчета рассматривалось Полесье. Ссылаясь на мнение Н.И. и С.М. Толстых, автор отмечала, что при изучении славянской духовной культуры эта зона как «модель прасостояния» может быть взята в качестве исходной для сравнения с другими областями. Вместе с тем, для некоторых случаев «такой отсчет следует вести от Прикарпатской зоны, в частности от юго-запада Подолии» (Гаврилюк 1981: 65). Последовательная исследовательская работа по фронтальному сопоставлению множества локальных форм и вариантов родильной обрядности позволила выделить «северо-западную (с северной и юго-западной подсистемами), центрально-восточную и южную» (Гаврилюк 1981: 258–259), что в целом отвечает диалектному членению украинского языка. Продолжив ареальные исследования традиционной обрядности, Н. Гаврилюк позже обратилась к картографическому рассмотрению чрезвычайно интересного и малоизученного паремийного жанра – формулам обмана детей как мифопоэтическому фрагменту народных верований. При этом основное внимание при анализе вариантов вербальной стереотипии «мифо-антропогонической тематики» уделялось, как подчеркивала автор, полесскому материалу. При этом ареальные характеристики становились дополнением научных знаний относительно территориальной дифференциации Полесья как одной из архаических историко-культурных зон Славии и подтверждали выводы Н.И. Толстого о диалекте как лингво-этно-фольклорной единице (Гаврилюк 1994: 338).

Исследования родильной обрядности украинцев были продолжены Е.А. Борjak. Н.К. Гаврилюк была научным руководителем докторской диссертации и монографии Е.А. Борjak *Баба-повитуха в культурно-історичній традиції українців: між профанним і сакральним* (Київ, 2009). В определенной степени тема явилась развитием ее кандидатской диссертацией, которая была посвящена традиционным верованиям украинцев, связанных с ткачеством (Борjak О. *Ткацтво в обрядах та віруваннях українців: середина XIX – початок XX ст.* Київ, 1997), и также была основана на теоретических принципах школы Н.И. Толстого. Е. Борjak, обратившись к материалу родильной обрядности спустя почти трех десятков лет после полевых исследований Н. Гаврилюк, смогла в новых условиях и применительно к поставленной цели проанализировать записи, сделанные в 1970–1980 гг., тогда еще непосредственно от живых носителей традиции. Во время экспедиционных выездов

в 2003–2009 гг. в составе комплексных научных экспедиций Государственного научного Центра по защите культурного наследия от техногенных катастроф МЧС Украины, было обследовано 52 села, что позволило создать уникальный корпус материалов от переселенцев:

Ця збірка польових матеріалів має свою специфіку: весь комплекс записів зроблено на Поліссі – на Житомирщині та Рівненщині. Особливість роботи експедицій [...] полягає у переважному фіксуванні розповідей переселенців, які донедавна мешкали в зоні відчуження Чорнобильської АЕС, а також населення, яке все ще мешкає на екологічно небезпечних територіях (Боряк 2009: 29).

В монографии Е.А. Боряк приведена обширная библиография по многим славянским традициям, использованы работы Н.И. и С.М. Толстых, Т.А. Агапкиной, Л.Н. Виноградовой, А.А. Плотниковой, И.А. Седаковой, А.Л. Топоркова и др. В частности, приведены данные по тематическим картам южнославянского культурно-диалектного материала (праздники по поводу родин, женщины, приглашенные в качестве гостей, «сорочка» новорожденного, действия с последом и пр.), представленные в монографии А.А. Плотниковой «Этнолингвистическая география Южной Славии» (Москва, 2004), также информационно богатый материал 14 лексических, семантических и комбинированных карт в монографии И.А. Седаковой «Балканские мотивы в языке и культуре болгар» (Москва, 2007).

В числе основных исследовательских задач школы Н.И. Толстого, непосредственно связанных с проблемой реконструкции славянской духовной культуры, были «неоднократно ставившиеся» вопросы разработки диалектологии славянской мифологии, в частности региональной типологии персонажей восточнославянской низшей мифологии, установления ее региональной специфики (Виноградова 2023: 386). В этой связи в Секторе этнолингвистики и фольклора под руководством Толстого в свое время была начата работа О.А. Порицкой, посвященная украинской демонологии. Актуальность темы, как подчеркивала О. Порицкая, была вызвана прежде всего тем, что такие исследования официальной наукой ранее не поддерживались, что привело к торможению изучения в Украине народной мифологии как «неотъемлемого элемента духовной культуры украинского этноса» (Порицка 2004: 7). В качестве основного источника автор называет фольклор, в котором сохранился субстрат архаических демонологических верований. Для системного описания украинского материала, а также инославянских параллелей, была применена «Схема описания мифологических персонажей», разработанная С.М. Толстой, Л.Н. Виноградовой, А.В. Гурой, Г.И. Кабаковой, О.А. Терновской, В.В. Усачевой. Используя методику Сектора, О. Порицкая рассматривала мифологический персонаж как инвариантный набор смысловых признаков, когда название демона является, хотя и важным, но не определяющим признаком. Перед автором стояла задача представить сведения по региональной специфике демонологических персонажей (ДП), выявить характерные признаки мифологических персонажей (МП)

на лингвистическом, морфологическом и функциональном уровнях, выделяя при этом «мужские» (домовые, лесные, водные) и «женские» МП. Интересная работа О. Порицкой, основанная на собственных экспедиционных материалах, которые впервые были введены в научное обращение, архивных данных (фонды ИМФЭ, Львовской научной библиотеки им. В. Стефаника, Института народознания НАН Украины, Полесского архива Института славяноведения РАН, фонды Отдела современного польского языка Института польской филологии Университета им. М. Склодовской-Кюри (Люблин, Польша), продолжила системное изучение традиционной духовной культуры в Украине.

Надо сказать, что комплексный анализ различных фрагментов традиционной картины мира как лингво-культурологических феноменов в аспекте национально-культурного своеобразия способствовали развитию как лингвистических, так и фольклорно-этнологических изысканий. Помимо этого, в ареальных и диалектологических исследованиях все большее внимание уделялось «синтагматизации» объекта, когда в качестве вариантов диалектных текстов к анализу привлекались большие по объему диалектные единицы (Гриценко 1999: 10–11), что позволило анализировать фольклорные тексты различных жанров. Такой поход с привлечением фольклорного материала, оказался эффективным при исследовании мифологических и демонологических систем отдельных говоров. Так, Л.А. Москаленко, рассматривая представителей демонологической системы в традиции Полесья, показала, что степень табуизации напрямую зависит от существующих связей с внеязыковыми прагматическими и культурологическими факторами региона. Анализ сюжетов и верований выявил наибольшую табуизацию при номинации *черта*, *ведьмы*, *русалки*, *вовкулаки* (Москаленко 1999: 169–177). Представленная на материале одного села система демонических персонажей имеет значительную семантическую загрузку, а при условии дальнейших исследований с учетом специальных программ может быть расширена и уточнена.

Обращение к изучению плана содержания этнокультуры, представление о фольклорном дискурсе как коллективно созданном и отличающемся динамикой, равно как и обусловленная этим иррадиация методов этнолингвистики и когнитивистики, представляет, возможно, одно из ключевых направлений развития комплексных междисциплинарных исследований в этнологии. Исходя из упомянутого постулата изоморфизма языка и культуры, особое значение имеют работы, которые развивают проблематику такого взаимодействия и основаны на анализе фольклорного текста в его широком понимании.

Известно, что Н.И. Толстой неоднократно подчеркивал значение фразеологии как фактора «системы терминологии» традиционной обрядности. Фразеология, как и формулы, считал он, – одно из основных звеньев этой системы, те «структуры текста», которые отражают наиболее значимые фрагменты традиционной культуры. Тема реконструкции праславянской фразеологии всегда интересовала Н.И. Толстого, и в целом ряде работ он демонстрировал эффективность семантической реконструкции фразеологизмов – поиска его «объяснения», исходя из обрядовой и нейтральной бытовой сферы (Толстой 2003).

Исследованиям лексико-фразеологической системы украинского языка посвящено немало работ, в которых единицы фразеологического уровня анализируются как знаки, отражающие особенности категоризации и интерпретации традиционной картины мира. М.В. Жуйкова, рассматривая на материале заговорной традиции семантическую эволюцию ряда предикатов двочленных вербальных формул, анализирует метафорическую модель в фольклорном дискурсе, в частности, метафоры, в которых обстрел из огнестрельного оружия трактуется через концептуальную сферу «пищи»: *зустріти залізними бобами, почастувати чавунними кавунами, попотчевать свинцовым горохом* и пр. (Жуйкова 2009: 11–12). Фольклорный и этнологический материал описан здесь с целью выявления лингвокультурных основ эволюционных процессов в лексико-фразеологической системе украинского и русского языков, позволяя сделать взвод, согласно которому метафора, которая представляет военные действия как угощение, имеет под собой глубокие мировоззренческие основы. В народном сознании существует стойкая концептуальная корреляция «гость» – «дар», при этом в метафорическую модель переходят латентные оценки оппозиции «хозяин» – «гость». Об актуальности подобной модели метафоризации для украинского языка свидетельствует номинация пушки *харчівниця*, известная из исторических описаний военного устройства в системе оборонных укреплений, а также по фольклорным текстам. Среди интересных работ, связанных с этнолингвистическими подходами, диссертационная работа В.Т. Шевченко по изучению терминологической системы украинского языка в контексте традиционной свадебной обрядности (Шевченко 1998).

Комплексный научный подход, характерный для этнологии и лингвистики во второй половине XX в., был связан, как справедливо принято считать, с осознанием исторических источников как текста, а также значимостью «содержательной» стороны языка, что наиболее полно нашло отражение в этнолингвистическом направлении, синтезировавшем исторический и структурный подходы к славянской духовной культуре. В свою очередь, комплексные лингвистические исследования способствовали изучению традиционных фольклорных жанров – погребальных плачей, заговоров и верований, народной медицины, нарративных и малых жанров фольклора и пр.

В свое время появились несколько региональных (в частности, Полесских) этнолингвистических атласов, включающих фольклорные материалы: *Атлас поліського весільного обряду*, *Атлас поліського поховального обряду*, *Атлас народної медицини та лікувальної магії*, *Атлас поліського традиційного одягу та взуття* и пр. Немало работ, к сожалению, остается все еще в рукописях, опубликованы лишь небольшие фрагменты или отдельные карты. Совершенствуя методику этнолингвистического картографирования, в Атласе полесского погребального обряда В. Конобродской были предложены инновационные подходы, когда, кроме номинации реалий, обрядового действия, обычаев и верований, невербальных знаков, объектом картографирования выступил мифологический мотив, обусловивший соответствующую номинацию. Сегодня, учитывая, что в украинистике, как правило, преобладают этнолингвистические исследования символов и национально ориентированных текстов, картографирование остается одной из наиболее актуальных задач.



Создание этнолингвистических атласов, связанное с развитием ареальных исследований, обозначено как «условие современного этнолингвистического изучения явлений традиционной народной духовной культуры» (Конобродська 2007: 11). Не менее важной задачей является создание словарей традиционной народной духовной культуры. Определенные успехи в украинской этнолингвистической лексикографии имеются – опубликованы словари символов и различных явлений традиционной народной духовной и материальной культуры, выработаны теоретические обоснования создания таких работ. Предполагается, что исследования охватят явления традиционной народной духовной культуры всего украинского этнокультурного пространства, что даст возможность создания этнолингвистического словаря украинской традиционной народной духовной и материальной культуры, а также общеукраинского этнолингвистического атласа (Конобродська 2007: 12–13).

Современная украинская этнология активно развивает региональные исследования, актуальность которых обусловлена значимостью «фактологии национальных культур», ролью «исторической парадигмы этнокультурных взаимовлияний» (Кирчів 2013: 4). Необходимо учитывать, что дивергентные процессы в славистике (в том числе украинистике) последних десятилетий нашли прямое отражение и в компаративно-типологических подходах при изучении контактных зон и этнокультурного пограничья. Акцентируя национальную тематику в трактовке тех или иных явлений культуры пограничных регионов, в частности Полесья, нередко указывается на недостаточность трактовки региона как «прародины», подчеркивается необходимость современных сравнительно-типологических и междисциплинарных комплексных гуманитарных исследований с учетом «национального культурного ландшафта»:

Істотний вплив на дослідження поліського українсько-білоруського етнокультурного пограниччя мав загальноприйнятний у науці погляд на Полісся як на особливу зону слов'янського світу, складову слов'янської прабатьківщини. (...) Таке бачення Полісся подавалося славістами, особливо в минулому та й у наш час нерідко, як якийсь наднаціональний ландшафт, штучно абстрагований від тісної його пов'язаності у відповідних етнотериторіальних частинах з українським і білоруським довкіллям. Мовиться, скажімо, про поліські говори, пісні, перекази та інші явища народної традиційної культури поліщуків, аналізуються, зіставляються вони в широкому міжслов'янському і європейському контекстах, але при цьому залишається поза увагою або лише епізодично трактується їх співвідношення, генетичний зв'язок з реаліями культур етносів, до яких належать поліщуки, – українського і білоруського (Кирчів 2013: 24).

Накопленный в течение предыдущего периода этнофольклорный материал сегодня издается в Украине в виде синтетических, обобщающих изданий – энциклопедий, словарей, каталогов, указателей и пр., что является ведущим направлением в современной украинской этнологии и фольклористике. Среди приоритетных можно

назвать многотомное издание Института искусствоведения, фольклористики и этнологии им. М.Ф. Рильского НАН Украины *Етнографічний образ сучасної України. Корпус едиційних фольклорно-етнографічних матеріалів* (главный редактор Г.А. Скрипник). Запланировано 10 тт., опубліковано на сейчас 7, в том числе: *Календарна обрядовість* (2016); *Господарські заняття, промисли та ремесла* (2017); *Родина та культура сімейного співжиття* (2018); *Культура народного харчування* (2018); *Традиційне повсякденне та обрядове вбрання* (2018) и др. В багаже української етнології и фольклористики сьогодні фундаментальні енциклопедическі видання: *Українци. Історико-етнографічна монографія. У 3-х т. Т.2* (Київ, 2005); *Україна в типажах народних, красвидах і архітектури: Художньо-етнографічна спадщина Юрія Павловича* (Київ, 2010); *Художня культура західних і південних слов'ян (XIX – початок XX століття): Енциклопедичний словник* (Київ, 2006); *Українська фольклористична енциклопедія* (Львів, 2018); *Українська славистична фольклористика (XIX – початок XXI століття)* (Київ, 2019).

Во всем комплексе современных научных направлений постоянно присутствует поставленные Н.И. Толстым задачи исследования духовности народной культуры, чему он посвятил всю свою жизнь. Его увлеченность наукой, огромнейшая эрудированность, постоянная поддержка и уважение каждого, душевная открытость и доброта, чувство юмора и простота общения, – проще говоря, обаяние личности Ученого и Человека, – это тот огромный подарок, который судьба подарила всем, кто знал его. Это неизменное требование честности и высокой «планки» в науки, «чувство красоты исследовательского поиска, научной этики, живого слова народной мудрости, вдохновение и желание постигать народные традиции и народное мироощущение» (Дубровина 2023: 603).

В одном из писем Н. И. Толстого к Д.С. Лихачеву (от XII. 1989 г.) есть такие слова: «...Я часто думаю о Вас, вспоминаю Вас, радуюсь Вашей энергии и Вашему слову, звучащему не только на всю Россию, но и во всех земных пределах» (Из переписки 2013: 508). Эти слова по праву можно отнести и к самому Никите Ильичу, слово которого звучит «во всех земных пределах».

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## SCHOOL OF N.I. TOLSTOY AND STUDIES OF SLAVIC FOLKLORE IN UKRAINE – DIRECTIONS, THEMES, METHODS

ОКСАНА МЫКУТЕНКО



In 2023, scholars of Slavic studies in the world celebrated the one-hundred-year anniversary of the birth of Nikita Ilyich Tolstoy (1923–1996), whose contribution in the development of Slavic folklore is invaluable. The most productive years of the scholar's work fell and largely contributed to the height of comparative complex interdisciplinary research in Slavic studies, including in Ukraine. The idea of the culture's integrity was discussed in numerous articles by Tolstoy, as well as in the works of the members of the School of Ethnolinguistics he created. Understanding the semantic unity of all forms of folklore was achieved as a result of many years of complex expeditionary study of one of the most archaic zones of Slavia – Polissya, which was reflected in a number of studies and formed the basis of the fundamental ethnolinguistic dictionary *Slavic Antiquities* (vols. 1–5; M., 1995–2012). Emphasizing that “all folk culture is dialectic”, Tolstoy contributed to the development of ethnolinguistic archeology as an interdisciplinary direction in the study and reconstruction of the Slavic spiritual culture, a comprehensive analysis of the characteristics of cultural text in the folklore tradition. The all-Slavic scale of the problems discussed by Tolstoy remains relevant for modern Slavic studies, also in Ukraine, especially in the light of modern methodological pluralism and the expansion of the subject field of folklore.

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# The Cult of Saints (Awliya) and Pilgrims in Social Networks (Based on the Materials of the Republic of Bashkortostan, Russia)

===== Ainur I. Tuzbekov, Albert T. Akhatov =====

The article analyses the practice of pilgrimages to the graves of awliya (Islamic saints) in the Republic of Bashkortostan. The authors propose that pilgrims should be studied as a distinct socio-cultural group using the methods of online research. In the course of the research, digital netnography methods were applied by scientists to study the internet group “Sufi RB”, created and moderated by the followers of the Naqshbandiyya Haqqani Tariqah. The results of the study of pilgrims as a socio-cultural group using digital netnography methods, supplemented with the results of field surveys, indicate that this approach is effective and provide a basis for its use in scientific research.<sup>1</sup>

KEYWORDS: archaeological sites, sacred sites, awliya, pilgrimage, Sufism, social networks, netnography, internet communities

Članek analizira prakso romanja na grobove awliya (islamskih svetnikov) v Republiki Baškortostan. Avtorji predlagajo, da bi bilo treba romanje preučevati kot posebno družbeno-kulturno skupino z uporabo metod spletnega raziskovanja. Med raziskavo so znanstveniki uporabili metode digitalne netnografije za preučevanje spletne skupine »Sufi RB«, ki so jo ustvarili in moderirali privrženci Naqshbandiyya Haqqani Tariqah. Rezultati preučevanja romanjev kot družbeno-kulturne skupine z uporabo metod digitalne netnografije, dopolnjeni z rezultati terenskih raziskav, kažejo, da je ta pristop učinkovit in daje podlago za njegovo uporabo v znanstvenih raziskavah.<sup>2</sup>

KLJUČNE BESEDE: arheološka najdišča, sveti kraji, awliya, romanje, sufizem, družbena omrežja, netnografija, internetne skupnosti

<sup>1</sup> The research was supported by the Russian Science Foundation (project No 23-28-01674 The Sacralisation of archaeological sites as a phenomenon of the modern spiritual life of the Southern Ural population)

<sup>2</sup> Raziskavo je podprl Ruski znanstveni sklad (projekt št. 23-28-01674 Sakralizacija arheoloških najdišč kot pojav sodobnega duhovnega življenja prebivalstva južnega Urala).

## INTRODUCTION

During field research, the staff of the Department of Archaeological Heritage of the Southern Urals at the R.G. Kuzeev Institute of Ethnological Research, Ufa Federal Research Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences recorded numerous instances of the use of archaeological monuments in modern cult and ritual practices by both representatives of traditional and non-traditional beliefs and teachings.

The research conducted between 2013 and 2023 identified three universal directions of the sacralization of archaeological sites in the Southern Urals:

1. Islam in the formation of holy places;
2. New religious movements in search of “places of power”;
3. Archaic cults and archaeological sites.

In identifying the features of sacralization, it was established that the majority of archaeological sites in the territory of the Republic of Bashkortostan, Russia, could be categorised under the first direction (Tuzbekov 2018: 79).

From our perspective, this may be explained by the way Islam has been spreading and developing in Russia. In the early stages, it was closely related to Sufism, a distinctive mystical and ascetic branch of Islam. Sufism includes religious and philosophical teachings, as well as various practices (asceticism, meditation, physical exercises, etc.), which eventually enable a Muslim to unite with Allah. To achieve this, a Muslim needs help from spiritual teachers and mentors, called sheikhs or murshids in Sufism, who guide the Murid students (Sufi disciples) in their pursuit of union with God.

The most enlightened, well-known and revered mentors became ishans who founded individual schools and branches called tariqahs in Sufism. These are also known as Sufi brotherhoods. The spiritual leaders (ishans) themselves were often considered “saints” (awliya in Arabic) during their lifetime and were venerated as such.

The followers of Sufism (Sufis) were often actively involved in spreading Islam to different parts of the world, adapting Muslim teaching to local ethno-confessional characteristics and traditions. In this way, they contributed to mixing Islamic canons with local pagan beliefs. As a result, in some areas the burial places of mythical heroes or real people, including sheikhs and ishans, became objects of worship for local residents (Islam 1991: 221–231).

This is also the case in the Southern Urals, where the widespread practice of venerating the graves of saints (awliya) by the Muslim population (mainly Bashkir) is closely related to the cult of ancestors. It is also related to the cult of Ishans, where the objects of worship are primarily funerary and religious buildings. These include mounds, stone constructions, mausoleums, etc., which locals believe to be the burial sites of certain saints.

Thus, owing to the extensive activity of the Sufi sheikhs of the brotherhood of Isawiya (XIV–XV centuries) and the brotherhood of Naqshbandiya-Mujaddidiya (XVIII–XIX centuries), from the XIV century onwards the cult of Ishans started to spread among the Bashkirs. It involved venerating ishans as saints and their graves as holy places where worship and sacrifices were performed. The cult was associated with the ability to work miracles (karamatas), heal and foresee the future (Tuzbekov 2018: 80). It is also worth



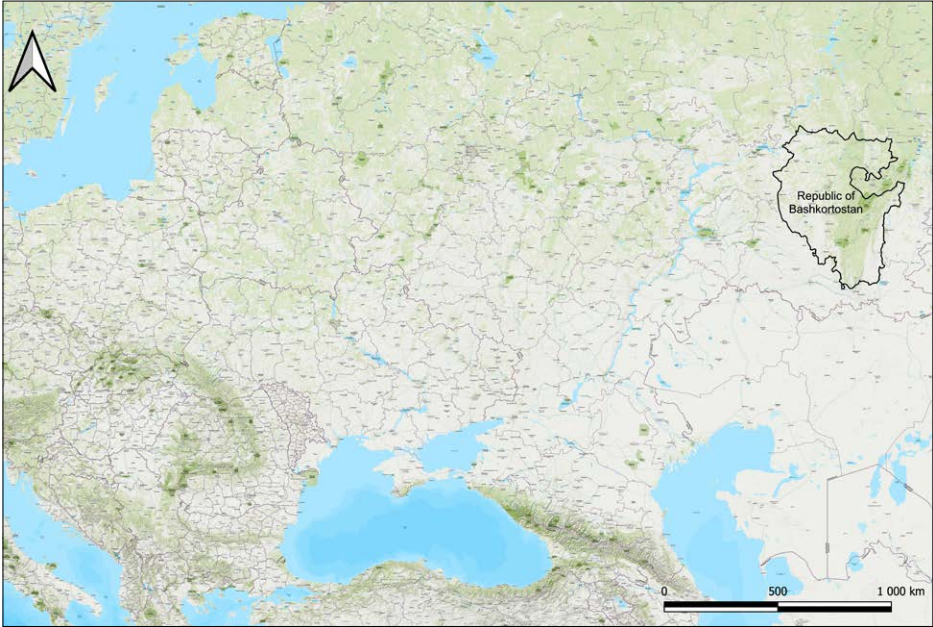


Figure 1: The location of Republic of Bashkortostan.

mentioning that from the very beginning, the construction and functioning of Sufi sacred burial sites was initiated and supported by the sheikhs themselves (Ismoilov 2019: 27–28).

The Naqshbandi Tariqah of Haqqania is a Sufi brotherhood that has played a significant role in the revival and development of Sufism in the Republic of Bashkortostan (Yusupov, Berdin 2017; Tsibenko 2019). Its followers now play an important role in the Muslim community, annually organising a number of mass events related to the worship of saints whose graves are located at archaeological sites in the Southern Urals (Fig. 1). These include the hillfort of Sandiyak (Kuedinsky District, Perm Krai), the mausoleums of *Hussein*-bek and Tura-khan (Chishminsky District, Bashkortostan Republic), the medieval necropolis of Ilchigulovo IV (Miyakinsky District, Republic of Bashkortostan), etc. (Fig. 2).

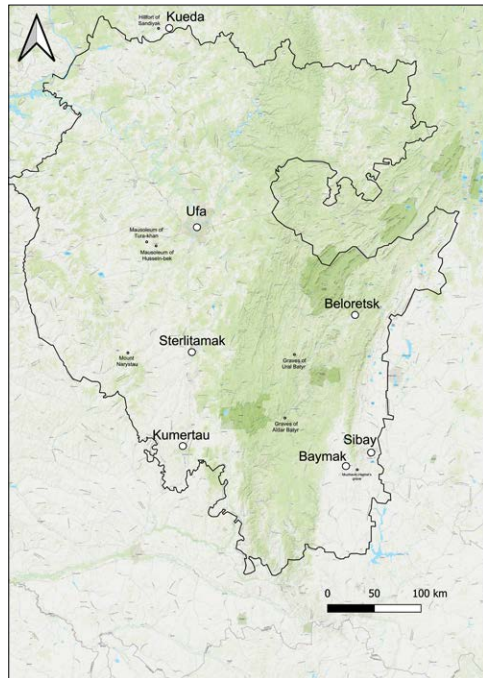


Figure 2: Republic of Bashkortostan. Cities, towns and sacred objects.

The complexes organized at the site of the medieval necropolis of Ilchigulovo-IV, located on Mount Narystau (Miyakinsky District, Republic of Bashkortostan), are the most striking example of an object of archaeological heritage associated with the graves of XIV century nomads that has been given sacred significance.

The process of sacralising the archaeological monument and the surrounding territory has been mentioned in previously published research (Tuzbekov, Bakhshiev 2015; Tuzbekov, Bakhshiev 2019). However, the people visiting the site, the frequency of their visits and the rituals they perform were not covered by the study.

While studying the morphology of the sacred archaeological sites and the structures built around them, the researchers repeatedly conducted surveys of pilgrims who came to honor the holy places. Many of them were willing to share how they had learnt about the the holy place, but they avoided answering questions on personal and social matters. In the course of the survey, it was found that online communities were one of the main sources of knowledge about holy places.

Many of the pilgrims also used the internet as a means of religious communication – to socialize with like-minded people and co-religionists through various online groups, or to search for information on specific matters in Islam, including information about saints, their burial sites, the arrangements of collective prayers, etc.

The surveys and interviews with pilgrims did not provide enough information to give a general description of the people who visit sacred archaeological sites, their interests, the rites and rituals they perform, the frequency of their visits or their reasons for visiting the holy places. In this regard, having considered various sources, it was concluded that the most accessible and informative means of learning about this issue is to study the materials published by the pilgrims themselves in virtual communities on the internet. This entails studying the way they interact and communicate, as well as their internet profile. According to H. Rheingold, a virtual community is a group of people who may or may not meet each other face to face, and who exchange words and ideas through the mediation of computer bulletin boards and networks (Rozhdestvenskaya, Semenova 2014: 24).

The purpose of this work is to study the socio-cultural characteristics and interests of Muslim pilgrims who visit the sacred sites in the Republic of Bashkortostan, including archaeological sites. This analysis is based on the analysis of the SufiRB internet community in the VKontakte social network.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> VKontakte (international name ‘VK’) is a Russian social network created by the Durov brothers in 2006. It is one of the three most visited websites in the Russian part of the internet, the so-called Runet. The network is analogous to the world’s largest social network, Facebook. In July 2022, the daily audience of the platform in Russia amounted to 49.1 million people. The monthly Russian audience amounted to 75.7 million people. A total 53% of Russian internet users visit Vkontakte on a daily basis. At the same time, the monthly coverage of the Runet reaches 83% (VKontakte 2022). The total monthly audience of VKontakte in all countries is 100 million users. According to data from SimilarWeb, as of 1 January 2021, the VKontakte website ranked fifteenth in popularity in the world. In this regard, we decided to analyse the groups on this platform.

## RESEARCH METHODS

To achieve the objective of the study, netnography methods were used. The term “netnography” was first introduced by R. V. Kozinetz. In his opinion, the essence of modern netnography is a specific set of related research practices for collecting, analyzing and presenting data, as well as the ethical standards for conducting such research.

According to the scheme developed by R. Kozinetz, an online study should consist of five steps:

1. determination of a research issue or problem
2. identification of the communities
3. participant observation and data collection
4. data analysis and repeated multiple interpretations of the findings
5. preparation and presentation of the results, their theoretical application (Kozinetz 2010: 79).

Having applied the above scheme and determined the aim of the study, the following objectives were set:

1. give a general description of the participants of the internet groups that organise and visit sacred archaeological monuments
2. draw up an average generalized profile of the virtual community members
3. determine the interests of the online community members
4. determine the main types of content produced, the level of perception and activity of the members
5. study the main producers and consumers of the content
6. characterize the posts of the internet community and determine their main topics

In order to achieve the objectives, the following aspects were investigated:

- group members' profile data
- the communicational activity of the group members
- messages, comments, reposts (re-posts), likes (approval) of current and most discussed topics by the members.

The study analyzes both the structural and attribute variables of the data, which were obtained using the vk.barkov.net and socstat.ru resources. To achieve the intended aim and fulfill the objectives of the study, the most efficient method was to analyze the communicational activity of members, posts and comments. It was therefore decided to continue analysing the internet groups in the VKontakte social network and to use the methods previously tested by researchers (Kozinetz 2010; Bikkulov, Pashkevich, Chugunov 2012; Polukhina 2014).

The research is limited to an online study, supplemented by previously collected field material. For this purpose, digital netnography tools were mainly used (referring to the third type of netnography). According to R. Kozinetz, digital netnography combines all methods of data analysis, including software for recognizing words and languages, calculating and representing social connections based on human understanding and comprehension.

He believes that human interpretation takes precedence over all forms of mechanical understanding, as it considers the context when analyzing data (Kozinetz 2010: 79).

The visual method of analyzing photo and video materials, widely used in ethnography, was also applied.

The content published in the group was analysed using the sociometric method with the resource <http://popsters.ru>. This is a service for statistics and content analytics of social network communities. The analysis included the quantity and type of content published, as well as the activity of the audience between the moment of creation and 31.12. 2022.

In order to specify the community parameters from 10 October 2014 to 31 December 2022, an automated research method was applied together with the resource [vk.barkov.net](http://vk.com/barkov.net) to collect data about the group and its members. The objectives of the study were to compare the popularity of information posted within the communities. To evaluate it, the engagement rate per post was calculated, the engagement rate (ER) being a metric used to assess the average number of interactions your social media content receives per follower. The engagement rate is calculated as the total number of interactions the content receives divided by the total number of followers, multiplied by 100%.

#### THE OBJECT OF THE STUDY

As mentioned above, when it comes to the number of archaeological sites with signs of sacralization, direction 1 (Islam in the formation of holy places) predominates in the territory of the Republic of Bashkortostan. Meanwhile, the most active organizers of events at holy sites are adherents of the Naqshbandiyya Haqqani Tariqah. The decision was therefore made to study the virtual communities of this particular tariqah.

According to Stephane A. Dudoignon, a modern researcher of Sufism, representatives of this branch are among the leaders in developing global cyberspace among all Sufi tariqahs (Dudoignon 2020).

When “Sufism” was entered in the category of communities, the VKontakte search engine identified about 80 Internet pages with members numbering from ten to several thousand. Some of these are virtual Sufi communities of the Naqshbandi Tariqah, followers of Shaikh Muhammad (Mehmet) Adil al Haqqani, who has greatly contributed to the revival and development of Sufism in Bashkortostan.

The goals outlined in the profile information about these groups corresponded to the four main goals of the majority of online communities described by J. Preece: “to exchange information, to get answers to questions or send information; to provide support conveying sympathy or expressing emotions verbally or non-verbally; to communicate informally using synchronous communication; to discuss ideas, which, as a rule, requires the help of a moderator” (Rozhdestvenskaya, Semenova 2014: 27).

The initial analysis showed that the largest number of members from Bashkortostan belonged to the following groups:

1. Sufism. The Path of the Heart. The Way to God (<https://vk.com/club38488863>);
2. Sheikh Muhammad (Mehmet) Adil Haqqani Naqshbandi (<https://vk.com/sheikhnazim>);
3. Tariqah Naqshbandi. Sohbet, quotes, books (<https://vk.com/naqshbandrus>) and
4. Sufi RB (<https://vk.com/club78436717>).

Despite the assertion by M. Castells that internet communities are formed on the basis of a shared interest rather than any geographical location (Castells 2004: 153), the last group “Sufi RB” was selected as the object of the research for the reasons set forth below.

The main principles of unity in this community (the only one containing the name of the region in its title) are the subscribers’ territory of residence and interest in Sufism, as well as in the activities of Shaikh Muhammad (Mehmet) Adil al Haqqani. The study of members’ profiles showed that among all the people who indicated their location (66%), the majority (71%) live in the Republic of Bashkortostan (the details are specified below).

The community’s geographical connection with the region is confirmed by the link to the associated website “Sufi Order of Naqshbandi Rabbani in the Republic of Bashkortostan”, dedicated to the present topic (Sufi Order 2022). Many posts are also made in the Bashkir language, which is spoken by the local Bashkir and Tatar populations.

Moreover, the members of the group turned out to be subscribers to mainly regional and city news feeds, as well as Bashkir national communities, which also indicates their geographical connection to the region.

The trips undertaken by members of the group to sacred sites located in the territory of the Republic of Bashkortostan, such as Mount Narystau (Miyakinsky District, Republic of Bashkortostan), Ural Batyr’s grave (Beloretsky District, Republic of Bashkortostan), Muzhavor–Hazrat’s grave (Baymaysky District, Republic of Bashkortostan), etc. to hold collective celebrations and prayers, are confirmed by numerous photo and video materials posted on the community walls.

It is also worth noting that this group’s audience makes up a significant share in almost all the above-mentioned communities (among those indicating their location): Sufism. The Path of the Heart. The Way to God – 7%, Shaikh Muhammad (Mehmet) Adil Haqqani Naqshbandi – 17%, Tariqah Naqshbandi. Sohbets, quotes, books – 16%.

The analysis of posts made it possible to attribute the group “Sufi RB” to the so-called community of “multimodal social worlds” (under the classification of A.C. Garcia, A.I. Standl, J. Bechkoff, Y. Cui). According to the researchers, the particularity of such on-line communities means they should be studied using both online and offline methods to obtain some aggregate material (Polukhina 2014: 97).

The data on the group and its members was obtained with the help of the resource vk.barkov.net, which is a universal set of tools that enables the convenient extraction of a wide variety of data from social networks. Based on the collected material posted from 10 October 2014 to 31 December 2022, it was possible to form summary tables containing open, structural and attribute variables. This allowed for the identification of sex and age characteristics, as well as the place of residence of the members.

In accordance with the guidelines of the Association of Internet Researchers, the received information was generalized and depersonalized. Therefore, the work does not contain users’ personal information and does not have links to personal pages. The study involved the analysis of exclusively open data, posted by the users of the social network themselves, who had accepted the Rules of Protection of User Information of the website vk.com, and expressed their awareness that in accordance with clause 6.2 of the rules, the information they post is available to any registered user of the website.

## TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INTERNET GROUP AND SUBSCRIBERS

The Internet community “Sufi RB” was created on 10th October 2014. At the time of data collection – the end of December 2022, the group had 811 members (751 discounting the blocked and deleted members). During the specified period of time, 1,915 posts and 185 comments were recorded in total.

The “Information” section states: “Khaja Amina, the wife of Mawlana Sheikh Nazimm, was from Bashkortostan...” This clearly emphasises the great importance of the region for the Sufi community. The group has one administrator. Publication of materials by other members is restricted by the settings. The administrator re-published the materials of only four authors. Three of them are men and one is a woman living in the Republic of Bashkortostan and Saint Petersburg.

In accordance with the rules of Vkontakte, members are required to indicate their gender when registering. As a result, it was found that the majority of individuals in the group were women (57%), while the number of men was comparatively lower (43%).

The indicated gender gradation is generally consistent with the data on the active audience of the Russian segment on Vkontakte at the end of 2022. This data indicates that 27.9 million authors were registered on the platform, of whom 59.5% were women and 40.5% were men (Tcherny 2022).

Almost half of the members (44%) indicated their year of birth on their personal pages. The distribution of these years was as follows: under 17 years old (3.3%), 18–29 years old (9%), 30–39 years old (24%), 40–49 years old (20%), over 50 years old (43%). The obtained data indicate that almost half the group members are people aged over 50.

These results are consistent with the available field materials gathered in the years 2013–2018, when it was noted that the main visitors to the holy places were women, most often middle-aged and older.

The predominance of women is probable due to their high level of religiosity and special psycho-emotional and physiological state. According to Russian researchers, women are much more likely to attend churches than men, they belong to so-called sectarian communities and are subject to superstitions – belief in witchcraft, divination, omens, fate, prophetic dreams, the evil eye, etc. (Ryazanova, Mikhaleva 2011: 24, 36).

Most of the members of the group under study indicated their country (74%) and place of residence (62%). The data reveal that the vast majority of those who indicated their country of residence live in the Russian Federation (95%). Of those who indicated their place of residence, 62% live in settlements within the Republic of Bashkortostan, and a significant proportion of these (44%) reside in Ufa and 2% each in the towns of Sibay, Beloretsk, Baymak, Sterlitamak and Kumertau. It should be noted that, with the exception of Ufa, most of the members live in cities and villages in the southern and southeastern parts of the region, which are inhabited mainly by the Bashkir population.

The analysis of the profiles of the community members showed that almost a quarter have a higher education (27%). Most of them are graduates of Bashkir State University, Zagir Ismagilov Ufa State Institute of Arts and Bashkir State Agrarian University.

Despite the fact that the Vkontakte User License Agreement states that when registering the user is obliged to provide all the necessary reliable and up-to-date information for the formation of a personal page, many prefer to remain anonymous and may publish false information about themselves. This is why, when analyzing internet communities, it is important to study the interests and information interaction between members.

One of the vk.barkov.net resource tools was used to determine the interests of the group members. It makes it possible to take into account other communities in which the group members participate (Table 1).

Name of the Internet group	The number of members who are also members of the internet group Sufi.rb	Total members	Audience percentage
Shaikh Muhammad (Mehmet) Adil al Haqqani	168	1,385	21%
Verhovnyj muftij Talgat Tadzhuiddin (Grand <i>Mufti</i> Talgat Tadzhuiddin)	137	9,747	17%
Serlyshyjek, Bashkortostan (Keep a secret Bashkortostan)	128	126,498	16%
BASHKORT YIRZARI (Bashkirian songs)	126	55,937	16%
Novosti Respubliki Bashkortostan i Ufy (BST) (News of the Republic of Bashkortostan and Ufa (BST))	118	184,989	15%
Bashkirkaya domohozyajka (Bashkir housewife)	113	194,124	14%
Moya Ufa   Novosti (My Ufa   News)	112	301,148	14%
BASHKORTTAR – BASHKORTLAR (Bashkirs)	111	30,287	14%
Novosti Ufy i Respubliki Bashkortostan (News of Ufa and the Republic of Bashkortostan)	107	462,883	13%
BASHKIRKA (Bashkir women)	104	32,876	13%

Table 1: The ten most popular virtual communities that members of the Sufi.rb group belong to.

It was found that the group's members are mainly interested in Islamic topics and Sufism, and are members of Bashkir communities. A large share of them had subscriptions to the personal internet page of Talgat Safich Tadzhuiddin, the chairman of the Central Duma of Russia (the oldest functioning all-Russian religious Muslim organization in the country). His popularity is probably due to his willingness to accept new Muslim parishes into his organization or his friendly relationship with the current spiritual leader of the Naqshbandi Tariqah Haqqaniah – Sheikh Muhammad (Mehmet) Adil Haqqani, whom he repeatedly invited to visit Bashkortostan.

Having analyzed the interests of the group members, it can be concluded that in addition to Islam and Sufism, the audience of the community is also interested in regional and urban news aggregators, as well as popular Bashkir national communities.

## INFORMATIONAL INTERACTION BETWEEN MEMBERS

Apart from general information about the group members, it was also decided to study their behavioral characteristics and their reactions to the posted materials (likes, reposts, comments, views). For this purpose, the tools of the internet resource <http://popsters.ru> were employed. The content and type of published materials (Table 2) were analysed, as well as audience activity from the creation of the community until 31 December 2022 (Fig. 3).

Indicators	Online community Sufi RB
<b>Content</b>	
Posts	1,915
Photos	247
Texts	1,834
Videos	51
Links	713
<b>Activity</b>	
Likes	17,467
Reposts	2,525
Comments	185
Views	398,342
<b>Activity by content type</b>	
Photos	51%
Texts	23%
Videos	18%
Links	8%
<b>Engagement by content type</b>	
Photos	11.7%
Texts	5.2%
Videos	4.1%
Links	1.8%
<b>Engagement rate</b>	
Engagement Rate per post (ERpost)	1.3%
Engagement Rate per day (ERday)	0.8%
Love Rate (LR)	1.1%
Talk Rate (TR)	0.0119%
Visibility Rate (VRpost)	25.6%

Table 2: Content and audience activity.

As is the case with many online VKontakte virtual communities, the published materials in the group under consideration are represented by a combination of text, links, and photographic and video materials. Having analyzed the relative activity by type of content, it can be concluded that participants are almost twice as interested in photographic



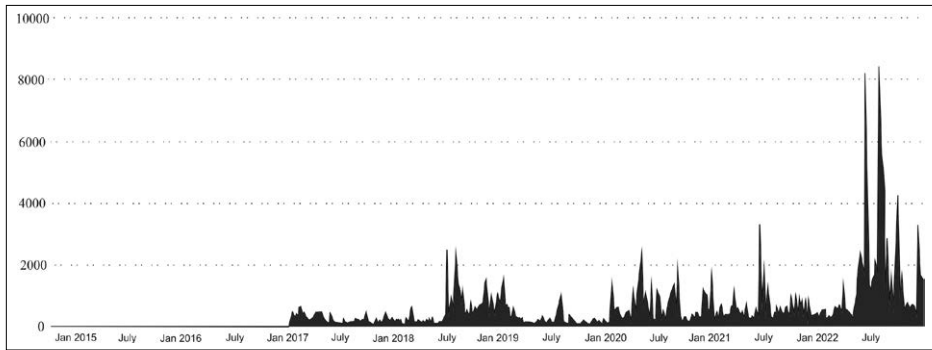


Figure 3: The number of views of community publications from the date of creation of the community until 31. 12. 2022 (accounting for viewing publications in the settings, enabled since 2017).

materials (51%) as they are in text (23%) and video clips (18%) published on the community wall. At the same time, the results of the study on the activity of the internet community audience in 2022 indicated that the VKontakte network was primarily used as follows: video (18.8%), photo (34.3%), text (31.9%) and links (15.0%) (Kalin, Kushnir 2022).

In our opinion, the considerable interest in photographs is due to the fact that this format is the simplest for users to perceive. It is easier for people to look at photographs than to read texts, especially since the materials were made in the territory of the Republic during *sobhets*, i.e. meetings, where conversations on religious topics, collective celebrations, etc. were held.

Another point worth noting is that the number of views of posts in this group increased significantly in 2022. The most popular ones are dedicated to events at the Aldar Batyr (Aldar Isikaev – tarkhan, batyr, head of the Burzyansk volost, leader of the Bashkir uprising of 1704–1711, an outstanding political figure) memorial complex (Burzyansky District, Republic of Bashkortostan), the grave of Ural Batyr (Beloretsky District, Republic of Bashkortostan) and on Mount Narystau (Ilchigulovo IV, kurgan burial ground) (Miyakinsky District, Republic of Bashkortostan).

In order to study the main consumers and producers of content, three tables were formed, which included the data obtained from studying the personal pages of members who had been active (likes, reposts, comments) in the community once, 50 or 100 times.

Initially, the study covered the profiles of members who had been active more than once. This yielded a total of 658 members, of whom 67% were women and 33% men. Slightly more than half of the members (53%) indicated their age, 57% of them being over 50 years old, 20% were between 40 and 49 years old, 15% were between 30 and 39 years old, and 11% were younger than 29 years old. Of the 72% of participants who indicated their country of residence, 98% lived in the Russian Federation. Sixty percent indicated their region of residence and the majority (76%) were from cities and villages within the Republic of Bashkortostan. The largest number of active members lived in Ufa (36%) and other cities and villages, mainly in the southern and southwestern parts of Bashkortostan.

Eight members had been active more than 50 times – four women and four men. Of the five people who gave their age, two women were 49 and 53 years old, and the men were 32, 34 and 41 years old. As for those who gave their place of residence, three were from Ufa, one person from Beloretsk (city of Beloretsk, Republic of Bashkortostan) and one from Kueda (village of Kueda, Perm Krai).

The majority of the five most active members (more than 100 activities) were men (three individuals). Of the three people who gave their age, one woman was 49 years old, and the men were 32 and 34 years old. Of the three people who indicated their place of residence, two lived in Ufa and one was from the village of Kueda. A preliminary examination of the profiles and publications on the walls revealed that almost all of them reposted materials from the SufiRB group, as well as publications about Islam, Sufism, and the activities of Shaikh Muhammad (Mehmet) Adil al Haqqani.

One indicator of subscribers' interest in community policy is the Engagement Rate. The obtained data indicate that the engagement rate by type of content is quite different. Thus, with an average engagement rate of 1.402% for the internet group Sufi.rb, the reaction to the photos was 11.7%, which indicates that most subscribers like to look at photos taken at events organized by community leaders.

In order to rank groups by total engagement, the resource popsters.ru was used to determine the level of average subscriber engagement per post. As a result, a fairly high level of average subscriber engagement for the post and a heightened interest in the content were established (Fig. 4).

To identify the most interesting posts for group members, ten posts with the highest engagement rate were selected.

The post entitled “Stone to Aldar Batyr! Burzyansky District” (ER 42.41%), dated 31 July 2022, reporting on the erection of the cenotaph in honour of Aldar Batyr (Burzyansky District, Republic of Bashkortostan) took the first place. Second place was

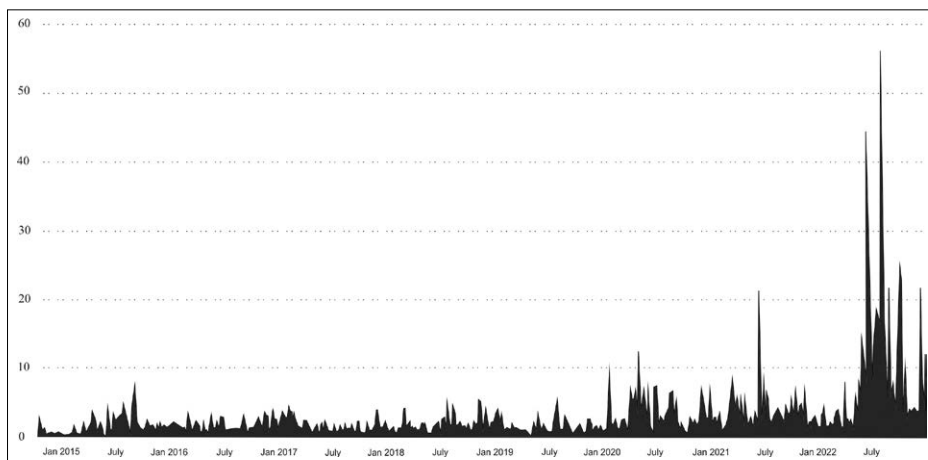


Figure 4: The coefficient of engagement per post by days from the date of creation of the community to 31. 12. 2022.

taken by the post “On 12th June a meeting of Muslims was held on Mount Narystau” (ER 23.18%) from 14 June 2022. The post provides information on an event held in Narystau, which brought together about 10,000 Muslims. The third most popular post was “Sheikh Usman S. Kildin – the representative of the Mawlana of Shaikh Mehmet an Naqshbandi ar Rabbani” (ER 20.83%) from 13 August 2022. The submitted post was accompanied by a photo of a document authorizing Shaikh Usman S. Kildin from Bashkortostan to be the murshid of the Naqshbandi Tariqah. The fourth most popular post, from 10 August 2022, was in the Bashkir language and reported on the opening of the Aldar Batyr memorial complex (ER 20.83%). Fifth place was taken by the post announcing the opening date of the Aldar Batyr memorial complex (ER 16.39%) from 04 August 2022.

## CONCLUSIONS

Years of research on the processes of sacralization of archaeological monuments conducted by the staff of the Department of Archaeological Heritage of the Southern Urals at the Institute of Ethnological Research, named after R.G. Kuzeev of the UFIC RAS, have led to the conclusion that a number of funerary objects, primarily located within the Bashkir Trans-Urals, are included in the modern cult and ritual practices of Muslims from different branches of Islam.

In the Southern Urals, one of the main models of sacralization of archaeological monuments is the traditional cult of the grave of a saint – awliya. It is closely related to both pre-Islamic religious beliefs and the cult of Ishans (leaders of Sufi tariqahs). In this cult, funeral and religious buildings are declared to be the burial places of saints.

The field research included occasional interviews with pilgrims and local clergy, but these meetings did not provide enough information to come up with a general description of the people who regularly participate in rituals organized at the burial sites of saints.

As the internet becomes increasingly globalized and social media platforms gain popularity, attracting wider audiences, we believe that netnography is one of the most promising avenues for learning more about pilgrims as a specific socio-cultural group. It involves applying various software and computer programs to analyse text information.

The data obtained through this method quite accurately determine the residence, gender, age and interests of people who regularly visit sacred archaeological sites. It also identifies the most active individuals and community leaders among members, as well as the level of involvement and interaction among community members. The data also enabled us to establish that a considerable number of people in the region participate in events at holy places, which are organized by representatives of the Naqshbandi Tariqah of Haqqani with the intention of mobilising their followers.

A slight predominance of women over men was found in the sex composition of the internet community members. This confirms the previously proposed thesis that middle-aged and older women living in rural areas are more likely to participate in the ritualistic practices at the graves of the awliya.

The analysis of the participants' interests and engagement with individual posts showed that they were particularly interested in Sufism and posts about the rituals of worship by Sufis at holy places, especially those held at Mount Narystau (Ilchigulovo IV medieval necropolis).

In the course of the analysis of the SufiRB internet community, it was also discovered that one of the most effective tools for studying the initiators of the process of sacralization of archaeological objects is to identify the most active members of online communities, the so-called leaders of the internet community. Further investigation of their personal pages revealed that they frequently organize trips to holy places and actively participate in establishing new places of worship.

Thus, the use of netnography methods has augmented the number of tools available for studying Muslim pilgrims who visit the sacred archaeological sites of the Republic of Bashkortostan.

The experience of studying the activities of religious internet communities, which demonstrate various flexible ways of building interaction between people and sacred objects of archaeological heritage, can contribute to the use of these sites in other areas of the socio-cultural environment, such as tourism, school and post-school education, the preservation of folk traditions and familiarization with the spiritual culture and worldview of ancestors.

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## КУЛЬТ СВЯТЫХ (АУЛИЯ) И ПАЛОМНИКИ В СОЦИАЛЬНЫХ СЕТЯХ (ПО МАТЕРИАЛАМ РЕСПУБЛИКИ БАШКОРТОСТАНА)

Айнур И. Тузбеков, Альберт Т. Ахатов



В статье анализируется малоизученная тема – инкорпорация традиционных суфийских практик, связанных с поклонением могилам святых Аулия (большая часть которых приурочена к сакрализованным памятникам археологии) в современную религиозную повседневность людей посредством Интернет коммуникаций.

Цель исследования – изучение паломников как особой социокультурной группы, представляющей собой с одной стороны «реальное» объединение людей – последователей Накшбандийского тариката коллективно посещающих сакральные места на Южном Урале, а с другой – виртуальное сообщество, способствующее построению новых форм передачи информации и интеграции отдельных ее акторов в религиозное Интернет-пространство.

В качестве объекта исследования выступила интернет-группа «Sufi RB», созданная и модерируемая последователями Накшбандийского тариката Хакканийи основными принципами объединения которого является единство территории проживания подписчиков (Республика Башкортостан) и интерес к суфизму и деятельности Шейха Мухаммад (Мехмет) Адила Хаккани аль-Кипруси.

Теоретическим основанием для изучения сообщества послужили онлайн-методы нетнографии (восходящей к этнографической науке). На основе анализа опубликованных материалов и активности аудитории сообщества был выявлен высокий интерес акторов к суфизму и массовым мероприятиям (до 10 тыс. чел) организуемых суфиями у святых мест и сакрализованных археологических объектов в Республике Башкортостан.

В ходе анализа полученных данных было определено, что собранные ранее во время экспедиционных выездов 2013–2018 гг. материалы коррелируются с результатами, полученными в «онлайн режиме». Так, было выявлено, что в целевой аудитории сообщества наблюдается небольшое преобладание женщин над мужчинами и людей старше 50 лет над всеми остальными возрастными категориями подписчиков. Большинство акторов группы кроме столицы региона живут в населенных пунктах, находящихся в южной и юго-восточной частях региона.

Авторы, анализируя паломников как социокультурную группу при помощи методики цифровой нетнографии, дополненной результатами полевых изысканий пришли к выводу о ее эффективности. Нарботанный религиозными интернет-сообществами опыт по построению организации взаимодействия людей и сакрализованных объектов археологического наследия, в интернет пространстве, можно использовать для развития туризма и т.д.

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# Political Archaeology. Deconstructing the Political Exploitation of Myths in Iraq (1958–2003)

— Goodarz Haddadi Nasab, Mehdi Mortazavi\*, Fariba Mosapour Negari

The Middle East is widely recognised as one of the most influential regions in the world, primarily due to its rich cultural diversity encompassing linguistic, ethnic and religious variations. However, despite the potential significance of myths in shaping national identity and political developments, limited research has been conducted in this area. This study aimed to explore the role of myths in the political governance of Iraq during the period from 1958 to 2003, a challenging era within the Middle East. Considering Iraq's ancient history, this research sought to elucidate the ideological perspectives of the rulers during the republican era, as well as the factors influencing their selection of specific myths for political purposes. It is worth noting that this study can contribute to enhancing awareness in future investigations on the role of myths in political governance across other regions within the Middle East.

**KEYWORDS:** Republic of Iraq, 1958 to 2003, ideology, political myth, the goddess Ishtar, the god Marduk

Bližnji vzhod velja za eno najvplivnejših regij na svetu, predvsem zaradi bogate kulturne raznolikosti, ki vključuje jezikovne, etnične in verske razlike. Kljub potencialnemu pomenu mitov pri oblikovanju nacionalne identitete in političnega razvoja pa je bilo na tem področju opravljenih le malo raziskav. Namen te študije je bil raziskati vlogo mitov pri političnem upravljanju Iraka v obdobju med letoma 1958 in 2003, ki je bilo na Bližnjem vzhodu zahtevno obdobje. Ob upoštevanju starodavne zgodovine Iraka je ta raziskava skušala pojasniti ideološke perspektive vladarjev v republikanski dobi ter dejavnike, ki so vplivali na njihov izbor določenih mitov v politične namene. Poudariti velja, da lahko ta študija prispeva k večji ozaveščenosti pri prihodnjih raziskavah o vlogi mitov pri političnem upravljanju v drugih regijah na Bližnjem vzhodu.

**KLJUČNE BESEDE:** Republika Irak, 1958–2003, ideologija, politični mit, boginja Ištar, bog Marduk

## INTRODUCTION

This article aims to examine the role of myths in decision-making and political governance during the Republic of Iraq era. This perspective will be employed to explore the

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background of existing studies on this issue with a view to gaining further insight. Analysing the role of myths in shaping political strategies and leadership within the historical context of the Iraqi Republic reveals a new way of interpreting that era. Additionally, the relationship between political ideology in Iraq and the exploitation of myths will be analysed in a section entitled “Ideologies of the Iraqi Republic”. The dominant ideologies of the era, Pan-Arabism and Iraqi nationalism, were heavily influenced by the social and political landscape of Iraq at that time. Studying these social and political factors provides a critical foundation for understanding how these ideologies emerged. Therefore, this research will also encompass an examination of these influential conditions. A brief overview of historical events and significant political developments during the Republic of Iraq era will aid in understanding why rulers exploited myths for political advantage. This research investigates the link between political ideology and the use of myths in Iraq. We cannot fully grasp how myths were used in specific historical events without a strong foundation in the events themselves. Furthermore, given Mesopotamia’s rich cultural heritage and the rulers’ need to foster unity among the diverse perspectives within Iraq, particular focus will be placed on the period following the monarchy (during the First Republic and Baath Party rule). Due to Mesopotamia’s long and diverse history, this period becomes even more significant for study in this context. Mesopotamia’s unique cultural heritage and the need for national unity make the Republic of Iraq era a compelling case for examining the use of myths in governance. This study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how myths influenced governance and political decisions throughout Iraq’s republican era. The theoretical foundations underlying this topic will be briefly presented in a separate section to emphasise its overall importance. Consequently, this article will explore how ancient myths can contribute to national solidarity within a country.

With this context in mind, our main inquiry revolves around examining how myths influenced Iraq’s national identity and shaped political governance strategies and decisions during the Republic of Iraq era. To address this question, a descriptive-historical and qualitative approach will be employed, utilising various library resources to analyse the role of myths in decision-making and political governance during the Republic of Iraq era. The findings revealed that during the Iraqi Republic period, particularly in its early stages, there was a prevalent politically motivated utilisation of mythological figures such as Ishtar (symbolising love, war, blessings, social relations and social interaction) and Shamash (the sun god). In addition, considering the prominent role and position of the goddess Ishtar in ancient Mesopotamian society, it can be inferred that there was a shift in the perception of women’s roles during the First Republic of Iraq. Furthermore, the presence of the god Marduk was utilised to legitimise the rulers of ancient Mesopotamia and justify their actions in times of war. This was evidenced by the strengthening of legitimacy during the Iraq-Iran conflict and confrontations with Israel. It is also possible that the personality of the Iraqi president at that time played a significant role in the decision to attack Kuwait. Ultimately, it appears that during the period of the Iraqi Republic, emphasis was often placed on the goddess Ishtar due to political and social conditions. Conversely, under Baath Party rule, the focus shifted towards the god Marduk.

## RESEARCH HISTORY

The influence of national mythmaking in shaping and advancing the debate over Iraqi nationalism has been the subject of numerous studies. In the context of Iraq, Harkhu (2005) examines the ideological parallels and divergences between Saddam Hussein and the ancient Mesopotamian kings, acknowledging both historical echoes and the unique context of Saddam's rule. The role of the state and politics in antiquarianism and collective identity in Iraq (during the Baathist era) is discussed in an article by Eric Davis entitled "The Museum and the Politics of Social Control in Modern Iraq" (Davis 1994). This article acknowledges the large growth in government spending in this area. In his book entitled *The Development of Archaeology in Mesopotamia: From the Ottoman Empire to the Rise of the Iraqi State*, Bernhardsson discusses the evolution of archaeology in Mesopotamia from the time of the Ottoman Empire to the British occupation and the early years of the formation of the Kingdom of Iraq as a sovereign state. He emphasises the connection between archaeology and modern Iraqi nationalism (Bernhardsson 2005). Several researchers have also conducted in-depth research on the ancient gods and myths of Mesopotamia (Matsushima 2014; Cortés 2019; Oshima 2011). Additionally, numerous studies have been published on the political exploitation of ancient Mesopotamian mythical symbols during the Republic of Iraq's existence (al-Khalil 1991; Baram 1983; Abdi 2008).

It is important to note that during the Iraqi Republic, symbols of the goddess Ishtar were used to foster national unity among Iraqis (Dawisha 2016). R. Nicholas Christoff references to the god Marduk in political decisions during that time have also been found (Dalley 1995; De Bruyn 2013). Although the use of ancient myths during the Iraqi Republic has already been discussed, this article differs from earlier ones in that it is unclear from an archaeological perspective how and why the governments in question selected the specific deity or goddess to achieve their political objectives.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

The primary objective of this research is to explore the ideological perspectives of rulers in the political manipulation of ancient myths, and to elucidate their role in justifying and influencing the political decisions made during the period of the Iraqi Republic (1958–2003). Given the historical significance and diverse pantheon of ancient gods in Iraq, this study specifically focuses on understanding the position and influence of the goddess Ishtar and the god Marduk in shaping political governance. It also examines how their societal nature impacted the decision-making process of Iraqi rulers. In essence, this research seeks to investigate how myths have contributed to strengthening Iraq's national identity amidst various challenges.

Hence, the primary focus of this research will be to examine the development of Pan-Arabism and Iraqi nationalist ideologies. Additionally, it will explore the political advantages associated with the worship of the goddess Ishtar and the god Marduk, as well as their impact on governmental decision-making during the Iraqi Republic era. To

achieve this objective, a descriptive-historical and qualitative research approach has been adopted, with a strong emphasis on utilising library resources.

Moreover, this research employed a qualitative approach, centred on a textual analysis of political speeches delivered by prominent Iraqi leaders. Speeches were collected from different academic resources relevant to Iraqi politics. Thematic analysis was the primary method used, with a coding scheme designed to identify keywords, historical references and recurring themes related to national identity and the deployment of myths and symbols. By closely examining the way historical events and figures are presented within these speeches, we aimed to elucidate the methods by which Iraqi leaders have leveraged political mythology to both construct and reconstruct national identity, ultimately serving their political agendas.

## THE FOUNDATIONS OF MYTH AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

The role of myths in culture and national identity is one of the topics that have been studied in sociology. Social identity theory emphasises that individual identity is dependent on the identity of the group in which one resides. In other words, groups can be defined in terms of national, cultural and religious communities, and myths play a role in the formation of the identity of different groups. Therefore, the theory of social identity is a crucial foundation for investigating the relationship between myth and identity (Brown 2019). Our understanding of identity is crucial to this research. Social construction theory tells us that identity is not fixed, but constantly evolving based on our social interactions and group memberships. Political identity, a specific type of social identity, revolves around shared political beliefs. Furthermore, identity construction is a dynamic process, shaped by social and political contexts. These concepts allow us to analyse how Iraqi leaders have used myths and symbols to construct and reconstruct national identity, ultimately influencing political decisions and governance.

The following section presents examples related to this theory in the Middle East. For example, the founder of the Republic of Turkey (Atatürk) used cultural myths in political discourse to transform the traditional Muslim society into a secular, modern and democratic nation-state (Morin 2010: 485–486). Alternatively, in Persian culture, the mythical king Jamshid plays an important role in the formation of group identity and is known as a symbol of purity, authenticity, courage and justice. It seems that myths are widely recognised in the formation of group identity in many cultures, functioning as symbols of accepted and influential values in society. They play an important role in the formation of group identity and national identity. It also seems that each member of society assumes a variety of roles that collectively contribute to forming that person's identity and the collective identity within which they live. In this regard, it is important to consider individual needs. In order to achieve individual satisfaction, it is necessary to address three key areas: the need for development, the need for social connection, and the need for security and belonging. Myths are considered to be one of the factors that play a role in fulfilling these individual needs. It is necessary to acknowledge that

social realities are created through social processes and no reality exists in isolation. Myths are also examined as one of the social processes that play a role in the structure of social realities. Furthermore, social facts are not inherently right or wrong; rather they are created through perceptions, meanings and social interactions. In this regard, myths are examined as one of the social processes that play a role in the structure of social realities. For example, national myths can play a role in the construction of national identity, and as one of the factors that facilitate integration and unity within a society, they assist in the better recognition and understanding of social processes. Therefore, it can be assumed that cultural heritage myths are important as one of the key instruments in legitimising nationalism and fostering a sense of national belonging to promote political ideology (Berger 2009: 492). For instance, this type of benefit can be observed in the Middle East, where Hafez Assad (President of Syria at the time) employed cultural heritage to strengthen his government (Wedeen 1999). Similar mechanisms can be seen in the case of the family of Muhammad Ali Pasha in Egypt (Reid 2002) and in the example of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938) who sought to identify the roots of Turkish civilisation in the Sumerians and Hittites. Similarly, the Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi (1919–1980), also identified himself with the Achaemenid generation (Sciolino 1991: 40, Mortazavi 2009: 125–126).

#### IRAQI IDEOLOGIES AND THE EXPLOITATION OF PAST HERITAGE: TRACING THE FORMATION OF MODERN IRAQ

The modern state of Iraq can be traced back to the second decade of the 19th century. Following the conclusion of the First World War, the British amalgamated three southern provinces of the Ottoman Empire – Mosul, Baghdad and Basra – to form a new country known as Iraq (Ramesh 2003: 123). In 1921, under the rule of Prince Faisal bin Hussein from the Hashemite dynasty, the Kingdom of Iraq was established. This section aims to examine the social and political conditions that prevailed during this period and their influence on shaping Pan-Arabism and nationalist ideologies. It will explore how these ideologies evolved from the monarchy era until the downfall of power held by the Baath Party in Iraq (2003).

#### PAN-ARABISM IDEOLOGY

Abu Khaldoun Sati al-Hosri is recognised as one of the key figures in the development of Pan-Arabism (Dawisha 2016: 49). His ideas also played a significant role in shaping the formation of the Republic and the Baath Party (Simon 1986: 75–84). Al-Hosri's perspective emphasises language and history as shared principles that define a nation. He posits that the Arabic language has its roots in ancient times on the Arabian Peninsula and that the extensive history of the Arab people extends back to pre-Islamic times. These cultural aspects serve as protective measures against foreign influences (Cleveland 1971: 123–126).

Dervish Moqdadi, a Palestinian graduate from the American University of Beirut, also emphasised Pan-Arabism and advocated for the establishment of an Arab homeland by recognising the environmental potential of the Fertility Crescent idea (Dawn 1971). The formation of Pan-Arabism ideology during the founding period of the Kingdom of Iraq (1921) can be attributed to several factors. Despite being an Arab from the Sunni Hejaz religion, King Faisal, who became Iraq's first king after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, was revered by Shiites as a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad and a leader in their rebellion against Ottoman rule. King Faisal and his supporters believed that the Arab lands could unite around a central core, similar to the Italian or German model, forming an Arab country with Iraq as its capital. It is worth noting that Pan-Arabism reached its peak in Iraq during both the monarchical era (1921–1958) and the early republican period (1958–1968).

Although Iraq gained independence from British colonial rule in 1932, the treaties signed between Britain and Iraq in 1924 and 1930, which allowed Britain to maintain military bases and interests in Iraq, had a significant impact on the development of Pan-Arabism. These agreements were only reluctantly approved by the Iraqi parliament, highlighting the influence of external powers on Iraqi affairs. Furthermore, the presence of ethnic rivalries and successive coups between 1936 and 1941 further emphasised the importance of Arab unity and solidarity, with a focus on a shared language and ancient history (Dann 1969: 362). While it can be argued that the First Iraqi Republic (1958–1968) marked a transition from Pan-Arabism to Iraqi nationalism, it is evident that Iraqi nationalist thought had not yet fully emerged during the period between 1921 and 1968. This period stretched from the monarchy era until the end of the First Republic, characterised by political and social instability. Therefore, it can be posited that the Iraqi nationalist ideology had not yet reached a state of consolidation during this period.

### THE IDEOLOGY OF IRAQI NATIONALISM

The 1958 coup led by General Abdul Karim Qasim transformed Iraq from a monarchy to a republic. This shift was influenced by various factors, including the rise of Nasserism in Egypt and Iraq's desire to compete with Egypt for influence in the Arab world. Additionally, Iraq's withdrawal from the Arab League, its claim of sovereignty over Kuwait and the Arvand River, strained relations with neighbouring countries, and the Kurdish rebellion in the 1960 and 1970s played a role in forming a new ideology among Iraqi leaders (Abdi 2008: 9). The Baath Party emerged as a significant force during this period, promoting strong nationalist sentiments and emphasizing Iraqi nationalism. The party's ideology of Pan-Arabism aimed to consolidate political unity by drawing on Iraq's ancient history and glorious past. It is worth noting that other intellectuals such as Miqdadi also influenced the foundation of Iraqi nationalism and Baathism (Simon 1997). The Baath Party was established in the 1930s by two Syrians, Michel Aflaq and Salahuddin Bitar, while studying at the Sorbonne University. They drew inspiration from nationalist debates in Europe and the Arab world, including ideas put forth by al-Hosri and Miqdadi (Torrey 1969). Considering the limited understanding of ruling ideologies during the

Kingdom of Iraq era and beyond, it is important to examine how national mythmaking influenced political governance during the republican period.

### THE ROLE OF NATIONAL MYTHMAKING IN THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

The position of national mythmaking in the political thinking of the Republic of Iraq can be observed through the dominance of the Baath Party in the government from 1968 onwards. Benefiting from the ancient potential of Mesopotamia, the Baath Party emphasised the distinction of Iraq from other places and promoted Iraqi nationalism as the dominant ideology. As a result, ancient symbols of Mesopotamia became prevalent in public and political gatherings. An example of this national mythmaking is the renaming of the province of Hillah to Babylon in 1970. In Baghdad, a hotel was named Babel with an entrance designed to resemble the gate of the goddess Ishtar. Furthermore, Udi Hussein, son of Saddam Hussein, established a newspaper called Babil (Coughlin 2002: 49). These instances demonstrate how modern Arabic names were replaced by ancient Mesopotamian names.

Another manifestation of national mythmaking is evident in the naming of an atomic reactor after one of the ancient myths, Tammuz (Baram 1983: 451). This reflects how ancient Mesopotamian culture and mythology even influenced scientific endeavours. The government also supported festivals inspired by Mesopotamia. Moreover, architectural and artistic styles derived from Sumer, Babylon and Assyria gained popularity during this period (al-Khalil 1991). This cultural revival led to an increase in budget allocations for the Ministry of Antiquities between 1968 and 1972 by more than 80% (al-Khalil 1991). Collectively, these examples demonstrate how national mythmaking significantly influenced political thinking and cultural expressions within Iraq during this period.

To emphasise the significance of the matter and to back up the assertion, we present Saddam Hussein's message to archaeologists:

The responsibility of managing and protecting the ancient monuments, which are valuable relics for Iraqis, rests with you and especially the experts; to show the world that previous civilizations originated from our country and that they made a significant contribution to humanity (cited in Shantaf 1979: 11).

In light of these statements, it appears that attaining superiority in the Arab world's economic and military domains, as well as in the Iran-Iraq war (1988–1980), was critical for the Baath party in strengthening Iraq's nationalist emotions (Abdi 2008: 7). In this sense, Saddam Hussein abandoned the idea of Pan-Arabism as a means of uniting Arabs under a single banner. Nevertheless, he emphasised Iraq's cultural and political supremacy over other Arab countries, as well as its right to lead them. Promoting historical-cultural bigotry, such as the power of old myths and their impact on individual and social unconscious beliefs, could potentially play a role in this direction. These ancient tales

include those about Sumerian gods and goddesses including An Enlil, Enki, Ninhursag, Nanna-Sin, Utu and Inanna (Cortés 2019: 63). In particular, Ishtar (also known as Inanna or Ishtar in Akkadian) and the god Marduk played an important role in forming political ideas within the Iraqi Republic.

### THE ROLE OF THE GODDESS ISHTAR DURING THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ'S EXISTENCE

The first Iraqi Republic (1958–1968) already showed signs of the resurgence of pre-Islamic history. The national flag and emblem were designed by General Abdul Karim Qasim using the star of the goddess Ishtar and the god Shamash's solar symbol (Baram 1983: 427). The investigation into the potential for capitalising politically on the god Shamash and the goddess Ishtar during this period enhances the significance of the work. General Abdul Karim Qasim's perspective was rejected during the Baath Party's reign. In other words, it appears that the characteristics of the myth in question, along with the prevailing political and social conditions, determine how myths are used politically. The remainder of this essay will explore this subject in greater depth.

As previously mentioned, the two types of identitarianism that could be pursued in Iraq were Pan-Arabism and exclusive nationalism. Pan-Arabism regarded Arab culture, history and a shared language as prerequisites for the identity and unity of the Arab people, while exclusive nationalism believed that Iraq's cultural and natural potential was exclusively Iraqi and not Arab. However, the Iraqi Republic era may be seen as the period when Pan-Arabism gave way to Pan-Iraqism. This is because Pan-Arabism was not as much emphasized during this time as Iraqi nationalism (Bashkin 2011: 294). From this perspective, it appears that General Abdul Karim Qasim promoted the people using the term "Arab people of Iraq", in order to emphasise the trans-ethnic identity of the nation of Iraq in light of the political and social circumstances of the time. This included the rise of pan-Arab Nasserism in Egypt and the opposing Baathism in Iraq. The incorporation of the eight-pointed star of the goddess Ishtar on the national flag and the god of Shamash on the national emblem (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2) could potentially facilitate the integration of other ethnic groups in Iraq, including the Kurds, with the central government. However, General Abdul Karim Qasim's nationalism may have hindered Iraq's alignment with the goals of the Arab League (Dawisha 2016: 287–288).



Figure 1: The symbol of the god Shamash on the national emblem during the period of General Abdul Karim Qasim (1963–1958). (Dann 1969: Cover page)



Figure 2: The eight-pointed star symbolising the goddess Ishtar on the national flag of Iraq during the period of General Abdul Karim Qasim (1963–1958). (Dann 1969: Cover page)



The symbol of the goddess Ishtar (Fig. 2) was selected to figure on the national flag during the leadership of General Abdul Karim Qasim. However, the reasons why and how remain a mystery. It is important to note that the equal rights of all Iraqi citizens were enshrined in the country's constitution during his tenure, regardless of their race, ethnicity, language or religion. Furthermore, the goddess Ishtar was renowned for her commitment to justice (Pryke 2017: 162–163; Jacobsen 1970: 209). She was considered to possess (Fig. 3) the authority to pursue justice and establish order in the world. Therefore, although the concept of justice in the ancient Mesopotamian world, rooted in divine origins, differed from that in modern Iraq, based on universal and modern law, utilising the symbol of the goddess Ishtar on the Iraqi national flag to promote justice within the context of political and social conditions was feasible. For instance, political prisoners, including Kurds, were released under the First Republic. However, they continued to express their discontent. Therefore, it seems that during the republican era, the utilisation of Ishtar's symbols was primarily focused on fostering social connections and interactions. As previously mentioned, the goddess Ishtar sought to enhance her power through engagement. This can be seen in the context of Jamal Abdel Nasser's claim to be the Arab leader in the Middle East during that time. Furthermore, under the First Republic (Abdi 2008: 12), the activities of the Communist Party, which had been limited during the Kingdom of Iraq, were completely halted in 1962. This is significant because General Abdul Karim Qasim's political beliefs did not align with the Marxist viewpoint. His decision to lift the ban on the Communist Party's activities reflects traits similar to those attributed to the goddess Ishtar. In addition to being the personification of love, war and blessings, this mythical goddess also emphasised interacting with other deities to gain more power (Abdi 2008: 12).

The social standing of women in the first Iraqi Republic is a distinct issue from the ones mentioned above. It can be said that the anthropomorphism of ancient Mesopotamian myths, the attributes of the goddess, and the beauty attributed to the goddess Ishtar/Inanna and ancient Mesopotamia in Sumer (Matsushima 2014: 1), along with the social status of women in both ancient Mesopotamia and modern Iraq, are interconnected. The ancient era preceding the Hammurabi dynasty appears to have had a more tolerant attitude towards women's social status



Figure 3: The Goddess Ishtar. (Pryke 2017: 161)



Figure 4: The symbol of the god Shamash, the eight-pointed star of the goddess Ishtar on the flag of Iraq and the importance of the role of women in the middle of the picture. (Dann 1969: 176)

because gods replaced mythical goddesses during the time of the Hammurabi. However, it is possible that the secular perspective and changing attitudes towards the role of women during the First Republic of Iraq were influenced by a self-awareness stemming from the goddess Ishtar's personality. Consequently, women's roles in society became more prominent during this period (for further details, see Dann 1969). For instance, in Figure 4, the presence of the goddess Ishtar's symbol on the flag and the god Shamash's symbol of two torches, along with a woman depicted within the picture, suggests that the nature of Ishtar's personality may have reflected and represented the position and role of women in Iraqi society at that time.

It is important to note that during the initial decade of General Abdul Karim Qasim's commitment to purely nationalist ideology, his ideas were not widely accepted (Baram 1983: 427). However, during the war with Iran, the Baath Party apparently prioritised Iraqi nationalism (aiming for unity between diverse ethnicities and religions) over Pan-Arabism, which will be further explored in subsequent sections. It is important to note that the Ishtar Gate was excavated by German archaeologists in the early 20th century. The remains of the gate were subsequently sent to Berlin. However, in the 1970s, the Baath regime failed to restore the gate, so a new design inspired by the Ishtar Gate was constructed. In order to emulate the architectural style of ancient times, bricks were placed between the original bricks of the Ishtar Gate (Fig. 5). These additional bricks bore inscriptions indicating that this structure was rebuilt during Saddam Hussein's era (Coughlin 2002: 227). Furthermore, replicas of the gate of the goddess Ishtar, accompanied by an image of Saddam Hussein, were distributed throughout the country (Fig. 6).



Figure 5: An example of Saddam Hussein's approach to reconstructing the Ishtar Gate in Babylon. (Abdi 2008: 20)



Figure 6: The replica of the gate of the goddess Ishtar and the president of Iraq at the time, Saddam Hussein. (Al-Khalil 1991: 53)

## THE POSITION OF THE GOD MARDUK DURING THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ PERIOD

The role of the god Marduk during the Republic of Iraq period can be seen through the utilisation of ancient myths and Babylonian civilisation to help solidify the national identity of the Iraqi people under the rule of the Baath Party from 1968 to 2003. One may cite an example from 1982, when the party employed ancient myths as a means to achieve their political objectives, such as the unveiling of the statue of the god Marduk in Baghdad. Babylon was a popular destination for archaeologists and tourists, and particularly for foreign dignitaries who were invited by the Iraqis to witness the magnificence of the ancient Mesopotamian ruins. It is worth noting that on the anniversary of the Baath Party coup in 1969, during General Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr's leadership, Iranian diplomats were among the first foreigners invited to visit this site. This coincided with the Iranian Shah's preparations to celebrate his monarchy's 2500th anniversary (Abdi 2008: 19). It is likely that the Baathists intended to remind these imperial diplomats that ancient Iranians drew inspiration from Babylon's supreme deity, Marduk (Fig. 7), at Persepolis.

In 1987, President Saddam Hussein issued an order to rebuild the Tower of Babel. The significance of Babylon in the Baath Party's ideology can be attributed to its manifestation as a symbol of resistance and stability in the Mesopotamian civilisation, particularly after the overthrow of multiple kings. Additionally, Babylon's strategic location between Sunni areas surrounding Baghdad and Shiite regions in the south further underscores its importance (Baram 1991: 45–47). Therefore, the construction of the tower facilitated the social cohesion desired by the Baath party, particularly during the period from 1980 to 1988, which coincided with the war against Iran. Consequently, the Baathists sought to assert their dominance by invoking the myths contained in the *Shahnameh*. The interplay between political events and the use of national myths is a critical aspect of understanding national identity in Iraq. The devastating and prolonged Iran-Iraq War (1980–1988) significantly influenced Iraqi society, fostering a surge in Iraqi nationalism and a sense of national unity as the country faced a common enemy. It is likely that this evolving social context influenced how Iraqi leaders employed national mythology. They may have emphasised myths that highlight Iraqi courage, resilience and historical importance to bolster national pride during this turbulent period. Analysing how political



Figure 7: The god Marduk. (Prete 2011: Cover page)



Figure 8: Medal of the 1987 Babylon International Festival with the face of Saddam Hussein and the ancient king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar. (De Cesari 2015: 25)

events, such as the Iran-Iraq War, have shaped the use of political mythology in Iraq is essential for comprehending the complex relationship between national identity, political leadership and the exploitation of symbolic narratives.

During the conflict with Iran, Saddam Hussein sought to bolster his nationalist leadership by portraying Nebuchadnezzar, an ancient Iraqi figure, as someone who had fought against the Iranians and the Jews (Karsh and Rautsi 1991: 152). This was evident in the depiction of Nebuchadnezzar and Saddam Hussein on the medal of the 1987 Babylon International Festival (Fig. 8). However, this essay will not delve into this historical narrative. Instead, it will focus on exploring the significance of the mythological god Marduk in both ancient and contemporary Iraq during the Baath Party era.

The revival of Babylon can be attributed to Saddam Hussein's fascination with Nebuchadnezzar, one of the most famous kings of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. In early 1981, one year into the Iraq-Iran war, Babil was chosen as the centre of celebrations with the slogan "Yesterday's Nebuchadnezzar, Today's Saddam Hussein." These celebrations became an annual event during the Iran-Iraq war. On the one hand, these festivities portrayed Iran as a staunch enemy of Iraq. On the other hand, they conveyed a hidden message and a threat to Israel (Karsh & Rautsi 1991: 152). This is because Nebuchadnezzar, the king of New Babylon, plundered Jerusalem in 587 BC with the support of the mythical god Marduk. The conflict between Israel's ancient God, Elohim, and Marduk, the chief god of the city of Babylon, resulted in Marduk's victory (De Bruyn 2013: 631–632). It is plausible that Saddam Hussein attempted to exploit the mythical legacy and war power associated with Nebuchadnezzar from ancient times for political gain against his rivals and enemies. A notable example is a billboard from 1990 that links ancient monuments with contemporary ideology. The billboard depicts Jerusalem being captured by Nebuchadnezzar's warriors in 587 BC, alongside a celebration of unity by fighters with diverse beliefs. The image also includes Saddam Hussein, then President of Iraq, standing next to Saladin who defeated the Crusaders, and Nebuchadnezzar (the conqueror of Jerusalem), all under the Iraqi flag (Fig. 9).



Figure 9: Picture of the President of Iraq with Saladin, the commander of the Arabs in the Crusade, and Nebuchadnezzar, the conqueror of Jerusalem in ancient times. (De Cesari 2015: 25)

The most formidable divisions of the Iraqi Army were the Hammurabi Armoured Division (an elite formation of the Iraqi Republican Guard) and the Nebuchadnezzar Infantry Division (Harkhu 2005: 60). The significance of this lies in the belief held by the ancient rulers of Iraq that mythical gods played a crucial role in their creation, birth and upbringing (Nemet-Nejat 1998: 218). During the Old Babylonian period, for instance, royal scribes glorified acts of warfare against enemies and the defeat of rivals by the rulers (Bottero 1995: 294). Such ancient mythical beliefs could serve to justify and legitimise the warlike behaviour exhibited by the Baath Party in the minds of the masses. This is further supported by a speech given by Vice President Taha Muhie-eldin Marouf (1924–2009), who stated: “O masses of our great nation, the victorious children of Iraq, the grandchildren of Nebuchadnezzar... Salutations to the battle of Qadisiyah [referring to Saddam Hussein’s war with Iran]. With yesterday’s Nebuchadnezzar as its slogan and today’s Saddam Hussein as its embodiment, it establishes a link between this country and its historical past. Under the leadership of a fearless and inspired figure [Saddam Hussein], we shall celebrate victory” (Baram 1991: 48). It is important to note that the Iraqi Baath Party consistently employed ancient myths to justify its actions.

However, relying solely on ancient myths is insufficient to explain the political decisions of the Iraqi Republic in the aforementioned cases. This notion can also be observed in Iraq’s military invasion of Kuwait. To begin with, it is important to examine the historical narrative surrounding this event. Saddam Hussein claimed that he initiated the war against Kuwait after receiving a divine vision of the Prophet of Islam in a dream. Despite his secular beliefs, he even incorporated the phrase “Allah Akbar” in the national flag in 1991. Additionally, during the course of the war, photographs depicting his acts

of worship within sacred structures were disseminated as a means of legitimising his military actions (Simpson 2003: 251).

In ancient Mesopotamia, battles and victories were seen as the will of the gods. For example, the god Marduk played a key role in the wars of King Hammurabi, and the defeat of his enemies was seen as the victory of justice (Dalley 1995: 416). The gods were also believed to speak to ancient kings in their dreams (Lewis 1993: 184). This belief in divine guidance has been used for political purposes throughout Iraqi history. For example, during the Persian Gulf War, Saddam Hussein claimed that he had been commanded by God to invade Kuwait. He said, “God is witness that He [God] wanted the war to happen and we took this decision from God... Our role in this decision was minimal” (Abd-al-Jabar 1994: 104). By legitimising his war actions with religious language, Saddam Hussein sought to portray the conflict as a battle between good and evil. The Baath Party, which ruled Iraq at the time, also believed that Kuwait was historically part of Iraq. They cited the myth of Marduk, who was said to have returned the lost land of Dilmun to Iraq (Seri 2006). This belief provided the Baath party with a justification for invading Kuwait, despite the fact that it violated international law (Kelsay 1993: 16). The use of religious and mythological language to justify war is a common tactic used by political leaders. By linking their actions to the will of the gods, they can try to gain the support of their people and portray their enemies as evil. This was certainly the case with Saddam Hussein, who used religious language to great effect during the Persian Gulf War.

Finally, it is necessary to state that the duality inherent in Iraqi mythology, particularly in the case of deities such as Ishtar and Marduk, is an undeniable phenomenon. This duality, manifested in various aspects such as power and mercy, war and peace, and life and death, reflects the complexities of human society and its conflicting needs. However, Saddam Hussein, the former dictator of Iraq, masterfully exploited this duality to advance his political agenda. By manipulating mythological narratives and emphasising specific aspects of the deities’ personas, he projected an image of himself as a powerful, ruthless yet benevolent and saviour-like leader of the Iraqi people. For instance, Saddam saw himself as an embodiment of Marduk, the god of war and power, employing symbols and imagery associated with him in propaganda and state ceremonies. He also utilised tales of Ishtar, the goddess symbolising feminine power and beauty, to legitimise his rule and garner support from Iraqi women. Through the distortion and misuse of Iraqi mythology, Saddam successfully established an image of himself as an unparalleled, powerful leader in the minds of the Iraqi people. This significantly aided his consolidation of power and suppression of dissent. While the inherent duality of myths can reflect the complexities of human society, their exploitation for political purposes, as exemplified by Saddam Hussein, can have detrimental consequences.

## CONCLUSION

The results of the study indicate that ancient myths play an important role in the formation of collective and national identities. They have been used as a tool to promote political ideology and legitimise nationalism in the Middle East. The idea of Pan-Arabism was formed during the founding period of the Kingdom of Iraq. This ideology is based on the common belief, language and history of a nation. It was used to protect the Arab national identity against foreign influences prevalent at the time. During the Iraqi Republic period, nationalist sentiments and Iraqi nationalism were strengthened by relying on Iraq's ancient and glorious past. The goddess Ishtar and the god Shamash were used as symbols to promote these sentiments. This helped to reduce the challenges posed by other Iraqi ethnic groups to the central government and led the country towards greater unity.

The cancellation of the ban on the Communist Party's activities was indicative of General Abdul Karim Qasim's willingness to interact with various political currents. Qasim was a secular leader who was not aligned with any particular ideology. He believed that the best way to unite Iraq was to allow a diversity of political views. The goddess Ishtar was a powerful symbol in ancient Mesopotamia. She was the goddess of love, war and fertility. She was also the patron goddess of social relations. In the First Republic of Iraq, Ishtar was used as a symbol to promote national unity and social harmony. The role of women in Iraq changed significantly during this period. The ban on the Communist Party was lifted, allowing more women to participate in politics. Additionally, the government promoted the goddess Ishtar as a symbol of female power and authority. This helped to change attitudes towards the role of women in society. The Baath Party also used ancient myths to promote its political goals. It turned to the ancient myths (especially the god Marduk) and the civilisation of Babylon to crystallise the national sentiment of the Iraqi people. The deposed president of Iraq used the ancient myths of Babylon and Mesopotamia to justify his war actions. In fact, ancient myths have sometimes been used as a tool to justify political decisions and provide legitimacy for war actions.

In conclusion, this research has explored the multifaceted relationship between political leadership, national identity and the manipulation of myths in Iraq. We have examined how Iraqi leaders have utilised specific myths to construct, reconstruct and legitimise their agendas throughout history. The analysis has highlighted the case of Saddam Hussein and his exploitation of deities such as Marduk and Ishtar to consolidate his power. It is important to acknowledge that scholars such as Harkhu (2005) have previously explored the connection between Iraqi ideology and Mesopotamian myths, particularly focusing on how these myths bridge archaeological representations and political identities. While this article shares common ground with Harkhu's work, it has offered a distinct perspective by focusing on the post-Iran-Iraq War period and analysing how leaders used myths to navigate the social and political transformations of that era. This approach has allowed for a deeper understanding of the dynamic interplay between political context, national identity and the strategic deployment of mythology in Iraq. Further research can delve into the contemporary landscape, exploring how the manipulation of myths continues to shape Iraqi identity and political discourse.

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## POLITICAL ARCHAEOLOGY. DECONSTRUCTING THE POLITICAL EXPLOITATION OF MYTHS IN IRAQ (1958–2003)

GOODARZ HADDADI NASAB, MEHDI MORTAZAVI\*, FARIBA MOSAPOUR NEGARI



This article delves into the fascinating phenomenon of how myths were strategically employed for political gain in Iraq during the Republican era (1958–2003). The author argues that Mesopotamia's rich cultural heritage, which includes some of the earliest civilisations and a vast array of myths and legends, constituted a powerful resource for rulers seeking to forge a unified national identity. The research meticulously examines how the ideological perspectives of these leaders, particularly the shift from Pan-Arabism – emphasising a shared Arab language and history – to a more inward-looking Iraqi nationalism, influenced their selection of specific myths. Employing a descriptive-historical and qualitative approach, the analysis incorporates speeches delivered by Iraqi leaders alongside scholarly works on mythology and Iraqi history. Social identity theory is introduced as a valuable framework to illuminate how myths contribute to a strong national identity and foster a sense of group cohesion. This sense of shared history and cultural heritage, nurtured through the retelling of myths, can be a powerful tool for uniting a diverse population.

The article meticulously traces the trajectory of Iraqi ideology during the Republican era. In the early years, Pan-Arabism held sway, emphasising the shared identity of all Arab nations. However, a gradual shift towards Iraqi nationalism emerged, focusing on the unique heritage and history of Mesopotamia. The dominance of the Baath Party, a political movement advocating for Arab unity, is then analysed in the context of this ideological shift. The party's strategic use of national mythmaking, manifested through the adoption of ancient symbols and narratives associated with Mesopotamia, stands out as a key strategy to promote Iraqi nationalism. The author provides specific examples to illustrate this point,

including the renaming of cities with names evoking Mesopotamian history (e.g., Saddam City replacing Al-Awja) and the implementation of large-scale archaeological projects aimed at rediscovering and celebrating the glories of past Mesopotamian civilisations.

The article delves further into the specific ways the goddess Ishtar and the god Marduk were used to shape political ideology:

- The findings revealed that during the Iraqi Republic period (particularly in its early stages), the politically motivated utilisation of mythological figures such as Ishtar (symbolising love, war, blessings, social relations and social interaction) was prevalent. The emphasis on Ishtar, associated with justice, social interaction and empowerment, aligns with the early Republic's focus on social unity and potentially even the advancement of women's rights during that period. Her image resonated with the aspirations for a more equitable and just society. This is particularly evident in the use of the country's flag and national symbols by leaders such as General Abdul Karim Qasim, who was the Prime Minister during that era (1958–1963). The sun god Shamash, often associated with justice and social order, may have also played a role in this early ideology, but the emphasis seems to have been placed more on Ishtar.
- In contrast, the god Marduk, symbolising strength, legitimacy and resistance, was extensively employed by Saddam Hussein and the Baath Party to legitimise their rule and justify their actions during wartime, including the Iran-Iraq War, which Iraq initiated in 1980, and challenges with Israel. It is also possible that Saddam's desire to be seen as a powerful leader influenced his decision to attack Kuwait. Ultimately, it appears that during the period of the first Iraqi Republic led by Abdul Karim Qasim, emphasis was often placed on the goddess Ishtar due to political and social conditions. Conversely, during the rule of Saddam Hussein's Baath Party, the focus shifted towards the god Marduk.

Furthermore, the inherent duality within Iraqi mythology, particularly evident in deities such as Ishtar and Marduk, is undeniable. This duality, manifested in various aspects such as power and mercy, war and peace, and life and death, reflects the complexities of human society and its conflicting needs. However, Saddam Hussein, the former dictator of Iraq, exploited this duality to a chilling effect in order to advance his political agenda. By manipulating mythological narratives and emphasising specific aspects of the deities' personas, he projected an image of himself as a powerful, ruthless yet benevolent, and saviour-like leader of the Iraqi people. For instance, Saddam saw himself as an embodiment of Marduk, the god of war and power, employing symbols and imagery associated with him in propaganda and state ceremonies. He frequently used golden swords in official portraits, reminiscent of Marduk's weapons. He also utilised tales of Ishtar, the goddess symbolising feminine power and beauty, to legitimise his rule and garner support from Iraqi women. Through the distortion and misuse of Iraqi mythology, Saddam successfully established an image of himself as an unparalleled, powerful leader in the minds of the Iraqi people. This significantly aided his consolidation

of power and suppression of dissent. While the inherent duality of myths can reflect the complexities of human society, their exploitation for political purposes, as exemplified by Saddam Hussein, can have detrimental consequences. It can sow discord, silence dissent, and ultimately weaken the very national identity it purports to strengthen.

In conclusion, the article underscores the critical importance of understanding how political events shape the use of myths in constructing national identity. This emphasises the intricate relationship between political leadership, national identity and the strategic manipulation of symbolic narratives. The case of Iraq serves as a cautionary tale, highlighting the potential dangers of distorting and exploiting powerful cultural symbols for personal gain.

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# Those Infinite, Multiform Stories without Fixity: Myth and History, a Very Long Engagement

Gregor Pobežin

Pričujoče besedilo obravnava problematično razmerje med antičnim zgodovinarstvom in mitologijo oziroma mitološkimi zgodbami kot virom za zgodovinske raziskave. Čeprav se je namreč grško zgodovinarstvo na neki način že v 5. stol. pr. Kr. soočilo s problematiko mitoloških vrivkov v snov metodološko dobro razdelanih zgodovinskih postopkov, je rimsko zgodovinarstvo še dolgo na kritičen način raziskovalo in prečiščevalo zgodbe ustanovnih mitov. Besedilo našteje in v daljših odlomkih obravnava nekatere metodološko pomembne pasuse, ki razodevajo odnos posameznih grških in rimskih zgodovinarstev do mita kot (ne-)vira, obenem pa skozi analitično branje filozofskega traktata Seksta Empirika, filozofa iz 2./3. stol., preizprašuje odnos (zgodnjega) rimskega zgodovinarstva do mitov.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: historiografija, zgodovina, mitologija, mit, logografi, mitografi, Herodot, Tukidid, Polibij, analisti

This paper deals with the problematic relationship between ancient historiography and mythology, or mythological stories as historical sources for historical research. Although Greek historiography had, in a sense, already been confronted with the problem of mythological intrusions into the substance of methodologically well-developed historical procedures (as early as the 5th century BC), Roman historiography continued for a long time to critically investigate and purify the stories of the foundation myths. This paper presents a detailed analysis of some methodologically relevant passages that reveal the attitudes of individual Greek and Roman historiographers towards myth as a (non-)source. At the same time, it questions the attitude of (early) Roman historiography towards myth by examining the philosophical treatise of the 2nd/3rd century philosopher Sextus Empiricus.

KEYWORDS: historiography, history, mythology, myth, logographers, mythographers, Herodotus, Thucydides, Polybius, annalists

This paper is essentially about three things:<sup>1</sup> the (problematic) relationship between myth and Greek and Roman historiography, the critique of the use of myth by ancient historians,

<sup>1</sup> This paper represents a further development of the line of thought initiated in my paper published three years ago in the book *Worldview in Narrative and Non-narrative Expression* (Pobežin 2021). The hypothesis put forth in that paper was that early Roman historiography was not only genre-bound (Timpe 2001: 17), but also context-bound (Rome as a Mediterranean powerhouse – an emerging empire proper – being the context), and that the historians themselves *could have been* governed by the so-called world–mind conditionals (Piller 2009: 207). The question of *why* myth was not only employed but also meticulously explored has not been addressed in the above text. This question will be revisited here, with the intention of providing context through the use of longer quotations from a variety of authors.

and a tentative formulation of a research question (to which we will unfortunately fail to provide a convincing answer) about why some Roman historians kept employing myth, despite the existence of convincing rationalisations against such literary and methodological practices put forth by Greek writers.<sup>2</sup>

One of the key arguments presented in this paper challenges the widely held belief that the incorporation of myths into historical narratives by ancient historians indicates traditionalism, a lack of rigour and an inclination towards fictionality. We contend that this perception stems from a modern, rationalist perspective that fails to appreciate the literary conventions and historical context of ancient writings.<sup>3</sup> This reliance on mythological sources, as we argue, was both natural and necessary given the *context* in which these narratives took shape, as well as the prevailing literary traditions. Prior to the advent of formal historical writing, the majority of prose and poetic works consisted primarily of myths and mythological narratives.<sup>4</sup>

It should be clear from the outset that the use of two terms employed frequently in this essay – “mythographer” and “logographer” – exploits their etymological capacity for play on words. With regard to the various types of historical work, “mythography” is, strictly speaking, genealogy, which is primarily concerned with establishing lines of descent and does not refrain from investigating the mythical period.<sup>5</sup> The term “mythographer” is derived from the word “logographer”, which was used polemically by Herodotus and Thucydides in their works. This does not imply that Greek historians did not use the terms *mythographia* or *mythographos*.<sup>6</sup> We will examine both terms before turning to the main problems related to the phenomenon of *mythistoria*<sup>7</sup> outlined at the beginning of this section.

## INCIPIT PROLOGUS

In his *Institutio oratoria*, Quintilian identifies three types of narrative: *fabula*, *argumentum* and *historia*. While *fabula* was used in tragedy and poetry, and *argumentum* in comedy, *historia* was the form of narrative used for things *that had actually happened*:

Now there are three forms of narrative, without counting the type used in actual legal cases. First there is the fictitious narrative as we get it in tragedies and poems, which isn't merely not true but has little resemblance to truth. Secondly, there is the realistic narrative as presented by comedies,

<sup>2</sup> Hawes 2014: 6–13.

<sup>3</sup> See Darbo-Peschanski 2007: 27–38.

<sup>4</sup> See Wardman 1960 for further discussion.

<sup>5</sup> Marincola 2004: 1.

<sup>6</sup> It is assumed that the majority of the audience reached by this paper will not be fluent in Latin and Greek. For this reason, all quoted passages are given in the English translation. When the context so requires, the original text is given in the footnote or, in the case of shorter sentences and phrases, within the body of the text.

<sup>7</sup> Wiseman 2010: 73–86.

which, though not true, has yet a certain verisimilitude. Thirdly there is the historical narrative, which is an exposition of actual fact.<sup>8</sup>

The translation provided here is of some significance in relation to the subject matter of this paper.

For the purpose of this treatise, another author will be more thoroughly consulted. In his work “Against the Professors” (*Adversus mathematicos*), Sextus Empiricus (2nd/3rd century AD)<sup>9</sup> presents an important observation regarding the art of history: “... there is no technical knowledge either of things infinite or of things which vary from hour to hour. But *particular histories* are both infinite, because of their great number, and without fixity, because the same facts are not recorded by all respecting the same person. [...] Thus, of an assumption which begins with a falsehood and is so multiform that it cannot be checked, and changes its shape at each man’s fancy, there can be no technical treatment. Moreover, since of the subjects of history one part is history, another legend, another fiction, – and of these history is the recording of certain things which are true and have happened ...”<sup>10</sup>

We may be tempted to interpret both texts with the focus on their two keywords, *veritas/ἀλήθεια*. Yet Sextus Empiricus’ reasoning<sup>11</sup> absolves him (and Quintilian) from any possible accusations of naivety.<sup>12</sup> As we shall demonstrate subsequently, Sextus’ argument did not concern the opposition of *truth* and *untruth* or even *fiction* and *non-fiction* (*fabula* – *gestae rei expositio*; πλάσμα – ἀληθῶν τινῶν [...] καὶ γεγρονότων ἔκθεσις). Instead, it focused on the *cognitive potential of a narrative*. We shall revisit this observation in our concluding remarks.

<sup>8</sup> *Inst.* 2,4,2: *et quia narrationum, excepta qua in causis utimur, tres accepimus species, fabulam, quae versatur in tragoediis atque carminibus, non a veritate modo sed etiam a forma veritatis remota; argumentum, quod falsum sed vero simile comoediae fingunt; historiam, in qua est gestae rei expositio.*

<sup>9</sup> Very little is known about Sextus Empiricus, a Pyrrhonian sceptic who reveals virtually nothing in his (many) works. Nothing of certainty can be asserted about him, not even where he was born. For further details see House 1980.

<sup>10</sup> S.E. *M.* 1,259–263: οὐτε τῶν ἀπείρων οὐτε τῶν ἄλλοτε ἄλλως γινομένων ἔστι τις τεχνικὴ γνώσις, αἱ δὲ γε κατὰ μέρος ἱστορίαι ἄπειροί τε διὰ τὸ πλῆθος εἰσι, καὶ οὐχ ἔστωσαι διὰ τὸ μὴ τὰ αὐτὰ περὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ παρὰ πᾶσιν ἱστορεῖσθαι. [...] οὐ τοίνυν τῆς οὕτως ἀπὸ ψευδοῦς ὑποθέσεως ἀρχομένης καὶ ἀδιεξιτῆτου κατὰ πλῆθος καὶ πρὸς τὴν ἐκάστου προαίρεσιν μεταπλαττομένης γένοιτ’ ἂν τις τεχνικὴ θεωρία. Πρὸς τούτοις ἐπεὶ τῶν ἱστορουμένων τὸ μὲν ἔστιν ἱστορία τὸ δὲ μῦθος τὸ δὲ πλάσμα, ὧν ἡ μὲν ἱστορία ἀληθῶν τινῶν ἔστι καὶ γεγρονότων ἔκθεσις [...]

<sup>11</sup> One might argue that it is inappropriate to mention Quintilian and Sextus Empiricus on the same page, given that their lives may have been separated by a whole century. Nevertheless, it has been suggested that much of Sextus Empiricus’ thought, particularly with regard to the criterion of truth, was derived from the 1st century BC (see Sedley 1992: 24–25).

<sup>12</sup> See Nicole Loraux’s influential paper (Loraux 1982) on the concept of truth as inherently different from the modern categories. This should be taken into account when examining the work of 5th century BC historians such as Herodotus and, in particular Thucydides, as well as that of the 2nd century BC Roman annalists.

## MYTH AND (EARLY ROMAN) HISTORY: A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT

In his 27th book, Livy makes observations about the annalist Lucius Coelius Antipater (acme: 2nd half of the 2nd century BC) and his investigative capabilities:

I should make too long a digression about one solitary fact, if I were to go through all the accounts of the death of Marcellus. I will only cite one authority, Coelius. He gives three different versions of what happened, one handed down by tradition, another copied from the funeral oration delivered by his son who was on the spot, and a third which Coelius gives as the ascertained result of his own researches.<sup>13</sup>

It feels like we should refrain from quoting passages from Livy's *Ab urbe condita*, given that the majority of his first book is replete with mythical accounts, particularly the narrative covering the events preceding Aeneas' arrival in Italy. However, Livy makes it quite clear that he distinguishes between the events preceding the foundation of the city and those of later periods. He regards the former as *poeticae fabulae* rather than *incorrupta rerum gestarum monumenta*. He ensured that when he introduced the more fabulous moments, he made his readers aware of it (*inseritur huic loco fabula*).

We consider Livy here because his work came *after* the rational revision of the Roman historiographical method in the 1st century BC. Prior to this period, we see little restraint in employing myth as a historical source. It was embraced as an integral part of narrative.<sup>14</sup> According to Plutarch, the first known Roman historian Fabius Pictor (ca. 254 – after 200 BC) employed the foundation myth:

But the story which has the widest credence and the greatest number of vouchers was first published among the Greeks, in its principal details, by Diodes of Peparethus, and Fabius Pictor follows him in most points. Here again there are variations in the story, but its general outline is as follows.<sup>15</sup>

According to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, other early Roman historians followed Pictor's suit. Lucius Cincius Alimentus, Calpurnius Piso and even Porcius Cato readily incorporated mythological material in their oeuvres. Another interesting passage follows in Dionysius:

<sup>13</sup> Liv. 27,27,12: *multos circa unam rem ambitus fecerim si quae de Marcelli morte uariant auctores, omnia exsequi uelim. ut omittam alios, Coelius triplicem gestae rei ordinem edit, unam traditam fama, alteram scriptam in laudatione filii, qui rei gestae interfuerit, tertiam quam ipse pro inquisita ac sibi comperta affert.*

<sup>14</sup> Our biggest problem here is the lack of textual evidence; almost all of it is secondary, having been preserved by later writers for various reasons (cf. Poucet 1976, Verbrugghe 1981).

<sup>15</sup> Plut. *Rom.* 3: τοῦ δὲ πίστιν ἔχοντος λόγου μάλιστα καὶ πλείστους μάρτυρας τὰ μὲν κυριώτατα πρῶτος εἰς τοὺς Ἕλληνας ἐξέδωκε Διοκλῆς Πεπαρήθιος, ὃ καὶ Φάβιος ὁ Πίκτηρ ἐν τοῖς πλείστοις ἐπηκολούθηκε. γεγόνασι δὲ καὶ περὶ τούτων ἕτεροι διαφοραὶ: τύπων δ' εἰπεῖν τοιοῦτός ἐστι.



But concerning the babes born of Ilia, Quintus Fabius, called Pictor, whom Lucius Cincius, Porcius Cato, Calpurnius Piso and most of the other historians have followed, writes thus: By the order of Amulius some of his servants took the babes in an ark and carried them to the river, distant about a hundred and twenty stades from the city, with the intention of throwing them into it.<sup>16</sup>

Before we move on, we should make it clear that we are confronted with a challenging question regarding the literary strategies of the early Roman historians. It is not possible to ascertain the *exact* attitude of the early Roman historiographers – the annalists – towards myth. It is plausible that they were as critical of the historicisation of myth as some later authors (whose works we *do* have at our disposal) and their Greek predecessors and contemporaries discussed below.<sup>17</sup> There are many explanations for why myths were not scrutinised as critically in early Roman historiography as they were by Greek writers. However, it would be an oversimplification to say that while Greek historians from the tradition of Thucydides to Polybius regarded anything that could not be verified first-hand as implausible, early Roman historiography emerged from a tradition of collective storytelling rather than individual criticism. In any case, it is prudent to leave the question open to the argument of tradition, as this is a relatively safe approach. The issue is directly related to the question of how early Roman historians perceived themselves,<sup>18</sup> and to the educated guess about the extent to which they were familiar with the methodological advances of their Greek predecessors and counterparts.<sup>19</sup> It is possible that their literary strategies had a lot to do with reassuring the political identities of the elites and the state.<sup>20</sup> However, it is also true that they operated within a cultural context that was largely unchanging and which they were unable to break away from.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Dion. Hal. 1,79,4: περὶ δὲ τῶν ἐκ τῆς Ἰλίας γενομένων Κόιντος μὲν Φάβιος ὁ Πίκτωρ λεγόμενος, ὃ Λεύκιός τε Κίγκιος καὶ Κάτων Πόρκιος καὶ Πείσων Καλπούρνιος καὶ τῶν ἄλλων συγγραφέων οἱ πλείους ἠκολούθησαν, γέγραφε· ὡς κελεύσαντος Ἀμολίου τὰ βρέφη λαβόντες ἐν σκάφῃ κείμενα τῶν ὑπηρετῶν τινες ἔφερον ἐμβαλοῦντες εἰς τὸν ποταμὸν ἀπέχοντα τῆς πόλεως ἀμφοῖ τούς ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι σταδίους.

<sup>17</sup> They certainly subjected them to critical scrutiny. According to Diodorus of Sicily, who characterizes this story as a *fabulistic* narrative, Pictor offers an alternative mythological story of Aeneas: “As for this story, [Quintus] Fabius [Pictor] who wrote the history of Rome offers another version, maintaining that Aeneas became an oracle and was led by a quadruped beast to establishing the city. When he was about to sacrifice a pregnant white pig, the beast ran away and took refuge under a hill where it bore thirty piglets [...]” (Diod. 7,5: Περὶ δὲ τῆς προσηγορίας ταύτης Φάβιος, ὁ τὰς Ῥωμαίων πράξεις ἀναγράφας, ἄλλως μεμυθολόγηκε· φησὶ γὰρ Αἰνεΐα γενέσθαι λόγιον, τετράπουν αὐτῷ καθηγῆσεσθαι πρὸς κτίσιν πόλεως· μέλλοντος δ’ αὐτῷ θύειν ἕν ἔγκυον τῷ χρώματι λευκῆν, ἐκφυγεῖν ἐκ τῶν χειρῶν, καὶ διασχῆναι πρὸς τινα λόφον, πρὸς ᾧ κομισθεῖσαν τεκεῖν τριάκοντα χοίρους.)

<sup>18</sup> It may be that these historians, generally members of the governing elite, were in search of literary confirmation of their political role (cf. Timpe 2002: 18). However, we are arguing here that early Roman historiography was not only genre-bound. Also, as we are arguing that the “empire” in which the early Roman historians operated became culturally diverse by the end of the 2nd century BC, we shall try to point out that this new circumstance called for universalist literary strategies (Wiseman 2010).

<sup>19</sup> Marcus Porcius Cato (234–149 BC) likely drew inspiration from Thucydides, whose works may have reached Rome shortly after the Third Macedonian War (Canfora 2006: 721–723; see also Wiseman 2007). If we accept that Rome and early Greek poetry were not isolated from each other, as Wiseman (2007: 68) suggests, then it is likely that early Roman and Greek historiography also had a close relationship.

<sup>20</sup> Timpe 2001: 18.

<sup>21</sup> Spiegel 2009: 4.

“ONE CAN NO LONGER EMPLOY THE EVIDENCE  
OF POETS AND FABULISTS”

In essence, the Greeks believed that myth could not have sprung *ex nihilo*; not all “myth” was considered to be *fabula*.<sup>22</sup> They also believed that the gods took interest in human affairs<sup>23</sup> and even the most prominent champions of reason were *seen to be* no exception (Xen. *Mem.* 1,2). In Socrates’ reassuring arguments that the Athenians had every reason to be proud of their grand past, he invoked the example of Theseus (Xen. *Mem.* 3,5,10), juxtaposing the mythical and the rational. It was theatrical. However, this particular effect is also indicative of the fact that political (and cultural) identities relied on myths,<sup>24</sup> which goes beyond the Roman world.

In historiography,<sup>25</sup> Herodotus’ euhemeristic introduction to his *Histories* functions, perhaps not intentionally, as a rationalistic attempt at demystifying myth with regards to the “truth”, although the dismissal of mythological explanations for the animosities between the Greek and Persian worlds, which eventually culminated in the Persian wars, is not exactly convincing:

These are the stories of the Persians and the Phoenicians. For my part, I shall not say that this or that story is true, but I shall identify the one who I myself know did the Greeks unjust deeds, and thus proceed with my history, and speak of small and great cities of men alike.<sup>26</sup>

As one of the most defining myths of the Greek world was too far in the past to be investigated using a historical method, Herodotus preferred to begin his narrative from an empirically palpable vantage point. However, the *rationale* seems to be diluted by mythological substance.<sup>27</sup> Subsequently, Greek historiography gradually steered away from involving myth in historical texts. As we shall see further on, there were consistent attempts at rationalization.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Marincola 2004: 118–119.

<sup>23</sup> However, we must not lose sight of the (numerous) Greek thinkers whose line of thought was borderline atheism. See Whitmarsh 2017.

<sup>24</sup> Walbank 2002: 179; Saïd 2007: 80.

<sup>25</sup> Finley 1959: 3–4. For the purpose of this textual illustration of the subject matter, we shall limit ourselves to a handful of Greek historiographers, although there is also evidence of critique among Roman writers, particularly Plutarch, Seneca, Quintilian, Lucian etc. (for further reading, see Finley 1965, Bosworth 2003, Marincola 2004: 118–127).

<sup>26</sup> Her. 1,5: ταῦτα μὲν νῦν Πέρσαι τε καὶ Φοίνικες λέγουσι· ἐγὼ δὲ περὶ μὲν τούτων οὐκ ἔρχομαι ἐρέων ὡς οὕτω ἢ ἄλλως κῶς ταῦτα ἐγένετο, τὸν δὲ οἶδα αὐτὸς πρῶτον ὑπάρξαντα ἀδίκων ἔργων ἐς τοὺς Ἕλληνας, τοῦτον σημήνας προβήσομαι ἐς τὸ πρόσω τοῦ λόγου, ὁμοίως σμικρὰ καὶ μεγάλα ἄστυα ἀνθρώπων ἐπεξιών.

<sup>27</sup> Herodotus’ scepticism seems feeble, but recent scholarship has demonstrated that previous criticism of Herodotus was not always well placed (Jouanno 2018: 10–15; see also Baragwanath and de Bakker 2012: 1–10 for the history of scholarship on Herodotus and particularly on the “Herodotean paradox”).

<sup>28</sup> Hawes 2014: 6–13.

In this respect, Thucydides' short story about the *tyrannicides* (Thuc. 1,20) performs a two-fold function. It tames the mythological matter in the *ἀρχαιολογία* (*archaiologia*),<sup>29</sup> but also distances the narrative from the realm of everything that was out of reach of serious historical research:

All men show the same *uncritical acceptance of the oral traditions* handed on to them, even about the history of their own country. [...] Anyone accepting the broad *facts* of my account on the arguments I have adduced will not go wrong. He will put less faith in the *glorified tales* of the poets and the compilations of the *prose chroniclers*, whose stories are written more to please the ear than to *serve the truth*, are incapable of *proof*, and for the most part, given the lapse of time, have passed into the *unreliable realms of romance*. He will conclude that my research, using the *clearest evidence* available, provides a sufficiently accurate account [...]<sup>30</sup>

What are Herodotus and Thucydides concerned with? Hecataeus, Herodotus' predecessor, wrote that he has “written things as they seemed true (*alethes*) to him”, thus opening the gate for all the writers to inherit the genre. However, it was Thucydides who perfected this *techne*. Herodotus himself applied the term *logopoiioi* to his predecessors, including Hecataeus, but seemingly without any prejudice. Meanwhile, Thucydides had already applied the term *logographers* in a somewhat derisive manner:

On the whole, however, the conclusions I have drawn from the proofs quoted may, I believe, safely be relied on. Assuredly they will not be disturbed either by the lays of a poet displaying the exaggeration of his craft, or by the compositions of the **chroniclers** that are attractive at truth's expense; the subjects they treat of being out of the reach of evidence, and time having robbed most of them of historical value by enthroning them in the region of legend. Turning from these, we can rest satisfied with having proceeded upon the clearest data, and having arrived at conclusions as exact as can be expected in matters of such antiquity.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Marincola 2004: 119.

<sup>30</sup> Thuc 1,20–21: οἱ γὰρ ἄνθρωποι τὰς ἀκοὰς τῶν προγεγενημένων, καὶ ἦν ἐπιχώρια σφίσιν ἢ, ὁμοίως ἀβασανίστως παρ' ἀλλήλων δέχονται. [...] ἐκ δὲ τῶν εἰρημένων τεκμηρίων ὅμως τοιαῦτα ἂν τις νομίζων μάλιστα ἃ διήλθον οὐχ ἀμαρτάνοι, καὶ οὔτε ὡς ποιηταὶ ὑμνήκασι περὶ αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τὸ μείζον κοσμοῦντες μᾶλλον πιστεύων, οὔτε ὡς λογογράφοι ξυνέθεσαν ἐπὶ τὸ προσαγωγότερον τῆ ἀκροάσει ἢ ἀληθέστερον, ὄντα ἀνεξέλεγκτα καὶ τὰ πολλὰ ὑπὸ χρόνου αὐτῶν ἀπίστως ἐπὶ τὸ μυθῶδες ἐκνευικηκότα, ἠρῆσθαι δὲ ἠγησάμενος ἐκ τῶν ἐπιφανεστάτων σημείων ὡς παλαιὰ εἶναι ἀποχρόντως. Translations of quotes from Thucydides': Thucydides, Hammond, Rhodes 2009 (bold text mine).

<sup>31</sup> Thuc 1,21: ἐκ δὲ τῶν εἰρημένων τεκμηρίων ὅμως τοιαῦτα ἂν τις νομίζων μάλιστα ἃ διήλθον οὐχ ἀμαρτάνοι, καὶ οὔτε ὡς ποιηταὶ ὑμνήκασι περὶ αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τὸ μείζον κοσμοῦντες μᾶλλον πιστεύων, οὔτε ὡς λογογράφοι ξυνέθεσαν ἐπὶ τὸ προσαγωγότερον τῆ ἀκροάσει ἢ ἀληθέστερον, ὄντα ἀνεξέλεγκτα καὶ τὰ πολλὰ ὑπὸ χρόνου αὐτῶν ἀπίστως ἐπὶ τὸ μυθῶδες ἐκνευικηκότα, ἠρῆσθαι δὲ ἠγησάμενος ἐκ τῶν ἐπιφανεστάτων σημείων ὡς παλαιὰ εἶναι ἀποχρόντως.

Thucydides' use of the term *logographers* calls for reflection. In Hobbes' version,<sup>32</sup> this term is translated as "prose writers". In Jowett's translation<sup>33</sup> the term "chronicler" is used, and the same is found in Crawley's version.<sup>34</sup> It is not our intention to assess the suitability of these translations. However, it is possible to suggest that they have overlooked a significant aspect of the term and that they have written their accounts in a manner that is lacking in certain respects. This could be described as either "at truth's expense" or perhaps without a comprehensive narrative framework. *Inseritur huic loco praemonitio*: according to extant sources, the "logographers" composed various texts, including the *logoi*, of which too little is known. However, there is nothing to say they completely lacked sound historical material, as both Herodotus and Thucydides relied on these same sources.

Polybius uses the term μυθογράφος (*mythographos*) on several occasions, perhaps most eminently when he makes a statement that in the "present day in which every sea and land has been thrown open to travellers [...] one can no longer employ the evidence of poets and fabulists (ποιηταῖς καὶ μυθογράφοις χρῆσθαι)".<sup>35</sup> In the latter instance, the use of the term is clearly pejorative. According to Polybius, a *mythographer* is a fabulist who presents "tainted witnesses to disputed facts" (ἀπίστους ἀμφισβητούμενων παρεχόμενοι βεβαιωτάς).<sup>36</sup> Strabo clearly associates the term "mythography" (μυθογραφία) with epic poetry but also mentions attempts at hypercriticism towards mythography (3,4,4):

So no one could be surprised if [...] some men, having believed in these stories [about Odysseus] themselves and also in the wide learning of the poet, have actually turned the poetry of Homer to their use as a basis of scientific investigations, as has been done by Crates of Mallos and certain others as well. Other men, however, have greeted all attempts of that sort with such ferocity that they not only have cast out the poet, as though he were a mere ditch-digger or harvest-labourer, from the whole field of scientific knowledge [...]<sup>37</sup>

<sup>32</sup> *The English works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury. Thucydides*. Translated by Thomas Hobbes. London: Bohn, 1843.

<sup>33</sup> *Thucydides translated into English; with introduction, marginal analysis, notes and indices. Volume 1. Thucydides*. Translated by Benjamin Jowett. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1881.

<sup>34</sup> Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*. Translated by Richard Crawley. London: Everyman, 1998.

<sup>35</sup> Pol. 4,40,2: τοῦτο γὰρ ἴδιόν ἐστι τῶν νῦν καιρῶν, ἐν οἷς πάντων πλωτῶν καὶ πορευτῶν γεγονότων οὐκ ἂν ἔτι πρέπον εἴη ποιηταῖς καὶ μυθογράφοις χρῆσθαι μάρτυσι περὶ τῶν ἀγνωστούμενων [...]

<sup>36</sup> In defence of these fabulists, if such a thing is called for, it is necessary to acknowledge that the canonized historians often explored and wrote about the contemporary events, some of which they may have even experienced first-hand (e.g. Thucydides and Xenophon).

<sup>37</sup> Strabo 3,4,4: οὐ δὴ θαυμάζοι τις ἂν [...] οὐτ' εἴ τις αὐταῖς τε ταύταις ταῖς ἱστορίαις πιστεύσαντες καὶ τῇ πολυμαθείᾳ τοῦ ποιητοῦ καὶ πρὸς ἐπιστημονικὰς ὑποθέσεις ἔτρεψαν τὴν Ὀμήρου ποίησιν, καθάπερ Κράτης τε ὁ Μαλλώτης ἐποίησε καὶ ἄλλοι τινές. οἱ δ' οὕτως ἀγροίκως ἐδέξαντο τὴν ἐπιχείρησιν τὴν τοιαύτην ὥστε οὐ μόνον τὸν ποιητὴν σκαπανέως ἢ θεριστοῦ δίκην ἐκ πάσης τῆς τοιαύτης ἐπιστήμης ἐξέβαλον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς ἀναμεινόμενους τῆς τοιαύτης πραγματείας μαινομένους ὑπέλαβον· συνηγορίαν δὲ ἢ ἐπανόρθωσιν ἢ τι τοιοῦτον ἕτερον εἰς τὰ λεχθέντα ὑπ' ἐκείνων εἰσενεγκεῖν οὐκ ἐθάρρησεν οὔτε τῶν γραμματικῶν οὔτε τῶν περὶ τὰ μαθήματα δεινῶν οὐδέεις. καίτοι ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ δυνατόν εἶναι καὶ συνηγορῆσαι πολλοῖς τῶν λεχθέντων καὶ εἰς

In the first chapter of his *Theseus*, Plutarch elaborates on the concept of *mythography*: “Now that I have traversed those periods of time which are accessible to probable reasoning and which afford basis for a history dealing with facts, I might well say of the earlier periods ‘What lies beyond is full of marvels and unreality, a land of poets and fabulists, of doubt and obscurity.’”<sup>38</sup> Like Polybius and Strabo, Plutarch clearly associates the term *mythography* with *poets* and *fabulists* (and, indeed, with the remote past beyond the scope of rationalist analysis). Mythography qualifies as a fabulist narrative with little or no evidentiary value, which deals with earlier periods that lie beyond the point in time which is accessible to historical reasoning and verification.

It is important to note, however, that while it may be tempting to view myths as purely fictional or even frivolous, even the most respected historians, such as Thucydides and Polybius recognized that there was a kernel of truth to be found within these stories, often hidden beneath layers of poetic language.<sup>39</sup> In any case, myths may serve as markers in historiographic narrative, indicating the lost “true account” of whatever was supposed to be in their place.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, in the Roman and Greek worlds, the past (even the distant past that had been relegated to the realm of legend and mythology<sup>41</sup>) was deeply ingrained in every aspect of public and private life.

#### BUT THERE IS ANOTHER STORY, A MORE FABULOUS ONE ...

According to Strabo, Lucius Coelius Antipater (acme in the 2nd half of the 2nd century) related a story about Evander from Arcadia as the founder of Rome:

When Heracles was driving the cattle of Geryon he was entertained by Evander; and since Evander had learned from his mother Nicostrate (she was skilled in the art of divination, the story goes) that Heracles was destined to become a god after he had finished his labours, he not only told this to Heracles but also consecrated to him a precinct and offered a sacrifice to him after the Greek ritual, which is still to this day kept up in honour of Heracles. And Coelius himself, the Roman historian, puts this down as proof that Rome was founded by Greeks – the fact that at Rome the hereditary sacrifice to Heracles is after the Greek ritual.<sup>42</sup>

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ἐπανόρθωσιν ἄγειν καὶ μάλιστα ταῦτα ὅσα Πυθίας παρεκρούσατο τοὺς πιστεύσαντας αὐτῷ κατὰ ἄγνοιαν τῶν τε ἐσπερίων τόπων καὶ τῶν προσβόρων τῶν παρὰ τὸν ὠκεανόν. ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν ἐάσθω λόγον ἔχοντα ἴδιον καὶ μακρόν.

<sup>38</sup> Thes 1: οὕτως ἐμὸν περὶ τὴν τῶν βίων τῶν παραλλήλων γραφὴν, τὸν ἐφικτὸν εἰκότι λόγῳ καὶ βάσιμον ἱστορίᾳ πραγμάτων ἐχομένη χρόνον διελθόντι, περὶ τῶν ἀνωτέρω καλῶς εἶχεν εἰπεῖν· ‘τὰ δ’ ἐπέκεινα τερατώδη καὶ τραγικὰ ποιηταὶ καὶ μυθογράφοι νέμονται, καὶ οὐκέτ’ ἔχει πίστιν οὐδὲ σαφήνειαν.’

<sup>39</sup> Jouanno 2018: 17.

<sup>40</sup> Frazer 1990: 5–6.

<sup>41</sup> Calame 2003: 9.

<sup>42</sup> Stra. 5,3,3: αὐτὴ μὲν οὖν ἡ μάλιστα πιστευομένη τῆς Ῥώμης κτίσις ἐστίν. ἄλλη δὲ τις προτέρα καὶ μυθώδης Ἀρκαδικὴν λέγουσα γενέσθαι τὴν ἀποικίαν ὑπ’ Εὐάνδρου. τοῦτ’ ὁ ἐπιξενωθῆναι τὸν Ἡρακλέα ἐλαύνοντα τὰς

Strabo is quite clear on this point: the story offered by Antipater is μυθώδης (*mythodes*) – *fabulous*, although Antipater enjoyed a good reputation.<sup>43</sup>

Antipater's contemporary Cnaeus Gellius engaged with the same mythological cycle:

After punishing Cacus, Hercules dedicated the altar to *Pater Inventor*, which he had vowed if he found his lost cows. This Cacus lived in the place called *Salinae*, where the *porta Trigemina* now is. Cacus, as Gellius related, was imprisoned by the Etruscan Tarchon, to whom he had been sent as an ambassador by King Marsyas, accompanied by Megales the Phrygian. Cacus escaped from his chains and, having returned to the place from which he started, seized a kingdom in the area of the river Vulturnus and Campania with forces of some size. While he was daring to lay his hands in addition on the lands which had passed into the control of the Arcadians, he was overwhelmed under the leadership of Hercules, who happened to be present at the time. The Sabines took in Megales, after learning the methods of augury from him.<sup>44</sup>

Both accounts, which we examine here as the alternative *ktisis* story, can be read in parallel to provide a more comprehensive account of Cacus, Hercules and Evander. This account was later picked up by several other authors.<sup>45</sup> The discrepancies could suggest that Antipater and Gellius (much like other early Roman historians) engaged in a critical<sup>46</sup> and careful<sup>47</sup> evaluation of the mythical material. The question remains as to

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Γηρυνόου βοῦς: πυθόμενον δὲ τῆς μητρὸς Νικοστράτης τὸν Εὐάνδρον (εἶναι δ' αὐτὴν μαντικῆς ἔμπειρον, ὅτι τῷ Ἡρακλεῖ πεπρωμένον ἦν τελέσαντι τοὺς ἄθλους θεῶ γενέσθαι, φράσαι τε πρὸς τὸν Ἡρακλέα ταῦτα καὶ τέμενος ἀναδείξαι καὶ θῦσαι θυσίαν Ἑλληνικὴν, ἣν καὶ νῦν ἔτι φυλάττεσθαι τῷ Ἡρακλεῖ. καὶ ὁ γε Κοῦλιος, ὁ τῶν Ῥωμαίων συγγραφεὺς, τοῦτο τίθεται σημεῖον τοῦ Ἑλληνικὸν εἶναι κτίσμα τὴν Ῥώμην, τὸ παρ' αὐτῆ τὴν πάτριον θυσίαν Ἑλληνικὴν εἶναι τῷ Ἡρακλεῖ.

<sup>43</sup> For Valerius Maximus, Antipater was a *certus Romanae historiae auctor* (Val. Max. 1,7,6); according to Priscianus, Antipater only used trustworthy sources (Prisc. 8,383: *ex scriptis eorum qui veri arbitrabantur*).

<sup>44</sup> Cornell 2013: F17 (= Peter F7, Chassignet F6). Solin. 1.7–9: *quippe aram Hercules, quam uouerat si amissas boues repperisset, punito Caco Patri Inuentori dicauit. (8) qui Cacus habitauit locum, cui Salinae nomen est, ubi Trigemina nunc porta. hic, ut Gellius tradidit, cum a Tarchone Tyrrheno, ad quem legatus uenerat missu Marsyae regis, socio Megale Phryge, custodiae foret datus, frustratus uincola et unde uenerat redux, praesidiis amplioribus occupato circa Vulturnum et Campaniam regno, dum adrectare etiam ea audet quae concesserant in Arcadium iura, duce Hercule, qui tunc forte aderat, oppressus est. (9) Megalen Sabini receperunt, disciplinam augurandi ab eo docti.*

<sup>45</sup> According to Dionysius of Halicarnassus (1,39), Cacus (Κάκος) steals Hercules' cattle while the hero is asleep, dragging them backwards by their tails. When Hercules wakes up and realizes that his cattle are missing, he confronts Cacus in front of his cave. The latter refuses to allow Hercules to search the area and instead calls upon his neighbours to help. However, when the cattle start mooing, Hercules kills Cacus and then builds an altar to *Zeus Heueresios* (Ζεὺς Εὐρέσιος) – *Father Inventor* –, and is finally led by the locals to Evander (Εὐάνδρος), the king of the region. See March 2009: 204–205 for a more detailed recap of the story. See Secci 2013 for versions in Livy, Ovid and Propertius (p. 196, footnote 3) and particularly Virgil.

<sup>46</sup> Plut. *Rom.* 3 τοῦ δὲ πίστιν ἔχοντος λόγου μάλιστα καὶ πλείστους μάρτυρας τὰ μὲν κυριώτατα πρώτος εἰς τοὺς Ἕλληνας ἐξέδοκε Διοκλῆς Πεπαρήθιος, ὃ καὶ Φάβιος ὁ Πικτωρ ἐν τοῖς πλείστοις ἐπηκολούθηκε.

<sup>47</sup> Dionysius says of Aelius Tubero, for instance, that he was “careful in the compilation of his history”: ὡς δὲ Τουβέρων Αἴλιος δεινὸς ἀνὴρ καὶ περὶ τὴν συναγωγὴν τῆς ἱστορίας ἐπιμελῆς γράφει (DH 1,80,1). Incidentally, Tubero was appreciated by Cicero who deemed him worthy of imitation (Cic. *Q. Fr.* 1,1,3: *Tubero, quem*

why they chose to include them in their historical accounts in the first place, given the methodological criticisms expressed by their Greek counterparts.

If, as previously stated, it would be prudent to consider this literary strategy as a mere matter of tradition, there is another safe approach that we will not pursue here, namely the question of truth (*veritas/ἀλήθεια*).<sup>48</sup> This approach unnecessarily leads us astray and down the path of morality<sup>49</sup> and neglects the specific aspect of historiography-as-literature where plausibility/credibility played a central role.<sup>50</sup>

Before we propose a different perspective on this matter, let us revisit Sextus Empiricus' critical view of mythological stories (as part of history). The core of his criticism, relevant to our subject, hinges on the observation that *there is no technical knowledge either of things infinite or of things which vary from hour to hour* (οὔτε τῶν ἀπείρων οὔτε τῶν ἄλλοτε ἄλλως γινομένων ἔστι τις **τεχνικὴ γνῶσις**).<sup>51</sup> The cornerstone of his scepticism resides on the criterion of scientific method – *τέχνη (téchne)*. We need to look more closely at the continuation of the passage that was quoted at the beginning of this article. It must therefore be quoted *in extenso*:

Moreover, since of the subjects of history one part is history, another legend, another fiction – and of these *history is the recording of certain things which are true and have happened* [...] and *fiction is the narrating of things which are not real events but are similar to real events* [...] and *legend is the narrating of events which have never happened and are false* [...] – since there exists no art which deals with things false and unreal, and the legends and fictions, which form the main subjects of the historical part with which grammar is concerned, are false and unreal, it will follow that there exists no art which deals with the historical part of grammar. [...] For, firstly, *the Grammarians have not furnished us with a criterion of true*

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*ego arbitror, praesertim cum scribat historiam, multos ex suis annalibus posse deligere, quos velit et possit imitari.*) The question of which historian Aelius Tubero is meant by Dionysius and/or Cicero remains open to debate (Richardson 2011: 157; see also Weaire 2005: 248); see also Cornell 2017.

<sup>48</sup> The attempts by modern scholars to separate historical fact from literary embellishment in the works of Greek and Roman historians have been aptly described by T. P. Wiseman (Wiseman 1979: 39) as an exercise in futility. It was observed that the quest for absolute historical veracity is ultimately futile (Cawkwell 1997: 9), for the very nature of these ancient works defies such simplistic categorisation.

<sup>49</sup> Potter 1999: 15–16. The act of swearing an oath to the truth places a significant burden on historians to ensure the accuracy of their narratives. In any case, even if a historian were inclined to fabricate or exaggerate, they would have had to apply layers of what might be called a “venerer of credibility” in order to gain the trust and acceptance of their audience (Farrington 2015: 49).

<sup>50</sup> Nicolai 2007: 15–17. It also shifts our focus – perhaps too radically – on the question of how much “historical truth” remains when a narrative text is stripped of its literary merit. See White 1986: 121 for the argument about histories as “fictions of factual representation” (cf. also Spiegel 2009). Some, e.g. Woodman (1998: 18), believe that once the “rhetorical kitsch” is removed from historical narratives, there is very little historical value left. For further details on the debate about the factuality of Greek and Roman historiography, cf. Moles 1993: 114–121 and Bosworth 2009 on the use of sources by ancient historians. See also Potter 1999: 138 for arguments against Woodman’s criticism of the “truthfulness” of ancient historical texts. However, this approach overlooks the paradigmatic nature of ancient history (Nicolai 2007: 16).

<sup>51</sup> S.E. M. 1,259.

*history*, so that we might determine when it is true and when false. In the next place, as the Grammarians have no history that is true, the criterion of truth is also non-existent [...] For we must establish first which of these dissentient narrators is telling the truth, and then inquire as to the facts [...]<sup>52</sup>

Notwithstanding the erroneous assumption that “grammarians do not instruct us as to how history should rightly be written”,<sup>53</sup> the quote is surprisingly modern, particularly in postulating the criterion of *veritable history*. Sextus acknowledges the existence of legends and fictions within historical narrative, yet he appears to suggest that it is difficult to devise a method that would distinguish “recordings of certain things that have happened” from fiction. As he observes, *particular histories are infinite [...] and without fixity* (αἰ δέ γε κατὰ μέρος ἱστορίαι ἄπειροί [...] καὶ οὐχ ἑστῶσαι).<sup>54</sup> The multiplicity of accounts pertaining to a single individual or event precludes the possibility of conducting a methodologically sound study (τεχνικὴ θεωρία) of these narratives, as they are innumerable in number (ἀδιεξίτητοι κατὰ πλήθος) and subject to arbitrary modification (πρὸς τὴν ἐκάστου προαίρεσιν μεταπλαττομέναι).<sup>55</sup>

#### IN LIEU OF A CONCLUSION – EPILOGUS

Sextus’ arguments may appear devastating at first glance, but they may offer a form of redemption for Roman historiographers through the concept of equipollence. If there is no definitive criterion of truth, then multiple accounts may be considered equally credible, leading to a suspension of belief.<sup>56</sup> In our case, this suspension would apply to distinguishing between true and untrue accounts. In this respect, it can be *observed* that myths are explored and exploited in historiography (to the detriment of the historical works) not because they are *untrue* per se, but because there may be no methodologically certain way of determining *how true or false* they are. Does this exonerate historians from the

<sup>52</sup> S.E. M. 1,263–268: Πρὸς τούτοις ἐπεὶ τῶν ἱστορουμένων τὸ μὲν ἐστὶν ἱστορία τὸ δὲ μῦθος τὸ δὲ πλάσμα, ὧ ὦν ἡ μὲν ἱστορία ἀληθῶν τινῶν ἐστὶ καὶ γεγονότων ἔκθεσις [...] πλάσμα δὲ πραγμάτων μὴ γενομένων μὲν ὁμοίως δὲ τοῖς γενομένοις λεγομένων [...] μῦθος δὲ πραγμάτων ἄγενήτων καὶ ψευδῶν ἔκθεσις [...], ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἔστι τέχνη τις περὶ τὰ ψευδῆ καὶ ἀνύπαρκτα, ψευδῆ δὲ ἐστὶ καὶ ἀνύπαρκτα τὰ περὶ τοὺς μύθους καὶ τὰ πλάσματα, περὶ ἃ μάλιστα τοῦ ἱστορικοῦ μέρους ἡ γραμματικὴ καταγίνεται, οὐκ ἂν εἴη τις τέχνη περὶ τὸ ἱστορικὸν μέρος τῆς γραμματικῆς. [...] πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ οὐ παραδεδώκασιν “ἡμῖν οἱ γραμματικοὶ τῆς ἀληθοῦς ἱστορίας κριτήριον, ἵνα καὶ ἐξετάζωμεν πότε ἀληθὴς ἐστὶν αὐτὴ καὶ πότε ψευδής. εἴτα καὶ μηδεμίᾳ οὐσίης “ἀληθοῦς ὅ ἱστορίας παρὰ τοῖς γραμματικοῖς οὐδὲ τὸ τοῦ ἀληθοῦς κριτήριον ὑποστατόν ἐστιν [...] πρότερον γὰρ δεῖ ὑποστῆναι ἐν τοῖς διαφωνοῦσι τὸν ἀληθεύοντα, καὶ τότε ζητεῖν τί ἐστίν·

<sup>53</sup> At least one critical and methodological treatise is known from this period, e.g. Lucian’s (ca. 125 – after 180) *Quomodo historia conscribenda sit* (Πῶς δεῖ ἱστορίαν συγγράφειν). Sextus Empiricus’ claim raises some interesting questions: either he did not know about Lucian’s work, or it came too late, in which case this could be an argument towards a narrower dating of his life. However, since quite a number of historians (some of whom are listed in this paper) wrote on *how to write history* – albeit less explicitly than Lucian – we can, perhaps, dismiss Sextus’ claim as a rhetorical rant.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. 1,260.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. 1,263.

<sup>56</sup> See Svavarsson 2011: 29.



burden of seeking “the truth”, as if to say that: “since it is impossible to ascertain whether a given assertion is true or untrue, and as it may be both, it is meaningless to pursue the matter and be content with it”<sup>57</sup> Certainly not. But it does present an argument in favour of shifting the focus from the truth to the *credibility* (appearance) of the mythological stories employed by historians. Taken at face value, these stories were both true *and* untrue. In the case of a historian such as any one of the early annalists – or even Livy – who engaged in an honest re-examination of stories, such as that of Hercules and Cacus, the issue lies elsewhere: cultural context.

By the early 3rd century BC, Rome had already absorbed most of Italy. Consequently, the known annalists were already operating in a multicultural empire which, it could be argued, imposed itself on them as much as they imposed their political views on it.<sup>58</sup> The story of Hercules and Cacus, in which the Arcadian prince Evander plays a key role as the founder of the first city on the Palatine hill, transcends the exclusive Roman cultural sphere (polis). It melds elements of two originally Greek myths (Hercules, Evander) to create an alternative *ktisis* story closely associated with the local Hercules cult celebrated at the *Ara maxima Herculis invicti*, situated near the so-called Forum Boarium. Furthermore, Evander also leaves his trace in the Aeneas story, in which he establishes a link between the Romanized Hercules cult and the mainstream foundation myth. In examining this story, Antipater and Gellius “internationalized” the Roman origin narrative, extending the “date” of the empire’s creation by at least one generation.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Cf. Massie 2013: 226–227; Machuca 2021: 328. See also Byrd 2023.

<sup>58</sup> See Pobežin 2021: 100–102 for a more elaborate argument about the annalists and the world-mind conditionals (Piller 2009).

<sup>59</sup> This paper is a result of studies conducted in the research project “Empire and Transformation of Genre in Roman Literature” (J6-2585) funded by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency, and the research program “The (New) Cultural History of Intellectual Heritage: Slovenian Historical Space in Its European Context” (P6-0440) funded by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency.

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## VSE TISTE PREŠTEVILNE IN RAZNOLIKE, VSAKOKRAT DRUGAČNE ZGODBE: ZELO DOLGA ZAROKA MED MITOM IN ZGODOVINO

GREGOR POBEŽIN



Kljub temu, da so že grški zgodovinarji »klasičnega obdobja« razmeroma zgodaj koncipirali metodološko utemeljeno skepso do mitoloških zgodb kot zgodovinskih virov (Thuc. 1,20; Pol. 4,40), so se zlasti zgodnji rimski zgodovinarji (»analisti«) še dolgo sklicevali na različne »ustanovne« mite, jih analizirali, primerjali in prečiščevali.

Članek izpodbija prepričanje, da vključevanje mitov s strani antičnih (rimskih) zgodovinarjev pomeni pomanjkanje kritične distance na eni in izraz politične nuje na drugi strani. Ta perspektiva je namreč pregloboko zakoreninjena v sodobnem racionalističnem pogledu, ki spregleda zgodovinski in literarni kontekst antičnih (zgodovinskih) del: miti so bili zaradi prevladujočih literarnih tradicij pred pojavom formalnega zgodovinarstva naravni in nujni del pripovedi, vseskozi pa so ostajali eden od temeljev kulturne in politične identitete.

Grški zgodovinarji, ki so v tem članku posebej izpostavljeni, predstavljajo (ob zavesti, da njihova dela predstavljajo zanemarljiv odstotek literarne zapuščine grškega zgodovinarstva) različne pristope k demistifikaciji in kritiki mitov v zgodovinarstvu. Prav nasprotno se je zgodnje rimsko zgodovinarstvo, na katerega so sicer močno vplivale kolektivne narativne tradicije, pogosto sklicevalo na mitološko materijo: zgodovinarji analisti, kot so Fabij Piktor, Lucij Celij Antipater in drugi, so v svoja dela vključevali in z vso resnostjo pretresali elemente ustanovnih mitov (prim. Stra. 5,3; DH 1,39).

Pričujoči članek izpostavlja stališče, da mitoloških vrivkov v zgodovinarstvih delih ni mogoče presojati po razmeroma sodobnem kriteriju (ne)resničnosti pričevanj, pač pa je veliko bolj smiselno upoštevati njihovo (literarno) verjetnost. Kulturni kontekst, v katerem so omenjeni zgodovinarji delovali, mita ni avtomatično postavljaj pod vprašaj: kritika, ki jo zasledimo pri Tukididu in Polibiju, se nanaša predvsem na (ne)preverljivost in pokvarljivost mitoloških ali celo zgodnejših zgodovinskih pričevanj.

Zato pričujoči članek v branje priteguje tudi odlomek iz besedila »Proti učiteljem« manj znanega skeptika Seksta Empirika (2./3. stol.), ki v citiranem odlomku (S.E. *M.* 1,259–263) do problema zavzame držo, ki se nujno izteče v ataraksijo: njegov skepticizem odpira vrata za več pričevanj, ki se lahko štejejo za verodostojna, in poudarja izzive razlikovanja med resničnimi in lažnimi pripovedmi.

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# Мифологический персонаж *škrat* у словенцев Надижской и Терской долин: мифологизация душ нечистых покойников в фольклоре и верованиях итальянско-словенского пограничья<sup>1</sup>

Мария В. Ясинская

Članek analizira mitološke predstave o škrtih med Slovenci v Beneški Sloveniji (Nediške in Terske doline) v Italiji v primerjavi s predstavami o teh bajčnih bitjih v Sloveniji in med njihovimi romanskimi sosedi – Italijani in Furlani. Pomembna lokalna značilnost škrtov v Beneški Sloveniji je njihov izvor iz duš dojenčkov, ki so umrli pred krstom. Ta značilnost določa tako funkcije kot tudi habitate teh likov, pa tudi zaplete mitoloških zgodb o njih. Povezava škrtov z nemirnimi dušami se krepi s prepričanji o njihovi povezavi z vremenskimi pojavi. Na frazeološki ravni (tako v literarnem jeziku kot tudi v narečjih) se škrti povezujejo z neposlušnimi, nagajivimi otroki.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: Slovenci v Italiji, demonologija, škrti, obmejna folklor, Nadiška dolina, Terska dolina, nekrščeni umrli otroci

The article analyzes the mythological concepts of škrti (gnomes) among the Slovenes of the Natisone and Torre Valleys in Italy, against the backdrop of representations of these supernatural beings in Slovenia, as well as among their Romance neighbors – the Italians and Friulians. A characteristic local feature of škrti in Slavia Friulana is their origin from the souls of infants who died before baptism. This feature determines both the functions and the habitats of these characters, as well as the plots of mythological stories about them. The connection of škrti with the unclean dead is reinforced by beliefs about their association with weather phenomena. On the phraseological level (in both literary language and dialects), škrti are associated with unruly, mischievous children.

KEYWORDS: Slovenes in Italy, demonology, dwarfs, *škrat*, folklore of borderland, Natisone Valley, Ter Valley, children died without baptism

## ВВЕДЕНИЕ

Лингвисты, этнологи, фольклористы и культурологи, исследующие зоны пограничных контактов и островные ареалы, не раз приходили к выводу, что именно на периферии

<sup>1</sup> Исследование выполнено при финансовой поддержке гранта РНФ № 20-78-10030 «Языковые и культурные контакты в условиях социальных трансформаций у национальных меньшинств альпийско-паннонского региона».

лучше всего сохраняются архаичные черты как в языке, так и в традиционной культуре, тогда как инновации, как правило, развиваются из центра (Толстой 1999: 10). Именно в островных анклавах, отрезанных от основного лингвокультурного массива, сохранение архаики обусловлено необходимостью самоидентификации в условиях иноэтнического и / или иноконфессионального окружения (Плотникова 2016: 5). С другой стороны, на лингвокультурном пограничье неизбежно присутствуют явления межъязыковой и межкультурной интерференции. Именно эти процессы оказывают влияние на формирование тех или иных систем – как языковых, так и относящихся к области традиционной народной культуры, например, системы мифологических представлений, народной демонологии.

Словенские диалекты и традиционная народная культура словенского этнического меньшинства, проживающего на территории Италии в регионе Фриули-Венеция-Джулия, давно привлекают внимание исследователей, поскольку они являются самыми западными языковыми и культурными диалектами словенского и вообще славянского мира, граничащими с миром романским (Бодуэн де Куртенэ 1904; Baudouin de Courtenay 1988; Matičetov 2022; Zuljan Kumar 2015, 2022, 2022a; Merku 1980; Merku 2004; Logar 1983; Smole 2001; Špehonja 2012; Ivančič Kutin 2018; Ježovnik 2020, 2022 и др.). Славянское население в данном регионе является автохтонным и живет на этих землях уже с VI–VII вв., соседствуя с романскими народами – фриулами и итальянцами. В условиях длительного и постоянного соприкосновения с романскими языками, словенские диалекты данной зоны изобилуют контактными явлениями: заимствованиями из романских языков на всех языковых уровнях, переключениями кода на итальянский язык (Пилипенко 2016; Пилипенко 2023), наблюдаются также и контактные явления в сфере духовной культуры, в том числе и в области народной демонологии. Например, словенские кривопеты – женские мифологические существа, характеризующиеся вывернутыми задом наперед ступнями, – имеют много общих черт с фриульскими аганами (ангуанами) (Ivančič Kutin 2018: 20; Krojež 2008: 229), в области демонологической лексики встречается много романских заимствований (напр. *št'rija*, *štri:ja*, *št'ri:ya* ‘ведьма, колдунья’ из ром. – фриул. *strie* ‘ведьма, колдунья’, ит. *strega* ‘то же’ – Bezlaj 2005: 120; ОЛА 10: 107; Zuljan Kumar 2022a).

В настоящей статье речь пойдет о мифологическом персонаже, именуемом *škràt*<sup>2</sup>, – персонаже типа гнома (ср. пол. *krasnodudki*, нем. кобольды и пр.), широко известном западным и южным славянам, а также многим европейским народам. Будут рассмотрены особенности данного персонажа, характерные для поверий и мифологических рассказов, бытующих в Венецианской Словении, на фоне словенских представлений о гномах. Мы попытаемся выделить локальные черты данных демонов, а также сравним их с аналогичными персонажами, известными у романских соседей, – фриулов. Материалом для исследования послужили как данные из уже опубликованных источников, содержащих поверья и мифологические рассказы,

<sup>2</sup> В качестве метаязыкового названия в статье будет использоваться наименование «шкрат», чтобы не путать данного демона со сходными персонажами типа гномов.



собранные в разные годы у словенцев в Италии (Nicoloso Ciceri 1992; Tomasetig 2010; Merku 2004; Balloch 2018; Stanonik, Potočnik 2020), так и собственные полевые записи, выполненные в период с 2017 по 2022 гг. в ходе серии полевых исследований, проведенных в Венецианской Словении (в Терской и Надижской долинах<sup>3</sup>) (Пилипенко, Ясинская 2018; Пилипенко, Ясинская 2023).

## ИМЯ ПЕРСОНАЖА

Основное наименование персонажа, как уже было сказано выше, – *škràt* – происходит из др.-в.-нем. *scrato* ‘лесной демон’, что родственно с др.-сканд. *skrat(t)i* ‘лесной демон, великан’ (Snoj 2023: 729). Также встретились варианты: *škret (tistkrat so ywerile škret, mi dijmo škret* (LC)), и уменьшительные – *škratjac, škrakjac, škretič, škratela*. В «Материалах» Бодуэна де Куртенэ из долины Натизоне зафиксировано наименование *škrábec (škrátec)* (Baudouin de Courtenay 1988: 66). Другое наименование, встречающееся преимущественно у словенцев Терской долины, – *škarifíc*. Оно мотивировано существительным *škarifa*, имеющим в терском диалекте значение ‘шапка, чепчик’ (Matičeto 2022: 218; Kropej 2008: 258). Подобная номинация мотивирована тем, что одной из важнейших внешних черт персонажа является наличие красной остроконечной шапочки на голове. Ср. также наименование *kapič* (от *kapa* ‘шапка’), отмеченное в области Гориции и на словенском Приморье. В Резии аналогичный персонаж называется *vedomec* и *budekič*, в долине Натизоне встречаются наименования *fantič* (Kropej 2008: 263), *fantinac* (Верхний Трибиль; Tomasetig 2010: 211), происходящие из ит. *fante* ‘мальчик’ (Snoj 2003: 147), что объясняется также внешним сходством демона с ребенком (по признаку маленького роста). Любопытно, что все наименования шкрата относятся к мужскому роду, шкратов-девочек нам не встретилось ни в этнографической литературе, ни в живом бытовании.

## ВНЕШНИЙ ОБЛИК

Как упоминалось выше, основной внешней чертой шкрата является маленький рост: *májhen ku otròk* [маленький, как ребенок]. Эта характеристика вошла и в словенский литературный язык: шкратом в переносном значении стал называться человек маленького роста (экспресс. *zelo majhen človek: proti meni je pravi škrat* [очень маленький человек: по сравнению со мной он настоящий шкрат] (SSKJ, s.v. *škrat*)). Характерным признаком шкрата является наличие красной конусообразной шапочки на голове, и вообще часто подчеркивается присутствие красного цвета в его одежде (ср. у поляков сходный персонаж даже получил наименование *krasnoludek*, мотивированное его основным цветом одежды): *Su ywerile, ke su méjhane, su bli*

<sup>3</sup> Словен. Terske doline, Nediške doline, ит. Valli del Torre, Valli del Natisone.

*obličene rdéjčo an de miéle cappuccio tu zad, su miéle te gnommi!* [говорили, что они маленькие, были одеты в красное, и у них была шапка сзади, у этих гномов] (ЛС). По представлениям словенцев, зафиксированным в материковой Словении, частым атрибутом шкрата выступает синий или зеленый фонарик (огонек), который тот держит в руках. В редких случаях представляли шкрата, летящим по воздуху и несущим фонарик. Согласно некоторым верованиям, шкрат может иметь бороду и выглядеть стариком (единичные свидетельства об этом встретились и в Венецианской Словении). Иногда он представлялся хромым или горбатым (физическая неполноценность является характерной чертой многих демонов, что подчеркивает их хтоническую природу), или же с нарушенными телесными пропорциями – несооразмерно короткими или длинными конечностями, большими ушами, глазами (Кропей 2008: 258). В Резьи сохранились свидетельства о том, что шкрат выглядит растрепанным человечком маленького роста, поэтому детям говорят: *Si skuštran kot škarific!* [Ты растрепанный, как шкарифич (шкрат)] (Кропей 2008: 263).

Как и многие мифологические персонажи, шкрат у словенцев наделяется способностью к оборотничеству: он может показываться в виде различных животных (черного кота, жабы, теленка), человека (шахтера) или в виде природных объектов (огонька, горящей кометы, грозových вспышек). Если человек столкнется с таким огнем, он может заболеть. Похожие верования о шкратах-огнях известны также фриулам: они выступают под именами *fuoc salvarego*, *fuoc salvari*, *fuoc voladi* «дикий огонь», *fogolari* и многие другие (Кропей 2008: 263; Nicoloso Ciceri 1992: 465).

## МЕСТА ОБИТАНИЯ (ЛОКУСЫ) ШКРАТА И ЕГО ФУНКЦИИ

В целом, шкратов у словенцев можно отнести к духам локусов, хотя набор этих локусов может быть чрезвычайно широк. У словенцев, как и других славян, выделяется множество типов шкратов, различающихся между собой как местом обитания, так и набором функций. Так, М. Кропей выделяет *горных* (подземных) шкратов, связанных с рудниками (хранители скрытых в земле сокровищ); *лесных* (древесных) шкратов, ведающих лесом, деревьями, выступающих покровителями диких животных; *водных* шкратов, сопряженных с водой и рыбами; *полевых* шкратов, которые помогают человеку при полевых работах и ожидают дар за свою помощь в виде миски с кашей или другой пищи (на горных пастбищах также жили шкраты, они показывались перед пастухами и пугали их); а также *домашних* шкратов (духов-покровителей дома), обитающих в доме возле очага или под порогом. Идея о том, что шкраты могут представляться духами локусов и причинять различный вред людям, работающим в этих локусах, – лесникам, шахтерам, кузнецам, пекарям и др., нашла забавное продолжение в шуточном употреблении слова *škrat* применительно к печатке в тексте: шут. *v zadnji številki nam je ponagajal tiskarski škrat*: ‘je tiskarska napaka, so tiskarske napake’ [в последнем номере у нас нашалил типографский шкрат: ‘есть печатка, печатки’] (то есть в типографии якобы тоже могут обитать свои шкраты, которые творят бесчинства, вызывая печатки

в тексте) (SSKJ s.v. škrat). Шутки и вредительство шкратов, адресованные ремесленникам различного рода при выполнении ими работ, нашли отражение также в современных авторских сказках, например, сказка С. Макарович «Škrat Kuzma dobi nagrado» (Makarovič 1974).

Домашний шкрат в некоторых локальных традициях мог выступать и в качестве духа-обогатителя, приносить в дом деньги или зерно, однако за свою службу он требовал высокую плату – душу хозяина, его жены или ребенка. Для того, чтобы шкрат превратился в духа-обогатителя, необходимо заключить с ним договор, подписанный кровью, а он за это обеспечит человеку богатства. Чтобы шкрат принес деньги, нужно было положить на окно один золотой, и тогда шкрат бы вернул целый мешок золота. Но иногда недоброжелатели могли подменить золотой на камень, репей, дохлую кошку, и в таком случае шкрат навалил бы целый дом этих предметов, и хозяину был бы нанесен урон (Kropelj 2008: 258–267). Отголоском представлений о шкрате, приносящем богатство и служащем своему хозяину, является тот факт, что в литературном языке об удачливом человеке говорят: *menda mi pomagata sam škrat* [как будто ему помогает сам шкрат] / как восклицание: *o ti škrat ti* [ну ты и шкрат!] (SSKJ s.v. škrat).

Соответственно, местами обитания шкратов могут быть, с одной стороны, рудники, пещеры и расщелины, сырые места в лесах и горах, а, с другой стороны, дом (особенно такие локусы в доме, как очаг, порог), кузница, мастерская сапожника и другое «очеловеченное» пространство. Они появляются в тумане, в темноте или при свете, летом они спят в стогах сена. С приходом христианства шкрат, как и другие персонажи низшей мифологии, стал ассоциироваться с нечистой силой, чертом (словен. лит. *hudič*). Этому способствовали также представления о местах обитания шкрата – подземельях, которые стали отождествляться с преисподней. Так в словенском литературном языке слово *škrat*, согласно SSKJ, может выступать в литературном словенском в качестве эвфемизма к слову *hudič* ‘черт’ (SSKJ s.v. škrat). С большой долей вероятности можно сказать, что лексема *škrat* выступает в качестве эвфемистического замещения слова *hudič* ‘черт’ и в контекстах, приведенных в предыдущем абзаце, так как аналогичные фразеологизмы широко распространены в словенском языке и имеют множество вариантов: например, *biti s hudičem / od hudiča* [быть с чертом / от черта], *komu sam hudič pomagata* [кому-либо сам черт помогает], *pečati se s hudičem* [знаться с чертом] и т.п.

## СПОСОБЫ ВЗАИМОДЕЙСТВИЯ СО ШКРАТАМИ

Чтобы расположить к себе горного шкрата, шахтеры оставляли ему горшочек с едой и каждый год клали красное платье. Если он мешал работать стуками, ставили алкоголь, чтобы он напился и больше не стучал. Спасти душу человека, продавшего ее шкрату-обогатителю, может только священник. Часто говорится о том, что лесные шкраты нападают на человека, если тот нарушает запреты: смеется, ругается,

клянется или свистит в лесу, пьет из шахты. Они могут завести его в лес, и, если повезет, тот очнется на другой день в каком-либо опасном месте на краю гибели. Шкрат может заглушить эхо, сделав его неслышным. Избавиться от козней шкрата можно, перекрестившись (Крогеј 2008: 258–267).

То есть, в основном, шкраты выступают как вредоносные существа, однако могут и помогать человеку: подсказывать, где скрыты клады, где пролегают жилы руды, приносят человеку деньги и богатство.

## ЕДИНИЧНОСТЬ / МНОЖЕСТВЕННОСТЬ

Для жителей Резьи и Венецианской Словении (Надижской долины) характерно представление о том, что шкраты (рез. *vedomci*<sup>4</sup>) могут показываться в дикой природе группами в виде маленьких человечков (детей) в красных шапочках или одетых в красное (*v ardečin obliečeno*), они лезут вверх и вниз по деревьям и камням, ходят и танцуют на протянутой веревке (Tomasetig 2010: 201), перемещаются по воздуху, скачут: *biežta damu, ki go po mosticju okuole cirkve je puno Škratjacu, ki skačejo* [бегите домой, потому что на мостике около церкви полно шкратов, которые скачут] (Tomasetig 2010: 206).

## ГЕНЕЗИС ШКРАТОВ (ВЕНЕЦИАНСКАЯ СЛОВЕНИЯ)

Если на происхождении шкратов, выступающих в качестве духов локусов, в поверьях и мифологических рассказах о них акцент не ставится, то верования, сохранившиеся у словенцев в Италии, характеризуют шкратов скорее не как духов локусов, а относят их к комплексу представлений о духах-скитальцах. Согласно свидетельствам, записанным в Надижской и Терской долинах, **шкраты происходят из душ детей, умерших некрещеными**, в том числе в результате выкидышей и аборт, душ убитых незаконнорожденных младенцев (представления о том, что шкратом может стать десятый ребенок одного и того же пола в семье, родившийся в сорочке или в «красной шапочке» на голове или же ногами вперед, представляются скорее вторичными). Данный комплекс верований бытует до сих пор, что подтверждается лексическими данными, вошедшими в словарь: надиж. *skr'at* m. 'ребенок', 'подвижный ребенок', 'озорной', 'пацан', 'гоблин' (*bambini morti prima della nascita*) (Špehonja 2010: 251), а также находит отражение в многочисленных поверьях и мифологических рассказах: *škrat je otrok, ki nie biu karščen* [шкрат – это ребенок, который не был крещен] (Tomasetig 2010: 198); *otroc ne karščeni so ratal*

<sup>4</sup> В словенских мифологических представлениях *vedomci* – души умерших до крещения младенцев, которые показывались в виде блуждающих огоньков; также это существа, которых рожали женщины после семи или девяти лет беременности, их можно было опознать по отсутствию волос на теле, мутным глазам, сросшимся бровям. Эти мифологические персонажи выступали противниками кресников, сражаясь с ними за урожай (Крогеј 2008: 332).

*škрати anta so muorli tarpiet an plantat po sviete an čakati, kda bo njih rešitov, konc sveta al na vien kej* [некрещенные дети становились шкратами и должны были страдать и блуждать по свету и ждать, когда будет их избавление – конец света или не знаю что] (Tomasetig 2010: 200); *ki so umarli brez žegna, brez karsta, ki so miel an prestor poseben v britofe, ki niso mogli bit zagrebeni h tin družin, ki so bli karščeni* [те, которые умерли без благословения, без крещения, у которых на кладбище было свое особое место, потому что они не могли быть похоронены рядом с теми другими, которые были крещены] (Tomasetig 2010: 200); *Alore ilatā škretić, je pravala, da so bli otroci, ka niso bli krščeni, ka so bli zapuščena, niso miel dušice* [итак, эти шкратичи, говорили, что это были дети, которые не были крещены, которые были брошены, у них не было души] (Balloch 2018: 242). Эти дети не могли найти себе упокоения ни в раю, ни в аду, ни в чистилище: *zaradi tega, k' niso bli krščeni, niso bli kristjani, niso mogli iti v nebesa an niso mogli iti v paku. An tu vica niso mogli iti* (Tomasetig 2010: 202). В книге А. Томазетич приводится быличка, в которой убиенные матерью дети говорят ей: *šest nas je, zaki s' nas udušila? Smo mogli bit angelci an smo hudičici* [нас шестеро, зачем ты нас удушила? Мы могли быть ангелочки, а мы чертенята] (Tomasetig 2010: 221).

Такие шкраты часто вызывают у взрослых рассказчиков не страх, а жалость: *an su bli takuo žalostni, nišo nardil nič sláveya* [и они были такие грустные, они ничего плохого не делали] (АТ). Подобное суровое посмертное наказание ни в чем не повинных детей трактуется современными рассказчиками как несправедливое: *Anta Buog, namest mame, je štrafu otroke, de so paršli Škratjaci na sviet* [И Бог, вместо мам, наказывал детей тем, что они превращались в шкратов] (Tomasetig 2010: 206). В одном из мифологических рассказов жители деревни видели шкратов на горном пастбище, они были одеты в красное, залезали на высокий камень и падали вниз. Один из свидетелей восклицает: «Дьявол должен день и ночь преследовать тех ведьм, которые рожают детей и потом их выбрасывают» (*Tiste štrije, ki rodijo otročiče an jih varžejo, tiste, de b' jih zluodij preganju*) (Tomasetig 2010: 199).

Описанную выше разновидность шкратов можно отнести не к духам локусов, а к душам-скитальцам, обреченным на вечные странствия, потому что они не могут после смерти отправиться ни в рай, ни в ад, ни в чистилище: *so ostal tle na telin svietu an tle na telin svietu se plantajo nimar* [они остались на этом свете и здесь на этом свете блуждают] (Tomasetig 2010: 202). В быличке, записанной А. Томазетич, повествуется о том, как одна женщина встретила шкрата, в это время зазвонил колокол, шкрат сказал: «Да, звонишь, но не для меня, да, звонишь, но для меня не звонишь» (Tomasetig 2010: 202). Вообще в ряде текстов подчеркивается связь шкратов с колокольным звоном. Представление о шкратах как некрещенных младенцах развивается в следующем сюжете, записанном П. Мерку в Стармице в 1969 г.: мальчик, пасущий коров, встречает шкрата, который помогает ему, а затем сообщает, что он его брат, в доказательство дает фартук и просит передать его матери. Мать при виде фартука приходит в ужас, потому что вспоминает, что в этом фартуке когда-то похоронила своего нежеланного ребенка. По совету

священника она не надевает фартук, а вешает его на липу, после чего в липу ударяет молния<sup>5</sup>.

**Мотив попадания молнии** в дерево, обвязанное фартуком, в который был завернут убитый и похороненный младенец, нашел отражение еще в одной быличке, записанной А. Томазетич в Гримакко: *je biu adan, ki je saldu biu okuole ne žene. An kar je biu daž, okuole nje so padale vse strele. Anta gaspuod je jau: – Biež po tist viertuh, ki s' ga nesla podkopavat, an loži ga oku nega dreva. Ona ga j'diela an potle je triešnilo tu tele drier an od tekrat strele nieso vič padale oku nje* (Tomasetig 2010: 208). Речь идет об одной женщине, за которой все время ходил шкрат и вокруг которой всегда ударяли молнии, когда была гроза. Священник сказал этой женщине взять фартук, в котором она похоронила ребенка, и привязать его на дерево, тогда молния ударила в это дерево, а около женщины больше не били молнии.

<sup>5</sup> *Je blu t-u 'ni vasi, so kráve pásli. Alóra je šu otročič – dvánajst liet – kráve past. Je bla 'na vriža, na túca, an vihá, k' je t'elo úse nésti. Tel otrók je teų zmárzniti 'o par kráfcah. Jóce, jóce san an pride te-h njemu dan škrát.*

»O ti« *jau*, »kaj juóčeš?«

»An mráz mi je.«

»Počákaj, je za d-u tólo vas« *jau*, »ti parnesén« *jau* »o iz a kuríva« *jau*. *Ánta pride d-u tólo vas an je zibála na žená stára nega otroká t-u zibi'eli. Te ni moų úzi'eti vejáve. Télega túkaj za se ošcipáti tel škrát télega otroká, je začéu jokáti otrók, tála žená je šla dol k otrokú, je úzéu tólo infomejávó anta jo j' nésu. Pride gor, mejávó j' parnésu, je zakírou ogín.*

»Res,« *je jau* »ti,« *jau*, »vidiš, sen tuoj brát!«

»Jej, jas niman brátra!«

»Pač, jas sen tuoj brát. Le,« *j' jau* »tel vírtuh daš mámi an dej ga vržtá predsê!« *Anta j' šu, kadar se j' zagréu, tale j' šu, poten se j' zgíbu.*

*Pride damú tel otročič: »Caj, mama!« jau »jas man še ênega brátra!«*

»Ne, ni'emaš!«

»Pač, pač!« *jau* »dúgo je par mené bių, ogín zakúru« *jau* »an tel je dau še vírtuh« *jau*.

*Ánta téla žená se j' ustrášila, rěčie gaspu'odu: »A, gaspu'od,« žala »ka bi se gájajala, ankrát s' jéla, san ubíla otroká an tu vírtuhu zavíla« jala »an je dal mujmú sinú tel vírtuh, da ga bon nosíla.«*

»Ne!« *j' jau* »lozi ga h tísti lípi, privéži tu no lípo« *jau* »an biešta deléc do njej!«

*Je šla 'o h lípi an šla an drúge lít je zvezála tel vírtuh ánta na jásnin se j' ustrelilo an... ? ... lípo, vírtuh, úse kúp (Starmica)* [Это случилось здесь в одной деревне, пасли коров. Итак, шел мальчик 12 лет паси коров. И поднялся шторм с градом и ветром, который бы вот-вот всё унес. Этот мальчик бы замерз возле коров. Он плакал, плакал, и пришел к нему один шкрат. «Эй ты, – сказал, – почему ты плачешь?» – «Мне холодно». – «Подожди, я пойду в деревню и принесу тебе что-нибудь сжечь», – так сказал. Он спустился в деревню, а там старуха убаюкивала младенца в колыбели. Он не мог взять хворост, чтобы сжечь. Тогда он ушипнул этого младенца, и тот начал плакать. Женщина спустилась к ребенку, шкрат взял несколько веток и ушел. Он поднялся наверх, взял ветки и развел огонь. «Видишь ли, – сказал он, – я твой брат» – «Нет, у меня нет брата!» – «И всё же я твой брат!» «Смотри, – сказал он, – дай матери этот фартук и пусть она его наденет!» И потом он ушел, когда развел костер, и исчез. Пришел тот мальчик домой: «Знаешь, мама, у меня есть еще один брат!» – «Нет, у тебя нет!» – «Да вот есть, – сказал он, – он долго был со мной, развел огонь и вот еще дал этот фартук». И тогда та женщина испугалась и сказала священнику: «Святой отец, когда-то я убила сына и завершила его в фартук, и теперь он дал моему сыну этот фартук, чтобы я его надела». – «Нет, – сказал священник, отнеси его к той липе, привяжи к ней и убегай». Она подошла к липе, привязала на нее фартук и на фоне совершенно ясного неба в липу ударила молния] (Meršk 2004: 224–225).

## КОМУ ЯВЛЯЮТСЯ ШКРАТЫ (ВЕНЕЦИАНСКАЯ СЛОВЕНИЯ)

Если шкраты – духи локусов могут показываться всем людям, оказавшимся в том или ином месте, то шкраты в Венецианской Словении часто являются детям, а особенно девочкам (Терская долина), а также своим родственникам (матери, которая когда-то избавилась от нежеланного ребенка). Шкрат часто выступает как персонаж, которым пугают детей (наряду с кривопетами и иногда другими мифическими существами), чтобы они не ходили одни в лес или в горы, не выходили на улицу после наступления темноты, после того как прозвонит колокол: *na hodita oku ponoč, prideju škrati an vas ponesijo* [не ходите наружу ночью, придут шкраты и вас унесут] (Tomasetig 2010: 200); *če te ušafa Škrat te ponese če v Ručafca! – nan so guoril. An mi se smo nimar bal* [если тебя найдет шкрат, то унесет тебя в Ручафца! – нам говорили. И мы всегда боялись] (Tomasetig 2010: 225).

## ФУНКЦИИ ШКРАТОВ (ВЕНЕЦИАНСКАЯ СЛОВЕНИЯ)

Как уже было сказано выше, функции и набор действий шкратов различаются в зависимости от представлений о месте их обитания. Шкраты в Венецианской Словении не выступают в качестве духов-покровителей локусов и не имеют строгой привязки к тому или иному месту. Обычно они появляются в неосвоенном, чужом для человека пространстве, в основном это дикая природа (лес, горы, луга и пастбища<sup>6</sup>, овраги и расщелины). Иногда встречаются объяснения, что шкрат может появляться в том месте, где был брошен убитый младенец: *Je bla na patučna, kar je biu velik daž, je paršlo no malo uode da po teli patučni, an do po teli patučni nimar je hodu Škrat. Morebit je biu an otrok varžen cja brez bit karščen, zavaržen an zatuo učefan al pa ubit* [Был один ручей, и когда был сильный дождь, туда стекало немного воды, и по этому ручью всегда ходил шкрат. Может быть, туда был брошен некрещенный ребенок, задушенный или убитый] (Tomasetig 2010: 202). Однако они могут оказываться и вблизи жилища, свидетельством чему являются поверья и мифологические рассказы (например, в приведенной выше быличке шкрат приходит в дом, чтобы украсть хворост). Основной функцией шкратов в Венецианской Словении является причинение мелкого вреда (*dušpiete* – в долине Натизоне, ср. ит. *dispetto* ‘досада’): *škrat su tisti mikani no, su mikani, takole možaci mikani, ki priju wun kar, kar ja tamá se zb(i)eraju an hodiju okuole dušpiéte dielat, samé dušpiete* [шкраты – это такие маленькие, ну, они маленькие такие человечки, которые появляются в темноте, собираются и ходят вокруг вредят, только вредят] (VC). Они переворачивают предметы, бьют посуду, съедают пищу человека, смеются над ним (в качестве их звуковой характеристики может выступать смех (Tomasetig 2010: 205) или плач (Tomasetig 2010: 215)), оставляя в дураках (*kar su ušafal*

<sup>6</sup> Пастбище в этом контексте может играть как роль неосвоенного человеком пространства (наряду с оврагами, горами, расщелинами, лесом), так и может выступать в качестве потенциального места встречи ребенка с его нерожденным из-за детоубийства сиблингом: известно, что на пастбищах старшие дети обычно присматривали за своими младшими братьями и сестрами, пока родители работали.

*lonce zvarnjene an ubite, su guoril, de su bli Škrataci* [когда находили перевернутые и разбитые горшки, говорили, что это были шкраты] (Tomasetig 2010: 218)). В Терской долине в 2017 г. нам удалось записать быличку о том, как шкраты заплетают гривы коням<sup>7</sup> (ср. воловьих хвосты заплетает фриульский демон *Mazzarot* – Nicoloso Ciceri 1992: 437). Они также заводят детей в лес: *so jih pejal deleč od vasi, an ta so jih pustil, a to jih njesu ubili, njesu naredil slavo, ma su jih pejal deleč, an potle tisti od vasi so jih yledal, su jih ušafal* [они (шкраты) их заводили далеко от деревни и там бросали, не убивали, не делали зла, то только их заводили далеко, и потом деревенские их искали] (АТ). В этом отношении шкраты в Венецианской Словении довольно безобидны, как правило, они не причиняют человеку и его окружению тяжелого вреда<sup>8</sup> и даже

<sup>7</sup> *Tolá je véro, tola je štorja. Práveca tále je riěšna, nije práveca! Ma máma an ji sestrá, ma máma je miěla trinást liét, an ji sestrá je miěla tri manj, ke desét. Niěso spále tu w naši hiši, zak je bla velika družina, so hodile spat tu no drúyo kámbriu bliz. Zjútra so wstále, an te ospodár, ke je biw zdol, jaw, Fráncka se je klicala ma máma: Fráncka, príde yliédat u hliěve. Oná je vidala, de je muw dwuá konjá, su bli dwua kónje, ke su wuezile owés an senúe, viěš, rečí, ke su prodájale. Ni blo ciěste. Saj viém, ku maš, maš dwua konjá, je jála, momó iti damów. Ma pridita, jaw, ke če ne, me ne bo májden viéruw! So šle nóter, so bli dwuá kónje, dwua kónja, an so miěle krine! Viěš, ka so? So miel njuh krine, wse kitece mále mále! Tih se ni moyló odplesi! Takó so ble nárete! Ma tóle je riěšno! Ma máma an nje sestrá se je ustrášila buj, ke je bla buj méjhana: Técimo, técimo! Ma máma je bla buj velika, viěš, je šla buj bliz za vidate: Lahkó se móra iti bliz, de me ne cábne oni konj? Ja ja! je jaw, prid, potipi, potípi! Je jála: Joj, če kitece méjhane! An so šle dow, ne, ustrášene. Ma kej je naréduw, káko so narédele te kitece? Antá je šla dow damów, je poviédala: Máma, biěži yor yliédat, je jála, konji majú oně kitece. Ma dai! Je jála, ne práve tu, ke ni je za právet! Máma, biěži yliédat! Biěži yliédat, če ne, ne bo májden viéruw, j' jála, an je bluó riěšno! Zad drúye dan te konjé so miěle kitece odléte, so miěle wse a onde viěš, alóra so šle yliédat. Konjé so prez kitec, éko, tuvá je riěš! Ma máma mi je nimer právla, téta Mařija, ta, k' je bla, je jála: Guada, quešto è vero! Je jála: Non so, non so! Oní: Abbiamo visto io e tua mamma! Májden ne vérje. An drúye dan so miěle wse odléte, ciělu nuóč je diěluw. Tistkrat so ywerile škret, mi díjmo škret! Su ywerile, ke su méjhane, su bli obliěčene rděčo an de miěle cappuccio tu zad, su miěle te gnommi! [Эта – правда, эта история. Сказка правдивая, не сказка! Моя мама и ее сестра, моей маме было тринадцать лет, а ее сестре было на три года меньше, десять. Они не спали в нашем доме, потому что была большая семья, они ходили спать в другую комнату, близко. Утром они встали и хозяин, который был внизу, Францка было имя моей матери, (сказал): «Францка, иди посмотреть в хлев!» Она знала, что у него было два коня, были два коня, которые возили овес и сено, знаешь, вещи, которые продавали. Так как не было дороги. «Ведь я знаю, что у тебя есть, есть два коня», сказала она, «мы должны идти домой». «Но пойдите», сказал он, «иначе мне никто не поверит!» И они пошли внутрь, были два коня, у них была грива, и все косички, маленькие-маленькие! Их нельзя было расплести! Так они были сделаны! Но это правда! Сестра моей мамы испугалась, она была меньше. «Бежим, бежим!» Моя мама была старше, она подошла поближе, чтобы разглядеть: «Можно подойти ближе, чтобы меня не лягнул конь?» «Да-да! Подожди, пощупай-пощупай!» «Ой», сказала она, «какие маленькие косички!» И они спустились вниз испуганные. Но что он сделал? Откуда взялись эти косички? И она шла домой, сказала: «Мама, беги наверх посмотреть», сказала она, «у коней косички!» «Ты что», сказала (мамина мама), «не говори то, что нельзя говорить!» «Мама, беги смотреть! Беги смотреть, иначе никто не поверит», сказала она, и это было правда! На следующий день у этих коней косички были расплетены, у них все было волнами, знаешь. Они пошли посмотреть, кони без косичек! Вот, это правда! Моя мама всегда рассказывала, тетя Мария, та, которая была, говорила: «Смотри, это правда!» Она говорила: «Не знаю, не знаю. Мы с твоей мамой видели!» Никто не верит, а на другой день у них у всех было косички расплетены. Целую ночь он работал. Тогда говорили шкрат, мы говорим шкрат. Говорили, что они маленькие, что они были одеты в красное, у них была шапка сзади у этих гномов] (LC).*

<sup>8</sup> Лишь в одном из рассказов, записанных в Терской долине (Массаролис), коровы, столкнувшиеся со шкратом, погибают через некоторое время: *kar smo paršli če v planino, gor smo vidli nega otroka. Krave so pogledale če v telega otroka an so se uarnile nazaj damou. Anta tu dvie lieta so vse krave krepale* [когда мы пришли на горное пастбище, наверху увидели одного ребенка. Коровы посмотрели на этого ребенка и вернулись домой. И потом в течение двух лет все коровы пали] (Tomasetig 2010: 210). В другом рассказе из Массерис коровы также возвращаются домой, встретившись со шкратом (Tomasetig 2010: 224).



могут помогать детям (например, шкрат спасает ребенка, оказавшегося его братом). Исключение составляют те случаи, когда шкрат пытается отомстить своей матери за то, что она его лишила жизни.

В Венецианской Словении встретилось единичное свидетельство о домовом шкрате, живущем при доме и помогающем по хозяйству, об этом нам рассказала наша собеседница, сообщив, что в их доме жил такой шкрат по имени Дулука, которому обязательно нужно было оставить пищу, иначе он начинал творить бесчинства, например, мог сбросить сажу на пол: *mi tle smo miéli énega škrátaca tu, ki je várval hišo <...> naš škrat se klíče Dulúka <...> ka smo bili mikane, če su pádle sáje dol, náša máma nam je jála, je škrat ki je vargl dol téle sáje, zak mu níesta pustíl... se je mórlo nímar kiek pustít za jest télemu škrátu* (АТ) (при этом она сама отметила, что их домашний шкрат не имел ничего общего с духом некрещеного ребенка, то есть, по ее мнению, шкраты бывают разными). Шкратов в других функциях в Венецианской Словении отмечено не было ни в опубликованных источниках, ни по данным наших полевых исследований.

## ЗАКЛЮЧЕНИЕ

Таким образом, тема нечистых покойников является стержневой в представлениях о шкратах в Венецианской Словении, она определяет и круг лиц, кому может показываться шкрат, и функции и действия, которые данный демон совершает, а также набор сюжетов мифологических рассказов о шкратах (при этом основным локусом обитания этих персонажей по-прежнему остается лес, труднодоступные места, пещеры и расщелины). В этом смысле данный локальный вариант шкрата стоит особняком на фоне представлений о шкратах как о духах локусов, характерных для многих регионов материковой Словении.

Особый интерес в связи с темой нечистых покойников представляет **связь шкратов с погодой**, четко прослеживаемая в поверьях и мифологических рассказах из Венецианской Словении. В Терской долине встречаются свидетельства, что шкраты показываются перед ненастьем: *Pouno judi so pravili tuole, ke ta škarific e se parkazou škuaže simpri prej kuj ne hude ure* [многие люди рассказывали, что шкарифич (шкрат) почти всегда показывался перед бурей] (Stanonik, Potočnik 2020: 142). Согласно некоторым поверьям, сами шкраты и являются причиной грозы, непогоды: *j' pravla, de teli tle niso bli požegnjeni otroc an de so nasreče, tuče, slavo uro, nagnojbe dielal* [говорила, что эти дети не были крещены, и они приносили несчастья, град, непогоду, вредили] (Tomasetig 2010: 207). Иногда в данных контекстах речь идет о встречах с группой шкратов, а не с единичными мифологическими персонажами, однако это наблюдение требует дальнейшего исследования на большем количестве примеров. Характерным является и то, каким образом шкрат наказывает свою мать – рядом с ней ударяет молния, молния бьет в дерево, к которому привязан фартук (ср. широко известную всем славянам связь нечистых покойников с непогодой, грозой).

Другой характерной чертой является **сопоставление шкратов с детьми**, которое проникает во фразеологию как диалектную, так и современного словенского литературного языка: так, слово *škrat* и его производные в переносном значении стали применяться к непослушным, склонным к шалостям, слишком подвижным детям: *skràkiac* m. — «шалунишка» (Špehonja 2010: 251). В одном из текстов, посвященных шкратам в книге А. Томазетич, рассказчик подтверждает, что со шкратами в настоящее время сравнивают слишком подвижных детей: *donašnji dan se die Škrakjac, kar otrok je žiu an gre v luht: — Si ku Škrakjac!* (Tomasetig 2010: 208). В словенском литературном языке у слова *škrat* также присутствует это значение (экспресс. *непослушный ребенок, neposedca: pri hiši ni več miru, odkar imato tega škrata* — SSKJ s.v. *škrat*). Однако здесь трудно предположить логическую цепочку, ведущую от шкратов, происходящих из некрещеных младенцев: видимо, основную роль здесь все же сыграли такие черты шкратов, как их маленький рост, напоминающий рост ребенка, а также их любовь к шуткам и шалостям. В современном словенском языке наименование ребенка шкратом носит даже ласкательный характер и выражает доброе к нему отношение, при этом не обязательно речь идет о непослушном ребенке, скорее обыгрывается его непосредственность, некоторая избалованность, которая, впрочем, не оценивается негативно. Во многом подобной трансформации значения способствовали современные авторские сказки для детей, где шкрат выступает как положительный персонаж.

В Венецианской Словении встретился рассказ о том, что против шкратов и непогоды, которую они приносят, помогла процессия во главе со священником, благословившим шкратов и тем их успокоившим: *so pravli, de an mož j' šu pred precesijo, k' nesu križ žegnan an de ta s Stare Gore go do Gorenj Tarbij jih je videu pet. An jih j' deu če h kraju an gaspuod jih je požegnu. An potle nie bluo vič slave ure, j' bluo dobro* [говорили, что один мужчина шел перед процессией, который нес святой крест и по дороге со Старой Горы до Верхнего Трбиля видел пять шкратов. Он их отстранил к краю дороги, и священник их благословил. И потом больше не было плохой погоды, все было хорошо] (Tomasetig 2010: 207).

Венецианско-словенские **шкраты имеют параллели во фриульской и итальянской народной демонологии**: это персонажи фриул. *Mazarot* (*Mazzarot*, *Mazzariùl*) и ит. *Boborosso* (букв. «красный дьяволенок»). Сходными чертами обладает венецианский мифологический персонаж *Sanguanello*: он так же похищает детей, но не обращается с ними плохо (Nicoloso Ciceri 1992: 442). Эти персонажи характеризуются и похожими внешними признаками: маленьким ростом и наличием красной шапочки (преобладающим красным цветом в одежде); эти демоны также причиняют человеку мелкий вред, смеются над ним (часто им приписывается такая звуковая характеристика как смех), они заплетают гривы лошадям и хвосты волам. Так же, как и словенские персонажи, они могут служить для устрашения детей, чтобы те не ходили в опасные места (соответственно, встречаются дидактические рассказы о том, как эти персонажи уносят детей в свои пещеры). По мнению исследовательницы А. Николозо Чичери, данные сходные черты свидетельствуют о параллельном немецком влиянии и на культуру фриулов, и на культуру словенцев в

регионе Фриули-Венеция-Джулия (ср. аналогичных персонажей и у других славян: поляков, чехов, словенцев в других регионах). Однако, более глубокое изучение словенских и конкретно венецианско-словенских представлений о шкратах в контексте романских и германских представлений об аналогичных демонах представляется весьма перспективным.

## ВЫВОДЫ

Таким образом, мы видим, что в Венецианской Словении шкраты не просто являются духами локусов, на первый план выступает их генезис: происхождение из якобы душ младенцев, умерших без крещения, что и определяет, в конечном счете, и функции, и локусы обитания данных персонажей, а также сюжетику рассказов о них. Связь шкратов с нечистыми покойниками подкрепляется представлениями об их связи с погодными явлениями, а также, возможно, фразеологией, стойко ассоциирующей непослушных, шалящих детей со шкратами. Все это позволяет предположить, что данные верования могут быть довольно архаичными, несмотря на их позднейшую христианизацию.

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АТ – жен. 1952 г.р. Сарценти (Надижская долина), зап. в 2019 г. Г. Пилипенко, М. Ясинской.  
 ЛС – жен. 1934 г.р. Платискис (Терская долина), зап. в 2017 г. Г. Пилипенко, М. Ясинской.  
 ВС – муж. 1944 г.р. Понтеакко (Надижская долина), зап. в 2017 г. Г. Пилипенко, М. Ясинской.

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SUPERNATURAL BEING ŠKRAT AMONG SLOVENES LIVING IN  
NATISONE VALLEY AND TORRE VALLEY: MYTHOLOGIZATION OF  
SOULS OF THE “IMPURE” DEADS IN THE FOLKLORE AND BELIEVES  
OF THE ITALIAN-SLOVENIAN BORDERLAND

MARIJA V. JASINSKAJA



The concepts of gnomes among the Slovenes in Italy have their own local specificity, which distinguishes them from the representations of these characters in other regions where Slovenes live. An important role is played by such a parameter as the genesis of these demons: according to beliefs and mythological stories recorded in Slavia Friulana (the Natisone and Torre Valleys), gnomes (škrati) come from the souls of infants who died before baptism (including as a result of infanticide). This very factor determines the set of motifs and plots associated with these mythological characters: they may appear in groups, climb trees and rocks, play pranks, tangle the manes of horses, lead children into the forest and make

them wander, may help their brothers and sisters, and also avenge their mother for killing them. Their connection with the unclean dead appears to be an archaic trait, longer preserved among the Slovenes in an ethnically mixed environment, whereas in other regions where Slovenes live, gnomes (*škrati*) generally act as spirits of places. On the other hand, similar mythological characters are also noted among their Romance neighbors – the Friulians and Italians (Friulian: *Mazarot* (Mazzarot, Mazzariûl), Italian: *Boborosso*, Venetian: *Sanguanello*), which could also have influenced the perceptions of these demons among the Slovenes of Venetian Slovenia.

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# Besedne zaveze v slovenskem folklornem sistemu: semiotični oris žanrskega okvira

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V razpravi je na podlagi izbora arhivskih virov, objavljenih študij in podatkov terenskih raziskav obravnavan folklorni žanrski okvir, ki služi podrobnemu opisu kulturno-jezikovne prakse besednih zavez v slovenskem folklornem sistemu. Oblikovanje nastajajočega žanrskega modela za potrebe interpretacije arhivskega gradiva ter natančnejšega in poglobljenega razumevanja sodobnega terenskega gradiva je predstavljeno na primeru treh skupin gradiva – prvo skupino sestavljajo primeri pravnih prisežnih obrazcev iz sredine 18. stoletja, drugo skupino tvorijo folklorni obrazci kletev in zavez s konca 19. stoletja, tretjo skupino pa raznoliki sodobni kratki folklorni obrazci, zbrani v 21. stoletju. Gradivo vsake od treh skupin je mogoče v veliki meri opredeliti s skupnimi semantično-pragmatičnimi kategorijami splošnega semiotičnega modela besednih zavez, ki odpira nove perspektive in izhodišča za nadaljnje folkloristične raziskave. Teksti besednih zavez v slovenščini doslej niso bili sistematično obravnavani, kljub temu da so močno prisotni v slovenskem folklornem gradivu, v katerem izkazujejo dolg obstoj ter raznoliko funkcionalnost.

**KLJUČNE BESEDE:** folklor, ustno izročilo, sistem folklornih žanrov, besedne zaveze, modeliranje

The article addresses the folkloristic genre framework, serving a detailed description of the cultural-linguistic practice of verbal bonds in the Slovenian folklore system, based on the selection of archival sources, published studies, and field research data. The formation of a genre model for the purpose of interpreting archival material and achieving a more precise and in-depth understanding of contemporary fieldwork material is presented through three groups of materials. The first group consists of examples of legal oath forms from the mid-18th century, the second group comprises short folklore forms of curses and verbal bonds from the late 19th century, and the third group consists of various contemporary short folklore forms collected in the 21st century. Each group of materials can be defined by common semantic-pragmatic categories of a general semiotic model of verbal bonds, opening new perspectives and starting points for further folkloristic examination of this short folklore genre. Texts and cases of verbal bonds in Slovenian have not been systematically addressed so far, despite their strong presence in Slovenian folklore material, demonstrating long continuity and diverse functionality.

**KEYWORDS:** folklore, oral tradition, folklore genres system, verbal bonds, modelling

UVOD<sup>1</sup>

*Zaveza* govorcem slovenščine v okviru vsakdanjega (besednega) sporazumevanja (Jakobson 1989: 153; Bauman 2004) največkrat pomeni neke vrste *obljubo*, tj. jezikovno sredstvo, ki jim omogoča, da naslovniku ponudijo zagotovilo o svojem preteklem, trenutnem in prihodnjem ravnanju ali védenju. V sodobnosti se zaveze pogosto uresničujejo tudi s pomočjo pisnih tekstov, med katerimi v raznolikih pravno-ekonomskih kontekstih razločujemo med *dogovori*, *pogodbami*, *soglasji*, *sporazumi* idr. Vsem zavezam je skupno, da postanejo z uresničitvijo za posameznika v odnosu do druge strani bolj ali manj zavezujoče, kar lahko prinese določene posledice. Izvorno pisni teksti nas v nadaljevanju ne bodo podrobneje zanimali, saj bomo v središče obravnave postavili tekste, ki se v splošni rabi uresničujejo zlasti govorno, čeprav je vsem skupno, da so bili iz nekega razloga zapisani, in sicer a) med pripravo sodnih zapisnikov sredi 18. stoletja, b) med zbiranjem narodopisnega gradiva konec 19. stoletja in c) med pripravo frazeološkega seznama ter opravljanjem etnografskega dela v letih 2005, 2022 in 2023. Vse tri skupine gradiva, ki bodo predstavljene v jedru razprave, smo pripravili z ozirom na potencialno produkcijo intertekstualnih povezav (Bauman 2004: 2), zlasti znotraj folklornega sistema – v primeru pravnih obrazcev podložniških priseg pa se, gledano diahrono, povezave med historičnim in sodobnim gradivom vzpostavljajo tudi medsystemsko, npr. na relaciji med pravnim in folklornim sistemom.<sup>2</sup> Intertekstualnost pri tem obravnavamo zlasti na ravni žanrskega okvira, zaradi česar si jo lahko predstavljamo kot nekakšen skupek usmerjevalnih načel, vodil, ki usmerjajo procese tvorjenja in sprejemanja tekstov. Iz žanrskega okvira lahko razberemo podatke o minulih okoliščinah rabe tekstov (prostor in čas izvajanja teksta, število govorcev in njihova medsebojna razmerja, prisotnost morebitnih materialnih pripomočkov itd.), saj žanr presega lokalna govorna dejanja (Bauman 2004: 5) oz. lokalne folklorne dogodke. Ob spremljanju vzorcev in razmerij med (ne)ponavljajočimi se znaki lahko torej raziskovalci sistematično opišemo lastnosti nekega žanra (prim. Frog 2016), ki so, enako kot sami teksti ali sporazumevalne vloge med govorcami, neposredno vezane na predhodne in nadaljnje tekste (Bauman 2004: 6; Bahtin 1986). V nadaljevanju vse tekste obravnavamo v okviru slovenskega folklornega sistema in preteklih obravnjav najkrajših ustaljenih jezikovnih zgradb, ki jih v slovenski slovstveni folkloristiki imenujemo (kratki) folklorni obrazci (Stanonik 2001; Babič 2015), a preden se posvetimo obravnavi konkretnih primerov, velja tekste zavez kot splošni predmet obravnave opredeliti nekoliko podrobneje.

<sup>1</sup> Članek je nastal v okviru raziskovalnega programa Etnološke, antropološke in folkloristične raziskave vsakdanjika (P6-0088). Sofinanciranje je omogočila Javna agencija za znanstvenoraziskovalno in inovacijsko dejavnost Republike Slovenije (ARIS).

<sup>2</sup> V razpravi vseskozi dopuščamo možnost heterogenega značaja tekstov, kar pomeni, da vprašanje o pisno-govorni podobi v obravnavanem gradivu mestoma ne more biti nedvoumno razrešeno. To dvojnost lahko ponazorimo s pravnimi obrazci podložniških priseg, saj so bili ti obrazci lahko zapisani in šele nato govorno izvedeni v konkretnih okoliščinah pravnega procesa – ko so jih pričevalci izrekli, so bili lahko znova zapisani v sodne zapisnike (gl. Ribnikar 1976: 30–31). Ribnikar ni dvomil, da so bile vse zapisane prislege dejansko izrečene (1976: 36).



Najprej se soočamo z vprašanjem, katero žanrsko oznako uporabljati kot krovno poimenovanje za tekste, s katerimi govorce podamo svoje zagotovilo, da bo oznaka vključevala ustaljenost elementov na ravni teksta, teksture in konteksta (Dundes 1980: 23; Stanonik 2001: 117, 257, 293; prim. Babič 2015: 14–15). Gre za ključno vprašanje poimenovanja žanra kratkih folklornih obrazcev, saj so v zavesti govorcev slovenščine ti teksti oblikovani in poimenovani z emskimi kategorijami, ki označujejo na sintaktični, semantični in pragmatični (Grzybek 2014) ravni ne povsem prekrivne pojme. Med take kategorije prištevamo poimenovanja *(za)obljuba*, *(za)prisega*, *beseda*, *zakletev*, *zaveza*, *zveza*, *rota*, *(za)rotitev* in mnoga druga narečna ali priložnostna poimenovanja, ki jih govorce v enakih oz. primerljivih kontekstih medsebojno nemalokrat zamenjujejo. Razprava ne obravnava splošnega filozofsko-jezikoslovnega »problema obljubljanja« (gl. Žagar 2018: 23–33),<sup>3</sup> a pri poimenovalni dilemi velja izpostaviti terminologijo pragmatičnega jezikoslovja, po kateri se teksti, označeni z naštetimi poimenovanji, uvrščajo h *komisivom*, tj. k tipu govornih dejanj, s katerimi se govorec v večji ali manjši meri »zaveže k določenemu ravnanju v prihodnosti« (Searle 1979: 8–9, 14; prim. z obljubami kot performativi v Austin 1962: 32). Termina komisiv v folkloristično obravnavo nismo prenesli zaradi njegovega vsebinskega obsega, ki sega onkraj zavez, kot jih bomo opredelili v folklorističnem kontekstu – po sodobnih klasifikacijah se namreč med komisive uvrščajo tudi ponudbe, grožnje, zavrnitve in drugi tipi izjav. Posamezne pragmatično-jezikoslovne raziskave komisivov so znatno pripomogle k boljšemu razumevanju zavez v okviru folklornega sistema. Po zgledu razprave jezikoslovca Vladimirja I. Karasika lahko komisive razdelimo glede na kontekst rabe po binarnih opozicijah na: a) *vsakdanje* in *ritualne*, b) *osebne* in *institucionalne*, c) *posledične* in *brezposledične* ter d) *izvedljive* in *neizvedljive*. Karasik kot najbolj nezaznamovano oz. »nevtralno« kategorijo komisivnih izjav opredeli izjave, ki so vsakdanje, osebne, nejamstvene in izvedljive (Karasik 2016: 59) – s tem avtor opredeli predstavo o neke vrste prototipski obljubi v ruskem jeziku. Take zaveze oz. komisive naj bi torej govorce sklepali v neformalnem vsakdanjem sporazumevanju z ostalimi pripadniki jezikovne skupnosti, pri čemer ne navedejo posledice/kazni za morebitno neizpolnitev obljubljenega, obenem pa se govorec zaveže k dejanju, ki med obema govorcema velja za izvedljivo oz. uresničljivo. Dodati velja, da nam kljub številnim tovrstnim možnostim za podrobno kategorizacijo sodobnega in historičnega jezikovnega gradiva, ki jih je mogoče prenesti v okvir folklornega žanra, še vedno manjka krovno poimenovanje.

V razpravi smo se odločili uporabiti priložnostno poimenovanje *zaveza*, ki nam kot krovni delovni termin pomeni a) skupek jezikovnih<sup>4</sup> in nejezikovnih<sup>5</sup> sredstev, uporabljenih za sklenitev zaveze med vsaj dvema govorcema ter obenem b) s temi izraznimi sredstvi opravljeno dejanje, tj. s kulturnim znakom ustvarjeno družbeno razmerje, ki določa

<sup>3</sup> Jezikoslovni problem obljube in obljubljanja je na slovenskem gradivu kot prvi v slovenskem in mednarodnem merilu izpostavil slovenski jezikoslovec Stanislav Škrabec, čigar delo sta podrobno ovrednotila Matejka Grgič in Igor Ž. Žagar (Grgič, Žagar 2004).

<sup>4</sup> Npr. *bog me, dam roko v ogenj, naj me hudič vzame* itd.

<sup>5</sup> Npr. dvignjena desnica z iztegnjenim palcem, kazalcem in sredincem; desnica, položena na srce; razprta desnica, dvignjena v višino glave itd.

nadaljnje odnose med govorcema. Obrazci zavez se v trenutku izrekanja ne nanašajo le na naslovnika<sup>6</sup> in neko skupno priznano avtoriteto oz. izvršno silo,<sup>7</sup> temveč se v vsakem tekstu ali vsaj kontekstu kaže tudi določena mera anticipacije nadaljnje interakcije na več ravneh – denimo kot neposredno soočenje izjavljalca z neugodnimi posledicami neizpolnjene zaveze, za katere je izjavljalec vedel, še preden je do njih prišlo.

V slovenski etnologiji in folkloristiki so bile zaveze v največji meri obravnavane kot prisega v kontekstu običajnega prava in z njim povezanih pravnih šeg (SEL 2004: 371, 462), torej pretežno kot pomemben predmet preučevanja pravnih zgodovinarjev (npr. Dolenc 1941; Vilfan 1996). V *Slovenskem etnološkem leksikonu* (SEL) je prisega opredeljena kot »slovesna izjava o kakem dejstvu«, ki lahko vključuje dotik kakega svetega predmeta,<sup>8</sup> s čimer bi »ob neresnični izjavi prisežnika posegla božanstva« (SEL 2004: 476). Tudi v okviru raziskav slovanske folklorne in tradicijskih verovanj je prisega opredeljena kot pravna šega med vsaj dvema osebama v navzočnosti prič, ki se izvede z izrekom prisežnega obrazca in s simbolnimi dejanji (Belova 1999: 512–514). Med raziskovalci z različnih področij velja konsenz, da je žanr zavez historično soroden žanru kletev (gl. Belova 1999: 513; Engelking 2010: 106; Ljung 2011: 1–3; Detelić in Delić 2012: 35), zaradi česar bi lahko pri definiciji zavez izhajali tudi iz kletev in zaveze opredelili kot »pogojne samokletve«, torej kletve, katerih posledice si izjavljalec pogojuje sam (podobno jih opredeli Engelking 2010: 108).<sup>9</sup> Ustaljena (konvencionalizirana) žanrska določila besednih zavez velevajo, da mora govorec pri uresničitvi teksta s svojo ubeseditvijo oz. izvedbo teksta zadostiti pričakovanjem sogovorca, da bo njuna zaveza uspešno sklenjena – šele nato sledi izpolnitev zaveze. Ta in primerljive kratke folklorne

<sup>6</sup> Besedne zaveze navadno skleneta vsaj dva govorca, zaradi česar lahko folklorne obrazce zavez po Františku Čermáku (2007: 432–433) opredelimo kot intersubjektivne, četudi jih avtor v kontekstu frazeologije loči izključno na število v sporazumevanju soudeleženih govorcev. Njegovo delitev na intersubjektivne in monosubjektivne frazeme (morda je nekoliko ustrežnejše poimenovanje *intrasubjektivni* frazemi) smo prevzeli, vendar s pomembno razliko, in sicer nam monosubjektivni izrazi v kontekstu folkloristične obravnave zaveze pomenijo govoročevo usmeritev izjave k samemu sebi. Tako pojmovanje nam namreč omogoča, da pomembno razširimo žanrsko obzorje, v katerem je mogoče preučevati mehanizme učinkovanja posamičnih tekstov. Za ponazoritev navajamo nekaj tipov monosubjektivnih zavez: postne in gladovne zaveze, zaveze čistosti in vzdržnosti (npr. celibat v verskem kontekstu ali vzdržnost odvisnikov od zasvojljivih substanc), zaveze molčečnosti, najpogostejše med vsemi pa so novoletne zaveze – zaobljube, s katerimi si posameznik določi osebne cilje v bližnji ali daljni prihodnosti na prelomu med starim in novim koledarskim letom. Pri monosubjektivnih zavezah je najbolj vznemirljivo vprašanje ritualizacije postopka, ki privede do posameznikove odločitve za »zavezo s samim seboj«, ter očitne problematike preučevanja govorne ali pisne (ne)uresničitve.

<sup>7</sup> Prim. s konceptom zunajjezikovne institucije, avtoritete, v odnosu do katere zavzemata poseben položaj tako izjavljalec kot naslovnik izjave (Searle 1979: 18). Searle prav tam problematizira Austinovo opredeljevanje performativov kot vselej pogojenih z zunajjezikovnimi dejavniki, pri čemer Žagar, vsaj v okviru komisivov, konkretno obljub, povzema, da po Austinu določena izjava pomeni zavezo k izvršitvi dejanja ravno zato, ker »obstaja ritual, da v ustreznih okoliščinah izrečemo ustrezno formulo« (Žagar 2018: 31), kar je posledica družbene konvencije, da torej (le) določeni jezikovni izrazi omogočajo sklepanje zavez. Za podrobnejši razmislek o pomenu in vlogi zunajjezikovne konvencije v kontekstu Austinove teorije performativa gl. Žagar 2018: 30–32.

<sup>8</sup> Gl. etimologijo besede *prisega* v Snój 2015 in pomen praslovanskega glagola *\*prisęti* 'iztegniti roko, dotakniti se'.

<sup>9</sup> Sorodnost lahko mdr. sistemsko dokazujemo s podatki o rabi apotropijskih sredstev, ki so jih ljudje sočasno uporabljali za odvrčanje posledic krivoprisežništva (npr. držanje fige v žepu med priseganjem, gl. Dolenc 1941; Vilfan 1996) in posledic kletev (npr. kazanje fige za odvrčanje zlega pogleda, gl. Levkieskaja 2004a; prim. z možnimi magijskimi načini škodovanja v Mencej 2007).

žanre torej opredeljuje diskurzivna raba (Nežmah 1997: 15), ki jo lahko v folkloristiki opišemo s t. i. metasignali – jezikovnimi in nejezikovnimi sredstvi, iz katerih je mogoče razbrati glavne značilnosti izvajanja nekega teksta, kot so se uveljavile v določeni skupnosti, zaradi česar je tekst preprosteje žanrsko opredeliti (Bauman 2012: 100–101).

Žanru besednih zavez je enako kot žanru kletve mogoče določiti izvorno tesno povezanost z verovanjskim sistemom določene skupnosti, ki je žanru dajal legitimiteto in mu omogočal polno funkcionalnost (prim. s prav tako sorodnim žanrom zagovorov v Dapit 2001: 142 in Ivančič Kutin 2018: 207–209). Antropološke in lingvokulturološke raziskave (Engelking 2010 [2000]; Ljung 2011) dokazujejo, da je verovanje kot proces (gl. Mencej 2017: 62–64) odločilni diahroni dejavnik žanrskih sprememb, s katerim je neposredno povezano vprašanje (jezikovnega) tabuja, ki se lahko vzpostavi šele na verovanjski podlagi postavljenih skupnostnih norm, ki nasploh izkazujejo močan vpliv na produkcijo in recepcijo folklornih tekstov v posamični skupnosti (Mencej 2017: 60). Verovanje kot dejavnik, ki vpliva na diahrono oblikovanje žanrskega okvira, lahko ponazorimo na primeru dveh skupin kratkih folklornih obrazcev, med katerimi v laičnem diskurzu načeloma ne razlikujemo – *kletev* in *kletvic*. Magnus Ljung preklinjanje in posledično kletvice opredeli kot 1) uporabo večbesednih izrazov, ki vsebujejo tabuizirane besede, pri čemer so 2) tabuizirane besede uporabljene v prenesenem pomenu; 3) ti večbesedni izrazi imajo ustaljeno skladenjsko in pomensko zgradbo, kar jih uvršča v t. i. formulaični jezik; 4) obenem pa preklinjanje predstavlja emotivni govor, ki (navidezno) odraža govorčeva čustva (Ljung 2011: 4; prim. Jakobson 1989: 154). Četrto definicijsko lastnost obravnavamo kot fakultativno, saj gradivo kaže, da ta za kletvene kontekste ni vselej ustrezna – kletveno dejanje lahko izvede tudi oseba, ki v procesu folklorne komunikacije opravlja zgolj posredniško vlogo in nima neposrednih čustvenih vezi z vpletenimi (gl. Pócs 2004; Dolenc 1999). Temeljni razloček med kletvicami in kletvami izpostavljam predvsem pri drugi definicijski lastnosti, saj tabuizirano besedje v kletvenih obrazcih ni uporabljeno v prenesenem pomenu. Priklic višjih sil, eksplicitna navedba kazni, telesnih in umskih tegob, genitalij, koitusa itd., četudi s katero od ustaljenih prispodob, je vselej ubeseden kot resničen oz. kot z govornim dejanjem uresničljivo dejstvo,<sup>10</sup> ki vzpostavlja neposredno povezavo z verovanjskim sistemom, kar kletve in del zavez uvršča k magijskim folklornim obrazcem. Pri tem ne moremo zanikati geneze žanra kletvic, ki je nastal zaradi postopne izgube referenc kletev na elemente verovanjskega sistema v zavesti skupnosti oz. govorcev (gl. sorodne transformacije folklornih tekstov v Bužeková 2023 po Weber 1948 [1919]), s čimer se je del žanrskega okvira kletev preoblikoval in se na novo vzpostavil v obliki žanrskega okvira kletvic.<sup>11</sup> Opozoriti velja, da tega transformacijskega procesa ne smemo opisati s posplošitvijo, da je vsaka kletvica prešla »magijsko fazo« svojega obstoja, temveč moramo na tak proces gledati kot na eno od evlucijskih stopenj žanra, na kateri je lahko tekst z enako zgradbo hkrati kletev in kletvica. Dodaten razločevalni vidik

<sup>10</sup> Enako po Karasiku (2016: 59), kjer se v zadnji od naštetih razločevalnih kategorij komisivi delijo ravno na izvedljive in neizvedljive.

<sup>11</sup> Povedno je tudi samo poimenovanje tega folklornega žanra s pomanjševalnim priponskim obrazilom *-ica*, torej *kletvica* kot 'mala kletev'.

med kletvijo in kletvico lahko izpostavimo z ozirom na funkcije jezika po Jakobsonovem modelu besednega sporazumevanja. V skladu z njegovim modelom bi kot dominantno funkcijo kletvic označili emotivno funkcijo, ki izhaja iz izjavljalca, kletvam pa je dominantna konativna funkcija, ki je usmerjena k naslovníku (Jakobson 1989: 154–156). V sodobnem vsakdanjem sporazumevanju kletvice pogosto rabimo tudi kot mašila (Nežmah 1997; Zuljan Kumar 2005, 2007; Ivančič Kutin 2011: 43–46; Babič 2015), torej so v teh primerih kletvice usmerjene v stik med govorcema in njegovo ohranjanje, kar označuje fatično funkcijo (Jakobson 1989: 156); sicer pa so funkcijsko zelo raznovrstne (gl. Ljung 2011: 24–35). Sklepanje zavez predstavlja kompleksnejši pojav, kot je mogoče sklepati na podlagi posamičnih sintaktičnih in semantičnih sprememb.<sup>12</sup> Upoštevati moramo tudi implicitno ali eksplicitno navedbo potencialne »žrtve«, tj. izjavljalčevo pripravljenost na kazen – pogojno kazensko breme, ki ga na simbolni ravni predstavlja poseben znak, katerega označenec morda ni nujno ohranjen v kulturnem spominu.<sup>13</sup>

Kam pa lahko glede na besedne zaveze ter kletve in kletvice umestimo psovke? V zvezi s tem velja izpostaviti delokutive oz. delokutivne glagole – semantično kategorijo, ki jo je v svoji obravnavi slovenskih kletvic in psovok uporabil Bernard Nežmah (1997: 7–19) po Émilu Benvenistu (1966: 301). Delokutivni glagoli so izpeljani iz lokucij (izjav), ki jih označujejo, npr. *psovati* pomeni reči »pes!«, pri čemer je po Nežmahovi interpretaciji v rabi dominantna izjava povzročila nastanek delokutivnega glagola, ta pa je začel označevati tudi ostale sorodne izjave; na podlagi zgornjega primera torej *psovati* ne pomeni zgolj reči (komu, da je) *pes*, temveč uporabiti žaljivke nasploh: *osel, bedak, prasica* itd. Benveniste pojasnjuje, da: »[d]elokutivni glagoli nastajajo pod pritiskom leksikalne nuje, povezane s tem, kako pogosti in pomembni so pomensko polni obrazci v nekaterih tipih kultur« (1988 [1966]: 301). V kontekstu razprave o zvezah lahko navedemo dva delokutiva: *zabogmati*, ki ga navaja tudi Nežmah (1997: 16) in pomeni 'reči »bog me«', ter *pridušati*, ki pomeni 'reči »pri (moji) duši«' in ima dva redkejša sinonima: *priduševati se* ter *primojdušati se*. Ti primeri nam potrjujejo, da se je tudi med govorce v določenih obdobjih pojavila leksikalna nuja, kot jo navaja Benveniste, na podlagi česar sklepamo, da je žanr v vrednotenju govorcev zasedal pomembno mesto v njihovih (folklornih) repertoarjih. Zanimivo je, da vsi našeti delokutivi danes učinkujejo arhaično, medtem ko mlajših sinonimov ni v rabi. Opažamo, da jezikoslovje sodobne psovke in kletvice v sinhroni perspektivi velikokrat ločuje na podlagi besednovrstnega merila, ki ga je v razpravah o psovkah marsikdaj razbrati le posredno, in sicer tako, da jedro psovalnih besednih zvez tvori *samostalnik*, jedro kletvičnih besednih zvez pa *glagol* (gl. npr. Nežmah 1997; Zuljan Kumar 2005, 2007). Skladno s predstavami tradicijskih verovanj moramo izpostaviti razloček med dvema tipoma izjav: »Ti si kot pes!« ter »Ti si pes!«. Poseben podtip kletev namreč tvorijo magijski folklorni obrazci, ki po prepričanju na naslovníku

<sup>12</sup> Npr. sprememba osebnega zaimka v zgradbi obrazca iz 2. v 1. osebo, npr. *vrag te vzemi* → *vrag me vzemi* itd.

<sup>13</sup> S tem ciljamo na starejše verovnjaške in pravne kontekste, ki so se vpisali v zgradbo folklornih obrazcev. Nazoren primer je sklepanje zaveze z obrazcem *dam roko/glavo stran*, ki se v zavesti sodobnega govorca ne povezuje (več) s kaznijo za krivo prisego iz 16. stoletja, ki je pomenila odsek prisežne roke ali prstov (gl. Kambič in Budna Kodrič 2004: fol. 3v).

povzročajo telesno metamorfozo, česar ne smemo enačiti z nemagijskimi primerami, izrečenimi z namenom ponižati in razžaliti posameznika; v sodobnih psovkah, ki imajo v rabi zabrisano povezavo s starejšim verovanjskim vrednotenjskim sistemom se torej metamorfoza izvaja s prisposodobno na simbolni ravni (prim. Danišová 2018: 18; Nežmah 1997; Babič 2015), kar pomeni, da bi diahrono tudi izvor elementov žanrskega okvira psovka lahko povezali z žanrom kletev. Zakleto stanje v pripovednem izročilu zelo pogosto pomeni metamorfozo človeka v telesno obliko živali (zoomorfizem), kar navadno odraža grešnikovo prestajanje kazni za storjene grehe in prestopke (Kropej 1995: 136), s katerimi je prekršil temeljne religijske ali etične norme svoje skupnosti.

### SEMIOTIČNI ORIS ŽANRSKEGA OKVIRA

V luči uvodoma predstavljenih temeljnih opredelitev žanra zaveze v folkloristiki nas bo med razvrščanjem gradiva in pripravo modelov zanimala zlasti funkcionalna razširitev žanra kletve in njegova medsebojna odvisnost z žanrom zaveze, do katere je v različnih okoliščinah prišlo na slovenskem jezikovnem območju. Zaradi tega smo pri pripravi gradiva drugega in tretjega modela upoštevali tudi kletvene (in kletvične) tekste, kakor so bili navedeni v obravnavanih virih. Upošteva je dejavnike preoblikovanja folklornih repertoarjev, ki so v času pospešene modernizacije in družbenih sprememb 19. in 20. stoletja spremenili medžanrska razmerja v folklornem sistemu, velja pripomniti, da v historični perspektivi, ki jo sinhrono predstavlja gradivo vsakega od modelov, razpolagamo z izrazito omejenimi podatki o kontekstu, zato napovedujemo zadržane sprotne ugotovitve, pri čemer poglobljena analiza ni namen te razprave.

Namen razprave je osvetliti žanrske drobce zgodovine žanra zavez in dopolniti mozaik raziskav najkrajših žanrov slovenskega folklornega sistema, ki so dandanes ne le premalo raziskani, temveč ostajajo v določenem obsegu neprepoznani, kar se odraža v maloštevilnosti interpretativnih raziskav najkrajših tekstov folklornega sporazumevanja. Pri tem se postavlja pomembno vprašanje: Kako obravnavati prakso sklepanja zavez, ki se je evolucijsko spreminjala od folklorne magijske prakse do institucionalne (ne nujno magijske!) prakse, pri kateri je kategorija »avtoritete/izvršne sile/kaznovalca« postopoma dobila zaledje v pravnem sistemu in sodnih institucijah? Glede na uvodne folkloristične opredelitve predmeta raziskave bomo v nadaljevanju sledili semiotičnemu pristopu, kot ga je pod vplivom semiotike Charlesa W. Morrisa (1938) in paremiološko-folklorističnih raziskav Grigorija L. Permjakova (1970) razvil Peter Grzybek (2014) za analize paremiološkega in (slovstveno)folklornega gradiva. Upoštevali bomo temeljno semiotično uresničevanje folklornih tekstov na treh ravneh, in sicer 1) na sintaktični ravni, ki opisuje formalna razmerja med posameznimi znaki (teksti), 2) na semantični ravni, ki opisuje razmerja znakov (tekstov) s predmetnostjo, na katero se znaki nanašajo, 3) in na pragmatični ravni, ki opisuje razmerja med znaki (teksti) in govorcji (Grzybek 2014: 70–74). V luči vseh treh ravni bomo tekste zavez povzermalno predstavili kot modele, pri čemer se bomo v nadaljevanju osredinili zlasti na sestavine v zgradbi obrazcev, v katerih bomo pozorni na zunajjezikovne reference, kot so npr. vloge živih in neživih udeležencev v

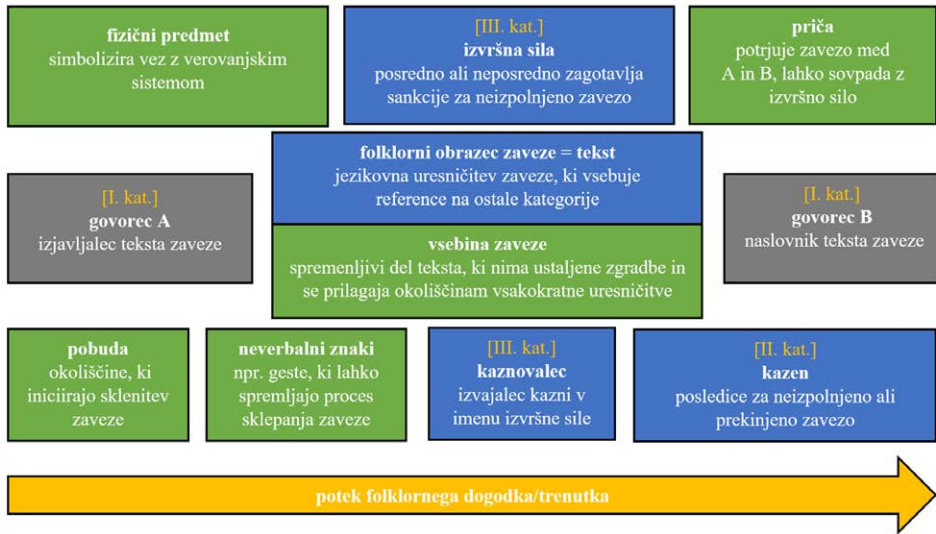
folklorni komunikaciji, ter na sestavine obrazcev, ki vzpostavljajo za žanr specifične semantične kategorije. Model kot abstrakcija konkretnih uresničitev folklornih obrazcev služi izključno znanstveni obravnavi, s katero želimo vzpostaviti primerjalno relacijo med posameznimi teksti in skupinami tekstov. Ta pristop je združljiv s folklorističnimi pristopi, ki folklorne dogodke preučujejo s pomočjo členitve na ravni teksta, teksture in konteksta (prim. Dundes 1980; Stanonik 2001: 117, 257, 293; Ivančič Kutin 2011: 17; 2015; Babič 2015: 12–16).

Kriteriju za uvrščanje gradiva v gradivsko osnovo posameznega modela, ki je predstavljen v poenostavljeni obliki oštevilčenih seznamov, velja pripisati, da smo izpustili primere izjav, ki so priložnostne in ubesedene tako, da v njih govorci navajajo zgolj konkretne razmere, ne da bi pri tem uporabili eno od ustaljenih zgradb obrazcev folklornega sistema. Take izjave lahko kljub odsotnosti folklornega obrazca vsebujejo navedbo morebitne posledice in nasploh učinkujejo enako, kot bi učinkovala zgradba s folklornim obrazcem zaveze, prim. npr. neustrezní primer 1 z ustreznim primerom 2:

1. **Resno** [npr. tudi *prisežem*], *če ne bo rezultatov [razpisa] po dveh tednih, se grem takoj odjaviti, pa naj bo, kar hoče.*
2. **Boga mi**, *če ne bo rezultatov [razpisa] po dveh tednih, se grem takoj odjaviti, pa naj bo, kar hoče.*

Izjava (1) je resda komisiv kot izjava (2), a nas izjava (1) zaradi odsotnosti ustaljenih povezav z elementi folklornega sistema v okviru te razprave ne zanima. Izjava (1) ne bi zadostila postavljenemu merilu tudi, če bi »Resno« nadomestili z glagolom, ki označuje določeni tip besednega zavezovanja, npr. *priseči* ali *obljubiti*. Tovrstni primeri so kljub temu zanimivi v sopostavitvi z zgradbami, ki vsebujejo folklorne obrazce, z njimi pa so tudi nemalokrat zamenljivi, kar lahko vidimo v primerjavi skorajda popolne zgradbene prekrivnosti izjave (1) in (2). Pripomnimo, da v primeru magijskega folklornega obrazca zamenjava ne bi bila mogoča, saj bi bil učinek govorne uresnitve teksta zaradi razlik na semantični in pragmatični ravni povsem drugačen. Kot bomo videli v nadaljevanju, se ta kriterij nanaša zlasti na sodobnejše gradivo tretjega modela.

Zbrano in pregledano gradivo smo med oblikovanjem modelov strnili glede na semantično-pragmatične kategorije, kot se odražajo v jezikovnih uresnitvah tekstov zavez, ki smo jih izluščili iz dostopne pravnozgodovinske literature. Kljub razširjeni obliki osnovnega modela sklepanja besednih zavez, ki ga vidimo na spodnjem prikazu (Slika 1), bomo gradivo razvrstili v tri temeljne kategorije. Te se v doslej analiziranih zavezah pojavljajo najpogosteje in so v spodnji shemi obarvane modro – gre za kategorije: I. usmeritve kazni v izjavljalca (A) ali naslovnika (B), II. opredelitve vsebine kazni ter III. izvršne sile ali kaznovalca – dveh vlog v sporazumevalnem/folklornem procesu, ki smo ju za namen razprave združili v skupno kategorijo. Zelene kategorije so tiste, o katerih nimamo dovolj sistematično zbranih podatkov ali pa smo jih zaradi obsega razprave morali izpustiti – najočitnejši in najmanj obvladljivi del med zelenimi kategorijami tako predstavlja vsebina posamične zaveze, ki je vsakokrat drugačna in v številnih virih, iz katerih smo črpali gradivo, povsem nedosegljiva. Zaradi raznolikega gradiva v drugem in tretjem modelu, ki vsebuje tudi kletve in kletvice, je ključnega pomena zlasti kategorija usmeritve kazni, ki služi kot glavni kriterij za ločitev med potencialnimi teksti zavez in



Slika 1: Shematični prikaz temeljnih semantično-pragmatičnih kategorij, kot so izpričane v obravnavanih tekstih zavez.

teksti, ki sodijo v žanrski okvir kletev in kletvic. Tekste zavez, ki so torej usmerjeni proti izjavjalcu/izvajalcu, iz previdnosti označujemo za »potencialne«, saj je opremljenost gradiva s kontekstualnimi podatki pomanjkljiva oz. nesorazmerna, zaradi česar je otežena podrobna opredelitev učinkovanja teksta v konkretnih okoliščinah izvedbe in posledično njegova osrednja funkcija. Brez dvoma lahko o tekstih (resda institucionalnih) zavez v celoti govorimo le v primeru prvega modela, ki vsebuje pravne prisežne obrazce iz 18. stoletja.

## I. PRAVNI PRISEŽNI OBRAZCI (18. STOL.)

Tri osrednje kategorije smo najprej preizkusili na delu pravnih prisežnih tekstov iz monografije Petra Ribnikarja *Slovenske podložniške prisege patrimonialnega sodišča Bled* (1976). Gre za urejeno in komentirano zbirko 176 pravnih obrazcev, od katerih smo v model vključili vzorec 70 zaporednih tekstov, ki so v izvorni objavi oštevilčeni od 30 do 100. Uvrstitve pravnih obrazcev<sup>14</sup> v okvir folkloristične razprave o folklornih obrazcih je pomembna za odkrivanje intertekstualnih povezav, ki so se skozi stoletja vzpostavljale v jezikovnih praksah slovensko govorečega prebivalstva. Ribnikar je zgradbo prisežnih tekstov razdelil na štiri dele: 1) navedba zapriseženca, tj. kdo prisega; 2) navedba, komu zapriseženec prisega – navadno sledi ustaljeno zaporedje božjih oseb, ki jim sledijo svetniki in angeli; 3) navedba okoliščin, o katerih priča zapriseženec – gre za jedro prisege, ki ga

<sup>14</sup> *Pravni obrazec* v pravnozgodovinski terminologiji pomeni pisno predlogo, ki zaradi nabora stalnih ali vsaj predvidljivih sestavin služi kot izhodišče za pripravo daljših pravnih tekstov.

ni bilo mogoče vnaprej določiti; 4) rotitev zapriseženca, da je v prisegi govoril resnico (Ribnikar 1976: 32–36). Med različnimi prisegami zbirke sta se konkretnim okoliščinam v največji meri prilagajala prvi in tretji del, v drugem in četrtem delu pa so se ustalile sestavine, ki nas najbolj zanimajo. Za razliko od krajših tekstov drugega in tretjega modela, ki jih zaradi kratkega obsega v nadaljevanju navajamo v celoti, bomo na tem mestu ilustrativno navedli le eno podložniško prisego v izvirnem prepisu iz Ribnikarjeve objave (1976: 67) z dodano poknjženo različico:

(84)

Jest Anshe Potoschnig Perschesem Pruti Bogu ozhetu Sinu in Suetimo Duho, eno pravo inu Zista Persego, da iest, inu moja Dersina is nasche greske gmaine ta Zait tega Sedaniga gaspoda Thomana nobene Lejsnike nijsem Posekau, inu tude nobene nijsem Safse Pojsekat Pustou, toku guisno koker mene Bug, inu ta Zista Bres Usiga Madesha Spozeta Diviza Mate Maria, inu use Bosie Suetnike na Moja Possledno Vuro Pomagat ozhe. Amen.

[Jaz, Anže Potočnik, prisežem proti Bogu Očetu, Sinu in Svetemu duhu eno pravo in čisto prisego, da jaz in moja družina iz naše grajske gmajne ta cajt tega sedanjega gospoda Tomana nobene lesnike nisem posekal in tudi nobene nisem zase posekati pustil, tako gvišno kakor meni Bog in ta čista, brez vsega madeža spočeta Devica mati Marija in vsi božji svetniki na mojo poslednjo uro pomagati hoče[jo]. Amen.]

### I. kategorija: usmeritev kazni

Kategorija daje odgovor na vprašanje, koga doletijo posledice, navedene v izjavi. V pravnih prisežnih obrazcih prvega modela so vsi teksti usmerjeni v tistega, ki prisego izreka, saj gre za visoko formalizirani pravni žanr in je funkcija teksta v kontekstu sodnih procesov nedvoumna.

### II. kategorija: opredelitev kazni

Kategorija odgovarja na vprašanje, kako je v tekstu opredeljena posledica, ki se obeta izjavljalcu ali naslovniku glede na usmeritev I. kategorije:

- a. *nedosegljivost nebes*: duša, na večne čase ločena od nebeškega kraljestva (50);
- b. *prekletstvo*: zavrženo, frdamano bitje (50);
- c. *telesna kazen za časa življenja*: tudi na tem svetu mene (pričo) štrafaj (77, 79, 81).

Verodostojnost izrečenega so govorci namesto z obetom potencialne kazni opredelili s pomočjo primerjave z obetom božje pomoči v zadnjih urah človekovega telesnega (zemeljskega) življenja; ubeseditve torej v veliki večini sledijo vzorcu »tako gotovo (*gvišno*), kot je gotova božja pomoč v času, ko se bo moja duša ločila od telesa«; gl. 30–49, 51–80, 82–100). Da je dodatek obeta pogube oz. prekletstva v pravnih obrazcih redek, Ribnikar primerjalno potrjuje na podlagi gradiva celotne zbirke, saj ju prepozna le pri dveh zapisovalcih: »Sklicevanje zapriseženecv na kazen pogubljenja, če ne govori[jo] resnice, sta v prisegi zapisala le Polak in Breznik« (1976: 39).



### III. kategorija: izvršna sila/kaznovalec

Kategorija odgovarja na vprašanje, kdo ali kaj izvrši kazen kot neposredni ali posredni kaznovalec, tj. avtoriteta, zmožna uresničitve sankcij, če so te upravičene. Ker so v mnogih tekstih uporabljeni izpusti (*etc.*), na mestih, kjer so vloge kaznovalca samoumevne, zgledeov nismo opremili s številčnimi vrednostmi:

- a. *nadnaravno bitje*: angeli, Sveti duh, Bog Oče, [Bog] Sin, Devica Marija;
- b. *svetnik*: vsi svetniki (brez konkretnih poimenovanj svetnikov).

Zaradi izrazitega ponavljanja sestavin v drugem in četrtem delu zgradbe priseg in le manjših odstopov, je mogoče model pravnih prisežnih obrazcev na podlagi pregledanih 70 tekstov posplošeno ubesediti kot:

*Jaz [ime] prisežem proti/k/v/(brez predloga) Bogu [Očetu], Sinu in Svetemu duhu, da je [vsebina zaveze] tako gotovo, kot je gotova božja pomoč v času, ko se bo moja duša ločila od telesa.*

Po jezikovni plati je pomembno vprašanje rabe predlogov v prisežnem gradivu, kar zgornja ubeseditvev nakazuje z variantami med poševnicami. Po pogostosti si jezikovna sredstva pri opredeljevanju orientacije prisege k neki avtoriteti (izvršni sili ali kaznovalcu v III. kategoriji) sledijo tako: *proti* (31-krat), *k* (22-krat), *v* (12-krat) in brez predloga (6-krat). Brez sklica na avtoriteto je le en primer. Predlog *pri* v zgradbi učinkuje kot dodatna podkrepitev in zato nekakšna (neobvezna) podaljšava oz. razširitev<sup>15</sup> – naveden je v drugem delu desetih obrazcev (89–91, 94–100), in sicer vsakič v zvezah »pri mojem/svojem životu«. Odsotnost rabe predloga *na* je mogoče pripisati dejstvu, da so prisežniki prisege v obravnavanem obdobju izvajali skoraj izključno tudi z neverbalnimi znaki, najpogosteje s tremi dvignjenimi prsti desne roke, ki je bila t. i. *čista* ali *prisežna roka*, ter z levo roko na svetem (prav tako simbolno čistem) predmetu, skozi katerega se je prisežnik skliceval na avtoriteto Boga (gl. tudi Orel 2009: 15, 20). To bi pomenilo podvojitev označevalca v ubeseditvi teksta in v spremljajoči kretnji. Pomen izbire predlogov za orientacijo razmerij znotraj modela zaveze se med drugim odraža tudi v mlajši frazeologizaciji zveze *prisegati na X*, pri čemer X predstavlja nekaj, kar izjavljalec vrednoti kot pomembno: *prisegati na redno jutranjo telovadbo, prisegati na ekološko pridelano hrano* ipd.

Pravni prisežni obrazci so edina besedila, v katerih je izjavljalec tudi opredelil in s prilastkom vrednotil svojo prisego; najpogosteje so jim prisežniki pripisovali attribute: *prava, resnična, verna, čista, izrecna* (slednja le enkrat v tekstu št. 55). Edini primerljivi obrazec v sodobnem gradivu so t. i. »častne besede«. Te so vsakokrat eksplicitno označene kot *častne* v kontekstu skupnosti, ki jih podrobneje opredeljuje in uveljavlja (pionirji, skavti, taborniki itd., gl. Kvartič 2023: 131, 143, 145, 246, 264).

<sup>15</sup> Zagovarjamo stališče, da je koncept podaljšave oz. razširitve, kadar se pomen izhodiščnega teksta ne spremeni, in dopolnitve, kadar se pomen izhodiščnega teksta spremeni, mogoče uporabiti tudi pri obravnavah žanra priseg in besednih zavez nasploh. Po Permjakovu (1970) je uporabnost konceptov razširitve in dopolnitve za sodobno paremiologijo na slovenskem gradivu utemeljil Matej Metec (2022).

## II. FOLKLORNI OBRAZCI KLETEV IN ZAVEZ (19. STOL.)

Drugi model smo oblikovali na podlagi starejših kratkih folklornih obrazcev iz zbirke narodopisnega gradiva Karla Štreklja,<sup>16</sup> ki jih Inštitut za slovensko narodopisje ZRC SAZU hrani v svojem arhivu, javno dostopni pa so v obliki skeniranih rokopisov na spletni strani Digitalne knjižnice Slovenije (dLib) pod naslovom Rokopisna zapuščina Karla Štreklja. Teksti so v nadaljevanju izpisani po vrsti, kakor so jih Štrekljevi dopisniki uvrstili na seznam, njihovo številčenje z izvirnih dokumentov pa zaradi preglednosti na spodnjem seznamu ni upoštevano. Gre za gradivo, ki je v naslovih rokopisov vsebovalo indice, da vsebuje kletvam sorodno gradivo (npr. naslova »Kletvine« ali »Kletve, rotiva, rotve«), in zelo verjetno je, da je obrazcev, ki ustrezajo merilom modela, v celotnem arhivu še več, saj so lahko vključeni med reke, pregovore in druge paremiološke žanre, tudi t. i. vraže (prim. Mencej 2017: 56–57), ali pa so vključeni v daljše pripovedno gradivo. Številne rokopisne strani ne vsebujejo drugih metapodatkov, zato gradivo okvirno datiramo v drugo polovico 19. stoletja.

1. *Sem žiher pes, da ni res.* (ŠZ 6/189: 3)
2. *Napravim rajši takoj harikiri, kakor da bi tebi kaj povedal.* (ŠZ 6/189: 3)
3. *S tega mesta de se ne ganem, če ni to res!* (ŠZ 6/208: 2)
4. *Černe mravlje de me snedó, če je takó!* (ŠZ 6/208: 2)
5. *Male miši de me živiga snedó, če je tako!* (ŠZ 6/208: 2)
6. *Takiga de male miši snedó, ko je on!* (ŠZ 6/208: 2)
7. *Če je to res, ták de postanem, ko en ključ!* (ŠZ 6/208: 2)
8. *Čern de bo, ko žuža (?),<sup>17</sup> če ni to rés!* (ŠZ 6/208: 2)
9. *Kúj [...] de me reberna (= smrt) vzame, če je to tako!*<sup>18</sup> (ŠZ 6/208: 2)
10. *Pamet de me mine, če je to laž!* (ŠZ 6/208: 2)
11. *Če sem jaz to govoril, de mi jezik na nebó prisáhne!*<sup>19</sup> (ŠZ 6/208: 2)
12. *Čeljusti de mu riz (= lat: de) pánte pádnejo, kdor je to rekel!* (ŠZ 6/208: 2)
13. *Zemlja de me požrè, če mu odpustím.* (ŠZ 6/208: 2)
14. *Mozgi de se mi posušé, če je to moj otrok!* (ŠZ 6/208: 2–3)

<sup>16</sup> Gradivo navedenih kratkih folklornih žanrov iz Štrekljeve zbirke je v tej obliki in obsegu objavljeno prvič, zato smo ga v primerjavi z gradivom prvega in tretjega modela nekoliko izdatneje opremili s komentarji, ki resda ne zadoščajo za podrobno kontekstualizacijo, olajšajo pa prepoznavo številnih intertekstualnih vezi z drugimi folklornimi enotami, zlasti povedkami, ki jih v prvem in tretjem modelu nismo uspeli prepoznati v tolikšnem obsegu.

<sup>17</sup> Najverjetneje sorodno z razširjenim primerjalnim frazemom *črn kot žužek/hrošč*, a v kontekstu kazni lahko o izvoru in pomenu počnelosti le ugibamo.

<sup>18</sup> *Kuj* ali *kój*, 'takoj', je v izvirmiku opremljen z razlago v nemščini in sodi med jezikovne znake, ki v številnih tekstih zavez učinkujejo kot izraziti katalizatorji učinka zaveze. V drugih, tudi mlajših kontekstih med take znake v kontekstu besednih zavez prištevamo še npr. *takoj*, *ta moment/trenutek*, *tukaj in zdaj*, *pri (tej) priči* ipd. O frazeologizirani podkrepitvi z zvezo *pri priči*, ki ji prav tako lahko poiščemo izhodiščno pomensko motivacijo v sodnih procesih, gl. tudi *priča* v Snój 2015 in Pleteršnik 2014 ter podrobneje v pravnozgodovinskem kontekstu v Škrubej 2002: 173–176).

<sup>19</sup> Kazni za krivoprisežništvo so v zgodovini pogosto povezane s telesno kaznijo, ki zadeva jezik kot telesno sredstvo greha (prim. Kambič in Budna Kodrič 2004: fol. 3v); na primeru tega in podobnih obrazcev bi lahko ugotavljali tudi svetopisemski vpliv: »Jezik ti bom prilepil na nebo, da boš onemel in jim ne boš več opominjevalec, kajti uporna hiša so.« (SSP3, Ezk 3:26)

15. *Mozgi de mi posahnejo, če sem jaz oče tega otroka!* (ŠZ 6/208: 3)
16. *Černi orli de ti oči izkljujejo, zapeljivka!* (ŠZ 6/208: 3)
17. *Môra (= Alp)<sup>20</sup> de te zaduši!* (ŠZ 6/208: 3)
18. *Roka de mi usáhne, če sem ga jaz udáril!* (ŠZ 6/208: 3)
19. *Noge de mi zastanejo, če sem jaz tam bil!* (ŠZ 6/208: 3)
20. *Z jasniga néba de me stréla ubíje, če besede ne deržim, kar ti obljubim!* (ŠZ 6/208: 3)
21. *Pričo de upredem (= peream),<sup>21</sup> če ni to res!* (ŠZ 6/208: 3)
22. *To babo de mesec noč in dan úrba!* (ŠZ 6/208: 3)
23. *Tudi se reče: Tebe de Mora urba!* (ŠZ 6/208: 3)
24. *Hudobnež! [a] Sreča ti zaspala! [b] Sreče nikoli ne gledal!* (ŠZ 7/43: 1)
25. *Pojdem rajši živ v grob, kakor da bi to storil.* (ŠZ 7/43: 2)
26. *Da bi te mesec urbal!* (ŠZ 9/152, 5: 5)
27. *Da bi te mora urbala!* (ŠZ 9/152, 5: 5)
28. *»Da te tri buteri! Ti butan ti!« je na Štírskem navadna psovka [sic]. Butavka pomenja »assa foetida«, Teufelsdreck. (Že v »Mittheilungen des historischen Vereins für Krain« sem tega hudega duha omenil in ga priméril iranskemu Daéva Buiti etc.)* (ŠZ 9/153, 2: 2)
29. *Med Pohorci sem našel psovko [sic] deselj. »Da bi te deselj<sup>22</sup> odnesel.« Več nisem mogel o njem zvediti. Štírski Nemci: Du verflückster Daschel. (Štrekelj: cf. bair. Dâse Hexe.)* (ŠZ 9/153, 3: 3)
30. *Vrag ti grud pretekâl!* (ŠZ 9/153, 7: 7)
31. *Zdravje ti zâspalo!* (ŠZ 9/153, 7: 7)
32. *Uíma te vzela! !* (ŠZ 9/153, 7: 7)
33. *Kuga te vgnjela!* (ŠZ 9/153, 7: 7)
34. *Naglica te zadela!* (ŠZ 9/153, 7: 7)
35. *S. Petka te potila!* (ŠZ 9/153, 7: 7)
36. *Bog te ubil!* (ŠZ 9/153, 7: 7)

<sup>20</sup> Nem. *Alp-* ali *Albtraum*, 'nočna mora'. V nemškem ustnem izročilu so za nočne more najpogosteje kriva škratom podobna bitja – nem. *Alp* (sg.), *Alpen* (pl.) slovar opredeljuje kot »koboldhaftes, gespenstisches Wesen«, 'škratom podobna strašljiva bitja'), ki človeka na različne načine mučijo, dušijo in mu ne pustijo spati (Duden 2023). V slovanskem izročilu je vzrok za nočne more pripisan delovanju bitja, imenovanega *mora* ali *mara* (gl. Levkieskaja 2004b: 178–179); enako v slovenskem folklornem sistemu, v katerem ima mora največkrat podobo starke, gl. npr. Matičetov 1968: 225 in podrobno predstavitev predstav o teh bitjih v Kroepej 2008: 323).

<sup>21</sup> Lat. glagol *pereō* s pomenoma 'umreti' in 'izginiti' lahko povezujemo vsaj s telesno smrtjo. Prim. splošno razširjeno prakso ritualnega (besednega) izganjanja v luči slovanskih tradicijskih verovanj (Agapkina, Vinogradova 1999: 392–397) in primerljivo besedno izničevanje v slovenščini in estonščini v Babič, Voolaid 2018, ki se je kot pogost mehanizem ohranilo tudi v sodobnih kletvicah. Ne smemo pa enačiti folklornega konteksta v latinščini kot metafiziku, ki služi za opis pomena, ter v slovanskem oz. slovenskem folklornem kontekstu izpričanega primera, v katerem je glagol *upresti*. Ta vzbuja zanimanje, saj ga izmed dostopnih jezikovnih virov najdemo le v *Slovensko-nemškem slovarju*, v katerem Pleteršnik (2014) navaja nemško razlago 'sich wund spinnen'.

<sup>22</sup> Iz istega vira je besedo *deselj* v *Slovensko-nemški slovar* vključil tudi Pleteršnik (2014).

### I. kategorija: usmeritev kazni

Kategorija daje odgovor na vprašanje, koga doletijo posledice, navedene v izjavi.<sup>23</sup> Kategorija prisežnika je izražena samo z zaimki in osebnimi glagolskimi oblikami (*me; sem, bom ...*), medtem ko je naslovnik v nekaterih tekstih eksplicitno poimenovan: *baba, hudobnež, butan, zapeljivka* itd.:

- a. *izjavljalec (zaveza)*: 18 primerov (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 25);
- b. *naslovnik (kletev)*: 18 primerov (6, 12, 16, 17, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36).

### II. kategorija: opredelitev kazni

Kategorija odgovarja na vprašanje, kako je v tekstu opredeljena posledica, ki se obeta izjavljalcu ali naslovniku glede na usmeritev I. kategorije:<sup>24</sup>

- a. *smrt*: požrtje (4, 5, 6, \*9, \*12), bolezen (33), živi zakop (25, \*13), neopredeljena (9, \*28, 37), zadušitev (17), udar strele (20), samomor (2);
- b. *bolezen*: odsotnost zdravja (31), kuga (\*33), neznana (\*30,<sup>25</sup> \*35);
- c. *izginotje*: neopredeljeno (21), ugrabi višja sila (\*28, 29, 32);
- d. *trpljenje*: mesec muči [nosi?] (22, 26), mora muči [tlači] (\*17,<sup>26</sup> 23, 27),<sup>27</sup> vrag muči (30);
- e. *telesna poškodba ali omejitev*: ohromitev telesa (19, 3), neznana (\*7), izpah čeljusti (12), zraščanje jezika (11), odmrtje roke (18);
- f. *umska pohaba ali omejitev*:<sup>28</sup> sušenje možganov (14, 15), izguba razuma (10);
- g. *preobrazba*: pes (2), neznana (\*7, \*8);
- h. *nesreča*: izginotje sreče (24a, 24b).<sup>29</sup>

### III. kategorija: izvršna sila/kaznovalec

Kategorija odgovarja na vprašanje, kdo ali kaj izvrši kazen kot neposredni ali posredni kaznovalec, tj. avtoriteta, zmožna uresničitve sankcij, če so te upravičene:

<sup>23</sup> Kriterij razločevanja smo oblikovali zlasti na podlagi glagolskega naklona in redkih kontekstualnih podatkov.

<sup>24</sup> Primeri, označeni z \*, pomenijo tekste, ki nadredni kategoriji le delno ustrezajo, zato smo jih tja uvrstili pogojno. Večinoma gre za tekste, ki so bili prvotno uvrščeni v eno od ostalih kategorij, a dopuščamo alternativne razvrstitve na podlagi morebitne neustrezne opredelitve njihovih semantičnih prvin.

<sup>25</sup> Mogoča je povezava s t. i. kletvami pri materinem mleku, ki so znane v južnoslovanskih izročilih (gl. npr. Detelić in Delić 2012).

<sup>26</sup> Dovršnost glagola nakazuje smrtnost mučenja, a po splošnem verovanju v slovenskem jezikovnem prostoru mora sprva dlje časa muči žrtev z dušenjem ali pitjem krvi, ki kratita spanec (gl. Matičetov 1968; SEL 2004: 34; Kroje 2008: 323; Ivančič Kutin, Mrvič in Kroje Telban 2022: 190–191).

<sup>27</sup> *Mesec* in *mora* imata sicer neposredno povezavo s povzročanjem nespečnosti, ki se v slovanskih tradicijskih verovanjih sama po sebi pogosto pojavlja kot kazen krivih ljudi, hudodelcev in grešnikov (prim. Vinogradova in Gura 1995: 168–171).

<sup>28</sup> Vsi trije teksti v tej podkategoriji so v veliki meri prekrivni, kazen v njih pa se deloma nanaša tudi na telo, ne zgolj na um. O pomenu in izvrih motivacije za kazen, ki kot *brezumje* prizadene umske zmožnosti posameznika, gl. v Agapkina in Belova 2012: 368–371.

<sup>29</sup> V primeru, ki je v tem besedilu naveden pod zaporedno številko 24, lahko razpoznamo dva sklenjena teksta, za katera je mogoče domnevati, da sta se uporabljala ločeno, čeprav se po kletveni funkciji povsem prekrivata, saj oba služita za izraz odrekanja sreče v naslovnikovem življenju.

- a. *poosebljeni naravni elementi in sile*:<sup>30</sup> zemlja (13),<sup>31</sup> strela (\*20), ujma (32), kuga (33), mesec (22);
- b. *nadnaravno bitje*: bog (36), smrt (8), mora (17, 23), vrag (30), buteri (28), deselj (29);
- c. *žival*:<sup>32</sup> mravlje (4), miši (5, 6), črni orli (16);
- d. *svetnik*: sveta Petka (35).<sup>33</sup>

### III. SODOBNI FOLKLORNI OBRAZCI KLETVIC IN ZAVEZ (21. STOL.)

Kronološko je gradivo tretjega modela, s katerim smo preizkusili tri kategorije, najmlajše in sestavljeno iz dveh delov. Prvi del tvorijo teksti iz priloge »Besedilna realizacija pragmatičnih frazemov«, ki je del monografije *Pragmatična frazeologija* (Jakop 2006: 188–212). V kontekstu jezikoslovnega dela so ti teksti obravnavani kot pragmatični frazemi in opremljeni z zgledi iz besedil:

1. *bes me plentaj* (188)
2. *bes te lopi* (188)
3. *bog mi je priča* (189)
4. *častna beseda* (191)
5. *da bi te grom* (192)
6. *da bi te strela* (192)
7. *da bi te zlodej* (192)
8. *da bi te vrag* (192)
9. *da te bes opali* (192)
10. *kurc te gleda* (197)
11. *naj hudič vzame vse skupaj* (200)

<sup>30</sup> Podobno kot v starejši slovenski folkloristični literaturi (npr. Matičetov 1968: 214, 225–226) pri navajanju primerov III. kategorije ločujemo med a) poosebljenimi naravnimi silami ter b) nadnaravnimi bitji. Gre za splošne oznake, ki ne upoštevajo konkretnih kontekstov in prisotnih elementov tradicijskih verovanj, služijo pa enotni in preglednejši klasifikaciji.

<sup>31</sup> Poleg ustaljenih podob zemlje kot mesta pokopa (*biti pod zemljo, spraviti koga pod zemljo*; Pleteršnik 2014), velja pozornost usmeriti zlasti na frazeme in paremije, v katerih je zemlja personificirana kot dejavni udeleženec v procesu usodne interakcije s človekom, npr.: *zemlja vzame* koga 'umreti' (*Rajnkega Mirkota je spomladi zemlja vzela.*); *bo zemlja ven vzela* (*Tudi če se ne pozdravi, bo pa že zemlja ven vzela.*); *ne biti vreden, da te zemlja nosi* (*Ta nikoli ni bil vreden, da ga zemlja nosi!*); verovajska sodba: *zemlja si vzame, kar je njenega*. Personificirana podoba zemlje je pogosta: *izginil je, kot bi ga zemlja požrla, kot bi se v zemljo udril* (SSKJ2). Zanimivo povezavo med rabo kletvenih obrazcev in zemljo vsebuje frazem *kleti, da se zemlja tresse* (SSKJ2). Zemlja ima v več verovajskih sistemih (tudi slovanskih) neposredno povezavo s človeško minljivostjo kot zadnje počivališče trupla po telesni smrti (Belova, Vinogradova in Toporkov, 1995: 315–321; prim. z *danes človek, jutri črna z[emlja]* v Pleteršnik 2014).

<sup>32</sup> Število ima pomembno vlogo v folklornem sistemu. O tem pričajo števila živali v motivih povedk (Kropej Telban 1995, 2015) ali števila pri odštevanju in magijskih folklornih obrazcih, kot so zagovori (Babič 2015: 101, 109) ter navsezadnje v stopnjevanju in evfemizaciji nemagijskih folklornih obrazcev – kletvic (Babič 2015: 42). Zaradi tega smo ohranili slovnično kategorijo števila nespremenjeno.

<sup>33</sup> Sveta Petka, bizantinska krščanska svetnica, puščavnica in spokornica, ki je živela na prelomu iz 10. v 11. stoletje, se v nekaterih južnoslovanskih kontekstih povezuje z Mokoš, slovanskim ženskim božanstvom rodovitnosti. Povezavo omogoča motiv preje (gl. Kropej 2008: 116–117, prim. z Mencej 2013: 45–59).

12. *naj me hudič (vzame)* (200)
13. *naj me koklja brčne* (200)
14. *naj me strela (ubije/zadane/udari/rukne)* (200)
15. *naj me vrag* (201)
16. *naj me vrag/bog pocitra* (201)
17. *naj me vrag vzame* (201)
18. *naj vas bes lopi* (201)
19. *nekam se zaleti* (201)
20. *pejte k vragu* (203)
21. *pejte v kurac* (203)
22. *pejt/pejte v rit* (203)
23. *pejte se srat* (203)
24. *pička (ti) mater[i]jna* (203)
25. *piši me v uho* (203)
26. *pojdi se solit* (204)
27. *pojdi v kurac* (204)
28. *pojdi v pizdo (mater[i]jno)* (204)
29. *prmejdun* (205)
30. *prmejduš* (205)
31. *primojdun* (205)
32. *primojduš* (205)
33. *pri moji duši* (205)
34. *pri moji veri* (205)
35. *roko na srce* (205)
36. *solit se pojdi* (206)
37. *spelji se* (206)
38. *to je moja zadnja beseda* (208)

Poleg navedenih so zanimivi še primeri zgradb tipa *ni vrag* (202), *ni hudič* (202), *ni šment* (202), ki odražajo visoko mero prepričanosti govorca v ubesedeno, ne da bi govorec pri tem impliciral prvoosebno vpletenost kot nosilec morebitnih posledic, kot tisti, ki jamči, zagotavlja. Razmerje teh zgradb s folklornimi obrazci s seznama se pokaže z zamenjavo zveze *ni + bitje*, npr. *Ni vrag, če se ne bo to še kdaj ponovilo : Vrag me vzemi, če se ne bo to še kdaj ponovilo*. Tudi pri tem se kaže razširjanje oz. spreminjanje funkcij, ki jih imajo obrazci besednih zvez v sodobnem vsakdanjem sporazumevanju – v primerjavi s starejšim gradivom drugega modela je izrazit zlasti premik v hierarhiji funkcij posamičnih tekstov, in sicer od konativne funkcije k emotivni in fatični (Jakobson 1989: 154–156; prim. Ljung 2011). Zgradbenim tipom *ni + bitje* so sorodni tudi izrazi s predlogom *za*, npr. *za boga (svetega/milega)* (211), *za božji čas* (211), *za pet kristusovih ran* (211), *za pet kriščeveh ran* (211), *za prmej* (211), *za prmejduš* (211), *za (sveto) kriščevo voljo* (211), *za vraga* (211) – naštetih primeri so izpostavljeni zlasti v vzklkih.

V drugem delu dodajamo nekaj izbranih primerov iz avtorjevih terenskih zapiskov (Mrvič 2022–2023). Spodnje gradivo služi dopolnitvi modela, a ker je bilo zapisano različno natančno, posamezne tekste navajamo v poknjženi obliki, opremili pa smo jih z

okvirnimi podatki, ki obsegajo kraj in leto zapisa ter spol in starost govorca; kjer natančen podatek o starosti ni bil na voljo, je dodana približna ocena zapisovalca.

39. *Ja, dam glavo stran, da je imel vsaj dva metra!* [Sevnica, 2023, m., 51.]  
 40. \**Verjemite, ko vam rečem, da bi v tistih časih polovica zgodovinarjev dala roko stran za tako tehnologijo.* [Ljubljana, 2023, m., 43.]  
 41. *Roko na srce, tale se še dolgo ne bo pobral.* [Ljubljana, 2022, m., 34.]  
 42. *Ah ... Bog me štrafaj, če ni res!* [Boštanj, 2023, ž., 64.]  
 43. *Ja pa model, nisem to jaz na sliki, no, če ti rečem, majke mi!* [Ljubljana, 2023, ž., 22.]  
 44. *O, ti lažnivec, ti, da bi se ti jezik posušil, ko take praviš!* [Krško, 2022, m., 43.]  
 45. *Se mi lahko takoj jezik posuši, če ni bilo tako.* [Sevnica, 2022, ž., 46.]  
 46. *Ne, dam glavo preč, če ne bo drugi teden spet zatežila.* [Sevnica, 2023, m., 53.]  
 47. *Preklet naj bom, če mu še kdaj kaj verjamem.* [Boštanj, 2023, m., 73.]  
 48. *Bog me, da nisem!* [Brežice, 2023, ž., 39.]  
 49. *Bog daj, da bi ti gobec razneslo!* [Odziv na kihanje bližnjega; Boštanj, 2022, m., <20.]  
 50. *Daj bog, da ti nikoli več ne rata!* [Boštanj, 2023, m., 58.]  
 51. *Bog/Pas mater, če ni res!* [Obe varianti istega govorca; Krško, 2023, m., 53.]  
 52. *Ja, pa lahko ti stokrat prisežem, da ga nisem jaz klical!* [Sevnica, 2023, m., 32.]  
 53. *Prisežem ti na vse, kar imam, da bi ga vzela, če bi ga le lahko.* [Ljubljana, 2022, ž., 55.]  
 54. *Gorje ti, če se mi še kdaj zlažeš!* [Sevnica, 2023, m., 63.]

### I. kategorija: usmeritev kazni

Kategorija daje odgovor na vprašanje, kdo je deležnik posledic, navedenih v izjavi:

- a. *izjavljalec (zaveza)*: 28 primerov (1, 3, 4, 11–17, 29–35, 38, 39, 41–43, 45–48, 51–53);
- b. *naslovník (kletev)*: 25 primerov (2, 5, 6–9, 10, 11, 18–28, 36, 37, 44, 49, 50, 54).

### II. kategorija: opredelitev kazni

Kategorija odgovarja na vprašanje, kako je v tekstu opredeljena posledica, ki se obeta izjavljalcu ali naslovníku glede na usmeritev I. kategorije:

- a. *smrt*: obglavljenje (39, 46), udar groma/strele (5, 6, 14);
- b. *izginotje*: ugrabitev (7, 8, 12, 15, 16, 17, 20, 48, 53), povezava s spolovili ali z izločali (21, 22, 27, 28), neopredeljeno (37);
- c. *trpljenje*: neopredeljeno (1, \*7, \*8, \*15, \*42, \*48);<sup>34</sup>
- d. *telesna poškodba*: brca (13), udarec (2, 9, 18),<sup>35</sup> ožganje (9), odsek roke (40), nezgoda (19), posušenje jezika (44, 45), poškodba ust (49);
- e. *nesreča*: splošno (47, 50, 54), prekletstvo duše (29–33, \*47);

<sup>34</sup> V primerih, kjer je očitna elipsa (npr. *naj me vrag*), smo tekste prvotno razvrstili v podkategorijo izginotja (*naj me vrag vzame*), drugotno pa še v podkategorijo trpljenja, saj kazni ni dovolj natančno opredeljena.

<sup>35</sup> Zaradi pomanjkanja konteksta upoštevamo dva pomena glagola *opaliti*, in sicer 'udariti' in 'ožgati'.

- f. *kazen sorodstva*: matere (24, 43, 51);
- g. *statusno oškodovanje*: izguba imetja (11, 53), izguba časti (4, \*34);
- h. *drugo*: neopredeljeno ali nejasno (10, 23, 25, 26, 42, 38), ni kazni (3, 35, 41).

### III. kategorija: izvršna sila/kaznovalec

Kategorija odgovarja na vprašanje, kdo ali kaj izvrši kazen kot neposredni ali posredni kaznovalec, tj. avtoriteta, zmožna uresničitve sankcij, če so te upravičene:

- a. *poosebljeni naravni elementi in sile*: grom (5), strela (6, 14);
- b. *nadnaravno bitje*: bes (1, 2, 9, 18), bog (3, 16, 42, 48, 49, 50, 51), hudič (11, 12), vrag (8, 15, 16, 17, 20), zlodej (7);
- c. *živali*: koklja (13), pes (51);
- d. *neznano*: kurec (10).

V tekstu št. 40, ki je dodatno označen z znakom (\*), nismo prepoznali jezikovnih sestavin, značilnih za zgradbo folklornega obrazca zaveze. Tekst št. 40 namreč lahko kot frazem uvrstimo med izraze opisne ali deskriptivne kategorije (frazem lahko za razliko od folklornega obrazca opisuje dejanja in stanja tretjih oseb), medtem ko je folklorne obrazce mogoče preučevati le v okviru njihovega izvajanja, zaradi česar jih uvrščamo v performativno kategorijo. Določene zgradbe folklornih obrazcev so se z izpusti sestavin preoblikovale do te mere, da se je ob pomanjkanju zunajjezikovnega konteksta povečala njihova dvoumnost, zlasti ko izpade zaimsek, na podlagi katerega lahko sklepamo o usmeritvi obrazca, kar je opazno pri tekstu št. 39 (*Bog mater, če ni res! oz. Pas mater, če ni res!*). Tega ne bi mogli ustrezno klasificirati brez razširjenega konteksta, ki nam pove, da je govorec z izjavo podkrepil ravnokar povedano in s tem jamčil za resničnost svojih besed – torej je obrazec usmeril proti sebi. Nadalje opazimo, da dodatek besede »lahko« v zgradbah tekstov 45 in 52 kaže neke vrste mehčanje obrazca, saj ta ne pomeni, da se je z izrečenim nekdo zares zavezal, temveč da se je pripravljen zavezati, kar pa kljub temu učinkuje kot »prava« zaveza. Poudariti je treba, da tekste zavez v tretjem modelu obravnavamo izključno kot sredstva podkrepitve povedanega, pri čemer jih najverjetneje niti izjavljalci niti naslovniki niso šteli za dejanske zaveze, ki bi jim sledile resne posledice. Posebno omembo si na tem mestu zaslužijo kletvice, ki smo jih v rabi zabeležili na terenu in se lahko povsem zamenljivo pojavljajo na mestih, kjer bi pričakovali folklorne obrazce besednih zavez, prim.: *Glej, častna [beseda], da ga ne bom nikoli več pustil delati samega. : Jebemti/jebenti, da ga ne bom nikoli več pustil delati samega*, vendar jih zaradi obsega razprave nismo uvrstili na seznam gradiva. V primerih, ko so uporabljene kletvice, največkrat pride do spremenjenega konteksta izrekanja, saj izbira žanra kletvic po eni strani pomeni poudarjeno emotivno funkcijo, ki pa jo po drugi strani zaradi vulgarnosti besedja spremljajo določene omejitve v vsakdanji rabi. V povezavi s kletvicami in tabuiziranim besedjem velja izpostaviti še proces evfemizacije, ki je s preoblikovanjem sestavin zaznamoval zgradbe številnih obrazcev tretjega modela. Po številu izstopajo obrazci od 29. do 32. primera, tj. obrazci s sestavino *duša*.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> O etimologiji te skupine izrazov, v kateri so ohranjeni odrazi evfemizacije posamičnih sestavin, podrobneje v Furlan 2017–.



## NEKAJ SKLEPNIH MISLI

Prenos gradiva v tri izbrane kategorije izhodiščnega razširjenega žanrskega modela besednih zavez je postopoma izoblikoval tri primerljive, a bistveno okrnjene modele izrazito raznolikoga gradiva, ki nam že ob prvi poskusni primerjavi gradiva ponudijo zanimive podatke, s katerimi lahko poglobimo razumevanje folklornega žanra zavez. Poudariti velja, da si sami modeli sledijo kronološko po starosti virov, ne po starosti obrazcev, ki so razvrščeni vanje. Teoretično je denimo mogoče, da so posamični obrazci tretjega modela po izvoru starejši od obrazcev drugega modela, nekateri izmed njih so se zagotovo uporabljali v 19. stoletju, a ker so podatki o rabi omejeni, lahko zanesljivo sklepamo zgolj o tem, da so vsi navedeni teksti starejši od virov, v katerih so bili zapisani. Z razširitvijo gradivske osnove, zlasti terenskega dela, bi lahko povečali možnost za natančnejše sklepanje o tem, iz katerega dela daljših prisežnih obrazcev (ne glede na njihov izvor in žanrske spremembe) so se razvili kratki folklorni obrazci besednih zavez, kot jih poznamo in uporabljamo danes. V tem oziru si lahko folkloristične raziskave pomagajo tudi z dognanji frazeologije in paremiologije, vendar zgolj jezikoslovni podatki ne zadoščajo za poglobljene analize, ki bi z ravni teksta zadostno segle na raven teksture in konteksta. Ugotovimo lahko, da se reference sestavin tekstov v tretjem modelu, ki okvirno predstavljajo sodobno jezikovno gradivo in gradivo s konca 20. stoletja, bolj navezujejo na pravne prisežne obrazce prvega modela kot obrazce zavez in kletev drugega modela. To ponuja hipotezo o prehodu tekstualnih drobcev pravnih praks v širšo jezikovno rabo in njihovo popularizacijo, ta pa je utegnila med kratkimi folklornimi žanri slovenskega folklornega sistema izpodrinuti starejše folklorne obrazce. Ti starejši obrazci zavez, kakor kaže gradivo iz Štrekljeve zbirke, vsebujejo nezanemarljiv delež elementov predkrščanskih verovanjskih sistemov – kar v žanrskem modelu zavez med drugim odraža kategorija izvršne sile, ki je v tekstih Štrekljeve zbirke zaradi tega težje določljiva. Z razpravo smo želeli izpostaviti to in druge drobne, a nezanemarljive značilnosti tega folklornega žanra.

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- ŠZ 7/43, 1–2 = »Reki in pregovori«, zapisal Anton Kupljen.
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VERBAL BONDS IN THE SLOVENIAN FOLKLORE SYSTEM:  
A SEMIOTIC OUTLINE OF THE GENRE FRAMEWORK

ROK MRVIČ



The article examines the text-oriented genre framework of verbal bonds within the Slovenian folklore system, based on archival sources, published studies, and field research data. It introduces selected categories of an evolving folklore genre model designed to assist in interpreting both historical and contemporary materials, exemplified by three groups of sources: legal oath forms from the mid-18th century, short folklore forms of curses and verbal bonds from the late 19th century, and various short folklore forms collected in the 21st century. Each group is categorized using a general semiotic model of verbal commitments, providing new perspectives for the folkloristic study of this genre. Despite their prevalence, these texts have not been systematically studied in Slovenian folklore until now.

The collected material was categorized based on semantic-pragmatic features, reflecting linguistic realizations of verbal commitments extracted from the available legal-historical literature. The general model of verbal bonds was simplified into three primary categories: direction of punishment, definition of the punishment, and the enforcer's role. In the current phase of research, texts directed towards the declarant are marked as "potential" verbal bonds due to insufficient contextual data, making it challenging to determine their impact and function accurately. Although they are not part of folklore system, legal oath forms from the 18th century provide the most reliable examples of verbal commitments.

By organizing materials into three distinct models based on the extended genre framework, the study offers valuable insights into the evolution and understanding of the genre. The models follow the chronological age of sources rather than the forms within them, acknowledging that some forms might be older than the sources documenting them. Expanding the data, particularly from fieldwork, could enhance understanding of how short folklore forms developed from longer legal oaths. The study suggests that modern short forms relate more to legal oaths than to the 19th-century commitments and curses, hypothesizing a transition of legal practices into broader linguistic use and their contextual and to some degree functional transformation within the folklore system. This transition might have marginalized older verbal bond text, which have included a larger number of pre-Christian elements and caused that they are relatively rare in contemporary everyday use of short folklore forms. The discussion highlights the need for further folkloristic research to explore these nuances comprehensively.

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# To See and to Respect: On the Relations between Humans, Supernatural Beings and the Landscape in Northeast Iceland

— Ana Svetel —

This article explores selected aspects of relationships between humans, supernatural beings and the landscape in Northeast Iceland. The landscape is understood as a changeable and dynamic dimension, encompassing all the continuously emerging processes of the terrain, vegetation, land, water, gases and atmospheric phenomena. In local perceptions, both humans, with their social practices and meaning-making, and non-humans – in our case especially supernatural beings – are integrated into this dynamic landscape. Belief traditions and interactions with the supernatural have an influence on agricultural and everyday practices, as well as on the social relationships within the community. Moreover, they are always situated in a specific environment. This intertwining of visible and invisible, material and immaterial elements and actors brings forth the question of respect, through which we can think the complex relationality between humans, non-humans and the landscape.

**KEYWORDS:** landscape, belief traditions, supernatural beings, vernacular beliefs, hidden people, elves, ghosts, Iceland

Prispevek obravnava nekatere vidike razmerij med ljudmi, nadnaravnimi bitji in krajino na severovzhodni Islandiji, pri čemer krajino razume kot izrazito spremeljivo in gibljivo razsežnost, v katero so vključeni vsi nenehno nastajajoči procesi površja, rastja, zemlje in voda, plinov in atmosferskih pojavov. V lokalnih percepcijah pa so v to dinamično krajino vpeti tako ljudje s svojimi praksami in upomenjanji kot tudi neljudje – v našem primeru predvsem nadnaravna bitja. Verovajske tradicije in stiki z nadnaravnim med drugim vplivajo na agrarne in vsakodnevne prakse prebivalcev, pa tudi na družbene odnose v skupnosti. Obenem so zmeraj uprostorjeni v konkretnih okoljih. V tem prepletu vidnih in nevidnih, snovnih in nesnovnih elementov in akterjev se poraja vprašanje spoštovanja, s pomočjo katerega lahko mislimo kompleksno relacijskost med ljudmi, neljudmi in krajino.

**KLJUČNE BESEDE:** krajina, verovajske tradicije, nadnaravna bitja, vernakularna verovanja, skriti ljudje, vilinci, duhovi, Islandija

## INTRODUCTION

In Iceland, numerous beliefs are widespread and directly embedded in the landscape and time (see, for example, Gunnell 2001; Gunnell 2004; for a broader Nordic context,

see Gunnell 2009). This became evident in the course of the ethnographic research<sup>1</sup> I conducted in the northeast of the island, in the municipalities of Langanesbyggð and Svalbarðshreppur,<sup>2</sup> between March and August 2019.<sup>3</sup> Although my primary research focus was not on belief traditions *per se* but rather the temporal dimensions of the landscape, especially weather, seasonality, and light and darkness (Svetel 2022), many interlocutors spontaneously brought forth elements of vernacular beliefs (Bowman and Valk 2012) associated with specific (micro)locations that were part of their everyday lives. Thus, I quite unexpectedly gathered personal testimonies and narratives reflecting the relationships between humans, supernatural beings and the landscape. These relationships are the focus of this article.

In this context, I understand the landscape<sup>4</sup> as a distinctly changeable and dynamic dimension, encompassing all continuously emerging processes of terrain, vegetation, land, water, gases and atmospheric phenomena (Ingold 1993), co-created with embodied, experiential, perceptive and “conversational” meanings (Lund and Benediktsson 2010). It is inscribed with language and linguistic practices through narratives, toponyms and mythologies (Basso 1988; Telban 2016). Basso gives the example of the Western Apache to illustrate the point that talking about the landscape also reveals perceptions of one’s own ways of appropriating and domesticating spaces.

For whenever the members of a community speak about their landscape – whenever they name it, or classify it, or evaluate it, or move to tell stories about it – they unthinkingly represent it in ways that are compatible with shared understandings of how, in the fullest sense, they know themselves to occupy it. (Basso 1988: 101)

Similarly, Valk and Sävborg note that “[e]nvironment is not a mere background or surrounding for stories, songs, and other expressive forms; it is sensed and intimately known reality” (Valk and Sävborg 2018: 8). Many anthropologists, ethnologists, geographers and other scholars who study the relationships between humans and the landscape emphasise that these relationships are not predetermined, objective facts. Instead, they are fundamentally co-determined by social and cultural factors, including symbolic, experiential, spiritual, sensory, material and other dimensions (see, for example, Ingold 1993;

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<sup>1</sup> The research was carried out within the framework of the Young Researchers Programme of the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency and within the ARIS research programme entitled Ethnological research of cultural knowledge, practices and forms of socialities (P6-0187).

<sup>2</sup> The two municipalities merged into one in the summer of 2022.

<sup>3</sup> The ethnographic research involved participant observation, semi-structured and unstructured interviews, as well as informal conversations with residents of the municipalities of Langanesbyggð and Svalbarðshreppur, both those living in the two settlements of Þórshöfn (approx. 370 inhabitants) and Bakkafjörður (approx. 60 inhabitants), and with the agrarian population residing on farms scattered across the municipalities, mainly engaged in sheep farming. The methodological background is explained in more detail in the doctoral dissertation (Svetel 2022).

<sup>4</sup> I will use the term landscape, although semantically it often overlaps with the concepts of place and environment (see, for example, Casey 1996; Ingold 2000; Harvey 2011 [2009]; de Certeau 2007 [1990]). This is also evident in certain quotations later in the article.



Hirsch 1995; Relph 1985; Tilley 1994; Tuan 1977; Casey 1996; Wylie 2003; Jóhannesdóttir 2010; Bajič and Svetel 2023). In addressing the construction of places, folklorists highlight the importance of telling and listening to stories (Valk and Sävborg 2018: 8). In this symbolic construction of places, both “grand” stories, such as the Sagas in the case of Iceland, and fragments of family or village memories, anecdotes, local toponymic explanations and other narrative elements play an important role.

Whether in the context of the recorded (mythical) history in the landscape (Hastrup 2008), which Halink (2014) calls the “Icelandic mythscape”, or in the case of family narratives about interactions with supernatural beings, it is against the backdrop of such collective, oral or written materials that the process of familiarising the physical surroundings and increasing the landscape’s cultural proximity takes place. Valk and Sävborg emphasise that “[t]he landscape, as it becomes storied, turns from a passive surrounding into an active participant in creating the supernatural environment” (Valk and Sävborg 2018: 10). This diverse, spatially embedded folklore tradition is also referred to as place-lore. It is “a concept that refers to a symbiotic relationship between traditional communities and their environment, between tangible reality and the storyworld” (Hiimäe 2007 [2004] in Valk and Sävborg 2018: 9).

In this article, I will not delve into the Sagas and other canonised Icelandic literature in prose or verse but will instead focus on my ethnographic material related to elves [*álfar*], hidden people [*huldufólk*],<sup>5</sup> the stones where they are believed to dwell [*álfasteinar*], as well as ghosts and interactions with the dead. In folk narratives, elves and hidden people are generally used synonymously. They are supernatural beings similar to humans, mainly engaged in agriculture, attributed with an archaic, pre-industrial lifestyle, and are rarely visible (see, for example, Hafstein 2000: 89; Gunnell 2007). It is important to note, as emphasised by Gunnell (2018), Hafstein (2000), and Heijnen (2005; 2010; 2014), that in Iceland, the supernatural sphere is often revealed to people through dreams. The purpose of this article is to demonstrate that narratives about supernatural apparitions are always connected with specific landscapes, spatially embedded in particular locations, so that we can understand them as part of place-lore. In fact, place-lore “highlights a variety of expressive forms that manifest close bonds between humans, places and the environment” (Valk and Sävborg 2018: 9). As we will see, these narratives and beliefs also play a role in spatialising certain memories and illustrating social norms and rules (Gunnell 2018). Experiences of interactions between humans and non-humans, especially the ontological status of the latter, have proven to be highly ambivalent and touch upon numerous methodological and epistemological crossroads (see, for example, Holbraad 2008; Nyce, Talja and Dekker 2015; Lien and Pálsson 2021). I will address the role of such beliefs and narratives in interpreting social norms, rules and prohibitions, as well as ambivalence towards them in the final part of the article.

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<sup>5</sup> The related terms are *huldumaður* (a man of the hidden people) and *huldukona* (a woman of the hidden people).

## EMPLACED BELIEF TRADITIONS IN NORTHEAST ICELAND

The Icelandic landscape is replete with numerous legends related to (often mythologised) historical events, toponyms and supernatural beings. Knowledge about the landscape is thus inextricably linked with knowledge about the past and traditional beliefs. For instance, Kirsten Hastrup argues that in Iceland the landscape is a “well-known history” (Hastrup 2008: 73). She claims that the topography of the island “may look historically empty, but it certainly feels packed with meaning and memory” (Hastrup 2008: 73). Additionally, this “spatialisation” of the past was part of the romantic project of mythologisation of the Icelandic landscape. An example of the latter is Goðafoss, a waterfall not far from the area of my field research, which has been “incorporated in the larger epic of Icelandic history and literature” (Halink 2014: 214). As Halink (2014: 214) notes, there is no reliable historical evidence to support the widely held belief that in the year 1000, Þorgeir Þorkelsson cast pagan idols into this waterfall,<sup>6</sup> renouncing the old religion and adopting Christianity. Despite the pronounced tendency to historicise and mythologise the Icelandic landscape, many locations of historical events are indeed well-documented, intertwining with oral history and supporting it.

In Svalbarðshreppur, an example is the gorge called Frakkagil or French Gorge and the cliffs known as Þjófaklettur or Thieves’ Cliffs. The names supposedly stem from an event when French sailors were caught stealing sheep. Local farmers caught them as they were attempting to transport the sheep onto their ship and hanged them in the gorge as punishment. The gorge and the cliffs are said to have been named after this event.<sup>7</sup> One of the interlocutors mentioned that the farmers laid a long log (presumably driftwood) across the gorge from which to hang the men. According to my interlocutors, the exact date of this event is unknown. Only one woman I spoke to claimed it occurred in 1702.

Like historical events and the mythical past, the landscape is also inscribed with stories related to encounters with hidden people, ghosts or the dead. Topographically, beliefs in hidden people or elves are often associated with specific rocks or large stones where these beings are believed to dwell. However, these rocks or stones are not necessarily remote, far from farms or other residential areas. In addition to rocks and large stones, beliefs are also connected with specific areas where grass should not be mowed, as these places belong to the supernatural beings. Such stories, known as *álagablettir*, are studied by Gunnell (2018). All the accounts related to encounters with supernatural beings that I have collected were always precisely located. Local (micro)toponymic names found across the country, such as *álfasteinn* (elf stone), *álfakirkja* (elf church) or *álfaborg* (elf city), often hint at places laden with the supernatural. As Hafstein (2000) writes, elf stones in Iceland have been mentioned in recent decades in the context of construction projects that planned their demolition. However, the accidents and mishaps that accompanied these projects, and which were attributed to the supernatural, meant that in many cases

<sup>6</sup> Goðafoss can mean either the “waterfall of the *goð* (gods)” or “waterfall of the *goði* (chieftain)”, but it is not the only Goðafoss on the island.

<sup>7</sup> I thank Gréta Bergrún Jóhannesdóttir from the University of Akureyri for the explanation.

roads and other infrastructure were redesigned in order to preserve the elf locations. In cases where the elf stones were demolished, numerous subsequent complications, damage and inconveniences were attributed to the elf stones, as highlighted by Hafstein (2000; see also Feder 2022).

For instance, near the road between Þórshöfn and Bakkafjörður, the two main settlements in the area where I conducted research, there is a rock informally referred to as Álfakirkja, meaning elf church, while elf rocks, *álfasteinn*, can be found on many farms. The dwellings of hidden people or the locations where they perform other activities are always precisely situated. Interlocutors are able to pinpoint these locations. The rocks where hidden people are believed to live and the meadows where they are thought to farm are not abstract spaces but unequivocally defined places. Human behaviour stems from this localised knowledge, as people avoid touching or throwing stones in certain places. In some areas they refrain from mowing the grass and these beliefs can influence infrastructure projects such as road construction, etc. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to conclude that understanding the landscape through the lens of traditional beliefs is ubiquitous in Iceland. When I came across information that there was supposed to be an *álfasteinn* on the island of Hrisey<sup>8</sup> and asked interlocutors about it, some knew what I was referring to while others claimed to be hearing about such a thing on their island for the first time.

The spatial dimension of the locations imbued with belief is also evident in the way information about them is preserved. An understanding of the landscape is transmitted through spatial knowledge. The findings of Hrobat Virloget, who researched the emplaced traditions in the Slovenian Karst, can be understood in this context: “However, as long as people will live with their own specific landscape, they will be able to preserve and renovate their “emplaced” traditions, most of them known just to the specific local community” (Hrobat Virloget 2012: 45). Emma,<sup>9</sup> one of the interlocutors who moved to Iceland and married into a farm in Northeast Iceland, recalls how in the first years after her move she went on trips and hikes with the neighbours. During that time, she learned how the landscape is directly connected with beliefs:

*About the local elf stones ... it is not that somebody tells me about it, but when you are going somewhere, to places, ... it is usually that they are rather unusual in shapes or they are alone, there are no other stones around, so usually you can tell already this might be an elf stone. Then I start asking about it and then I get feedback from the people. But we also have neighbours who are very eager to ... During the winter times, the first couple of years, well not since the children came, but before, we went hiking once a week during the wintertime, and one of our neighbours, he knows a lot of ghost stories and places and he always was managing the hikes and then telling us about different places.*

<sup>8</sup> An island in the Eyjafjörður in Northern Iceland, where I conducted preliminary ethnographic research in February 2019.

<sup>9</sup> All personal names are pseudonyms.

Through her example, we see the common practice of narrating certain stories at locations where encounters between humans and non-humans are believed to have occurred. This presupposes movement through the landscape. Indeed, relationships between people and the environment are often constructed while moving (Ingold 1993; de Certeau 2007 [1990]; Gregorič Bon and Repič 2016). During my fieldwork, the locations of the elf stones were often pointed out to me. Even if we did not visit the exact locations, interlocutors would at least indicate the direction through a window or make an effort to describe the location as accurately as possible. Thus, the emplacement of the stories and memories within a specific landscape played a crucial role in describing and presenting vernacular belief traditions. A similar situation arose during a school field trip when I accompanied some second graders and their teacher to Kópasker, a village about an hour's drive away. On the way, the teacher, sitting in the front seat of a small bus, said to her pupils: "*Do you remember the story about the elf* [referring to a specific elf she had mentioned in class, but I did not note his name]? *Well, he lives here, a little further in this direction,*" pointing towards the interior of the island. One of the students immediately asked if we could go there, but the teacher replied that we could not because there is no road that leads there.

In short, movement through the landscape (see Einarsdóttir and Lund 2024 for walking and Árnason et al. 2015 for driving) evoked numerous examples of stories and other narrations related to spatial interactions, such as memories of specific weather events and multispecies encounters. In the following section, I will present a case study of a farm in Langanesbyggð, where belief in hidden people is particularly intertwined with everyday practices, attitudes towards the landscape and interpersonal relations. This case also illustrates that belief in supernatural beings is not an isolated realm of vernacular spirituality but is embedded in numerous practical, mundane decisions. It also serves as an interpretative framework for certain events, and memories of encounters with hidden people frame the autobiographical narratives of the interlocutors. Let us now examine the interweaving of all these aspects through an ethnographic example.

#### PERSONS WE SEE AND PERSONS WE DO NOT SEE

Katrín (born in 1943), her daughter-in-law and I were sitting in the living room of their farm, having coffee. In the midst of a conversation about berry picking, Katrín told me that one should never throw a stone carelessly because you never know if you hit someone invisible. By this, she meant the hidden people. Then, continuing on a seemingly unrelated topic, she said that she sees a light from behind the hillside above their farm. When I asked her further questions about the light, she proceeded to recount memories from her childhood. As a child, she attended primary school on one of the neighbouring farms (as was common in rural areas at the time) and she recalled how from time to time she walked home with her sister. Most often, all the pupils and the teacher slept on the farm where the schooling took place and rarely went home. The farms in this area are quite far apart and for most of the pupils the distances were too great to commute daily. Katrín explained that they were often afraid while walking to or from school as it only

operated during the winter months, and they walked through a dark landscape. During those times, she would often see light behind the rocks at the top of the hill that rises up behind their farm. Nowadays, she is convinced that this light helped her, guiding her home and illuminating the landscape.

Then one day Oddi, a boy from a neighbouring farm (now her husband), came to visit with his stepfather and also noticed the light behind the rocks. He asked his stepfather about it, and the stepfather replied that elves lived there, and that the light came from there. Oddi responded that he had seen two of these beings making hay. His stepfather told him that it was their place, their area. Then Katrín suddenly shifts her narrative to the present. “*So we just respect it*” she concludes. “*We don’t touch this ground. We never did anything on this ground. We’ve earned this people’s respect, so we respect them, and they respect us.*” Later she adds: “*The world would be so much better place if we showed the nature more respect and respect each other more. Both the people that we see and the people we don’t see.*”

Her words relate directly to Heijnen (2005: 201), who emphasises that “the distinction between *huldufólk* and humans is essentially rooted in a distinction between invisibility and visibility.” Another significant aspect of Katrín’s concluding interpretation of her memories is the explicit mention of respect – the term she connects with respect for nature or the environment, interpersonal respect, and also respect between humans and non-humans. In her words, we can recognise respect as a fundamental emic concept, pointing towards coexistence and relationality among various entities, both visible and invisible. This brings us to well-known contemporary ontological discussions (Viveiros de Castro 1988; Kohn 2013; Watts 2013; Grauer 2020).

Respect for the *álfar* or *huldufólk* was emphasised by all the interlocutors who, when asked whether any specific places on their properties were connected with supernatural phenomena, answered in the affirmative. For instance, no one said that, despite knowing where hidden people are believed to live, they disregard this. However, many locals mentioned that there are no such places or that they are unaware of locations associated with beliefs in hidden people on their land. The fieldwork findings I have gathered attest to a close connection between supernatural beings and a sense of respect, which we will revisit in the next section.

Returning to our ethnographic case, Oddi confirmed Katrín’s story and added that when he first saw them, he was less than ten years old. He then explained that they were all dressed in black and white clothing and were raking hay. They were somewhat smaller than humans but not really small. Although he could not see them well due to the distance, he noticed that they behaved like humans. His testimony is similar to numerous other records from different parts of Iceland. People usually describe *huldufólk* as somewhat smaller but very human-like beings in appearance and behaviour. The tasks they perform are linked to agricultural activities. Additionally, *huldufólk* are perceived as non-modernised. Hafstein (2000) argues that this belief tradition represents a connection with an (idealised and pre-industrialised) past, portraying *huldufólk* as Icelanders from a hundred or more years ago. He emphasises that these traditional beliefs can be understood in the context of an ambivalent attitude towards modernisation and development, influencing

the disappearance or alteration of traditional practices and ways of life. Moreover, “the contemporary tradition as a whole may be read as an extended metaphor for social changes” (Hafstein 2000: 96).

Katrín and her family leave a certain part of their land undisturbed, but sheep are allowed to graze there. Animals are not considered a problem in many other similar cases where humans are not allowed to interfere with certain territories that belong to the hidden people. For example Bjarni, a farmer who lives a few kilometres from Katrín’s farm, showed me a place associated with hidden people where grass is never mowed, but he readily allows horses to graze there. Katrín explained this practice: “*Sheep can go there because sheep are just part of the nature.*” Oddi explained that there is a similar grassy area near the river, close to the border between their farm and the neighbouring farm. “*There is a small field, and it is always grass there and we never cut it because it is the elves’ field.*” However, Katrín adds: “*Sheep are eating there and sleeping there and it is ok. The elves respect the sheep.*” What is especially telling in this context is that they used to mow near that “prohibited” area in the past, but stopped recently, partly because they have enough hay.<sup>10</sup> Their remark about having enough hay reminds us that vernacular beliefs can directly influence agricultural practices – decisions about where to mow and where not to mow are always linked to ensuring sufficient fodder for animals during the winter months.



Figure 1: The hillside above Katrín’s farm; Langanesbyggð, 3. 7. 2019, Ana Svetel.

<sup>10</sup> Having bought a neighbouring farm, they now have more meadows to use for hay.

Later, Katrín and her daughter-in-law took me outside to “*show me everything*” related to the location-based aspect of the narratives, as discussed in the previous section. Katrín stretched out her hand towards the slope that rises up above their farm and pointed to one of the rocks: “*My oldest daughter lives in Reykjavik and when she comes here for the visit, she always goes to the elf stone [Kerling] and claps on it and says: ‘Hi, how are you.’ She visits them when she comes.*” We stood in the garden for a while, looking in the direction of Katrín’s narrative. “*It is there, on the top,*” she points a bit higher to the rocky edge where, as a girl, she used to see the light. “*You can walk up there [...]. And at the top, there is flat area and sheep really like to lie there. Like on a blanket. This is the elf rock and the light used to come from here. I am quite sure they live there. I haven’t seen one, but I have seen the light. And they borrowed stuff from me.*”

Her observation that hidden people sometimes come to borrow everyday objects can be placed in the broader context of interactions that Katrín recognises between her family and the *huldufólk* living on their farmland. Such interactions involving *huldufólk* borrowing objects are relatively common in Icelandic traditional beliefs. The interlocutor told me that about three years ago she was crocheting a blanket and lost her crochet hook. “*And I was like, ok, the elves took it. And I was relaxed with that.*” Then, a few days later, her grandson, while cleaning the barn with his grandfather, “*just found it [the lost crochet hook]. There.*” As Katrín said this, she and her daughter-in-law, who was helping translate, burst out laughing. “*And I believe that there was this elf little boy who was sent to bring the needle back, but he chose the wrong house, instead of our house he left it in the barn,*” she adds in the midst of laughter. In addition to the precise emplacement of the event, her explanation has an interesting symmetry: her grandson found the lost crochet hook in the wrong place, and a boy of about the same age belonging to the hidden people left it in the wrong place. Her daughter-in-law placed the question of missing everyday objects in a more general context:

*And it is something that we have all experienced. Like weird stuff, like your scissors or some spoon or something you use, and you are like: “Where is it?” And then it just lies on the floor or on the table in front of you. And you come back, and you are like: “What? Why didn’t I see it? What happened?”*

This case and the other narratives about co-habitation with hidden people show that there can be a multitude of different, more or less indirect interactions with supernatural beings. From the light with which Katrín alleviated her fear of walking in the dark landscape as a pupil, to avoiding mowing in certain areas, from joint family visits to Kerling, to a lost crochet hook. The ways of co-habiting with non-humans are thus diverse and nuanced, often connecting different members of the family, or entering into their interpersonal relationships. The supernatural beings are not passive or detached entities that belong to some abstract “other world”. In contrast, they are endowed with agency, which extends to “this” world and questions the apparent dichotomy between the natural and the supernatural and other binary categories, such as nature and culture (Descola 2018 [2005]; Ingold 2000).

In belief narratives, other-than-human persons gain agency and interact with people. [...] Belief narratives animate the world by fostering relationships between humans and the non-humans, which are bestowed with personhood and individuality. The supernatural is evoked through imagination and storytelling as a kind of liminal reality, which is never fully comprehensible or complete, but compelling in its powerful presence. (Valk and Sävborg 2018: 18)

“WE DID NOT REFUSE THE EXISTENCE OF HULDUFÓLK  
AND ELVES, BUT WE DID NOT BELIEVE IN IT”

The example of Katrín and her family could give the misleading impression that belief in hidden people and their influence on everyday practices is uniformly widespread among the inhabitants of Northeast Iceland, constituting an unquestioned “truth” or “mental reality” (Valk 2001 in Mencej 2017: 59–60). However, the situation is in fact much more complex, elusive and vague (Bille 2015), embodying various forms of “cognitive reality” (Mencej 2017: 56). The nuances and implications of the term “belief” are continuously rethought and reconceptualised by folklorists (see Mencej 2017). Although some interlocutors claimed to have had experiences with hidden people or encounters with the dead, many showed much more ambivalence towards such beliefs. During the fieldwork, I witnessed situations where someone would speak about hidden people or interactions with the dead, while relatives without such experiences would predominantly show respect – something we already mentioned in the previous section. In later individual conversations, many expressed uncertainties about such claims, refraining from taking a stance on whether they were “true” or not, and preferring to emphasise their respect for the environment and nature. I never detected mockery or doubt about narratives related to such beliefs. We can see this cognitive approach in a case where an interlocutor told me about her husband supposedly seeing deceased relatives. She concluded the story with the words: “*And he believes in that.*” When I asked her if she believed it herself, she cautiously replied:

*I don't ... [thinking] I think I don't believe in it, but maybe ... I am not like: “Are you just ...” I mean, I respect. Somebody believes in it, and somebody has seen things like that, and I believe that there are people who see things that I can't see, I mean ... I am perfectly, I know it is like that and I am just maybe not sensitive to it. I mean I am dreaming and then I meet people who are dead in my dreams and so on, but not, I didn't see them when I am awake. Yet.*

Some interlocutors who talked about places where hidden people live (or engage in agricultural practices), similarly stated that they themselves had not seen or perceived them, but that someone close to them (a partner, parents, siblings) had seen them or that



they had seen them only once, often many years ago, as a child. Therefore, the semantic dimensions of the term “belief” were revealed to be much more related to the question of respect – be it respect for the environment (or nature in emic conceptions), the landscape, the past, tradition, or respect for the experiences of others – than to the question of whether they ascribe existence to hidden people or not.

If we consider the question of ambivalence in the context of the spatial emplacement of beliefs, it is interesting to note that some interlocutors particularly emphasised that there are no *álfasteinar* on their farm or in their area. Sigrún, who grew up in the now-abandoned village of Skálar, mentioned that she remembers people often talking about hidden people but only on some farms and not in Skálar. When I asked one interlocutor about the hidden people, he responded, “*Not here. Not in Hlið.*”<sup>11</sup> His answer again highlights the distinctly location-based nature of beliefs in hidden people. Similarly, Sigurður initially replied that there were no stories of invisible people or elves on their farm, as his family was never “*into that stuff or dreams or ...*” However, he mentioned a large stone near the house, “*5 or 6 metres long, 4 metres wide, and maybe 2 metres high,*” where they used to play, and they informally called this stone *álfasteinn*. When we returned to this topic, I asked if anyone in his family believed that hidden people lived there. He responded after some thought: “*Maybe not believe ... but they were careful around it. Because if you do something bad to the elf stone ... Even though I did not believe in it, I paid respect to it. But we still played on it.*”

The rich and vibrant traditional beliefs in Iceland have often been oversimplified in the (mostly foreign) media, particularly in the context of Iceland’s tourist boom. This can be understood as a form of exoticization of the north or “borealism”, as it has been named by Schram (2011). The assertion that almost half of Icelanders believe in elves, as evidenced by headlines in newspaper articles and online posts, is a gross oversimplification of the complex nature of what we call “belief”. Broader questions about the ontological status of hidden people in the perception of the environment and what “believing” actually means will not be extensively addressed here (see Mencej 2004; 2017; Severi 2015; Pócs and Vidacs 2020). However, the ambivalence of belief is encapsulated in Sigurður’s words: “*We did not refuse the existence of huldúfólk and elves, but we did not believe in it.*” Regardless of the nuanced meanings of existence, belief and similar expressions,<sup>12</sup> all my interlocutors were at least familiar with hidden people or elves and with the widespread knowledge of the locations where they are said to live – hence their landscape dimension. Even locals who had no experience of seeing supernatural beings knew where a relative or ancestor had seen them, or knew which rocks they were said to inhabit. For instance, one interlocutor mentioned a location on their property whose (informal) toponym suggests a connection with elves. “*If you would try to cut the hay there, there was always going to be rain, so don’t even try to cut the grass there because you cannot dry it,*” he added.

<sup>11</sup> Hlið is the name of the farm.

<sup>12</sup> As I conducted the interviews in English, the undoubtedly relevant questions on the semantic nuances of the Icelandic belief-related terminology will not be discussed.

This example shows the close connection between belief practices and agricultural activities, which are both embedded in the landscape and often intersect with specific temporalities. For instance, weather conditions directly influence farming practices and decisions about when to carry them out. Thus, vernacular belief practices do not emerge in a vacuum but are tied to the everyday practices of the community that sustains them. In our case, it is primarily an agrarian community, so many details of beliefs in hidden people are linked to sheep farming.

### BELIEFS AND SOCIAL NORMS

Belief in supernatural beings also influences relationships between people, family dynamics and neighbourly relations. Valk and Sävborg emphasise that “[l]egends are not only dramatic and entertaining stories, they are also guidelines for behaviour in critical situations and instructions on how to avoid unwanted contacts with the otherworld” (Valk and Sävborg 2018: 19). The most compelling evidence of this can be found in the story shared by Bjarni. According to his narrative, a woman who lived on a nearby farm was replaced soon after birth. “*She*,” he explains, “*was not the same person as [at birth] ...*” Stories about “shifted” or substituted children can also be found in Icelandic narrative traditions, such as in the 19th-century Icelandic Legends collected by Jón Árnason.<sup>13</sup> However, Bjarni was not retelling a folktale, he was explaining about a person he knew, a woman who lived in the second half of the twentieth century. “*When you are not looking at your baby, the elves will come and change [it].*” When I asked how he knew this, he immediately replied that the mother of the replaced child told him that her daughter was replaced by an elf. He then went to find photo albums to show me this “shifted” woman. He spent a long time flipping through the pages of the albums, searching for the mentioned person. When he found her on one of the photographs, he added, “*she was quite different from her siblings. [...] Both how she looked and how she behaved.*”<sup>14</sup> His daughter-in-law, who was present during the conversation and helped translate, added:

*It is just – you can never leave your baby alone when they are so young because then the elf comes. But it is not because you did something wrong, you just always have to look for the baby. When they were little [points towards her children] and they were sleeping outside [in a stroller] he was always telling me: “You can’t leave them alone, the elves will come and there will be the shifter.”*

Bjarni’s narrative implies that a small child – or in this case a baby – should not be left alone outside. Spatially, it involves a clear demarcation between the home (interior space) and the external environment. The motif of an elf replacing a child (either with

<sup>13</sup> These narrative traditions can be understood within the context of the European legends about changelings.

<sup>14</sup> Therefore, one could also interpret this belief in the context of “explaining” potential “illegitimate” children.

a transformed old person or another child, but in any case, with someone from the supernatural sphere) the moment the mother is not looking at her child can be found in the Icelandic fairy tale “Father of Eighteen in Elfland”. It begins with the description of a mother leaving her child unattended at the liminal location of the doorway. It is then revealed that the child was replaced during that time:

Now, since the woman had her household work to do besides looking after the child, the time came when she had to leave him alone temporarily while she took the milk troughs to a nearby brooklet to wash them. She left the boy in the doorway. But when she returned, shortly afterward, and spoke to the child, he cried and howled in an angry, wretched manner, the like of which she had never heard before. (Icelandic Folk and Fairy Tales 2014: 24)

Bjarni’s story of the shifted child, especially in light of his daughter-in-law’s comment, reveals a distinctly dichotomous logic between internal and external spaces and the liminality of the locations that are in-between, such as the threshold. It also illuminates the liminality (and vulnerability) of this period for the person involved – the baby or the toddler. In short, this theme touches on in-betweenness, both in terms of time and space. These in-between, liminal spaces and times are often depicted in various traditional beliefs as “windows” for contact with the supernatural (see, for example, Mencej 2008).

In addition to beliefs in hidden people or elves, I also encountered stories about ghosts. For example, Sigurður recalled a story about a ghost named Modi who used to live on their farm. Allegedly people woke him up because they wanted to use him for malicious purposes, but the ghost got out of control. They had to tie him to a rock and bury the rock. Later, archaeologists from the United States of America came for excavations and were warned by the locals to be careful with that particular rock because a ghost was tied to it. However, one of the archaeologists ignored the warning. The locals were convinced that the ghost followed him to America because they heard he later divorced and had a car accident. “*So Modi is not here anymore?*” I asked. “*No, Modi left,*” Sigurður laughed.

Sigrún also mentioned that in Skálar stories were often told about ghosts, mostly “*when it was dark.*” There was said to be a ghost named Skálastúfur in the settlement. Sigrún explained the background of the ghost with the following story. Once, the men from Skálar found a corpse or part of a corpse in the bay (for legends related to washed-up bodies, see Gunnell 2005; 2017). As it was not an entire human body, they thought it was the remains of an unknown sea creature, but they later realised it was human remains. They buried the corpse, but not in the cemetery. However, the ghost of the deceased began to follow them. They then dug up the corpse and buried it in another place but to no avail, it continued to follow them. Finally, they buried it in the church and since then there has been peace.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Friðrik G. Olgeirsson recorded a considerably different version of this story. They appeased the ghost by driving a nail from a shipwreck into his grave, as they supposedly discovered that he was a French sailor – thus pacifying him by providing something associated with his life at sea. According to another version, they exhumed the body, cremated it, and scattered the ashes in the sea (Jóhannesdóttir 2009: 15).

*And this was the story we were telling each other in the winter in the evenings in the dark. And my mother was always telling the kids these stories. My brothers always wanted these stories to be exciting and tried to get the girls scared but it didn't work. They tried to scare us, but it didn't work.*

We can see that stories about ghosts are also emplaced in a particular landscape. The locations where the ghost is said to appear or where they buried him or where he is believed to dwell are not “somewhere” but always “there”. On the other hand, the temporal dimensions are much less precise. When I asked my interlocutors when certain events related to ghosts might have occurred, they usually responded that they did not know, that others had told them about it, and some mentioned very vague periods, such as the 18th or 19th century. Experiences with ghosts are also narrated more indirectly than experiences with hidden people. Many interlocutors talked about *huldufólk* as beings that had been seen or at least somehow felt by themselves or by someone close (partner, siblings, parents, etc.). They also stressed that these encounters were not necessarily tied to specific events. During the conversations, there were often no specific stories about hidden people, but instead I was told where they were believed to dwell, and that these areas are not to be disturbed. On the other hand, stories about ghosts were always in the context of stories or legends. However, even though stories about ghosts are usually not time-specific, the storytelling contexts are predominantly linked to the darkest part of the year and the evenings. A spooky undertone and child (co)listeners are recurring patterns. Stories about ghosts or the reasons why someone turned into a ghost often addressed (problematic) interpersonal relationships. For example, Teitur mentioned that a ghost lived on their farm and told a story about him.

*Many years ago there [at this farm] was a man who was not nice to his wife, and she eventually died and she haunted the people living here. They [...] had a child and he didn't believe the child to be his and therefore he mistreated his wife until she died. And she haunted this place, and she still lives here. I don't believe in it, it is just a story. This story shows that women didn't have rights and how much power men had.*

It is worth highlighting that the intentional or explanatory aspect of ghost stories was often explicitly emphasised by the speakers themselves. In the example above, Sigrún highlighted that such stories were used to scare girls, and Teitur concluded his story by connecting the ghost on their farm to the subordinate role of women in the past. This reminds us of Jónsdóttir's analysis of the role of supernatural female figures in Icelandic folk narratives and how they served to uphold hegemonic ideas about gender relations (Jónsdóttir 2023; see also Jónsdóttir 2021; Magnúsdóttir 2018). Ghost stories can also address relationships with farmhands and maids. I was told about a farm in Svalbarðshreppur that had been abandoned for a long period of time. The couple that ran the farm were once forced to leave it for some days following an urgent situation. To prevent the maid from escaping, they locked her in the house. A fire broke out and the woman, unable to

escape, suffocated in the flames. Since then, she has remained there as a ghost. This story is probably linked to the testimony of one of the interlocutors, who recounts an incident when he was riding in the area. He decided to stop and rest near the remains of the farm. He dismounted his horse, which was grazing nearby, lay down on the grass and fell asleep. Suddenly, he woke up with the feeling that someone was trying to strangle him.

Another local man shared a similar experience at the same location. He was riding in a group and they decided to take a break there.<sup>16</sup> However, he noticed that one of the horses seemed to be exhausted. When they decided to continue their journey and moved away from the spot, the horse suddenly regained his full strength. Similar to Katrín's case presented in the previous section, this example shows that animals are often important beings within the relationships between humans and supernatural beings (and within the relationships between humans and seasonal landscapes, see Svetel 2023a). They are part of the same "world" as humans and can be affected by the same visible and invisible entities.

In summary, we can see that many of the ghost stories revolved around subordinate social positions, misconduct, or problematic interpersonal relationships. These relationships include gender relations, relationships between masters and servants, the treatment of unknown corpses or the disregard of local prohibitions by foreigners. As we can observe, ghosts begin to appear when various social agreements are violated or rules are not followed. In a sense, we can again identify the question of respect as an underlying dimension. Gunnell points to this prescriptive dimension of folklore, particularly in legends, when he suggests that legends "provide a kind of map of how one should behave in this landscape: what is right, what is wrong, *when* are they right or wrong, and *how* punishment is likely to descend on you if you transgress the largely unwritten moral rules imposed by society" (Gunnell 2018: 27).

In addition to hidden people and ghosts, some interlocutors also mentioned seeing the dead, which is similar in some respects to the encounters with supernatural beings discussed above. For example, Emma told me that her husband had encountered deceased relatives: "*He saw his father when he was dead for two years or something. He saw him in the stable and he saw his grandmother once, she came to him when he was very sick, actually. She came to him.*"

As Emma explained, the deceased father also had a normal conversation with her husband, "*but it was also more or less in the dark. It was in the ... underneath where the sheep are, where the faeces are of the sheep, he was working there, digging the faeces. And his dad was there. He saw him but not in daylight. But they talked.*" Although cautiously undecided herself, she says that her husband has seen both the dead and the *huldufólk* on several occasions. Regarding the latter, she mentions that he saw them when he stopped for a break while horse riding:

*And he was just sitting in a grass and taking a rest and then he saw them.  
[...] When he started looking at them – I think there were two – they  
disappeared. I think, I was told that this is typical. When you ... you are*

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<sup>16</sup> Near abandoned farms there is often grassy vegetation suitable for taking a break and letting the horses graze.

*not supposed to look at them. It is like the stars sometimes, when you are looking directly at the stars, you can't see anything, but when you are looking like more to the right [for example], you see it.*

The contact with his deceased father, as in the previous examples, is spatially precise – her husband was able to specify exactly where he saw him. We can also observe another aspect that is repeated in experiences of encounters with various non-human entities (hidden people, ghosts, the deceased). The question of seeing is at the core of such encounters. As the words of the interlocutor make clear, the way to see supernatural beings is precisely not to look at them. This leads to a kind of paradox of “skilled vision” (Grasseni 2007) or “ways of looking” (Berger 2016 [1972]). To see what is otherwise imperceptible, one must not look at it.

This brings us back to the distinction between visibility and invisibility (Heijnen 2005), which distinguishes humans from the sphere of the supernatural. The question of visibility and invisibility takes on additional meanings when considered in the context of the Icelandic landscape. Hastrup highlights “wide visibility” as “one remarkable feature of the Icelandic landscape” (Hastrup 2008: 60), where distances are consequently difficult to determine. “The consequence is that if the landscape is simply ‘seen’, it looks empty, and relative size and distance evade any scale” (Hastrup 2010: 195). In a wide, expansive and clearly visible landscape, where one “can see”, which many interlocutors emphasised as a highly desirable characteristic of the landscape (Svetel 2023b), one can also perceive the invisible.<sup>17</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In this article, we have highlighted some aspects of the relationships between humans, supernatural beings and the landscape that exist in various forms in Northeast Iceland. In this regard, beliefs, stories and legends have, as Gunnell argues, “served as a kind of map”:

On one side, they reminded people of place names and routes, and gave historical depth to these surroundings, populating them with ghosts and other beings of various kinds. On the other, they served as a map of behaviour, underlining moral and social values and offering examples to follow and avoid. Simultaneously, they reminded people of the temporal and physical borders of their existence, questions of life and death, periods of liminality, insiders and outsiders, and continuously, the physical and spiritual division between the cultural and the wild [...]. (Gunnell 2005: 70)

<sup>17</sup> However, the issue of what is perceivable (and preferable) in the landscape or “nature” also touches on various other social and political levels in Iceland (Benediktsson 2007; 2008; Olwig 2007; 2008; see also Ögmundardóttir 2011) and does not only refer to phenomenological or mythological dimensions. Oslund, for instance, demonstrates that in Iceland, “[w]ays of viewing nature became part of political and economic disputes in this region” (Oslund 2002: 316).

Although the ethnographic narratives presented in this article are very different from each other and also vary in their social context, they are united by the fact that they deal in some way with the supernatural (Anderson 2003), where the supernatural is not detached from “nature” or the material environment that surrounds us. “Legends are not detached from the environment, they are embedded into a familiar setting, they take place” (Valk and Sävborg 2018: 19). From this notion, we can identify three interconnected concluding points.

Firstly, as illustrated by numerous ethnographic examples, belief in supernatural beings is significantly emplaced – the landscape is inhabited by hidden people, which is evident both in localised memories of encounters with them as well as in landscape elements imbued with the supernatural (elf rocks, enchanted spots, etc.). Both humans and non-humans dwell in the same landscape. Secondly, the relationship between humans and supernatural beings is framed in the context of respect, which emerges as a promising concept for further reflection on the complex relationships between humans and non-humans, between people and places, between the natural and the supernatural, between the visible and the invisible. What kind of relationalities are implied within the respect so often mentioned by my interlocutors could be a starting point for further research. And thirdly, the possibility of seeing or sensing the supernatural is revealed through some sort of indirect, mediated perception. It may involve the indirectness of the gaze itself: for example, one must not look at hidden people for too long or too directly. Moreover, it may also involve indirectness in the experiential sense: for example, contact with the supernatural is narrated as someone else’s experience (often formulated in a sentence such as: *I haven’t seen them, but someone in my family has*) or the encounter occurred in a dream.

Despite these common emphases, we cannot reduce the diverse vernacular beliefs or encounters with the supernatural into a single perceptual or experiential category. As we have shown, hidden people have a different social role and are understood differently from ghosts, and there is also a distinction between ghost stories and accounts of encounters with deceased relatives. However, what still emerges as a common feature is that all these forms of supernatural encounters and vernacular beliefs are linked to a specific, lived, experienced and material environment. In various forms of place-lore, both humans and non-humans inhabit the same landscape, with which both are in constant interaction. Finally, as Hastrup states: “One cannot see a *huldumaður* without already being present in the space where he appears” (Hastrup 2010: 206).

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VIDETI IN SPOŠTOVATI: O ODNOSIH MED LJUDMI, NADNARAVNIMI  
BITJI IN KRAJINO NA SEVEROVZHODNI ISLANDIJI

ANA SVETEL



V prispevku obravnavam razmerja med ljudmi, nadnaravnimi bitji in krajino na severovzhodni Islandiji in se ukvarjam z vprašanjem njihove medsebojne prepletenosti. S primeri vernakularnih verovanj v skrite ljudi (*huldufólk*) oziroma vilince (*álfar*), pa tudi s primeri pripovedi o duhovih in o prikazovanju umrlih pokažem, da so tovrstne oblike srečevanj z nadnaravnim nedvoumno uprostorjene – vršijo se v krajini, spomini nanje so lokacijsko določeni, skriti ljudje bivajo v značilnih krajinskih elementih, na primer v skalah. Vseeno pa je, kot razpravljam v drugem delu prispevka, tematiko sodobnega verovanja v nadnaravna bitja nujno kontekstualizirati tudi v luči ambivalentnosti in pomenskih razprtosti termina verovanje. Kljub ambivalentnosti razmerja med ljudmi in nadnaravnimi bitji odstirajo ne zgolj krajinske, temveč tudi družbene in medčloveške odnose, moralne norme, vrednostne horizonte, pa tudi agrarne in vsakodnevne prakse. S tem nakažem, da verovanjskih tradicij ne moremo razumeti kot izoliranih, ločenih od širših družbenih in kulturnih kontekstov. Izhajajoč iz tega lahko razumemo oba osrednja pojma (spoštovanje in posredni pogled), ki ju prepoznavam kot posebno relevantna za razumevanje etnografskih pričevanj. Gre za idejo spoštovanja, ki kaže na domačinsko percepcijo dinamične relacijskosti med ljudmi, neljudmi (vključno z nadnaravnimi bitji) in okoljem; ter za na videz paradoksalno podmeno, da je zaznava nadnaravnih bitij pogosto povezana z odsotnostjo neposrednega uzrtja.



# From Drought to Deity: Borrowing Freshwater Worship in Third Millennium BCE Shahdad

Fariba Mosapour Negari

Despite its severe climate, Shahdad, an ancient civilisation on the edge of the Lut Desert, thrived in the third millennium BCE. This article examines the worship of Enki, the Mesopotamian god of fresh water, in this area. An abundance of archaeological data found at Shahdad suggests that there were contacts with Mesopotamia in the third millennium BCE. This may be related to Shahdad's adoration of a water and fertility deity because it involves the presence of expert stoneworkers versed in Mesopotamian temple construction methods, the iconography of a water deity on the city seal and flag, and unique stone building elements. Although there is evidence of Mesopotamian influence in the freshwater deity worshipped in Shahdad, it is more likely that this interaction contributed to the emergence of a distinct freshwater deity. Archaeological excavations have unearthed unique artefacts that lend credence to this theory. These include pottery depicting water conservation practices, stone objects used in water rituals, and clay statues portraying figures praying for water.

KEYWORDS: Lut Desert, Shahdad, Mesopotamia, Bronze Age, Fresh Water God, Enki

Šahdad, starodavna civilizacija na robu puščave Lut, je kljub ostremu podnebjju, uspevala v tretjem tisočletju pred našim štetjem. Ta članek obravnava čaščenje Enkija, mezopotamskega boga sladke vode, na tem območju. Številni arheološki podatki, najdeni v Šahdadu, kažejo na stike z Mezopotamijo v tretjem tisočletju pred našim štetjem. To je lahko povezano s šahdadskim čaščenjem božanstva vode in plodnosti, saj vključuje prisotnost strokovnih kamnosekov, ki so poznali mezopotamske metode gradnje templjev, ikonografijo vodnega božanstva na mestnem pečatu in zastavi ter edinstvene kamnite gradbene elemente. Čeprav obstajajo dokazi o mezopotamskem vplivu v sladkovodnem božanstvu, ki so ga častili v Šahdadu, je bolj verjetno, da je ta interakcija prispevala k nastanku posebnega sladkovodnega božanstva. Pri arheoloških izkopavanjih so bili odkriti edinstveni artefakti, ki dajejo verodostjnost tej teoriji. Med njimi je tudi keramika, ki prikazuje prakse ohranjanja vode, kamnite predmete, ki so se uporabljali pri vodnih obredih, in glinene kipe, ki prikazujejo figure, ki molijo za vodo.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: puščava Lut, Šahdad, Mezopotamija, bronasta doba, bog sladke vode, Enki

Perilously perched on the edge of the Lut Desert, the Shahdad region of Iran's Kerman province has a surprisingly lengthy history of human settlement. The availability of scarce water sources, especially nearby rivers, is responsible for this resilience. There is evidence that the Shahdadi people worshipped a watery deity that is similar to the Mesopotamian god Enki for a long period of time. The Sumerian epic poem *Enmerkar and the ruler of*

*Aratta*, inscribed on a twelve-column tablet housed in Istanbul's Museum of the Ancient Orient (Kramer 1963), depicts a conflict between the rulers of Uruk (Enmerkar) and the city of Aratta (Vanstiphout 2003). Notably, some scholars have equated Aratta with Shahdad (Mosapour Negari 2022), suggesting a possible connection between the two regions. This, along with potential cultural exchange, could have contributed to the development of a shared belief in a water deity among the Shahdadi people and the Mesopotamians.

It is interesting to note that the Mesopotamians, with their sophisticated expertise in irrigation and agriculture, could have shared knowledge related to water management with the Shahdad population – both worshipping the water deity Enki (Richards 2000). This potential knowledge exchange, along with the possible exchange of resources as suggested by Mosapour Negari (2022), could have facilitated reciprocal communication between the regions. It is possible that such an exchange of resources could have facilitated a cultural and intellectual exchange between Mesopotamia and Shahdad, potentially leaving a lasting impact on the southeast of Iran. Evidence of extensive carnelian production at the Shahdad archaeological site (Salvatori and Vidale 1982), a material mentioned in the Sumerian epic related to Aratta (Kramer 1963), further strengthens the possibility of a connection.

## THE ENVIRONMENT

The Dasht-i-Lut and Dasht-i-Kavir, two of Iran's largest salt deserts, cover a considerable area of the country's eastern and central regions (Fig. 1) (Mortazavi 2009: 115). The Lut Desert occupies around 80,000 square kilometres, or 12% of Iran's total land area. It is divided into the northern Lut, the southern Lut and the central Lut (Kharazmi et al. 2020: 37). The current dry terrain of the Lut Desert conceals a startling secret: a large freshwater lake previously dominated the area. At least seven terraces on the northern slopes provide evidence of the lake's former splendour. Imagine a time when the Iranian plateau saw an abundance of rainfall, resulting in the submersion of even the highest valleys, while glaciers dominated most of Europe (Shahzeidi 2016: 124, 129).

According to research by Shoaee and colleagues (2023), the Lut Desert is a massive endorheic basin that was formerly home to a large paleolake (Fig. 2). The presence of yardangs – streamlined, elongated ridges of silt sculpted by wind erosion – supports the existence of this ancient lake. Further research is needed to determine the exact time-frame of this lake's existence. While the specific climate conditions of the Lut Desert during the third millennium BCE require further investigation, research by Vaezi et al. (2023) suggests a significant climate shift in southeastern Iran around this period. Their findings indicate a transition from a humid climate to a drier one at the beginning of the third millennium BCE. This shift likely had an impact on the environment of the region, including the Lut Desert. Reconstructing past climates for specific locations requires detailed local data. Although Jiroft, located approximately 275 km from Shahdad, offers valuable climate history for southeastern Iran (Vaezi et al. 2023), directly applying its findings to Shahdad presents challenges due to the distance between the two locations.

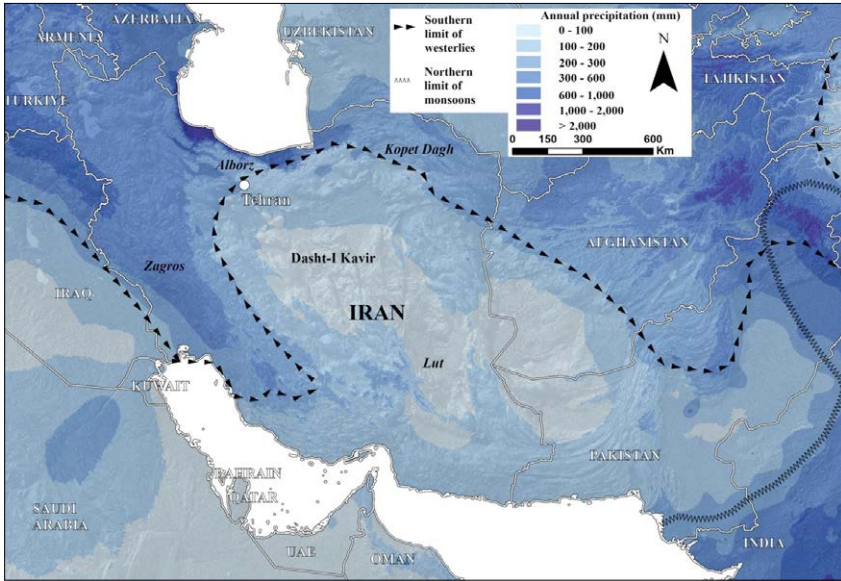


Figure 1: Present-day mean annual precipitation in Iran, focusing on the Dasht-i-Lut and Dasht-i-Kavir Deserts (WorldCLIM Data) (Shoae et al. 2023: 5).

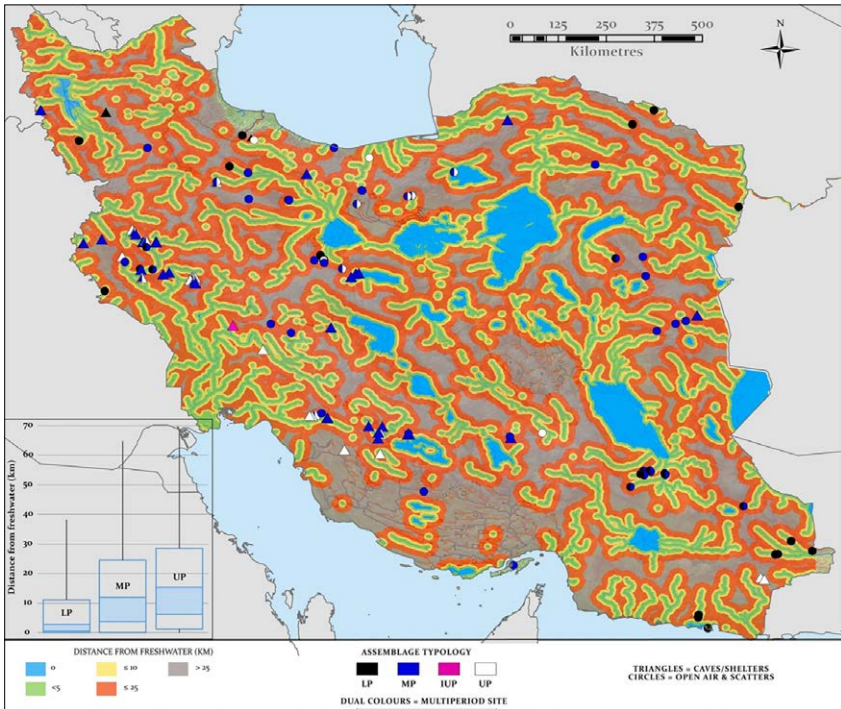


Figure 2: Distance from water analyses, highlighting the distance from mapped paleohydrology for all areas of the country (Shoae et al. 2023: 18).

Local climatic variations can occur even over relatively short distances. Further research specifically focused on the Lut Desert and Shahdad is necessary to understand the precise climate history of the region during the third millennium BCE. Paleoclimate studies in Shahdad or the surrounding areas would provide more conclusive evidence for the environmental conditions there. Despite the limitations, the Jiroft data still provides a valuable context. The observed climate shifts in Jiroft suggest that Shahdad may have also experienced similar changes, albeit potentially with some variations due to the distance. Jiroft's findings highlight the need for further investigation in Shahdad.

Fragility and change characterise the current climate in Shahdad. January is the coldest month, with average highs of above freezing and lows of below zero at night (Kardavani 1971: 7). The region surrounding Shahdad, bordering the Lut Desert, boasts unique features. These include the Rūdkhāneh-ye Shūr, the sole and vital river of Shahdad, the Shahdad Kaluts (local name for yardangs) and the Gandom Beryan plateau (the hottest place on Earth) (Koohestani 2020: 26). Despite its advantageous location on a trade route, Shahdad's climate presents a challenge for long-distance trade. Average temperatures range from 20 to 25 degrees Celsius. The city barely gets 45 mm of annual rainfall on average, with the majority of that falling in the winter and early spring, potentially creating difficulties for caravans traversing the region in ancient times. There can be no permanent lake because of very little rainfall. As the hot season begins in March, wind erosion is made worse by water shortage and aridity, which causes deep holes and cracks to appear in the surface of the land (Kardavani 1971: 6). Understanding Shahdad's past can be aided by the existence of stabilised sand dunes, river erosion features and the yardangs (Salighe et al. 2011: 4; Negaresh et al. 2011).

By examining these elements (environmental conditions, such as past climate changes and their potential impact on water availability or agriculture), we can gain a deeper understanding of the potential hardships endured by the residents of Shahdad. Furthermore, evidence suggests that Mesopotamia served as an important communication channel for Shahdad (Aratta) during the third millennium BCE. This is evidenced by the presence of trade routes and cultural exchange. This connection raises the possibility that Mesopotamian beliefs, particularly those related to water deities, may have influenced Shahdad's belief system.

#### FROM ENKI TO EA: THE EVOLVING FRESHWATER DEITIES OF MESOPOTAMIA

According to Jordan (2004: 85, 89–90), Enki, the multifaceted Sumerian deity (3500–1750 BCE), embodied creation, wisdom and life-giving fresh water. Known by various titles such as “Lord of the Soul” and “Owner of the Deep”, he was revered in Eridu (present-day Iraq). Over time, this powerful god transformed into Ea in the Babylonian-Akkadian pantheon (1900–200 BCE). Ea retained some of Enki's core attributes, but also became associated with the primordial waters, the source of all existence. While the worship of Ea spanned millennia, his prominence had gradually shifted by the Neo-Babylonian period.





Figure 3: Enki, Mesopotamian god of fresh water: A multifaceted deity.

**3a:** The water god Ea and his two-faced minister the god Usmu. Detail from the cylinder seal of a scribe named Adda, Akkadian Period (Black and Green 1992: 75).

**3b:** Gudea, Prince of Lagash, is introduced to the god Enki by his personal deity Ningiszida, shown with horned serpents rising above his shoulders. Details from Gudea's own cylinder seal; Neo-Sumerian period (Black and Green 1992: 139).

**3c:** The double-faced minister god Usmu ushers a bird man into the presence of the water god Ea; from a cylinder seal of the Akkadian Period (Black and Green 1992: 110).

**3d:** The god Ea in the watery *apsu* receives another god, probably Samas; from a cylinder seal of the Akkadian period found at Ur (Black and Green 1992: 27).

**3e:** Neo-Assyrian sun-dried clay figurines of the goat-fish and the merman, probably from the city of Assur; lengths 140 and 130 mm (Black and Green 1992: 92).

**3f:** Enki's symbolic emblem of the Kassite, Babylonian and Assyrian periods, a curved stick that ended in a ram's head (Black and Green 1992: 97).

He became the father figure of the rising god Marduk, signifying a change in his role within the evolving Mesopotamian belief system. Enki's significance requires an exploration of Eridu (present-day Abu Shahrein). Sumerian scribes regarded the southern Mesopotamian city of Eridu as the oldest city in the universe, the location "where kingship came first from heaven" (Leick 2003: 41). The Sumerian King List claims that Eridu's rulers reigned for incredibly long periods, although these are probably mythological tales. Eridu never rose to become the capital of a significant dynasty, despite its fabled past, and was not a significant political centre. However, it was of importance in the realm of religion, as the primary sanctuary of Enki, the god of water, was located there. The city's construction reached its zenith under the Third Dynasty of Ur, with contributions from numerous Mesopotamian monarchs. However, by the eighteenth century BCE, Eridu had been abandoned. The cult of Enki persisted in other shrines, most notably in nearby Ur, even after the city had collapsed. The Iraqi Department of Antiquities conducted archaeological excavations that uncovered a lengthy row of structures from the Ubaid period (around 4900 BCE), stacked one on top of the other. The Eunir, the temple devoted to Enki, is depicted in these eighteen layers as it continues to evolve (Leick 2003: 41). Unearthing the layered history of Eridu, evident in archaeological finds such as the evolving Eunir, sheds light on the city's changing religious landscape. The presence of a male deity, Enki, associated with the Eunir, prompts us to consider the possibility of earlier deities worshipped there. The presence of a male god in Eridu raises questions about a possible earlier female deity. Scholar P. Steinkeller suggests that during the Uruk period (c. 4500–3100 BCE), most Sumerian city-states may have had "goddesses as their titular divine owners". He proposes that Enki, considered the head of the earliest Sumerian pantheon, may have been paired with these goddesses, acting as a "sort of universal husband" (Steinkeller 1999). This theory suggests the possibility of female dominance in the early stages of Sumerian religion. It follows that the original deity in Eridu may have also been female, potentially replaced by a male god as societal structures shifted towards male dominance.

Although there is not much concrete archaeological evidence for Enki himself, artistic interpretations provide insightful information. These representations show a long-bearded, reclining god with a pleated, flowing robe and a horned cap. Water shoots out of his arms and onto the ground, occasionally carrying tiny fish with it (Fig. 3a). He frequently appears to be accepting worshippers or bearers of offerings (Fig. 3b). Alternatively, he can be seen accepting the lion-demon or the bird-man, who is shown to him as a prisoner under guard (Fig. 3c). Other gods may introduce these figures. Isimud, Enki's minister, is most frequently portrayed in this role. Enki is occasionally seen sitting inside a building called the abzu or in his E-abzu shrine, which is encircled by water channels (Fig. 3d) (Black and Green 1992: 75).

As the god of groundwater and all freshwater sources, including rivers, lakes and oceans, Enki is highly revered in Mesopotamia (Boehmer 1965: 87). He ruled over the Abzu, an enormous freshwater reservoir thought to be the source of all rivers, springs, marshes and precipitation (McIntosh 2005: 211). Since fertility and water management were crucial components of Enki's domain, archaeologists also investigate more general

cultural practices in these areas. Examining Mesopotamia's highly developed irrigation systems – some of which date to the sixth millennium BCE – can illuminate the cultural significance of water, which may be connected with Enki-related beliefs. The goat-fish was identified as Ea's representation in the iconography of the Kassite, Babylonian and Assyrian periods (Fig. 3e). The god also had two further symbols: a turtle and a curved stick that ended in a ram's head (Fig. 3f) (Black and Green 1992: 75).

#### SHAHDAD: A BRIEF LOOK AT ITS DISCOVERY & CHRONOLOGY

After travelling across Baluchestan and Kerman, as well as the edge of the Indian Plateau, Sir Aurel Stein conducted the first surface survey of the Lut Desert region in 1937, sparking interest in archaeology in the area (Yule 1998: 2). However, large-scale archaeological fieldwork did not start until later. The breakthrough came in 1967 when a team of researchers from Tehran University's Institute of Geography, led by Ahmad Mostofi, was conducting fieldwork near Dasht-i-Lut in northwest Kerman. While surveying the area, they stumbled upon surface ceramic fragments in Chaleh Takab, a location close to modern-day Shahdad. This discovery led them to identify Shahdad as an archaeological site. The General Directorate of Archaeology and Popular Culture received these samples. Two years later, in 1969, formal excavations got underway with the founding of the

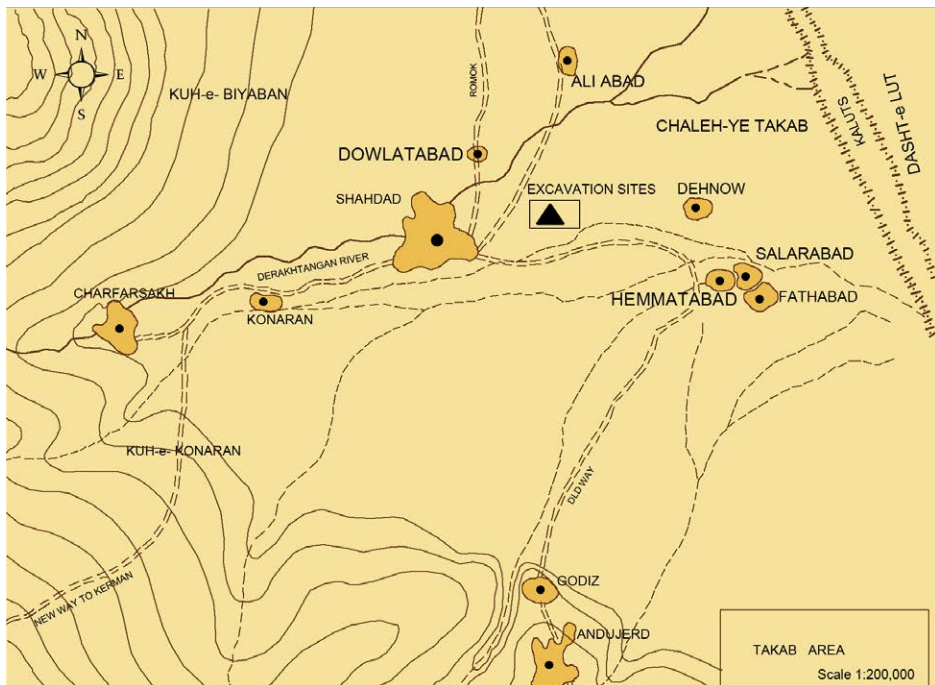


Figure 4: Map of the Takab Plain showing the location of the Ancient Shahdad excavation site relative to the present-day city of Shahdad (Hakemi 1997a).

Dasht-i-Lut archaeological department, which was led by Ali Hakemi (Hakemi 1997a). The ancient civilisation known today as Shahdad, was located some seven kilometres from the present-day city, according to preliminary research conducted by the Dasht-i-Lut archaeological team (Hakemi 1997a). They concentrated on the Takab Plain, situated five kilometres to the east of Shahdad, and the area surrounding a sizable, historic cemetery. This is situated between two parallel hills and the Takab Plain's alluvial fans (Fig. 4).

This area, which included the cemetery, was the archaeological team's main excavation site (Hakemi 1997a: 241). As a result, the name Takab has been honoured in the designation of the Shahdad archaeological sequences. Hakemi (1997a) used ceramic remnant classification to determine cultural periods on the Takab Plain. He used the prefix "TAK" followed by a Roman numeral to identify these periods. The earliest phase is designated as TAK IV, and is followed by TAK III, TAK II and TAK I. The most recent period, TAK I, is distinguished by pottery that is less sophisticated and lighter in colour, indicating that it is associated with historical and Islamic periods (Table 1).

TAK I	TAK II		TAK III		TAK IV		Cultural Period
	II1	II2	III1	III2	IV1	IV2	
1500 BCE-?	1700-1500	1900-1700	2200-1900	2500-2200	2700-2500	3300-2700	Time BCE

Table 1: Cultural Sequences of Shahdad (based on Hakemi 1997a).

## EXPLORING HISTORICAL DEPTHS: SHAHDAD'S WATER DEITY

Deciphering ancient symbols and venturing into the depths of history can provide an insight into the traditions and beliefs of former societies. Evidence of the water deity in Shahdad reveals a culture of reliance and respect for this essential component.

### - TAK IV: Whispers of Rain and Fertility

Excavated from the TAK IV period, a fine buff jar features cylindrical spouts and depictions of snakes with triangular heads (Fig. 5). Similar snake depictions are found in the glyptic styles of Konar Sandal South (Jiroft) (Pittman 2018). In some contexts, researchers have drawn connections between snake imagery and water sources (Desset et al. 2021). However, further evidence is needed to determine the specific meaning associated with the snakes on this particular jar. These jars depict imagery that may be interpreted as a water goddess entwined with a snake, potentially symbolising both strength and procreation. Similar snake representations are commonplace on carved chlorite artefacts from the Jiroft region (Madjidzadeh 2003). In broader contexts across Iran and Mesopotamia, snakes were often associated with deities linked to the chthonic realm, particularly underground water sources and springs, and consequently with life-giving forces such as fertility and healing (Benoist 2007; Golan 2003; Desset et al. 2021). This association suggests that the Shahdad jar imagery may be understood to hold similar symbolic meaning. Regarding the

flag featuring a human figure with horns and a snake (Fig. 6), Hakemi suggests it depicts a legendary conflict (1997a). This interpretation aligns with the established presence of conflict between snakes and deities or other powerful beings in the Jiroft artistic repertoire (Madjidzadeh 2003; Basafa & Rezaei 2014; Helwing 2017; Desset et al. 2021; Eskandari et al. 2022). This image may symbolise the human struggle against drought and the worship of the power of water and rain. Interestingly, a similar flag has been discovered at the Gonur site in Central Asia, bearing a resemblance to plaques found in western Iran (Meier and Vidale 2013).

### - TAK III: A Cry for Water

A range of ceramic vessels from the TAK III period have been found, including narrow-rimmed jars that are believed to have been used for collecting water and wide-rimmed jars that may have been used for storing grain. The high proportion of red jars (85.1% of the total red vessels) during the TAK III period suggests a focus on utilitarian pottery (Fazeli Nashli et al. 2012). However, definitive evidence for specific functionalities would require analysis of the vessel content or residues. Jars from the TAK III period exhibit a range of rim diameters (Fig. 7). As a preliminary attempt to understand the potential functionalities of the jars, two broad categories can be defined: narrow-rimmed and wide-rimmed. Further analysis of the ceramic assemblage from TAK III reveals a dominance of utilitarian pottery vessels. This is evident in the high proportion of red jars (85.1% of the total red vessels) dated to this period (Fazeli Nashli et al. 2012). Interestingly, data from our previous research also highlights a significant presence of pots (89.58% – combining the narrow and wide-rimmed jar groups) during TAK III (Figs.

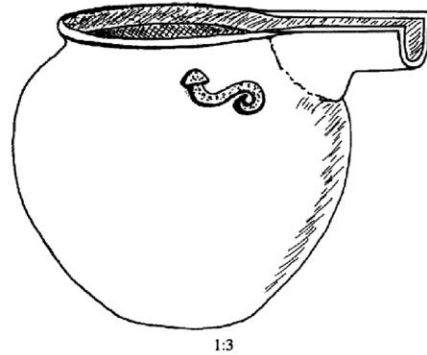


Figure 5: Fine buff jar, cylindrical spout, decorated with rolled band around the rim; a snake with a triangular head is applied to the upper part of the vessel's body (Hakemi 1997a: 569).

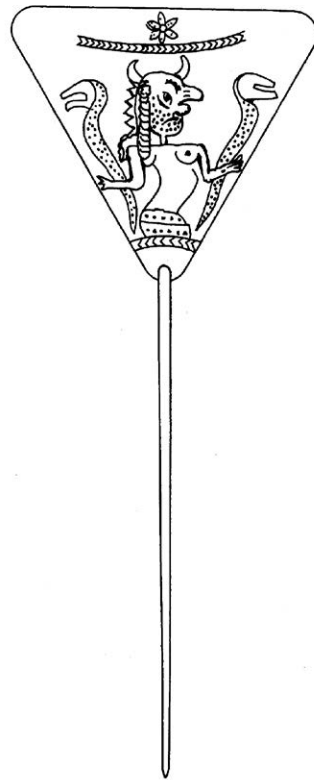


Figure 6: Silver triangular flag (Hakemi 1997a: 715).

6–7 and Table 3, Fazeli Nashli et al. 2012). The presence of distinct vessel categories, including wide-rimmed jars (38.17% of all jars) and narrow-rimmed jars (61.41% of all jars), alongside the narrow and wide-rimmed jar typology, suggests some level of specialisation in pottery production during TAK III (Fazeli Nashli et al. 2012). This may be indicative of centralised workshops or different workshops producing specific types of utilitarian jars. These findings on utilitarian pottery and the potential specialisation in production align with the observations regarding a close similarity between the red jars discovered in TAK III (Fazeli Nashli et al. 2012). While further investigation is needed, this consistency could point towards a standardised approach to pottery production during the mid-third millennium BCE.

The narrow-rimmed jars from TAK III may have been used for preserving water, considering Shahdad's arid climate and the challenges of obtaining reliable water sources (Fazeli Nashli et al. 2012). However, further analysis of jar contents or residues would provide more definitive evidence for their specific function. The function of wide-rimmed jars remains unclear. However, their wide rims could be advantageous for several tasks, including scooping, pouring and accessing contents. In some contexts, wide rims might also be suitable for storing grain, particularly if easy access is a priority. It is important to note that wide rims may not be the most effective design for creating airtight seals, which can be crucial for long-term grain storage in arid environments. As stated, our previous research identified various pottery types in TAK III, suggesting their use in different storage practices. However, a definitive link between wide rims and specific stored materials, such as grain, cannot be established solely based on rim design. Further investigation is necessary, including analysing jar residues and examining rim design in relation to the potential stored materials. This broader approach would be crucial for understanding the specific use of these wide-rimmed vessels, especially their potential role in grain storage practices in TAK III.

However, an intriguing inscription found on the rim of a red jar from TAK III (Fig. 8) sheds light on the importance of resource management at this site. The inscription, consisting of six symbolic syllables, has been interpreted by Professor Walter Hinz as signifying “sixty ka of fresh rainwater” (as cited in Kabuli 1989). While the full meaning and context of the inscription require further specialist study (Kabuli 1989), it highlights the community's focus on water management in Shahdad's arid climate. This emphasis on water conservation raises the possibility that other vessels, particularly those with different rim designs, may have been used for storing dry goods such as grain. Future analyses of jar morphology and residue analysis could help consolidate hypotheses regarding the specific functions of various jar types in TAK III.

Among the intriguing artefacts unearthed in TAK III, the curved and square-lined grey chloritic stone house stands out for its unique architectural features (Hakemi 1997a: 708) (Fig. 9). Hakemi's detailed description highlights its distinctive combination of curved and straight lines, along with the specific material used – chloritic stone. These miniature houses come in two forms: clay (without pots) and stone (with pots placed on top) (Hakemi 1997b). While the exact function of this structure remains unclear, its prominent presence suggests potential symbolic or religious significance. Interestingly,



Figure 7: Shahdad Archaeology storeroom: water & grain jars. (Photo by the author)



Figure 8: Jar from Shahdad with the inscription "Sixty ka of fresh rainwater" (National Museum of Iran).

Kabuli (2004) introduces the concept of “replica houses” found in graves in TAK III, potentially connected with water management practices. These miniature houses, some made of stone and some of clay, raise questions about the broader role water-related structures may have played in the lives of the TAK III community.

As discussed in my previous article (Mosapour Negari 2022), the environmental and archaeological evidence strongly suggests that Shahdad is a viable candidate for the location of Aratta. The wide-rimmed jars found in Shahdad, with their rims ideal for storing grain (Fazeli et. al 2012), further reinforce this argument. In an arid region such as Shahdad, such jars would have been essential for storing any grain received, potentially from Enmerkar, as suggested by Kramer (1963). Interestingly, the resemblance of these jars to those depicted atop the small stone house models (Fig. 9) raises an intriguing possibility. While it is likely that these models possessed symbolic meaning, the jar design may also reflect their practical use for collecting rainwater in this arid environment (Mosapour Negari 2022).

Notably, Kramer (1963) states that Erakh provided for Aratta with its grain surplus. Upon receiving the grain, the people of Aratta expressed their desire to fulfil Enmerkar’s request. This narrative suggests a potential grain exchange between the two regions. The wide-rimmed jars of Shahdad, which were ideal for storing grain (Fazeli et. al 2012), could have been used for this purpose. However, further evidence is needed to confirm this hypothesis. Additionally, Aratta was known for its skilled craftspeople, particularly those specialising in stonework. The grain from Enmerkar could be connected with Aratta’s potential contribution of expertise in exchange, although more evidence is needed to substantiate this hypothesis.

According to Kramer (1963), Enmerkar, the ruler of Erakh, desired to build a temple for his god. He may have sought the skilled stoneworkers of Aratta, renowned for their expertise in this area, to complete this grand project. In exchange for their craftsmanship, Enmerkar potentially offered grain, a valuable resource for Aratta, as suggested by the epic tale (Kramer 1963). While it is likely that the wide rims of the jars on the model stone buildings of Shahdad possessing symbolic meaning, they also resemble jars that are ideal for storing grain (Fazeli et. al 2012). This resemblance could be interpreted as a subtle reference to Aratta’s need for grain, a resource potentially offered by Enmerkar. Furthermore, if, as suggested by Kramer (1963), grain was a crucial resource for Aratta, these jars could have played a vital role in storing any grain received from Erakh.

The narrative from Kramer (1963) further strengthens this possibility, as it describes Enmerkar sending grain to Aratta. Upon receiving it, the people of Aratta expressed their willingness to fulfil his request. This suggests there may have been a trade agreement involving the exchange of grain for expertise between the two regions.

The abundance and blessing of water and rain are further symbolised by metal plates and bowls adorned with fish and snake designs (Fig. 10) (Pittman 2013). This association is supported by the symbolism of these creatures in the broader Iranian context. Snakes are commonly depicted alongside water sources in the region’s art (Desset et al. 2021). For instance, the glyptic styles of Konar Sandal South (Jiroft) frequently feature snakes alongside other aquatic imagery (Pittman 2018). Additionally, a lost-wax cast copper



statuette, likely dating to the third millennium BCE, portrays a potential goddess holding a snake wrapped around her waist (Eskandari et al. 2022). This imagery aligns with the wider Mesopotamian and Iranian belief system where snakes were associated with the chthonic realm, particularly underground water sources and springs (Benoist 2007; Golan 2003). Consequently, they were seen as symbols of life-giving forces such as fertility and healing (Desset et al. 2021). It is worth noting that snake depictions can hold various symbolic meanings beyond that of water. For instance, they can be associated with royalty and positive cultural aspects in the region. This aligns with the persistence of positive folk beliefs and traditions regarding snakes that continue into the modern era in Iran (Naseri Tehran et al. forthcoming).

The strength and sovereignty of the water and rain god is exemplified by a flag (Fig. 11), which probably depicts a god on a throne with bowls and a mace with geometric and spiral patterns (Hakemi 1997: 139). This interpretation is supported by several pieces of evidence:

1. Iconographic similarities:

- The Shahdad Standard, a similarly decorated metal object, depicts a figure seated on a throne holding a mace and flanked by women. This figure is widely identified as the water and rain god (Mosapour Negari 2022: 81).

2. Symbolic elements:

- The flag's imagery includes a god seated on a throne, a symbol of authority and power in the ancient world (Hakemi 1997a: 62).
- The god holds a mace, a weapon frequently associated with divine power and the ability to control natural forces (Hakemi 1997a: 62).
- The presence of date palms, a symbol of fertility and abundance closely associated with water in the region (Vaziri Kermani 1974: 90; Mostofi 1972: 342).
- The geometric and spiral patterns on the mace may represent water or the movement of water, further connecting the figure to his domain (Hakemi 1997a: 62).

3. Contextual considerations:

- The flag was unearthed in Shahdad, an area known for its ancient water worship practices (Hakemi 1997a: 62).
- The arid climate of Shahdad suggests a strong desire for divine intervention to ensure water availability for both human consumption and agriculture.

4. Archaeological interpretation:

- Archaeologists, including pioneers in the excavation of Shahdad, Hakemi (1969–1976) and Kabuli (1977–1978 and 1984–1991), have interpreted the flag as a symbol of the water and rain god's power, a means of seeking divine favour for rain and agricultural prosperity (Hakemi 1997a: 62; Kabuli 1974: 40). Furthermore, Hakemi (1973: 80) suggests the flag was used in religious ceremonies or as an offering to the water god.

The flag's central figure is surrounded by animals in a natural setting with trees. This imagery is likely to reinforce the god's association with fertility and the natural world. Additionally, a noteworthy detail is the presence of a smaller figure on the right side of the scene. Depicted as smaller than the main character, this individual is pointing to the central figure and holding a container in their hand. Their posture suggests an act of supplication, possibly begging for water from the enthroned god. Taken together, this evidence strongly suggests that the flag from Shahdad is a powerful symbol of the water and rain god's strength and sovereignty. It reflects the deeply held belief in divine power to control water and ensure agricultural prosperity in an arid environment.

The archaeological record from Shahdad reveals a rich tapestry of deities depicted on various artefacts. As discussed previously, the flag discovered in Shahdad (Fig. 11) likely portrays the water and rain god, wielding power and symbolising the hope for life-giving rain in this arid environment (Hakemi 1997a: 139). This focus on deities associated with water and fertility is further reflected in another intriguing artefact. Hakemi (1997a: 661) interprets a figure on a stone cylinder seal as a goddess seated on the ground encircled by nine wheat stems (Fig. 12). This imagery suggests a connection with fertility and abundance, potentially representing a symbol of heavenly mercy and humanity's saviour.

The stone cylinder seal itself measures between 38 and 32 millimetres in diameter (Fig. 12). The scene depicted on the seal is captivating, featuring a goddess in profile, her face framed by long hair and round eyes (Hakemi 1997a: 661). A second female goddess stands before her, with long, wavy hair cascading down her shoulders, a slender neck, and wide eyes. This goddess has a unique feature – two vertical horns, reminiscent of those found on goats. Intriguingly, a crescent moon sits between the two goddesses in the upper portion of the image. At the bottom of the frame, a child rests on a platform. Four goats, one with a twisted horn, complete the scene. Several small, scattered circles add to the symbolism (Hakemi 1997a: 661).

This tableau, particularly the nine wheat stems encircling the seated goddess, evokes comparisons with Aratta's epic and the Mesopotamian deity Enki, associated with freshwater. The presence of the crescent moon may further connect this scene with celestial bodies and their potential influence on the natural world. The rich imagery on the stone cylinder seal offers a window into the complex belief systems of the people who created it. The scene invites further analysis and interpretation, considering the potential connections between the various elements and their significance within the broader context of Shahdad's cultural landscape.

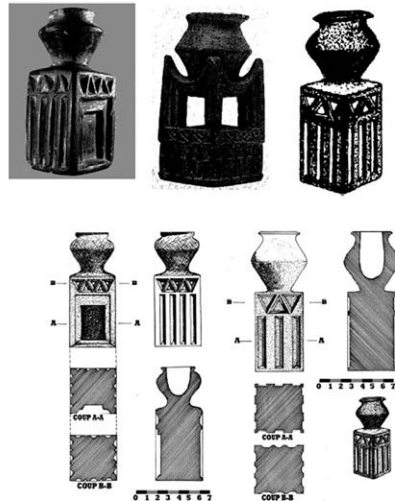


Figure 9: A miniature house of stone, crowned with a mysterious vessel, a symbol of reverence for fresh water (Hakemi 1997a: 621–624).

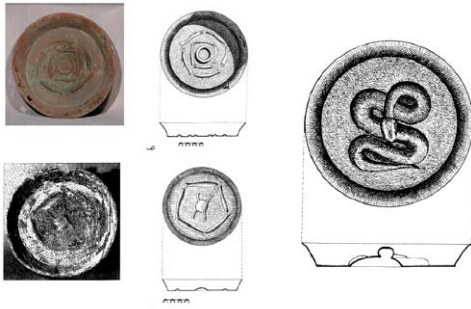


Figure 10: Metal vessels with fish and snake motifs, evoking dreams of water (Hakemi 1997a: 284, 402, 476).

Figure 11: The flag of Shahdad speaks of nature and water (National Museum of Iran).

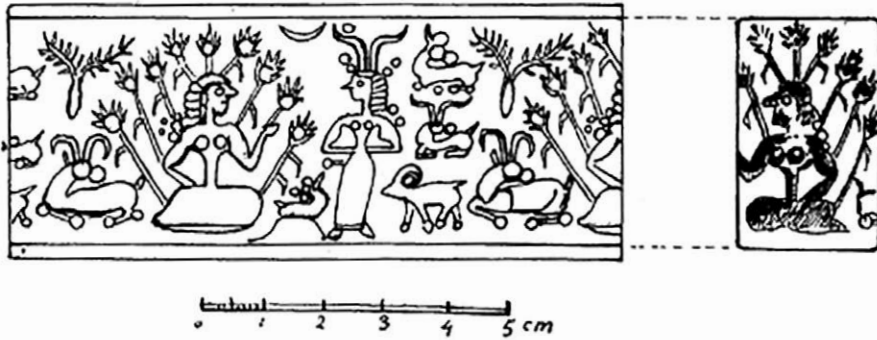


Figure 12: A cylindrical seal impression tells the story of water and food, two vital elements for human life in ancient Shahdad (Hakemi 1997a: 661).

The clay statues discovered from the TAK III period at Shahdad are among the most significant pieces of evidence pertaining to the city’s symbolic system. These statues fall into two distinct categories: male and female. Male statues typically feature square, elongated and bony faces. They are depicted either standing or kneeling. Hair and beard styles vary, with some figures having long locks and beards while others exhibit shorter styles. The statues possess a stocky build with broad shoulders and muscular arms. Their hands are often positioned on their chests (Fig. 13). According to Hakemi (1997a: 217), these clay statues, particularly the one depicting a man with long hair and a beard, exhibit striking similarities to artwork from Mesopotamia’s Early Dynastic Period. These parallels are particularly evident when compared with statues discovered at the archaeological site of Tell Asmar. Basin his theory on the translations by Jacobsen of inscriptions found on three statues unearthed at Khafajah, Henri Frankfort (Frankfort 1939) suggests that these figurines represent worshippers within the deity’s temple. The posture of the statues with their hands clasped in front of them further reinforces this idea.

While the Shahdad statues differ from those found at Khafajah and Tell Asmar in terms of material and quality, they share a remarkable similarity in style and representation. The standing posture with clasped hands and the depiction of the eyes are strikingly similar. Frankfort notes that the statues from Khafajah and Tell Asmar vary in size and quality, and he suggests this reflects differences in the social status of the donors who commissioned the statues (Frankfort 1939: 11). However, such distinctions are not readily apparent among the Shahdad figurines. This may be explained by the possible absence of pronounced social stratification in Shahdad society, as discussed earlier. It is important to note that the simplicity of the Shahdad figurines does not necessarily imply a simple society. In fact, a considerable amount of evidence suggests that the majority of Shahdad's inhabitants belonged to the upper social classes.

The function and symbolism of the statues remain open to interpretation. The question of whether these figures are connected with the god of water, a prominent deity in Shahdad, requires further investigation. Is there a drought signal in the fact that they are composed of unfired clay? Do their interlocked hands represent a request to the water god? These are a few of the topics that need more research. The remarkable similarities between the Shahdad statues and Mesopotamian art point to early cultural and artistic connections between these regions. Frankfort's interpretation of the statues as representations of worshippers offered to deities provides a valuable insight into the ritualistic functions of these objects. Further research is needed to unlock the full significance of these intriguing artefacts.

### **- TAK II: Abundance and Dependence**

The richness and blessings of water and rain are symbolised by a bronze axe adorned with two fish (Fig. 14) discovered from the TAK II period at Shahdad. This interpretation is supported by several key arguments:

- **Fish symbolism:** Fish are a well-established symbol of water and fertility in Mesopotamian cultures (McIntosh 2005: 211). The presence of two fish prominently displayed on the axe suggests a strong association with water and its life-giving properties.

- **Dependence on water:** Water scarcity is a constant challenge in arid regions such as Shahdad. The emphasis on a tool (an axe) adorned with fish symbols highlights the critical role water plays in sustaining life and agriculture (Hakemi 1997a: 140).

Remarkably, this axe's form and composition are similar to those discovered in Bactria (Hakemi 1997a: 243). However, the inclusion of the fish imagery specific to Shahdad emphasises the vital importance of water in the local context. The presence of numerous axes at the site further underscores the centrality of this tool for daily life. These themes draw attention to the significance of water in the beliefs and customs of the Shahdadi people. The association of the fish imagery with an essential tool such as an axe suggests that water deities enjoyed an elevated status in daily life and not just in religious ceremonies.

Several metal and pottery plates from Shahdad were found with decorations depicting fish circling their lower rims. This imagery is interpreted as a possible representation of the Mesopotamian rain god, Enki (Hakemi 1997a). This interpretation is supported by the following:



Figure 13: The similarity of the Shahdad clay statues to the worshippers of Tell Asmar, Mesopotamia (Hakemi 1997a: 661).

- **Mesopotamian fish symbolism:** As previously mentioned, fish were a well-established symbol of water and the rain god Enki in Mesopotamia (McIntosh 2005: 211).

- **Parallels with Mesopotamian shrines:** The association between specific motifs and deities in Shahdad finds parallels with other ancient cities. Shrines in Mesopotamia, for example, were often linked to deities based on the imagery found within them (McIntosh 2005: 199).

Instead of concluding with an assumption about water worship, let us explore some encouraging indications that the people of Shahdad had a deep respect for water. While we have not yet unearthed definitive proof of a fully developed cult dedicated solely to water deities, there is evidence of a strong symbolic connection between water and fertility.

- **Symbolic associations:** Artefacts such as the bronze axe adorned with two fish (Fig. 14) and the vessels decorated with fish are particularly noteworthy. These objects strongly suggest an association between water and fertility, mirroring established Mesopotamian symbolism in which fish represented the water god Enki (McIntosh 2005: 211).

- **Emphasis on water in an arid environment:** Water scarcity is a constant challenge in arid regions such as Shahdad. The emphasis on water imagery throughout the archaeological record highlights its vital importance beyond mere practicality. It suggests a reverence for water that permeated the lives of the people of Shahdad (Hakemi 1997a: 140).

- **Elevation of water deities:** The association of water symbolism with essential tools such as axes suggests that deities connected with water may have enjoyed an elevated status in daily life, not just religious ceremonies. This further emphasises the significance of water in the belief system of the people of Shahdad.

The available evidence does not point to a fully developed water worship system in Shahdad. However, it reveals a deep respect and symbolic connection with water and its associated deities. Further excavations and analyses of discovered artefacts may shed more light on the specific rituals or practices related to water reverence in this ancient civilisation.

While the inscription interpreted by Professor Hinz offers valuable insights into water management practices in Shahdad (as discussed earlier), potters' markings found on Shahdad pottery present another exciting avenue for unlocking the secrets of this ancient civilisation. These markings, similar to those found on pottery elsewhere in the region, hold the potential to reveal a wealth of information.

Deciphering these markings could contribute significantly to our understanding of Shahdad's social organisation, trade networks and pottery-making techniques. We could learn about the potters themselves, their workshops, and perhaps even gain clues about the dating of the artefacts (Kabuli 1989: 74). The sheer abundance of decorated jars in Shahdad further underscores the significance of these markings. With over 1,233 decorated jars unearthed, including 133 with intricate designs and 1,100 bearing incised or stamped markings, Shahdad stands out for its rich pottery tradition (Hakemi 2006: 172). It is important to note that while the current evidence suggests a deep respect for water in Shahdad, deciphering these markings might reveal a more direct connection with water deities. Further analysis and potential discoveries could shed more light on this possibility.

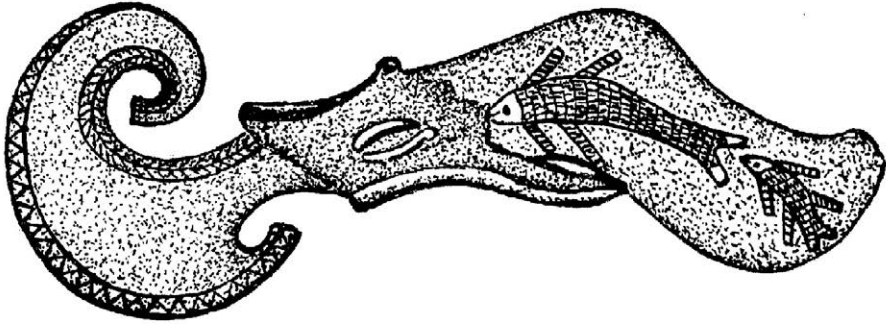


Figure 14: Double fish design on a ceremonial bronze axe (Hakemi 1997a: 693).

Archaeologist Mir Abdin Kabuli, who succeeded Ali Hakemi in excavating Shahdad, unearthed a fascinating collection of potters' markings with various computations (Kabuli 1997). Initially, he interpreted them as signatures or workplace identifiers used by individual potters. However, further investigation revealed these markings to be a system of calculations and measurement symbols, not simply potters' signatures.

For instance, during an excavation, multiple bowls were discovered nestled inside one another. Mark II was carved next to the larger plates or bowls, while Mark I was identified on the smallest bowl. A fourth, larger container had a distinct mark, and two more containers carried Mark III. Interestingly, the capacity of the first container with Mark I was three times smaller than the fourth container's capacity (Kabuli 1997). This suggests a possible correlation between the markings and the size or volume of the vessels.

While illustrations of these specific potters' markings are not available in Kabuli's (1989) publication, further analysis of these markings has the potential to reveal valuable information about Shahdad's pottery production and trade practices.

#### HUMAN-ENVIRONMENT INTERACTION: WATER SCARCITY AND ABUNDANCE SHAPING WATER DEITY WORSHIP

The previous passage explored evidence suggesting a deep respect for water among the people of Shahdad. While the arid environment undoubtedly fostered this reverence, a definitive link to established Mesopotamian water deities has not yet been established. However, the emphasis on water imagery in Shahdad, mirroring established Mesopotamian symbolism such as fish representing the water god Enki (McIntosh 2005: 211), suggests a potential connection with broader regional water deities. Future research focused on deciphering potters' markings and analysing unearthed artefacts may shed light on the specific belief systems related to water held by the people of Shahdad.

This section delves into the human-environment interaction in both regions, exploring how water scarcity may have shaped their beliefs and potentially led to a connection in their reverence for water. The concept of animism, as presented by Arhem (2016: 7) following Descola, offers a valuable lens through which to understand human-environment interaction in these regions. Animism suggests a metonymical continuity between nature and society, where natural elements are viewed as “real persons” with agency (Arhem 2016: 7). In contrast to totemism, which emphasises a metaphorical connection between humans and nature, animism aligns well with the reverence for water observed in both Mesopotamia and Shahdad.

Confronted with similar arid conditions, both the Mesopotamian and Shahdadi societies developed a deep appreciation for water. Mesopotamia, with its constantly flowing Tigris and Euphrates rivers, may have regarded water as a symbol of abundance, teeming with life as evidenced by the fish iconography (McIntosh 2005: 211). However, Shahdad’s situation was different. Fresh water was scarce, which meant its reality was very different from that of Mesopotamia’s abundance. The inscription mentioning “sixty ka of fresh rainwater” emphasises the critical importance of water management in Shahdad (Kabuli 1989). This constant need is likely to have transcended mere practicality and evolved into a form of reverence for this life-giving resource.

The presence of fish symbolism on Shahdad objects, mirroring Mesopotamian iconography, suggests a potential link in their symbolic representation of water. This shared symbolism and the prominence of water imagery in Shahdad, suggests the possibility of a connection with broader regional water deities. Shahdad’s location on trade routes is likely to have exposed it to Mesopotamian cultures (Kharazmi et al. 2020). The exchange of goods could also have facilitated an exchange of ideas. The shared fish symbolism may be a reflection of this cultural exchange, suggesting an animistic perspective where water was viewed as a vital force worthy of respect, if not deification.

While the current evidence suggests a deep respect for water in both regions, the precise nature of the connection between Shahdad and the established Mesopotamian water deities remains open to further investigation. Future research focused on deciphering potters’ markings, analysing trade routes, and examining unearthed artefacts may provide a clearer picture of the human-environment interaction and the potential exchange of ideas related to water reverence in these regions. Additionally, further exploration into the concept of animism in both cultures could shed light on their specific beliefs about the agency and importance of water.

## CONCLUSION

The arid environment of Shahdad undoubtedly shaped its cultural development, fostering a deep respect for water as evidenced by the emphasis on water imagery. This article explored the intriguing possibility of a connection between Shahdad and the Mesopotamian water god Enki. While archaeological evidence reveals intriguing similarities, such as the shared fish symbolism, a definitive link remains elusive. The significance



of Shahdad extends beyond its reverence for water. The sheer abundance of decorated objects suggests a thriving artistic tradition and the potters' markings have the potential to reveal valuable information about trade practices, social organisation, and even the dating of artefacts. Further research focused on deciphering these markings, analysing unearthed artefacts, and exploring trade routes could provide a more comprehensive picture of Shahdad's ancient civilisation.

Shahdad's strategic location on trade routes suggests potential connections to broader regional cultures. The presence of fish symbolism, mirroring Mesopotamian iconography, hints at a possible exchange of ideas. While the exact nature of this connection remains unclear, it underscores the importance of Shahdad as a potential bridge between different cultures in the region. Future exploration of trade routes and cultural artefacts could offer valuable insights into these connections.

This article has only scratched the surface of Shahdad's rich history. Future archaeological investigations hold the potential to unveil a wealth of information about this fascinating ancient city. By deciphering the meanings behind Shahdad's water imagery, exploring the significance of the potters' markings and understanding its role in regional trade networks, we can gain a deeper appreciation for the ingenuity and cultural richness of the people of Shahdad.

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## FROM DROUGHT TO DEITY: BORROWING FRESHWATER WORSHIP IN THIRD MILLENNIUM BCE SHAHDAD

FARIBA MOSAPOUR NEGARI



The scorching sands of the Lut Desert cradle the ancient Iranian city of Shahdad, a civilisation that thrived in the third millennium BCE despite its harsh environment. This article delves into the captivating story of Shahdad, exploring its profound respect for water and the intriguing possibility of a connection with Mesopotamian water deities. It also raises the possibility of a link to the legendary Land of Aratta. Archaeological excavations at Shahdad have unearthed a treasure trove of artefacts adorned with symbols that speak volumes about the city's reverence for water. A prominent flag depicts a figure wielding power – potentially representing a water and rain god – a desperate plea for life-giving rain in this arid region. A captivating stone cylinder seal portrays a goddess encircled by wheat stems, symbolising fertility and abundance, possibly a divine source of sustenance. Even seemingly mundane objects such as clay figurines acquire significance. Their resemblance to Mesopotamian objects of worship hints at a shared belief system centred on water deities.

Fish emerge as a recurring motif in Shahdad's artistic repertoire. This aquatic imagery aligns perfectly with Mesopotamian symbolism, where fish represented the water god Enki. The presence of a bronze axe adorned with two fish is particularly striking. This utilitarian tool, intricately decorated with a symbol of water, suggests that deities connected with this life-giving resource held an elevated status in daily life, not just religious ceremonies. Fish also adorn various pottery plates, potentially representing an homage to Enki, the Mesopotamian water god.

Interestingly, the wide-rimmed jars discovered in Shahdad, which were ideal for grain storage, resonate with the story of Aratta, a city mentioned in Sumerian epics. According to these epics, Aratta, facing a grain shortage, received grain from Erakh, a Mesopotamian city ruled by King Enmerkar. Could Shahdad be the fabled Aratta, and the exchange of grain a reflection of a deeper cultural and possibly religious connection? The presence of carnelian production in Shahdad, a material mentioned in Sumerian texts related to Aratta, strengthens this intriguing possibility.

The reverence for water extended beyond mere symbolism. An inscription mentions “sixty ka of fresh rainwater”, highlighting the critical importance of water management in Shahdad. This inscription, along with the numerous narrow-rimmed jars unearthed from the arid TAK III period, underscores the ingenuity of the Shahdadi people in conserving this precious resource. These narrow-rimmed jars, with their smaller openings, were likely to have been used for storing and transporting water, while the wide-rimmed jars were ideal for bulkier items such as grain. Miniature clay houses crowned with vessels further raise questions about their potential connection with water rituals or their symbolic representation of the importance of water.

The similarities between Shahdad's water imagery and Mesopotamian symbolism are undeniable. The presence of fish iconography and the potential connection between the Shahdad figurines and Mesopotamian worshippers suggest a cultural exchange or shared artistic influences. Shahdad's strategic location on trade routes strengthens this theory. The flow of goods is also likely to have facilitated an exchange of ideas. The shared reverence for water, a vital element for survival in both regions, may have found expression in a common visual language.

While the current evidence suggests a deep respect for water in Shahdad, a definitive link to established Mesopotamian water deities remains elusive. The key to unlocking this mystery may lie in the potters' markings found on Shahdad pottery. These markings, although not yet fully deciphered, could potentially reveal a wealth of information. They could shed light on trade practices, social organisation, and even the dating of artefacts. Even more importantly, these markings may contain clues about the deities venerated in Shahdad, providing a more direct connection with water worship.

The importance of Shahdad extends beyond its water reverence. The sheer abundance of decorated objects unearthed at the site points to a flourishing artistic tradition. The intricate designs and craftsmanship displayed on these artefacts reveal a sophisticated and vibrant culture. Additionally, Shahdad's location on trade routes suggests a role as a bridge between different regional cultures. The presence of fish symbolism, mirroring Mesopotamian iconography, hints at a possible exchange of ideas and artistic influences. Further exploration of trade routes and cultural artefacts could offer valuable insights into these connections.

This article has merely scratched the surface of Shahdad's rich history. Future archaeological investigations have the potential to unveil a wealth of information about this fascinating ancient city. By deciphering the meanings behind Shahdad's water imagery, exploring the significance of the potters' markings and understanding its role in regional trade networks, we can gain a deeper appreciation for the ingenuity and cultural richness of the people of Shahdad.

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# In Search of Treasure in Šalek: Creating Local Identity through Narrative Ostension

— Ambrož Kvartič —

People transform concrete real-life events into narratives, but the reverse is also true; folklore and narratives in general can also provoke a creative or active response in people and significantly shape their worldview and way of life. The cases in which this happens (through processes of narrative ostension) are also of interest to folklorists, as they provide crucial contextual information about how (folk) narratives function, spread and acquire meaning. Stories about hidden or buried treasure are among the most important narratives that provoke such ostensive (re)actions. People who live with them sometimes venture out into the symbolically significant but very real elements of local space (e.g. castles) and actively search for the treasure mentioned in a legend. Such is the case of Šalek Castle (in Velenje), where local folklore about buried treasure has prompted several generations of locals to head up to the castle and start digging.

KEYWORDS: treasure folklore, narrative ostension, legend-tripping, spatialisation, Šalek, Ekenštajn

Ljudje ustvarjamo svoje zgodbe iz konkretnih resničnih dogodkov, vendar drži tudi obratna pot – tudi pripovedna folklor (lahko) vzbudi ustvarjalni, tvornostni odziv ter pomembno zaznamuje in sooblikuje naše ukrepanje, pogled na svet in način življenja. Primeri, ko se to zgodi (s procesi, ki jih folkloristika obravnava s skupnim konceptom pripovedne ostenzije), so za folkloristične raziskave prav tako zanimivi kot samo pripovedno gradivo, saj prispevajo pomembne kontekstualne in performančne podatke o tem, kakšno vlogo ima pripovedna folklor za svoje nosilce, kako se širi in kako pridobiva pomene.

Pripovedno gradivo o skritem oziroma zakopanem zakladu je med najvidnejšimi primeri, ki sprožajo takšen tvornostni odziv. Ljudje, ki živijo s temi zgodbami, se tu in tam odpravijo aktivno iskat zaklade iz pripovedi, pri čemer vstopajo v s simbolnim potencialom zaznamovane elemente resničnega izkustvenega prostora – na primer na gradove. Tako je tudi v naselju pod gradom Šalek v Velenju, kjer je lokalna pripovedna folklor o zakopanem bogastvu spodbudila številne generacije domačinov, da so se povzpeli do grajskih ruševin in začeli s kopanjem.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: folklor o zakladih, pripovedna ostenzija, *legend-tripping*, prostorjenje, Šalek, Ekenštajn

*“What are you hiding in your depths, castle of Šalek –  
Among the evil rocks, within the unknown tunnels?”*

(Štefanija Prislán)

## INTRODUCTION

Exploring the narrative folklore of the place where a researcher grew up is not without the hidden bias of nostalgia. I spent my childhood living just below the ruins of Šalek Castle in Velenje and climbed its stairs countless times with my peers. As we got to know and experience the limits of our ever-expanding world, there was one story (legend) connected with “our” castle that proved to be the most persistent. It was the one about a tunnel connecting it to the neighbouring castles of Ekenštejn and/or Velenje, and about the treasure hidden within this tunnel. There were several versions of this story, told to us wide-eyed youngsters by the older inhabitants of Šalek and by our extended families. Not only did we listen to the stories, we followed them up the hill to the castle ruins in search of the coveted riches they promised. Of course, we would be the ones to find the treasure, as we seemed to be the only ones ever to have had the idea of going to look for it. We found nothing of course.

Then decades passed and all this came back to me as I looked at my hometown through the eyes of a folklorist, equipped with concepts, paradigms, methodological tools and piles of comparative material. Two worlds that had shaped me came together in the most fascinating way, resulting in a truly unique research project that is presented here.

I soon realised that the treasure hunts of my youth were merely a continuation of the long-standing practice of many generations of Šalek inhabitants, who had also followed the stories up to the castle, convinced that they would be the ones to find the buried treasure. This confirmed an important folkloristic postulate that, although concrete (historical) events are transformed into narratives through the process of folklorisation, it is just as likely that narratives also elicit a creative or active response in their bearers and shape their world and way of life within their experiential reality. That is why I decided to study the treasure (folk) tales of Šalek in detail through fieldwork and interviews. I wanted to investigate their variability and contextual dimension, their role in building local identity, their ability to convey messages and their potential to express the cultural peculiarities of a place I once called home.

Šalék is a small hamlet, a former village on the eastern edge of the Šaleška valley in the Styria region of Slovenia. In 1979, Šalek ceased to exist as an independent settlement and became a district of the town of Velenje. The old centre of the village lies just below a steep rocky hill on which stand the ruins of Šalek Castle, after which the entire Šaleška valley is named. The first mention of the castle dates back to 1154, when it was known as *Schalac*,<sup>1</sup> making it possibly the oldest castle in the Šaleška valley. Abandoned in 1770 after a series of fires, only the central tower remains with its (rather unique) triangular floor plan. Šalek Castle stands at a strategic position on a cliff at the northernmost point of a larger rocky ridge, on which the ruins of another medieval castle, Ekenštejn (also known as Fire Castle or Zgornji (Upper) Šalek Castle), stand to the south-east and slightly higher than Šalek.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Blaznik 1988: 383.

<sup>2</sup> For more on the hamlet of Šalek and the two castles, see Stopar 1975.



The area encompassing the two castles and the rocky ridge that connects them is the key location of the (folk) stories and accounts that I present in this article. Although the Šaleška valley, like many other areas in Slovenia, is full of folk narratives about treasure and accounts of the search for it, I have limited my research to this particular area. The research process took place between 2006 and 2019. It involved interviewing twenty-seven inhabitants of Šalek and Velenje – the very people who perceive this castle space as an element of their (spatial) identity. They either provided me with memories of their own treasure hunts or shared second-hand accounts of them.<sup>3</sup> The interviews were generally full of joyful reminiscence, with people willingly sharing their own accounts of treasure hunting. I am convinced, however, that me being a *de facto* member of their local community, sharing and comparing my stories with theirs, helped foster this willingness.<sup>4</sup> I conducted a couple of the interviews while wandering around the castle ruins, enabling the informants to point out specific spatial elements as they told their story. In addition to the interviews, I used some older written accounts<sup>5</sup> in my comparative analysis of narrative material.

Before presenting the collected material and the interesting effects that these stories have or had on the inhabitants of Šalek, I must first give the reader a general outline of the narrative folklore about treasures and treasure hunting (in Slovenia), as well as the important folkloristic concept of *narrative ostension*. This should help to explain the very tangible effect that narrative folklore can have on real life, “reaching out” to it and even prompting its bearers to take concrete action.

### “TREASURELORE”: NARRATIVE FOLKLORE ABOUT BURIED RICHES

Legends, tales and other narratives about hidden/buried treasure and treasure hunting are one of the most important constants in the repertoire of narrative folklore in Slovenia, Europe and the world. They are a rich, varied and interesting mix of genres and themes,<sup>6</sup> within which narrative folklore researchers have identified a wide variety of interpretative emphases: “[...] they reflect memory tales, superstition, real-life poverty, but also the desire to suddenly get rich.” (Marks 1987: 61) Viewed as a commentary on, or an illustration of, the social and economic status of the storytellers, it can be assumed that folk narratives about treasures form around traditional and contextual views of the actual and symbolic possibilities for improving one’s economic situation (Kalda 2014). From this perspective, these narratives reflect people’s experiences and their hopes, and point

<sup>3</sup> To preserve their anonymity, only the key contextual information about the informants is given (gender, year of birth, and the year of recording). The only exception is Štefanija Prislan from Šalek, who died several years ago and whose diaries and poetry are also (at least partially) publicly available texts.

<sup>4</sup> The research project was not intended to be an auto-ethnography. However, it turned out that my own “narrative-repertoire” played an important role in shaping the interviews themselves. In some cases, it was the telling of my story that sparked a detailed narrative from my interviewees.

<sup>5</sup> Rare as they proved to be; namely a work of satirical travel writing (see Alešovec 1884) and some diary entries by the aforementioned Štefanija Prislan (see Prislan, no year given).

<sup>6</sup> See also Dolenc 2000: 60–66.

to both the individual's desire for wealth and the values of their broader community. This interpretive emphasis is also present among the people of Šalek, as they repeatedly commented on their treasure-hunting with words to this effect: "[...] no one found the treasure anyway. We, the neighbours, would surely have noticed if someone got rich – but no one did." (Prislan, no year given: 31).

However, the economic paradigm alone – the desire for wealth and prosperity – is not and cannot be enough to understand the meaning(s) treasure narratives carry for the particular community within which they are embedded. These narratives also represent powerful conceptual abstractions, as they are thoroughly connected to a much wider range of narrative folklore and belief systems, that is, to other layers of tradition. Comparative analysis reveals that the treasure narratives revolve around two major cultural concepts: that of space and that of identity.

Narrative folklore about (buried) treasure, as well as narrative folklore in general, is an important element of spatialisation, that is, the process of conceptualising space and its boundaries (see, for example, Mencej and Podjed 2010). Space is "experienced through a process of imaginative reconstruction" (Aitchison et al. 2002: 78), and therefore cannot be reduced to a mere physical reality or a "natural given", but is also and above all a cultural construct. In creating space through narrative, the narrator chooses details from their cultural and experiential reality not for their documentary value, but for their symbolic or signifying potential (Simonsen 1993: 129). This potential is of course relative and may be defined in different ways, sometimes more narrowly and sometimes more broadly. It takes only a superficial examination of folk narratives on buried treasure to see that they emphasise the elements of (experiential) space that are (traditionally) considered to be manifestations of the other world and are therefore magical and (in a symbolic sense) dangerous (Hrobat 2010: 59). These include intersections, sacral buildings, old trees, isolated rock formations, standalone hills and, of course, castles. Through time and repetition, the community and its members determine which spatial elements are important and subsequently become a location-motif onto which folklore material is attached. Quite often it is "the greatest", the most dominant (the most important, the most present, the most exposed) elements of spatial reality that are the ones loaded with the greatest symbolic potential.<sup>7</sup> This potential is then materialised and contextualised through narrative folklore. It is therefore understandable that castles, being a prominent spatial dominant, very frequently become elements of narrative folklore (both fairy tales and legends) as well as their setting (for Slovenian examples, see Krojež and Dapit 2014; Hudales 2013; Zorec 2009).

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<sup>7</sup> Compare this to the folkloristic concept of "the Goliath principle". Originally proposed by Gary Alan Fine (Fine 1985; Fine 1992: 141–143) in the context of contemporary legendry, especially mercantile legends, this principle was set out to describe the tendency of "folk" to attach a corporate (mercantile) legend to the brand that dominates the market. As this "attachment" presupposes the migratory nature of the folk narratives, I find the concept useful when talking about any other example of migratory folklore attaching itself to any other conceptual dominant within a given cultural context. This assertion, however, would require much broader debate.

However, the folkloric role of treasure goes a step further than merely “marking space”. Narratives about it are always about buried or submerged wealth that is removed from immediate real experience. It is frequently guarded by mythical creatures (goblins, talking snakes, dragons)<sup>8</sup> or magic, making it a conceptual taboo.<sup>9</sup> For this reason, the traditional belief systems present it and perceive it as an illustration and a consequence of a community’s contact with the other world, or of a desire for such contact. Therefore, as per folkloristic analysis, a (buried) treasure in folk narratives cannot be considered as real wealth, but as a symbol of all goods, both worldly and other-worldly. Through this prism, the presence of treasure (or, more specifically, the folklore about it) in a particular local community can also be understood as that community’s aspiration to establish contact with the other world. Through narratives and space, the fabled, mythological world becomes part of the domestic environment. Meanwhile, the treasure represents a specific point in the local space that either transcends the boundaries of the terrestrial (Hrobat 2010: 59), or represents a passage between the two worlds.

However, identity is inseparable from space. People come to know, understand and make sense of it through storytelling (Bird 2002: 521). Identity is an ideology that is always in search of its material existence (Althusser 2000: 91) and finds it, among other things, in narrative folklore. This is why a significant part of the narrative folklore about treasure revolves around the dichotomy of Us vs. the Other – familiar vs. strange, community vs. foreigner/alien, village vs. town, etc. This can also be seen in some common themes or motifs within the Slovenian (European) repertoire of treasure narratives. The first of these is that the treasure was left here by the Turks, the symbolic archetypal representatives of chaos and danger, with the intention of returning to collect it one day (see, for example, Mlakar 2019: 60 and 69–72). The second is the motif of the Hun warlord Attila, an archetypal historical figure of the invasive Other, who is said to have been buried (sometimes in a golden coffin) along with his treasure in various micro-locations across Europe, including Slovenia (see, for example, Hrobat 2010: 57–59; Podbrežnik Vukomir and Kotnik 2009: 156–157; Podpečan 2007: 133). Both migratory motifs presuppose borrowing facts and names from historical memory and adapting (contextualising) them through new variants to the particular communities and their places/spaces. This also creates and perpetuates an emphasis on the long continuity of a particular local identity. Although not related to the treasure under the castle itself, this kind of application of formative Turkish Otherness is also present in Šalek: “*The linden tree that the Turks planted stood there. This Šalek linden tree. They came to Šalek and planted the linden tree there, promising to come and see how it grew. They haven’t been back yet though [laughs].*”<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Animal and mythical treasure guardians are a powerful symbol of the world of chaos or the afterlife (see, for example, Hrobat 2003: 131; Hrobat 2010: 71).

<sup>9</sup> In the context of Šalek and its treasure, this notion is further highlighted by older (written) narrative variants, which speak of people being punished or sanctioned for looking for treasure by either supernatural forces or the law. However, the contemporary accounts collected in my research do not tell of any kind of punishment or sanctions for this endeavour – supernatural or otherwise.

<sup>10</sup> Female, 1927, recorded in 2006.

Within the folk narrative and storytelling repertoires, a treasure is therefore both a desired object (a cultural fetish) and a signifier of the sacred – something that attracts and excites people on the one hand, and frightens and repels them on the other. It represents a boundary and it functions as a marker of the contact between the world of people and the world of the supernatural. It also expresses the local community's desire to make this contact within a space that this community recognises as its own. Once the importance of this duality is grasped, one can also begin to understand the undeniable emotional attachment of the storytellers to their narrative material and the real (ritualised) practices of actively entering into the world narratives, i.e. looking for the treasure that the stories put forth.

### FOLKLORE AND NARRATIVE OSTENSION

When collecting folklore material from people by performing fieldwork, a researcher often comes across cases in which informants supplement their narratives by “pinning” them to their own real experiences. Furthermore, they sometimes even use the narrative to justify their concrete behaviour and principled patterns of behaviour. These narrative details point to the important performance-contextual fact that a particular narrative can and does provoke an active creative response that shapes the world and way of life of its bearers.

The fact that concrete events create narratives is widely acknowledged (the narrative genre of the memorate, for instance), but “[...] it is equally as likely that the narratives also create events.” (Ellis 2001: 164) This relationship of mutual creation between stories and the real life of their bearers has already been articulated by several scholars of narrative folklore: “We have to accept that fact can become story and story can become fact.” (Dégh 1995: 261)

Folklorists describe this phenomenon with the concept of (narrative) ostension.<sup>11</sup> The term was originally used to refer to any set of ways in which “[...] the untextual reality itself – a thing, a situation or an event – conveys messages.” (Dégh and Vászonyi 1983: 6) However, in the subsequent debate, folklore scholars linked ostension more concretely to narratives themselves, defining it as the process by which people act out the motifs and events of narrative folklore (Fine 1992: 205). Ostension thus describes the occurrence(s) of everyday events and behaviours as narrative folklore directs them. The concept is also used to describe the way in which people enact the motifs and events of narrative folklore (Fine 1992: 205). Ostension thus represents: “[...] a dramatic extension [of folklore] into real life.” (Ellis 2001: 41). It describes a set of practices through which people enact their (narrative) folklore in one way or another (Fine 1992: 205). Ostensible practices are neither narrative nor organised “drama”, but are the conscious or unconscious recreation of the narrative scripts found in folklore (Meder 2009: 259). This recreation, in turn, is a consequence of the “[...] people's ability to shape their own behaviour on the basis of the story they have been presented with.” (Fine 1992: 207)

<sup>11</sup> For a more detailed presentation of the concept of narrative ostension along with examples from Slovenia, see Kvartič 2017: 139-48.

Ostension does not occur in all (folk) narrative genres, but tends to occur in those genres that are both presented and accepted as plausible, that correspond to socially and culturally relevant themes, and that indicate an individual's self-identification with the community (Fine 1992: 207). In other words, ostension and ostensible practices are primarily marked by legends.<sup>12</sup>

The visible (and thus recordable) manifestations of narrative ostension are many and varied. In order to study them, folklorists have grouped them together into three formal categories.<sup>13</sup> The first one describes an internalisation of the narrative, or its transformation into a memorate (a story of personal experience). This happens for instance, when the narrator presents themselves as the central character of the narrative, even though they may have heard (received) it as if it had happened to someone else. The second category involves any kind of (mis)interpretation of real events based on a pre-existing narrative. The third and final category – which is also the best means of understanding and explaining the treasure hunting expeditions inspired by treasure narratives – involves the dramatised enactment of the atmosphere, setting, characters and other elements of the stories in real life (Ellis 2003: 162–163). In the latter case, also called “pseudo-ostension”, there is always a self-reflexive awareness in people that everything that happens is primarily about the story; for instance, all the people who went treasure hunting at Šalek Castle did so with pre-existing knowledge of the stories of buried riches.

Other examples of narrative (pseudo-)ostension include: visiting cemeteries to experience supernatural events, experimental verification of narrative material, various societal panics based on narratives, etc. People – mostly young people – can and do recreate (enact) the narrative scenarios in one way or another, taking into account the temporal and spatial details known to them, with the implicit or explicit intention of experiencing the narrative directly and at first hand. In this way, instances of concrete behavioural patterns are created. Folklore studies categorise this as *legend-tripping*, a sub-category of narrative ostension. In this concept the local(ised) folk story variants are of the utmost importance, as they often link the narrative with a tangible spatial element, triggering the idea of directly exploring the events in the place where they are said to have taken place. These *legend-tripping* practices are often ritualised, with pre-known rules and roles for the individual participants, and are often accompanied by informal rites of passage (initiations), where, for example, a display of courage is required. Due to the highly dramatised components (“expedition”, confrontation with the story, return), *legend-tripping* can also be understood and explored as a particular form of folk theatre (Ellis 2004: 165–185). The journey is marked by both exciting anticipation and the fear that something extraordinary will happen to the participants. All this is characteristic of the treasure narratives at Šalek Castle.

<sup>12</sup> An example of a general definition of the genre of legend: “A story that [...] takes place in the real world and the unusual event it describes is not impossible or unimaginable; it may even sound plausible. It fits the everyday life of ordinary people and the contemporary value system that surrounds it.” (Dégh 1994: 29)

<sup>13</sup> These categories are in reality always in flux and overlap constantly.

## LOOKING FOR TREASURE AT ŠALEK CASTLE

As noted, the hidden/buried treasure motif is broadly present and relevant to the entire European narrative tradition (and beyond). However, in order to understand the local impact and the specific meaning of this “treasure folklore”, a narrow, local perspective tends to be far more useful. In what follows, I present a collection of narratives and testimonies about treasure and ostensive treasure-hunting (*legend-tripping*) practices localised at the castles Šalek and Ekenštajn. Both the motif of the treasure and the motif of actively looking for it are closely linked in the local narrative folklore. With each new telling, the narrators choose contextual details to bring the events closer to or further away from their own experiential reality. They often portray them as either true or untrue. I shall present a few narrative examples that I did not collect myself in the field, with comparison in mind:

The most powerful castle in the Šaleška valley was Šalek. This castle had underground connections with other castles. The largest underground tunnel led to the Fire Castle,<sup>14</sup> the ruins of which are located a few hundred metres higher. Since the castle is cursed, the tunnel is also cursed. Brave youngsters have tried many times to dig and collect the treasure that is said to be hidden in the tunnel. However, whenever they dug down to the tunnel, they heard a rumbling sound, got scared and ran away (Orožen 1936: 120).

This record contains all three of the main contextual elements that characterise most of the narrative repertoire (including memorates) about the treasure at Šalek Castle: the treasure itself, the underground connection with other castles, and the act of searching (digging) for the treasure. For this reason, it became a kind of canonical source for many later writers (see, for example, Tajinstveno 1974).<sup>15</sup> The example given, however, corresponds to the other examples of treasure narratives from the whole area. This can be deduced from the narrative collections and diary entries that can be reasonably dated to the period before 1936, when Orožen’s monograph was published. In the same work, however, we also find a similar narrative set in Ekenštejn (also called Fire Castle in this work):

People say that under the ruins there are either great treasures of gold or a great multitude of adders and horned vipers. When there are storms with lightning, it always strikes the ruins several times in a row. It is said that the lightning is drawn either by the gold or by the precious crown of the king of the snakes. About a hundred years ago, men gathered and prepared to dig through the ruins and reach the cellar where the treasure was said to be kept. But the cellar had three great stone doors. The men had already

<sup>14</sup> An alternative name for Ekenštajn Castle.

<sup>15</sup> Orožen’s method of collecting narrative material, published in his monograph *Castles and Manor Houses in the National Tradition*, is admittedly controversial. In many of his examples it is not possible to determine whether the material is the invented contribution of his informants – pupils at the Celje grammar school – or actual (traditional) narrative material (for more on this, see Hudaes 2013).

opened two of the doors, but when they came to the third, they abandoned their work and left (Orožen 1936: 123–124).

The story collected and written by Fran Mlinšek about Ekenštajn (around the same time as Orožen) is significantly different, but it mentions both the treasure and the search for it (the act of digging):

At the castle of Upper Šalek, a priest was once digging. [...] He made himself a hut out of branches and twigs and lay down in it. At the time of the consecration, the ground suddenly opened up in front of him. And he saw a large wooden bucket of money, and on each side three barrels of wine. A green man stood there and beckoned to him to take the money. But he threw his hat in, he didn't want to take anything. Then the ground closed again and a voice was heard saying: "Oh, if only you had saved me! The pine tree has not yet sprung up from which the cradle for the man who will save me will be made." (Hudales and Stropnik 1991: 110)

Fran Mlinšek also mentioned the treasure at Šalek Castle in his historical notes: "There are various tales about the castle, that there is a treasure buried there, etc." (Hudales and Stropnik 1991: 251–252)

Reading these records by "collectors of folk material", one can look for strong parallels between the local stories and the diverse and widespread global folk repertoire, as well as their importance for understanding the local ethnographic reality of Šalek and its inhabitants. The fact is that these examples are interwoven with numerous versions of localised treasure narratives shared by local people to this day – narratives in which the narrators incorporate their own experiences and memories, recreating both time and space and their own role (participation or distance) in the events they describe:

*Yeah, well, we actually went digging. Yeah, it just happened – sometimes we found a hole in the ground somewhere and started digging. We also struck the ground and if there was something hollow, like if we heard a hollow sound, then our imagination would go wild. Although there was probably nothing to it. But there was a lot of talk about it, yes. That there was some treasure hidden here, and that there was an underground tunnel leading down to Velenje Castle. But who knows what the truth is, we never got to the end of it.<sup>16</sup>*

Researcher (R): *So you were out looking for a hole in the ground?*

Informant (I): *For a hole and for something to find!*

R: *Like what?*

<sup>16</sup> Male, 1984, recorded in 2008.

I: *Yeah, maybe some gold or something. Because according to the stories, it was said that someone had buried all that gold. And that they had put it in that cave.*<sup>17</sup>

*I know there is a generation, ten years older than me, that they were looking for treasures. [Lists some names] they were digging there! But that's all I know.*<sup>18</sup>

*I remember, and it's true, my father told me, that once some German guy came after the war. And he had plans of this castle and everything. And he was looking for it somewhere, and he was looking for it, and that's it. And he came to one of the rocks here at Šafer's,<sup>19</sup> and he wanted to find out something. And the old Šafer chased him away. And then he left.*<sup>20</sup>

Although the content of European treasure narratives is often tied (at least implicitly) to real historical events or persons, this could hardly be said of the stories of the treasure at Šalek Castle. The only element in the narratives that can potentially be linked to a real historical context is the reference to lightning striking the castle buildings. Lightning eventually caused a fire at Šalek Castle in 1770, after which the building was completely abandoned (Stopar 1975: 24). It is not, however, possible to determine whether the process of folklorisation has preserved the memory of this particular event within local folk narratives. It is clear, however, that the frequent lightning strikes have been interpreted as evidence that there is a large amount of gold (or other metals) under the castle, as this gold is supposed to attract the lightning:<sup>21</sup>

*And then sometimes the elders said that the lightning strikes the castle up here. Up here in this particular part (points to a part of the castle). They said that there was probably a hiding place for some gold – that it is this gold that attracts the lightning.*<sup>22</sup>

Looking at the very rare written accounts of actual *treasure hunting* at Šalek Castle, the earliest mention I could find was in the autobiographical short story entitled “How I Cultivated Myself” (Kako sem se jaz likal), by the satirical writer and newspaperman of the latter half of the 19th century, Jakob Alešovec (1842–1901). The author describes with ironic humour his years of schooling in a Slovenian-German cultural environment.

<sup>17</sup> Male, 1959, recorded in 2010.

<sup>18</sup> Male, 1965, recorded in 2017.

<sup>19</sup> Šafer is the name of a former farmstead, the closest residential building to Šalek Castle, the home of the former (historical) caretakers of the castle. The name comes up frequently when Šalek residents talk about the castle and its folklore.

<sup>20</sup> Female, 1965, recorded in 2017.

<sup>21</sup> Compare to Orožen's account on Ekenštejn above.

<sup>22</sup> Male, 1938, recorded in 2017.



One of the chapters is dedicated to a long trip he took after an unsuccessful year at the Aloysius School in Ljubljana. On this trip, he visited the Šaleška valley and climbed Šalek Castle, of which he wrote:

[...] I had a beer in Šoštanj, I only passed through Velenje, but in Škalce I entered the parsonage and was stopped there by the parish cook. I did not want to push past her, so I went on and soon saw the ruins of Šalek Castle, which I climbed up to and even climbed into the collapsed window openings of the tower. The farmer I met somewhere under the castle mocked me, saying that if I was looking for ‘šac’<sup>23</sup> there, I would get nothing, as others had already found it. He did not know that I had climbed the tower only to look back across the Šaleška valley and see how far I had come. (Alešovec 1884: 448–449)

Jakob Alešovec attended the Ljubljana (Aloysius) Gymnasium between 1856 and 1863, when he graduated early (see Zajc 2013). This means that 1863 is the latest year in which he could have made the trip described in his book. Even if he had visited Šalek Castle a year earlier, the mention of the implied treasure hunt at Šalek Castle places it firmly in the early 1860s.

One of the most comprehensive written accounts of treasure hunting at Šalek Castle is found in the memoirs and diary entries of Štefanija Prislan (1914–2002), a native of Šalek. These texts are full of interesting and eloquent information about the way of life in the “old” Šalek. They contain information about the material, spiritual and social culture of the Šalek people, genealogical and historical data, and an inventory of continuity and change in the village and the broader area. Although her writings are sometimes tinged with nostalgia and “local-patriotic” pathos, her ethnographic inclination makes the notes mostly very informative and accurate, and therefore a good source for the historiography and ethnography of the village of Šalek in the twentieth century. Among other things, her diaries contain a lengthy account of three separate treasure hunts in which the inhabitants of Šalek participated, together with the names of the participants:

I knew of three groups: it was all secret and clandestine, but people still heard about it.

The first group from Šalek included Ban Milan, a merchant. Oštir Franc the farmer, Mak (?) Pepek the locksmith and the sawmill foreman – we called him “Ajmek”.

How gloomy was the morning when someone reported to the gendarmerie that some villagers from Šalek were digging at the castle at night. They went from house to house to find out more about the matter. People said that they were being punished for disturbing the property (the property of the Counts

<sup>23</sup> ‘Šac’ is an old Slovene colloquialism, derived from German, in which Schatz means treasure, profit or (material) wealth (see, for example, Snoj 2014).

of Thurn), but they had not dug up the treasure anyway. We neighbours would have noticed if anyone got rich – but we saw nothing. Only shards and pebbles from some of the portals were found on the hillside below the castle. Some of it was still worth something, and some of it was rubbish.

The second group, which also hoped to find the treasure, included Povh Tilek, Doblčak Cenek, Pavlov Karluh and Oštir-Vrtaški Anzek or Dolf. This group looked for it from Šalek Castle and as far as Preska. When they had dug quite a lot – about 100 metres from Pucl's hut or under Gorica castle,<sup>24</sup> something moved underground. They were so frightened that they ran in all directions, for there was a terrible shadow behind them.

The third group consisted of Hudovernik, who lived at the Paka station, Gričarjev Tone from Sele, Kovač Pepek (the one who told me all this) and Nedek, the railwayman, who lived in the Pehlhaus. They went to dig several times in terrible fear, but of course without success. No one knows what they were more afraid of – being caught by the authorities or those horrible monsters they thought were guarding the castle treasure. (Prislan, no year given: 30–31)

This account reveals some interesting information. The first one is the approximate period in which these “searches” are supposed to have taken place. A comparative check of the names given in the notes – on the reasonable assumption that these people were still young at the time of the search – suggests that the events described took place at least from the early twentieth century, if not from the end of the nineteenth century onwards. The other two groups are slightly more recent and can be placed in the period around or immediately after World War I. In this account, Prislan jumps between periods and even mixes them up by mentioning some names from the period after World War II, but the overall picture is telling enough. In addition to the timeline found in Prislan's writings, my interviews with some of the oldest inhabitants of Šalek confirmed the practice around the same time; as one informant said, referring to his father:

R: *What about the stories of your elders digging? Did your father also dig?*

I: *Yes, yes, yes. They dug even more than we did! They dug even more. But they also had the same points of interest. Only they went and dug there in the middle of the castle, on the other side, and they dug so much there that you almost couldn't go there anymore! That's where they dug. And they said that it was on that side they assumed it would be. And then they gave up. And they didn't dig anymore. My father, when he was a young man, they were already digging. But it was my – I should say – the generation just before me, well, those who were born there, after the year 1920, they were the ones who dug. And then we did too!*<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Yet another name for Ekenštajn.

<sup>25</sup> Male, 1938, recorded in 2017. My emphasis.

Prislan's writings also reveal that looking for treasure was (allegedly) a clandestine activity in and around the 1920s. The reason given is the desecration of property. This information may suggest that the treasure stories were also known to the authorities of the time (though no specific form of punishment or sanction is mentioned). Some specific digging locations are also mentioned, as well as "monsters" guarding the castle treasure, which is in keeping with the folklore motif of mythical creatures guarding the riches underground.

The most important and interesting variable one can find when collecting folk narratives and memorates of treasure hunting practices at Šalek Castle are the individual micro-locations on the castle ridge, where either the treasure or the tunnel are located, or where the narrators placed themselves in the act of looking for treasure. The range of these micro-locations is varied, but they are all chosen for their symbolic or signifying potential and are therefore never used randomly during narration. The groups that looked for the treasure or the tunnel determined for themselves, through active entry into the narratives, which elements of the broader castle space were of greater (symbolic) value to them. However, these spatial elements were always the most prominent features of the physical space.

In her diary entries, Štefanija Prislan also describes her own experience of searching for the secret tunnel, pointing out another specific micro-location – the pigsties at Kolavter farm – which, together with the slope to the north-east and east of the castle (where water is said to have once flowed), also appears in the accounts of other informants:

I don't know why, it was all interesting. I was also quite interested in Kolavter's pigsties. We were walking on the heavy rocks behind the pig-gery, and they said that there was a secret tunnel up to Šalek Castle. But nobody ever tried to open it or dig it up to see if there really was a tunnel to the castle. And we children were scared to look in there [...] everything was bewitched. (Prislan, no year given: 16–17)

The treasure of Šaleška was there; I described it in a poem. We said it was in the direction of Kolavter's pigsties – it was supposed to be there according to an old rumour. But no one has explored it. (Verdinek 2002: 154)

One of the digging sites that the informants repeatedly identified was a location beneath the eastern wall of the triangular tower, where there is a (now restored) vertical shaft, the remnant of a former chimney (Stopar 1975: 14). As an architecturally prominent element, it received some very interesting folk narrative interpretations that accompanied the *legend-tripping* visits to the castle at various times:

*Yeah, we dug ours first – there, first there, when they said they were just dropping people down. And they said that that's where they were dropping them in and that's where that cave was supposed to start. That they had to work half in there and dig those – [...] that they were half digging, and*

*they were half out, weren't they. Well, we already started digging there, that's it.*<sup>26</sup>

*That was it. The other site [where we were digging] was one of those exit shafts. Or on the north side there's one extension, it's like a chimney, something protruding and round. And they said that those who were naughty – who deserved to be punished, they were thrown down that shaft. Actually, it's quite steep from that part down to the Košanov graben, but it's overgrown now.*<sup>27</sup>

The area around Šafer's farm was also repeatedly mentioned as a very important potential point of interest, both by informants and in written sources. Some of the prominent rocks and Šafer's outbuildings were pointed out:

*People said that here, just above Šafer, a little further away there from the castle, just above the farm, where there are still some ruins to be found – that there was a stable inside and that there was a tunnel from inside out to Šafer here, you know. We dug there, digging everything up, and we dug deep – to see if there was anything there. We went all the way around, and we went out but we didn't find anything. So we left it. [...] Well, some said that there was supposed to be one of those entrances in the ground. And then the old Šafer, who was a mason, made one of those pigsties, or something like that, right there, right there. A pigsty. And from that time on, there was nothing there. We were no longer interested in it. So now I don't really know whether there would still be something there or not, I don't know.*<sup>28</sup>

We girls were convinced that the treasure was here. There is a flat wall at the Šafer's. And we found an entrance there, and that is where it was supposed to be. But when we started scratching the moss, they chased us away. [...] That's where the entrance to the tunnel leading to the upper castle should have been. That's all for now. (Verdinek 2002: 154)<sup>29</sup>

The flat area at the extreme north-west of the ridge, where the two castles stand, is also mentioned as a digging site. Some (older) informants called this area the “castle gardens”, although this cannot be historically confirmed:

<sup>26</sup> Male, 1938, recorded in 2017.

<sup>27</sup> Male, 1960, recorded in 2016.

<sup>28</sup> Male, 1938, recorded in 2017.

<sup>29</sup> This account is interesting because it is the only one that explicitly states that the treasure was sought only by girls. Other informants spoke of either boys or mixed groups.

*The side towards Kolavter. There were just these steps leading down. There is still one of those walls there now, I should say the old wall; there really were gardens there. It was flat. But, hey, we're digging, we're digging. And only when we had to hide for a while, we went, and we said, "Now we're going to go and dig there". Some of us brought bread, and some of us brought something else. Myself, I stole a sausage from the cellar at home, and I took it up, so we had a little bit of a snack as we dug. So, we're sitting there, and this big snake comes over. We ran away and we didn't dig there anymore. We were so scared.<sup>30</sup>*

The informants also pointed out some other micro-locations that occur sporadically in the context of visits to the castle and are thus not subject to broader (narrative) repetition:

*We were very interested in this particular hole in the ground at the top of the hill where Ekenštajn is located. There, in front of the two walls that are still standing. One little hill in front of that, there is this rather big round hole. And this hole – my imagination was running wild – is something that the witches must have made. And this hole was such a strong point that it pulled the earth right in.<sup>31</sup>*

Most of the accounts show that the searches for the treasure were generally haphazard – small excavations or simply probing the ground during an occasional visit to the castle. However, there is also information to suggest that searches were at least partially “organised”, especially when the interviewees described advance planning or the tools they carried with them up to the castle:

*[Addressing me] Go on and ask Š. M. about that! You'll find out first hand. Because they used to go up there with hammers and with picks, and they used to punch holes in the rocks. I don't know what else. But they got really serious about it!<sup>32</sup>*

Buried treasure aside, the other goal of these searches was to find the underground connection between Šalek Castle and Ekenštejn, or even between Šalek Castle and Velenje Castle on the other side of the valley. This tunnel has no historical basis (Stopar 1975: 52), but it is an important part of the treasure narratives, although not necessarily narratively linked to the treasure. A comparative reading of these accounts reveals a very interesting pattern: the older generations of informants speak of an underground connection between Šalek Castle and Ekenštejn, while the younger generations speak of a tunnel between Šalek Castle and Velenje Castle. Perhaps I can try to understand

<sup>30</sup> Male, 1954, recorded in 2013.

<sup>31</sup> Male, 1991, recorded in 2014.

<sup>32</sup> Female, 1965, recorded in 2017.

this difference from the historical perspective of the development of the area's identity. When the village of Šalek became part of Velenje in 1979 (and even much earlier), the identity of this area began to shift towards Velenje, and with it the focus of the symbolic articulation of this identity. However, this is a speculation, at least until some more field research is carried out.<sup>33</sup>

I: *Oh, and of course the treasure. The treasure of Šalek is somewhere between Šalek Castle and Ekenštajn. That is one story, but also that Šalek is supposed to be connected to Velenje Castle with a tunnel. That too.*

R: *With Velenje or with Ekenštajn?*

I: *With Velenje.*

R: *So this treasure has nothing to do with the tunnel, actually.*

I: *No, no this treasure is separate because it goes the other way, up towards Ekenštajn, somewhere up there. Or somewhere in between, closer to Šalek Castle. There used to be a well, a spring, and that is where the treasure was supposed to be hidden. However, the tunnel goes towards Velenje Castle, that is what was always said. A secret tunnel.*<sup>34</sup>

The stories about the treasure and the secret tunnel at Šalek Castle have always spanned all generations, and the folk material has mostly been passed on along a vertical axis, from the older to the younger generation. However, judging by both the written sources and the interviews, the participants in the ostential treasure-hunting visits to the castle (*legend-tripping*) are almost exclusively young people (children and teenagers). The informants, regardless of their age, consistently referred to the time of their youth as the time of their active treasure hunting. This pattern is consistent with folklorists' findings that narrative folklore plays a key role in the period of an individual's adolescence. By narrating and actively entering into the events described in narrative folklore, young people test and push the boundaries of their world and shape themselves into adults. These processes therefore constitute a test of an individual's maturity in communicating with peers and adults alike (Dégh 2001: 252). The repertoire of adolescents' narrative folklore is generally dominated by themes that fascinate, attract and repel at the same time. Engaging fully with folklore helps create self-awareness and understand one's own cultural reality. By actively entering into the events described in the story, young people participate in active, experimental learning about their surroundings and search for useful information related to the space where the narratives are set (Ellis 2003: 188).

<sup>33</sup> Interestingly, this pattern is at least partially confirmed by the material collected by Janko Orožen (1936) and Fran Mlinšek (Hudales and Stropnik, eds. 1991), where the connection between Šalek and Velenje castles is never mentioned.

<sup>34</sup> Male 1984, recorded in 2008.

## CONCLUSION

Narrative ostension – with the prominent sub-category of *legend-tripping* – is a less visible but very important part of narrative events because it helps us understand the embeddedness of narrative folklore in the concrete (micro)environments of its bearers. Furthermore, it helps us to understand the texts themselves and, consequently, to extract their meaning. In this respect, the tales of the underground tunnels and the treasure at Šalek and Ekenštejn castles are very compelling, as they have encouraged generations of young Šalek residents – indefinably far into the past – to climb up to the castle ruins, pound the ground and dig, wishing and expecting that the stories had a grain of truth in them. A comparative analysis of the local repertoire of treasure narratives has shown that these stories establish a connection with the fantastic, mythical and transcendental, and that the act of entering into their content implies a desire to make this connection. Hidden or buried treasure therefore has an important impact on local identity and its development, as it points to the inherent connection the local population has to the place where they live.

Since the narratives of the Šalek treasure are closely linked to the identity of Šalek and its inhabitants, one can also observe the transformation of this identity through them. During the conversations with the youngest interviewees (born after 1991), it became evident that the practice of active treasure hunting (*legend-tripping*) is disappearing. Young people still know the stories and their variants, but they do not go to the castle to look for the treasure themselves. This brings about an interesting break in the perception of narrative folklore, place and identity, and represents a different attitude from the one I observed among the older interviewees. On reflection, several circumstances could have influenced this change: 1) In order to enhance security, Šalek Castle was enclosed by a fence two decades ago and the entrance is locked most of the time. The limited access to the castle makes it difficult for visitors to experience the space directly (on a daily basis) and consequently inhibits the symbolic shaping of the castle space (spatialisation) through storytelling. 2) If narratives about the castle have always been a means of (almost) “intimate” inward self-identification among the residents of Šalek in the past, this has changed radically with their application in tourism and other contexts, which also arrived roughly two decades ago. As a result, narratives have become a means of presenting Šalek outwards in supra-local contexts that reach as far as possible. In these contexts, identities are rapidly and repeatedly constructed, dismantled and reconstructed. The existing (traditional) narrative folklore has thus been relativised, resulting in different meanings and functions than previously attributed to it. 3) The narratives themselves are also changing. Decades ago, the organised educational process (schools and associations) participated actively in storytelling events, presenting young people with traditional motifs and some new, original stories (see, for example, Stropnik 2001). These are slowly taking over the role of the main narrative representations of Šalek and the Šaleška region, creating a wide array of invented traditions<sup>35</sup> along the way.

<sup>35</sup> The concept of invented tradition was developed by the British historian Eric Hobsbawm (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983), who argues that much of the phenomena we now understand as part of tradition were in fact invented, or at least constructed, in some (collectively undefined) historical and social context. For an interesting example in the Šaleška region, see: (Ažber 2020).

In both my research and this subsequent article, I have admittedly only looked back in time and only to a relatively small area of significance where I could have reasonably assumed that I would find something. A comprehensive account would require a thorough survey of the contemporary situation. This would entail a detailed investigation into the realities of contemporary elementary and high school students who are either directly or indirectly engaged with the castle and its associated folklore. In addition, the wider spatial context must be taken into consideration. The Šaleška valley, which is home to many old castles and castle ruins, is replete with narrative folklore pertaining to tunnels and buried treasure. Therefore *my* “treasure hunt” continues.

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## V ISKANJU ŠALEŠKEGA ZAKLADA: OBLIKOVANJE LOKALNE IDENTITETE S PRIPOVEDNO OSTENZIJO

AMBROŽ KVARTIČ



Konkretni resnični dogodki iz naših življenj se s procesom folklorizacije pretvarjajo v zgodbe, vendar drži tudi obratna pot – tudi pripovedna folklor (lahko) vzbudi ustvarjalni, tvornostni odziv ter pomembno zaznamuje in sooblikuje naše ukrepanje, pogled na svet in način življenja.

Te primere folkloristika obravnava s krovnim konceptom pripovedne ostenzije, ki označuje vsakršne oblike (tvornega) udejanjanja pripovednega gradiva v resničnem življenju. Primerov pripovedne ostenzije (sploh v primeru žanra povedk) je veliko: nočni obiski pokopališč z namenom izkusiti nadnaravnih dogodkov, panika, ki jo na primer sprožijo sodobne povedke o satanizmu, izvajanje poskusov, ki bi potrdili ali ovrgli trditve zgodb in tako naprej. Za razumevanje tega, kakšno vlogo ima pripovedna folklor za svoje nosilce, kako se širi in kako pridobiva pomene, pa je njihovo raziskovanje prav tako pomembno kot raziskovanje samega pripovednega gradiva. Gre torej za manj izpostavljen vendar zelo pomemben kontekstualno razsežnost pojavnosti pripovednega gradiva med ljudmi, ki pa lahko raziskovalcem zelo koristi pri razumevanju vpetost folklore v konkretna (mikro)okolja in posledično pri razumevanju njenih spreminjajočih se pomenov.

V Sloveniji in po vsej Evropi je pripovedno gradivo o skritem zakladu med najvidnejšimi primeri, ki sprožajo takšen tvornostni odziv. Te pripovedi se oblikujejo okoli zanimivega vsebinskega nasprotja – v njih je zaklad predstavljen kot nedostopen (skrit, zakopan, celo zaščiten z magijo), v isti sapi pa je umeščen v povsem realna prostor in čas, blizu izkustveni resničnosti nosilcev zgodb. Zato se ljudje, ki z zgodbami o zakladih živijo skozi generacije, tu in tam odpravijo skrito bogastvo iz pripovedi aktivno iskat, pri čemer vstopajo v s simbolnim potencialom zaznamovane elemente svojega resničnega izkustvenega prostora – na primer na gradove. Spoznavanje tega pomembnega dela kontekstualne ravni pripovednega gradiva o zakladih raziskovalcem v folkloristiki pove veliko o tem, kako te zgodbe učinkujejo oziroma kakšno vlogo imajo za njihove nosilce. Pri njih namreč ne gre zgolj za simbolno artikulacijo zemeljskih in nezemeljskih dobrin (bogastva), pač pa z njimi lokalne skupnosti izražajo tudi željo vzpostavljanja stika s presežnim, bajeslovnim svetom. Skozi pripoved in vanjo vpeti prostor bajeslovni svet postaja del resničnega domačega okolja, zaklad pa je pri tem najmočnejši označevalec tistih točk konkretnega lokalnega prostora, kjer se meje med resničnim in bajeslovnim premoščajo. S prostorom, ki ga ljudje spoznavajo, razumevajo, osmišljajo in ustvarjajo (tudi) s pripovedmi o zakladu, je tako tesno povezana tudi (lokalna) identiteta.

Tradicijski pripovedni repertoar v Sloveniji vključuje zgodbe o zakladu, ki so ga v tukajšnjih krajih pustili Turki, ki nosi prekletstvo hudobnih graščakov, ki ga pred 'nevrednimi' varujejo magija in bajeslovna bitja, ki privlači strelo, ki se nahaja v podzemnih sobanah in tako naprej. Ti in drugi pripovedni motivi se s

procesi prenosa lokalizirajo v vsakdanji svet svojih nosilcev tako, da ti v zgodbe vkomponirajo konkretne prostorske elemente, ki lahko zaradi svoje dominantne vloge v nekem konkretnem življenjskem okolju pomenijo simbolno manifestacijo drugega sveta oziroma prehoda vanj. Ti elementi so zato (v pripovednem gradivu) predstavljeni kot magični ter v simbolnem smislu nevarni – gre na primer za križišča, sakralne objekte, stara drevesa, skalne osamelce in, seveda, gradove.

Pripovedi o zakladu močno zaznamujejo tudi prostor in identiteto naselja Šalek – nekdanje vasi, danes pa ene od mestnih četrti Velenje –, katerega prebivalci že stoletja živijo z zgodbami o bogastvu, zakopanem pod ruševinami gradu Šalek, ki se dviga nad starim vaškim jedrom. Iz tamkajšnjih lokalnih folklornih in spominskih pripovedi, dnevniški zapiskov in časopisnih poročil pa je razvidno, da so te zgodbe spodbudile že številne generacije prebivalcev Šaleka, da so vzeli v roke lopate in drugo orodje, se odpravili na grad in začeli s kopanjem. V članku je predstavljenih veliko primerov tako lokalnih folklornih pripovedi o lovu na zaklad kot tudi poročil o dejanskem prizadevanju Šalečanov, da bi pod »svojim« gradom našli skrito bogastvo.

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# Pagan Customs of the Veleti According to Notker Labeo

— Oleg Vladislavovich Kutarev —

The article studies a literary fragment written by Notker Labeo around 1000 in Old High German, which mentions a strange cannibalistic custom of the Slavs. This fragment had almost been forgotten by scholars of pre-Christian Slavic culture. It is a commentary on Notker's translation of *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* by Martianus Capella, which was considerably influenced by a certain literary tradition. The paper looks into Notker's sources, his influences and the trustworthiness of his evidence.

KEYWORDS: Slavic Paganism, Veleti, Notker Labeo, cannibalism, Polabian Slavs

Članek obravnava literarni odlomek Notkerja Labea, napisan okoli leta 1000 v stari visoki nemščini, ki omenja nenavaden kanibalistični običaj Slovanov. Raziskovalci predkrščanske slovanske kulture so na ta odlomek skorajda pozabili. Gre za komentar Notkerjevega prevoda dela *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* Marcijana Kapele, ki je bil pod precejšnjim vplivom določene literarne tradicije. Članek obravnava Notkerjeve vire, njegove vplive in verodostojnost njegovih dokazov.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: slovansko poganstvo, Veleti, Notker Labeo, kanibalizem, Polabski Slovani

## I.

There can be no doubt that attempts to trace the outlines of pre-Christian Slavic religion – Slavic Paganism – often draw the attention of scholars to ancient Russian, in other words, Old East Slavic material. Its sources are well-known and have been translated into modern languages. Serious studies have been devoted to this area. Moreover, ancient Russian sources on Slavic Paganism are much richer in evidence than Czech, Polish, Slovak, Bulgarian or Serbian sources, or indeed any other West or South Slavic cultural region. Important texts that touch upon Paganism, such as the *Primary Chronicle* or *The Tale of Igor's Campaign* are studied at school in Russia and other countries.

However, a different cultural world, often undeservedly overlooked in this respect, can offer as much vivid, ancient and trustworthy evidence on Slavic Paganism. It is the region of the Polabian and the Baltic Slavs who are now mostly extinct, but who played an important role in Europe between the 7th and 12th centuries CE, and contributed greatly to West Slavic culture. The Polabian Slavs inhabited the basin of the River Elbe in present-day Germany. Their very name meant that they lived “along the Elbe”, for Elbe in Slavic languages is “Laba” (cf. the Czech Labe etc.). In addition to the Obodrites (Abotrites), the Veleti (or the Wilzi) and the Rujani (or Rani), who all spoke the Polabian

language (which disappeared in the 18th century), the group of the Polabian Slavs also included the Sorbs<sup>1</sup> (Lusatian Serbs), who still speak Lusatian languages today and number around 30,000 people living in Germany.<sup>2</sup> While the Obodrites, the Veleti and the Rujani are considered to be both Polabian and Baltic Slavs because they lived close to the Baltic coast, the Lusatian Serbs never had access to the sea and are thus classed as Polabian, but not Baltic Slavs. A different group of Baltic Slavs, who were not Polabian Slavs, were the Pomeranians. They inhabited about one fifth of present-day Poland in the north-west of the country and spoke the Pomeranian language, which was close to both Polabian and to a certain extent also to Polish (Brüske 1955: 3–5). These five groups were divided into many tribes, but had a common destiny, which is why they are categorised as the **Polabian-Baltic Slav community**. For a long time, they struggled to remain independent and to preserve their Paganism against Christian states such as Germany (Holy Roman Empire), Denmark and Poland. In some places they stood their ground until as late as the 1170s,<sup>3</sup> but they were eventually defeated in the late 12th century and were annihilated or assimilated by the conquering nations (ЖОБ 2021: 524–525, 644–656).

A number of attempts have been made to collect all the fragments that deal with the Paganism of the Polabian-Baltic Slavs in one publication, from the classical work by K. H. Meyer<sup>4</sup> to the recent compendia by J. A. Álvarez-Pedrosa and J. Dynda.<sup>5</sup> However, these collections cannot be considered comprehensive. This small study looks at the text that was missed by the abovementioned scholars, as it is peculiar in its genre and its content. I will consider this text as it is preserved in all the relevant languages and briefly analyse it.

Although this passage seldom draws the attention of Western scholars, it has never been forgotten in the works of Russian mediaevalists. Alexander Kotlyarevsky, Alexander Veselovsky, Aleksey Sobolevsky, Vyacheslav V. Ivanov and Vladimir Toporov, among others, commented upon this text in the 19th and 20th centuries.<sup>6</sup> Oddly enough, the fact

<sup>1</sup> This ethnonym was never used by the nation itself. Present-day Lusatia enjoys cultural rights within the German lands of Brandenburg and Saxony.

<sup>2</sup> Strictly speaking, only one of the tribes of the Obodrites were called Polabians, but in this paper I use this name only in the broad sense.

<sup>3</sup> This date can be traced from the Icelandic *Knyttlinga saga* written in the mid-13th century, which deals with Danish history. The chapter 122 of the saga report that even after the Danish conquest of Arkona and Korenitsa/Charenza (the main Pagan centers of the Rujani) in the late 1160s, a number of Pagan shrines were still functioning, and one of them dedicated to the god Tjarnaglófi “resisted longer than the others but they managed to get him three years after” (*Knyttlinga saga* 1986: 169); in the original: “Hann helzk lengst við, en þó fengu þeir hann á þriðja vetri þar eptir” (*Knyttlinga saga* 1982: 305).

<sup>4</sup> Meyer (1931) is a collection of fragments in the original without translation or commentary. It comprises sources on Paganism of all the West Slavs and partially the South Slavs. These sources are mostly trustworthy Latin texts. This article deals with a source in a different language.

<sup>5</sup> These works have a solid commentary. The book by Álvarez-Pedrosa was initially published in Spanish (Álvarez-Pedrosa 2017: 61–199 etc.), and then in English with the addition of fragments in the original (Álvarez-Pedrosa 2021: 50–221 etc.); the original texts with translations into Czech are given in Dynda 2017: 33–248. In the indefinite future I plan to publish a compilation of this kind in Russian. In my recent article (in English) I tried to make a thorough review of the reliable evidence on the deities venerated by the ancient Slavs (Kutarev 2023). However, the sources mentioned are treated in a cursory manner and many facets of the multifarious Pagan culture are left out.

<sup>6</sup> See, for instance, Веселовский 1906: 20 and Иванов, Топоров 1974: 69 и т. д. and their bibliographies. I mention other authors below.

that Friedrich Engels mentioned this passage in his *History of Ireland* was mostly left unnoticed by the Soviet scholars. He wrote:

The reports of the classical writers of antiquity about the [Irish] people do not sound very edifying. Diodorus recounts that those Britons who inhabit the island called Iris [...] eat people. Strabo gives a more detailed report: “Concerning this island I have nothing certain to tell, except that its inhabitants are more savage than the Britons, since they are man-eaters [...] they count it an honourable thing, when their fathers die, to devour them [...]” The patriotic Irish historians have been more than a little indignant over this alleged calumny. It was reserved to more recent investigation to prove that cannibalism, and especially the devouring of parents, was a stage in the development of probably all nations. Perhaps it will be a consolation to the Irish to know that the ancestors of the present Berliners were still honouring this custom a full thousand years later (Engels 1970: 34–35).

Engels’ text then proceeds to quote the passage from Notker (following Jacob Grimm) that interests us. His commentary on cannibalism is in itself a curious document of his time, and we will also refer to the ancient geographers below.

## II.

A detour is needed to access Notker’s text. A mysterious author flourished in late Antiquity, called Martianus Capella. We know virtually nothing about him apart from the fact that he lived in Carthage and wrote in Latin. His main work is variously dated by scholars from the early 5th to the early 6th centuries.<sup>7</sup> That should not bother us here because Capella only provided the source for the text we will explore.

Martianus’ work is named *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, or “On the Marriage of Philology and Mercury”.<sup>8</sup> This text is unusual in form and its genre defies simple characterization. Clive Staples Lewis famously said: “For this universe, which has produced the bee-orchid and the giraffe, has produced nothing stranger than Martianus Capella” (Капелла 2019: 6).<sup>9</sup> Usually, *De nuptiis* is defined as an encyclopaedia or a handbook of the Liberal Arts – Grammar, Rhetoric, Geometry, Arithmetic, Astronomy, Dialectic and Music. Seven of the nine books of the treatise (3rd–9th) are devoted to each of these arts. At the same time *De nuptiis* can also be read as a work of fiction (Капелла 2019: 9–11).

<sup>7</sup> See the literature in Капелла 2019: 8–9; certain scholars date Capella as early as the 3rd century. Yuri A. Shahov, translator and scholar of Martianus Capella, does not explicitly side with any date.

<sup>8</sup> Latin (Martianus 1866); Russian (Капелла 2019).

<sup>9</sup> See the opinions regarding Martianus Capella that range from the critical to the respectful. For example, one claims his treatise was the most popular literary work in Western Europe at some point, next only to Virgil and the Bible, in Капелла 2019: 7–8.

In the Middle Ages, Martianus Capella's book became the definitive text in the education system. According to one scholar, "His work may be likened to the neck of an hourglass through which the classical liberal arts trickled to the medieval world" (Капелла 2019: 7). Martianus Capella is quoted as an authority on the most important disciplines by Gregory of Tours, Isidore of Seville, the Venerable Bede and many others, and he later influenced Dante, although his importance diminished by the advent of the Renaissance (Капелла 2019: 11–12).

The first two books of *De nuptiis* do not deal with the individual arts, acting instead as a narrative framework for the whole treatise. In the first book, the Roman gods decide to marry Mercury to a lady named Philology. The second book opens with Philology divining about her future marriage (it turns out that the bride and groom suit each other perfectly), then the bride is variously dressed and decorated by her friends and kin. Philology is then adopted into the ranks of the immortals and communicates with the gods, travelling across their numerous abodes. Then follows the marriage. Beginning with book three, the author addresses the Liberal Arts, one per book.

Martianus' work was a very popular school text and was often commented upon in the 9th and 10th centuries. The most influential commentary was written circa 900 by Remigius of Auxerre, a student of John Scotus Eriugena and a renowned expert in philology and philosophy.

### III.

Around the year 1000, Notker Labeo (also known as Notker the German), a monk and teacher at the famous centre of study, the Abbey of St. Gall, translated the first two books of *De nuptiis* into High German.<sup>10</sup> I date this translation to the period between 983 and 1020.<sup>11</sup> This was not the only thing Notker did for the development of a literary German language,<sup>12</sup> but what interests us here is the evidence of Pagan culture of the Veleti found in his translation.

The early 11th century was a high tide in the history of the Veleti. In the first 80 years of the previous century, the German state, especially under Otto the Great, the founder of the "Ottonian" branch of the imperial Saxon dynasty, succeeded in subduing the Polabian Slavs, including the Lusatian Serbs, the Southern Veleti and the Obodrites

<sup>10</sup> The original text is from Notker (1979), taking into consideration Piper (1882), and a critical edition (Notker latinus 1986).

<sup>11</sup> In 1020, Notker in his old age recounts in a letter (*Epistola ad Hugonem episcopum Sedunensem*) to Hugo, Bishop of Sitten (modern-day Sion in Switzerland), his various translations, and among them notes: "and I translated 'The Marriage of Philology'" ("et transtuli nuptias philologiae") (Grotans 1999). See the letter in Piper (1882: 859–861). It is hard to establish the *terminus post quem* of the translation, however, it is not earlier than 970s because Notker is said to have been born in the 950s, and he is described at the time of his death in 1022 as a septuagenarian by one of his students (Ганина 2015: 39). I am sure it is safe to claim the translation was made after 983, although it is impossible to give a more precise date.

<sup>12</sup> See Ганина (2015). Natalia Ganina provides an in-depth examination of Notker's life, his works and the purpose of his translations into German.



(Brüske 1955: 16–38). However, by the end of the 900s the situation had changed. A **Great Slavic Pagan Revolt erupted in 983**, which started in the lands of the Northern Veleti – the Lutici. The revolt aimed to gain independence from the Germans, destroying the emerging ecclesiastical system in the Slavic lands and bringing back the traditional religion. The Lusatian Serbs did not succeed in the revolt, but the Veleti and the Obodrites did (Brüske 1955: 39–54). In the words of Adam of Bremen, who wrote his chronicle in the 11th century:

the Slavs, more than fairly oppressed by their Christian rulers, at length threw off the yoke of servitude and had to take up arms in defence of their freedom [...] the rebel Slavs wasted first the whole of Nordalbingia<sup>13</sup> with fire and sword; then, going through the rest of Slavia, they set fire to all the churches and tore them down to the ground. They also murdered the priests and the other ministers of the churches with diverse tortures and left not a vestige of Christianity beyond the Elbe. At Hamburg, then and later, many clerics and citizens were led off into captivity, and even more were put to death out of hatred for Christianity [...] And so all the Slavs who dwell between the Elbe and the Oder and who had practiced the Christian religion for seventy years and more, during all the time of the Otto's, cut themselves off from the body of Christ and of the Church with which they had before been joined.<sup>14</sup>

The Lutici, also known as the Northern Veleti, gained significant power from that point onward. During the war with Poland in the years 1002–1018, Henry II, the Holy Roman Emperor, was even compelled to enter into alliance with the Lutici and practically legalize their Paganism. This inflamed such authoritative contemporaries as Bruno of Querfurt and Thietmar of Merseburg, but also became an incentive for them to record information about the Slavic deities, their cults and shrines (Álvarez-Pedrosa 2021: 64–76).<sup>15</sup> The revolt contributed to popularising the Veleti, but they were also demonized as being especially brutal barbarians. I believe Notker followed this line, being a contemporary of Bruno and Thietmar. Not so long ago, it seemed that the Germans had succeeded in suppressing their eastern Pagan neighbours, but after 983 the new reality had to be accepted: the Slavs

<sup>13</sup> The lands in the lower, that is, northern part of the Elbe.

<sup>14</sup> *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*, II, 42–44 (40–42) (Adam 2002: 83–85). “Sclavi a christianis iudicibus plus iusto compressi, excusso tandem iugo servitutis libertatem suam armis defendere coacti sunt. [...] Sclavi rebellantes totam primo Nortalbingiam ferro et igne depopulati sunt; deinde reliquam peragrantes Sclavoniam omnes ecclesias incenderunt et ad solum usque diruerunt; sacerdotes autem et reliquos ecclesiarum ministros variis suppliciis enecantes, nullum christianitatis vestigium trans Albiam reliquerunt. Apud Hammaburg eo tempore ac deinceps multi ex clero et civibus in captivitatem abducti sunt, plures etiam interfecti propter odium christianitatis. [...] Omnes igitur Sclavi, qui inter Albiam et Oddaram habitant, per annos LXX et amplius christianitatem coluerunt, omni tempore Ottonum, talique modo se absciderunt a corpore Christi et ecclesiae, cui antea coniuncti fuerant” (Adam Bremensis 1917: 102–105).

<sup>15</sup> For the “legalization” of Slavic Paganism under Henry II, which brought to life the first detailed descriptions of Slavic religion (the earliest material being about the Lutici), see my article (Кытапов 2018).

were once again politically independent, possessed a formidable military power and were determined to develop their Pagan culture. Meanwhile, the Germans did not yet possess the necessary resources to crush them.

However, the golden age of the Lutici was short-lived. In 1056–1057, a devastating internecine war subverted their power. According to Adam of Bremen, “many thousands of pagans were laid low on both sides”.<sup>16</sup> Military campaigns against the Baltic Slavs intensified, led by neighbouring powers. With the rapid decline of the Lutici, their lands were taken by the Obodrites, the Rujani, the Pomeranians, the Polish, the Danish and the Germans (Brüske 1955: 78–118; ЖОБ 2021: 593–597). But Notker died before that in 1022.

#### IV.

Now I turn to Notker’s passage on the customs of the Veleti. It is part of a translated text by Martianus Capella, which includes a commentary on the original treatise and was influenced by other texts. For certain vowels of the Germanic language Notker used acute and circumflex accents, which he thought was crucial, as he himself had written to Hugo of Sitten.<sup>17</sup> This orthography is preserved in German editions of Notker, which I follow here.

Notker did not only base his translation on the text by Martianus, but also on the corpus of commentaries on *De nuptiis*, such as the ones by John Scotus Eriugena and Remigius of Auxerre. In addition, he also turned to “more than sixty sources”, which figure in the commentary by James C. King.<sup>18</sup> Notker notably “preferred Remigius to other commentators” (Notker latinus 1986: XV), and opened his translation with a direct reference to him.<sup>19</sup>

In the second book of *De nuptiis*, the last one to give the bride adornments is her mother Phronesis, whose name is Greek for “discretion”. The scene takes place at the break of dawn, which ushers in the day of the wedding. Martianus describes this morning in a verse fragment (II, 116) (Martianus 1866: 31):

Et iam tunc roseo subtexere sidera peplo  
coeperat ambrosium<sup>a</sup> promens Aurora pudorem.

Different manuscripts give two readings for a): *ambosium* and *ambronum*. Translation:

<sup>16</sup> III, 22 (21) (Adam 2002: 133). “Multa milia paganorum hinc inde prostrati sunt” (Adam Bremensis 1917: 165).

<sup>17</sup> “Teuton words are not to be written without accents [...] acute and circumflex”; “uerba theutonica sine accentu scribenda non sunt [...] acuto et circumflexo” (Piper 1882: 861).

<sup>18</sup> See Notker latinus (1986: XVII–XVIII); all his sources are not yet identified (ibid.: XX).

<sup>19</sup> Notker opens his translations with a telling phrase “Remigius instructs us that the full name of this author was Martianus [...]”; “Remigius lêret únsih tîsen auctorem álenámen uuésen gehéizenen martianum [...]” (Notker 1979: J2; Piper 1882: 687).

And now Aurora, with the modesty befitting an immortal, began to hide the stars with her rosy gown.<sup>20</sup>

Notker did not only translate these lines but provided an explanation, which he based on the tradition of commentary. What follows is the commentary to this text by Remigius of Auxerre (48.20) (Lutz 1962: 158) with Martianus' text in bold type:

**Et iam tunc roseo subtexere sidera peplo coeperat** Ortum diei describit. **Et iam tunc coeperat Aurora subtexere** id est occultare vel opperire, **sidera in roseo peplo.** Oriente enim die splendor siderum evanescit. **Promens** id est manifestans, ipsa **Aurora pudorem** hoc est facinus vel turpitudinem, **ambronum.** Ambrones populi sunt Scythiae qui carnibus humanis vescuntur et maxime noctibus vagantes captos homines devorant. Inde fingit Auroram, id est ortum diei, manifestare scelus illorum quod noctibus peragunt. Brosis Grece cibus dicitur, hinc ambrones ipsi sunt et antropofagi, id est hominum comesores.

Translation:

**And now she started to cover the stars with a rosy gown** – [he] describes the break of day. **And now Aurora started to cover** – that is, to occult or wrap the stars in a rosy gown. For at the break of day the splendour of the stars disappears. **Bringing forth,** means manifesting, that is, Aurora [makes manifest] the shame (**pudorem**), that is, the crime (facinus) of the Ambrones (ambronum). The Ambrones are the peoples in Scythia who eat human flesh and mostly devour people whom they catch roving in the night. That's why he [Martianus] depicts that Aurora, that is the break of day, makes manifest their atrocity which they commit by night. Brosis in Greek means food, and thus "Ambrones" means the same as "Anthropophagi", that is, eaters of humans.

In this commentary, the most important distortion of the text occurs, impacting how it is understood later. In Martianus we see the word *ambrosium*, meaning "immortal", which refers to the blush (pudor) on the goddess' cheeks and is a metaphor for the blush of dawn. But Remigius, who reads a garbled manuscript, mistakenly accepts *ambronum* instead of *ambrosium*, interpreting it as the name of savage tribes. Whatever the time and circumstances of this distortion,<sup>21</sup> Remigius felt the urge to inform the reader about the Ambrones (completely unknown to Martianus' text!), who figure in the ancient sources, and also to add a story of their nocturnal evildoings, made manifest by the dawn (Aurora).

<sup>20</sup> I substitute "the immortal" for "the goddess" in the quoted translation (Martianus 1977: 40) because it better reflects the word *ambrosium*, which is crucial for us here, cf. Капелла (2019: 80).

<sup>21</sup> It looks like one of the manuscript copies had identical ducts for "si" and "n".

The Ambrones, a “barbaric” tribe of Germanic or, according to older scholarship, Celtic origins, repeatedly defeated the Romans in the late 2nd century BCE in alliance with other Germanic tribes. However, they were ultimately defeated alongside their allies, the Teutons, at the Battle of Aquae Sextiae. These events were mentioned by Titus Livius, Strabo and Plutarch. However, Remigius and later Notker present a completely new tradition of the Ambrones, far from that found in ancient history.

**This is the passage from Notker**, which shows familiarity with the commentary by Remigius (*Notkeri translatio “De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii” Martiani Capellae*, II, 8) (Notker 1979: J104–105), with Martianus’ and Remigius’ text set in bold type:

**Et iam tunc coeperat aurora subtexere. i. operire sidera. roseo peplo.**  
 Sô uuárd táz ter tág pegónða décchen die stérmen. **Prodens<sup>a</sup> pudorem. i. turpitudinem ambronum.** Irbáronde dfa únere<sup>b</sup> dero mán-ézon<sup>c</sup>. Cibus héizet grece brosis. dánnan<sup>d</sup> sínt ambrones kenámot. Dîe<sup>e</sup> héizent óuh antropofagi. dáz chît **commessores hominum.** In\_scithia gesézzene<sup>f</sup>. Síe ézent náhtes. tés sie síh tágés scámen<sup>g</sup> múgen. álso man chît. táz óuh ház-essa<sup>h</sup> hîer in\_lánde tûen<sup>i</sup>. Áber uueletabi dîe in\_germania sízzent. tíe uuír uuilze<sup>j</sup> héizên. dîe nescámént<sup>k</sup> síh níeht ze\_chédenne. dáz síe íro parentes mit<sup>l</sup> mêren réhte ézen súlfn. dánne die vuúrme.

Variant readings:<sup>22</sup> a) *Promens*, b) *Erbáronde únêra*, c) *ézôn*, d) *tánmân*, e) *kenámôt*. *Tíe*, f) *gesézene*, g) *scámên*, h) *házzessá*, i) *tûên*, j) *uuilze*, k) *nescámênt*, l) *mít*.

Translated from Old High German by Matvey M. Fialko:<sup>23</sup>

**And now Aurora, began to occult, i.e., cover the stars with her rosy gown.** – And there was the day [i.e., dawn] covering these stars. **Bringing forth the shame, i.e., the disgrace of the Ambrones.** And aroused (?) [the dawn] shame in the man-eaters. Food in Greek is called “brosis”, thus they are called “the Ambrones”. They are called the Anthropophagi, that is “**eaters of humans**”, who are in Scythia. They eat by night, because they are ashamed to do it by day. It is also said that the same is done by the witches who inhabit these parts. But the Weletabi who live in Germany, and whom we call the Wiltzi, are not ashamed to admit that they have more rights to eat their parents than do the worms.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> From Notker (1979: J104–105); the earlier edition is almost identical (Piper 1882: 787), only *mánézon* and *zechédenne* are written as one word; in all other cases the \_ is replaced with an interval.

<sup>23</sup> I thank Dmitry Galtsin, Matvey Fialko and Andrey Dosaev for their assistance in the translations to this article.

<sup>24</sup> As translated by Alexander N. Veselovsky into Russian: «Велетабы, живущие в Германии, которых мы зовём Вильцами, не стыдятся говорить, что они едят своих родителей с бóльшим правом, чем черви» (Веселовский 1906: 20) – “the Veletabi who dwell in Germany, and whom we call the Wilzi, are not ashamed to say that they eat their parents with more right than do the worms”; in the Russian version of F. Engels’ treatise: «Велетабы, которые живут в Германии и которых мы называем вильцами, не стыдятся признавать, что они могут поедать своих родителей с бóльшим правом, чем черви» (Энгельс 1948: 89) – “the Veletabi,

So, here is the text regarding the customs of the Veleti. According to Notker, they are cannibals, like the “Ambrones”, and they admit to eating their own parents. Where do these notions come from and are they trustworthy as evidence?

## V.

As has been said above, Martianus Capella knows nothing about the Ambrones, although he does mention the *Anthropophagi*. This tradition is no doubt descended from ancient Greek historiography through intermediary texts. Its main *topos* is Scythia, inhabited by the *Anthropophagi*, the Man-eaters.

They are first mentioned by Herodotus, who is directly quoted neither by Martianus, nor by Remigius, nor by Notker. The father of history deals at length with cannibalism among the barbarians. For example, he uses this topic to illustrate the varying conceptions of what is sacred among different peoples (Herod., Hist. III, 38):<sup>25</sup>

When Darius was king, he summoned the Greeks who were with him and asked them what price would persuade them to eat their fathers' dead bodies. They answered that there was no price for which they would do it. Then he summoned those Indians who are called Callataie, who eat their parents, and asked them (the Greeks being present and understanding by interpretation what was said) what would make them willing to burn their fathers at death. The Indians cried aloud that he should not speak of so horrid an act.<sup>26</sup>

But the main corpus of evidence on cannibalism is found in book four. First, he introduces the name of the people “Androfagi” (*Ἀνδροφάγοι*) (Herodotus 1928: 218) in IV, 18 and IV, 106:<sup>27</sup>

The Man-eaters are of all men the most savage in their manner of life [...] they are the only people of all these that eat men.

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who inhabit Germany and whom we call the Wilzi, are not ashamed to acknowledge that they can eat their parents more rightfully than the worms can”.

<sup>25</sup> (Herodotus 1928: 50–51): “Δαρείος ἐπὶ τῆς ἑωντοῦ ἀρχῆς καλέσας Ἑλλήνων τοὺς παρεόντας εἴρετο ἐπὶ κόσῳ ἂν χρήματι βουλοῖατο τοὺς πατέρας ἀποθνήσκοντας κατασιτέεσθαι· οἱ δὲ ἐπ’ οὐδενὶ ἔφασαν ἔρδειν ἂν τοῦτο. Δαρείος δὲ μετὰ ταῦτα καλέσας Ἰνδῶν τοὺς καλεομένους Καλλατίας, οἱ τοὺς γονέας κατεσθίουσι, εἴρετο, παρεόντων τῶν Ἑλλήνων καὶ δι’ ἔρμηνέος μανθανόντων τὰ λεγόμενα, ἐπὶ τίνι χρήματι δεξαίαι’ ἂν τελευτῶντας τοὺς πατέρας κατακαίειν πυρὶ· οἱ δὲ ἀμβώσαντες μέγα εὐφημέειν μιν ἐκέλευον”.

<sup>26</sup> The Ancient Russian “Primary Chronicle” (12th century), in concordance with the Greek *chronographs*, attributes cannibalism to the Indians, who are reported to be fond of eating travelers: “the Indians [...] eat people and kill travellers”; «Индомъ [...] члѣвки ядуше. и странъствующихъ оубиваху» (Ипат. 1908: 11).

<sup>27</sup> (Herodotus 1928: 306–307): “Ἀνδροφάγοι δὲ ἀγριώτατα πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἔχουσι ἦθεα, [...] ἀνδροφαγεύουσι δὲ μοῦνοι τούτων”. They are mentioned some more times.

Then, Herodotus describes the details of cannibalism, although in relation to other nations, for instance in IV, 26:<sup>28</sup>

It is said to be the custom of the Issedones, that whenever a man's father dies, all the nearest of kin bring beasts of the flock, and having killed these and cut up the flesh they cut up also the dead father of their host, and set out all the flesh mingled together for a feast.

This place echoes I, 216:<sup>29</sup>

Now, for their [the Massagetes'] customs [...] when a man is very old all his kin meet together and kill him, with beasts of the flock besides, then boil the flesh and feast on it. This is held to be the happiest death; when a man dies of a sickness, they do not eat him, but bury him in the earth, and lament that he would not live to be killed.

The fact that the authors who interest us here do not make direct references to Herodotus is irrelevant. The historians and geographers of later ages who wrote about Northern and Eastern Europe have taken such legends into account. In time they appeared in Latin letters. In the middle of the first century CE, Pomponius Mela quotes Herodotus' story of the "Essedones" (sic) almost verbatim (II, 8 (9)) (Древняя Русь 2017: 233). In his *Naturalis historia*, his junior contemporary Pliny the Elder, read by Remigius (Lutz 1962: 23) and Notker (Notker latinus 1986: XVIII), uses the names Anthropophagi and Essedones alongside other ethnonyms found in Herodotus (IV, 88). Pliny the Elder is also one of the first to mention the Venedi (IV, 97), that is, the Slavs (Древняя Русь 2017: 244, 246). Many more examples can be given. The topos of bizarre savages taken up by Herodotus was repeatedly exploited over the centuries. Despite the plots and ethnonyms becoming increasingly anachronistic, these stories continued to be reimagined and mixed in various forms, retaining their popular appeal.

I will not dwell upon cannibalism as represented in Latin literature. It is worth noting, however, that the stories of cannibals remained popular in mediaeval literature in the West. The old names of nations merged with new ones, and half a century later Notker Adam of Bremen wrote (IV, 19):<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> (Herodotus 1928: 224–225): “Νόμοισι δὲ Ἰσσηδόνες τοῖσιδε λέγονται χρᾶσθαι. ἐπεὶ ἀνδρὶ ἀποθάνῃ πατὴρ, οἱ προσήκοντες πάντες προσάγουσι πρόβατα, καὶ ἔπειτα ταῦτα θύσαντες καὶ καταταμιόντες τὰ κρέα κατατάμνουσι καὶ τὸν τοῦ δεκομένου τεθνεῶτα γονέα, ἀναμίξαντες δὲ πάντα τὰ κρέα δαῖτα προτίθενται”.

<sup>29</sup> (Herodotus 1920: 270–271): “Νόμοισι δὲ χρέωνται τοιοῖσιδε [...] Μασσαγέτης [...] οὗρος δὲ ἡλικίης σφι πρόκειται ἄλλος μὲν οὐδεὶς· ἐπεὶ δὲ γέρον γένηται κάρτα, οἱ προσήκοντες οἱ πάντες συνελθόντες θύουσί μιν καὶ ἄλλα πρόβατα ἅμα αὐτῷ, ἐψησαντες δὲ τὰ κρέα κατεωχέονται. ταῦτα μὲν τὰ ὀλβιώτατά σφι νενόμισται, τὸν δὲ οὐσφ τελευτήσαντα οὐ κατασιτέονται ἀλλὰ γῆ κρύπτουσι, συμφορὴν ποιούμενοι ὅτι οὐκ ἔκετο ἐς τὸ τυθῆναι”.

<sup>30</sup> (Adam 2002: 200–201): “Cynocephali sunt, qui in pectore caput habent; in Ruzzia videntur sepe captivi, et cum verbis latrant in voce. Ibi sunt etiam, qui dicuntur Alani vel Albani, qui lingua eorum Wizzi dicuntur, crudelissimi ambrones; cum canitie nascuntur; de quibus auctor Solinus meminit; eorum patriam canes defendunt;

The Cynocephali<sup>31</sup> are men who have their heads on their breasts. They are often seen in Russia as captives and they voice their words in barks. In that region too, are those who are called Alani or Albani, in their language named Wizzi; very hard-hearted gluttons,<sup>32</sup> born with grey hair. The writer Solinus mentions them. Dogs defend their country. Whenever the Alani have to fight, they draw up their dogs in battle line [...] Finally there are those who are given the name Anthropophagi and they feed on human flesh. In that territory live very many other kinds of monsters whom mariners say they have often seen, although our people think it hardly credible.

Here, there is a curious gloss to the word “ambrones” in Adam’s chronicle, which echoes Notker’s evidence, specifically the scholia 124 (120):<sup>33</sup>

In their language they are called Wilzi; most cruel gluttons [ambrones], whom the poet calls Gelani.<sup>34</sup>

According to the scholarly commentary (Бременский 2011: 150 сн. 98), the “poets” are Virgil (Geor. III, 461) and Lucan (Phars. III, 283). They only mention the swift Geloni<sup>35</sup>, without speaking of the Ambrones or the Wiltzi. Therefore, the identification was either made by Adam of Bremen himself, or borrowed by both Adam and Notker from some common mediaeval source. Another alternative is that Adam followed the literary fashion, randomly mixing the bizarre images of Northern European nations.<sup>36</sup>

Another ancient geographic work calls for attention here. It is the *Geographical Guidance* written in the 2nd century by Claudius Ptolemy (III, 5.10):<sup>37</sup>

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si quando pugnandum est, canibus aciem struunt. Ibi sunt [...] qui dicuntur Antropofagi et humanis vescuntur carnibus. Ibi sunt alia monstra plurima, quae recitantur a navigantibus sepe inspecta, quamvis hoc nostris vix credibile putetur” (Adam Bremensis 1917: 247–248).

<sup>31</sup> Literally “the dog-headed”, who had also been mentioned by Herodotus (IV, 191) as the “κυνοκέφαλοι” (Herodotus 1928: 394).

<sup>32</sup> In the original: “crudelissimi ambrones”, i.e., “the cruelest Ambrones”.

<sup>33</sup> (Adam 2002: 200); “Qui lingua eorum Wilzi dicuntur, crudelissimi ambrones, quos poeta Gelanos vocat” (Adam Bremensis 1917: 248).

<sup>34</sup> Adam makes numerous references to Martianus Capella. For instance, in the next chapter (IV, 20) he mentions the Scythian, that is, the Baltic shore (Adam 2002: 201): “which Martian says was ‘full of a multifarious diversity of barbarians’” (“litus Scithicum, quod Martianus ait ‘confertum esse multiplici diversitate barbarorum’” (Adam Bremensis 1917: 249)), while in the same chapter of *De nuptiis* (VI, 663) the author enumerates nations including “Geloni Agathysi Anthropophagi” (Martianus 1866: 227); cf. VI, 693: “beyond the Scythian ocean [...] the way becomes impenetrable due to the Anthropophagi” (“sed Scythico Oceano [...] Anthropophagi excursus inuios reddidere” (Martianus 1866: 240)), etc.

<sup>35</sup> The Geloni were first mentioned by Herodotus (“Γελωνοί”; IV, 102, 108–109 etc.), although he does not write that they were swift or cannibals (Herodotus 1928: 304, 308).

<sup>36</sup> The possible confusion in IV, 19 between the Wilzi and the Wizzi is notable, for the latter could have been a reference to the Finnic people known as the Vepsians (Бременский 2011: 147 сн. 37), cf. Old Russian «весь» (*Ves*) (Инар. 1908: 8, 14 и т. д.).

<sup>37</sup> Ptolemy 1991: 80. “Πάλιν δὲ τὴν μὲν ἐφεξῆς τῷ Οὐνεδικῷ κόλπῳ παρωκεανίτην κατέχουσιν Οὐέλται, ὑπὲρ οὓς Ὅσιοι, εἶτα Κάρβωνες ἀρκτηκώτατοι, ὧν ἀνατολικώτεροι Καρεῶται καὶ Σάλοι ὑπὸ τούτους καὶ Γέλωνες” (Πτολεμαί 1994: 50–51).

Back from the Ocean, near the Venedicus Bay, the Veltae dwell, above whom are the Ossi; then more toward the north the Carbones, and toward the east are the Careotae and the Sali; below whom are the Gelones.

While the ethnonym “Ven(e)di” was used by German authors to refer to the Polabian-Baltic Slavs as late as the early Middle Ages, Venedicus (Οὐνεδικῶ) Bay was the Baltic Sea. I will not touch upon the dubious matter of whether Ptolemy’s Veltae (Οὐέλται) were linked to the mediaeval Slavs – Veleti.<sup>38</sup> My point is to show that from an early period, the “Wilzi”, whoever this ethnonym referred to, were firmly placed among other barbaric nations in geographical literature.

Among Notker’s sources identified by James C. King, two deserve special consideration (Notker latinus 1986: 156–157). The first one is the *Life of Charlemagne (Vita Caroli Magni)* written by Einhard in the 9th century (chapter 12):<sup>39</sup>

[In 789 CE] he [Charlemagne] waged war against the Slavs, whom we are accustomed to call Wilzi, but who properly – that is, in their own tongue – are called Welatabi [...] There is a gulf stretching from the western sea towards the East, of undiscovered length [...] The Slavs and the Aisti and various other nations inhabit the eastern shore, amongst whom the chief are these Welatabi against whom then the king waged war.

Notker borrowed his “Weletabi” from this passage. I believe it is beyond doubt that the geographical description of North-East Europe (Scythia/Baltic region) first attempted by Herodotus was subsequently expanded by various authors. Over time, this list of nations included the Veleti, who were sometimes confused with their “neighbours” the Geloni, the Ambrones, the Anthropophagi, and others. We see here a typical example of a literary game. By providing an intertext with references to earlier sources, the new author could first show his erudition and bow to the authoritative texts, and then proceed to make his story more vivid by adding old material and interpretations or etymologies, no matter how fantastical they might be.

The second text to mention the Veleti in the time of Charlemagne was written by **another Notker – Notker Balbulus**, or Notker “the Stammerer” (c. 840–912) (Ноткер Заика 2023: 389). He also worked at the Abbey of St. Gall, but a century earlier than Notker Labeo. Around 885 he wrote *The Deeds of Charlemagne (Gesta Karoli Magni)*, in which he mentions the Veleti and “worms” in a somewhat boastful context. In the following story, he mentions an enormous and mighty warrior of Charlemagne’s throng named Eishere (II, 12):<sup>40</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Some literature can be found in Пролемай (1994: 54–62), although this topic needs special treatment.

<sup>39</sup> (Einhard 1999: 12); “Sclavis, qui nostra consuetudine Wilzi, proprie vero, id est sua locutione, Welatabi dicuntur, bellum inlatum est [...]. Sinus quidam ab occidentali oceano orientem versus porrigitur. [...] At litus [...] Sclavi et Aisti et aliae diversae incolunt nationes; inter quos vel praecipui sunt, quibus tunc a rege bellum inferebatur, Welatabi” (Einhardi Vita 1911: 15).

<sup>40</sup> (Ноткер Заика 2023: 439–440); “Is itaque cum in comitatu cesaris Bemanos, Wilzos et Avaros in morem prati secaret et in avicularum modum de hastili suspenderet, domum victor reversus et a torpentibus interrogatus,



Therefore, when he was in the company of Caesar, he mowed the Bohe-  
mians, the Wilzi and the Avars like the grass in the meadow and stringed  
them on his spear like little birds. When he returned home and was asked  
by those who wondered how did he fare in the region of the Veneds, he  
answered, despising the latter and chafing at the former: “What are these  
froglets to me? I usually stringed seven, eight or even nine of them on my  
spear and carried them around, while they were blathering I don’t know  
what. Our Lord the Caesar and us just wasted our time on these worms”.

It is, however, unclear to what extent this Notker influenced the other.

## VI.

James C. King wrote “it is unclear where Notker borrowed the information about such a  
diet of these people from” and saw no parallels in the sources (Notker latinus 1986: 157).  
Wolfgang Bröske did not deal with this matter at all, only studying the forms of the ethnonym  
from the passage without translating or retelling it (Bröske 1955: 7 Anm. 29). Alexander  
F. Hilferding spoke of the Slavic cannibalism as “German fairy-tales”, without taking the  
problem seriously (Гильфердинг 2013: 92–93). Alexander N. Veselovsky took the same  
approach (Веселовский 1906: 20). Alexander A. Kotlyarevsky found other German texts  
discussing the cannibalism of the Slavs in the early modern period, up until the 17th and 18th  
centuries. These texts seemed to allude more to Herodotus than to ethnographic evidence  
(Котляревский 2016: 118–120). He concludes that “one feature is particularly striking,  
namely that the Wilzi ate their elderly parents. As we find no similar customs among the  
Slavs or even the most savage peoples, we do not consider this to be an ethnographic ac-  
count. Such tales were in vogue during the Middle Ages. Travellers and seafarers loved  
to boast about the miracles they saw abroad, and the gullible chroniclers were only too  
keen to record their stories as fact. The tale could also have a bookish and scholarly origin  
because mediaeval lore traced the origin of the Slavs to the Scythes and the Massagetes,  
who engaged in such customs, according to Herodotus” (Котляревский 2016: 121–122).

There is, however, a curious passage from the so-called Pseudo-Caesarius of Nazian-  
zus, attributed to a 4th century author, but actually written in the mid-500s (II, 110):<sup>41</sup>

How is it possible that the Sclaveni and the Physonites (who are also called  
Danubians), [...] the ones who devour with great pleasure the breasts of

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qualiter ei in regione Winidum complaceret, illos dedignatus hisque indignatus aiebat: ‘Quid mihi ranunculi illi? Septem vel octo vel certe novem de illis hasta mea perforatos et quid nescio murmurantes huc illucque portare solebam. Frustra adversum tales vermiculos domnus rex et nos fatigati sumus’ (Notker Balbulus 1959: 75). James C. King wrongly attributes this fragment as II, 13 (Notker latinus 1986: 156).

<sup>41</sup> (Álvarez-Pedrosa 2021: 28): “ὄντες οἱ Σκλαυνοὶ καὶ οἱ Φεισωνῖται, οἱ καὶ Δανούβιοι προσαγορευόμενοι, οἱ μὲν γυναικομαστοβοροῦσιν ἡδέως διὰ τὸ πεπληρωθῆαι τοῦ γάλακτος, μυῶν δίκην τοὺς ὑποτίθους ταῖς πέτρας ἐπαράττοντες, οἱ δὲ καὶ τῆς νομίμης καὶ ἀδιαβλήτου κρεοβορίας ἀπέχονται”.

women because they are full of milk, dashing unweaned babes against the rocks like rats, while the others abstain even from the licit and irreproachable consumption of meat?

The commentary on the passage (Álvarez-Pedrosa 2021: 27–28) can be seen as a reference to Herodotus, specifically his account of the Amazons, who, according to later authors like Diodorus Siculus and Strabo, removed one of their breasts. The sceptical tone of the passage is due to the author being a witness to Slavic military raids. This episode only faintly echoes Notker.

## VII.

To conclude, the possibility that the Veleti actually ate their parents seems highly unlikely. It is more probable that Notker engaged in a literary game, with origins in Herodotus. **I argue that this passage in Notker was due to the fact that the Great Slavic Revolt of 983 had a deep impact on Germany.** The cruelty of the Veleti towards the Christians prompted men of letters to write about ancient nations and their savagery. This was facilitated by the historical connections between the Veleti and other nations of North-East Europe from the time of Ptolemy, as documented in literature. Remigius, misinterpreting a passage in *De Nuptiis* by Martianus Capella, forged a connection that Notker accepted, leading to the conflation of the Anthropophagi/Ambrones with the Veleti. Tenuous as such links may be, they fit seamlessly into the mediaeval tradition of literary invention, a practice in which both Adam of Bremen and a Russian chronicler enthusiastically participated. I argue that it was the literary sources and not the ethnographic data that made Notker write of the Veleti as cannibals. The Abbey of St. Gall, where Notker “spent his entire life” (Ганина 2015: 39), was 600 km away from the closest settlements of the Veleti and he probably learnt about this people either from his contemporaries, who were horrified by the atrocious revolt of 983, or from literary works, which spoke of the northern and eastern barbarians engaging in cannibalism and other types of savagery. Notker was equally ready to ascribe the same cannibalism to the local witches (“hâzessa”), but it did not produce the same reaction as the account of the man-eating Wilzi.

Although it would have been perfectly natural for any Christian author writing about the Pagan Slavs, for two hundred years after Notker while Paganism was alive, no one mentioned such a barbaric and bizarre custom as cannibalism among the Veleti. This is notable as it could have been used for the purpose of Christian missions or calls to subdue the Pagans. On the contrary, when we turn to descriptions of Western Slavic customs by Thietmar of Merseburg (“Chronicon” VIII, 3) or St. Boniface, 250 years before him, we find cremation as a standard Slavic funerary rite.<sup>42</sup> No other sources mention cannibalism

<sup>42</sup> A letter from St. Boniface No. 73, addressed to Aethelbald, King of Mercia circa 746–747 (Бонифаций 1995: 416–417). Boniface compares the “rustic kindred of the Slavs and the savage Scythia” (“rustica gens hominum Sclaforum et Scythia dura”) (Бонифаций 1995: 414–415, cf. Álvarez-Pedrosa 2021: 50–51).

among any Slavic people. It is highly likely that, much like the Greeks in the story told by Herodotus about King Darius' court (III, 38), the Slavs would have shuddered at the mere notion of the cannibalism ascribed to them by Notker. His use of literary tradition to interpret the events of the 983 rebellion should lead us to dismiss cannibalism as an aspect of Pagan Slavic culture.

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<sup>43</sup> All dates for internet resources are given on 31. 10. 2023.

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## POGAŃSKIE ZWYCZAJE WIELETÓW WEDŁUG NOTKERA LABEO

OLEG VLADISLAVOVICH KUTAREV



Pomimo długich prób zebrania wszystkich najważniejszych źródeł na temat przedchrześcijańskiej religii i kulturze Słowian, wciąż pozostają teksty i autorzy, którzy nie są dobrze znani w literaturze i są niejako “zapomnianymi” badaczami. Jednym z takich autorów jest Notker Labeo (ok. 950–1022), dzięki któremu nastąpiło powstanie niemieckiego języka literackiego. Wśród jego dużych prac wyróżnia się tłumaczenie na język staro-wysoko-niemiecki łacińskiego późnoantycznego dzieła Marcjanusa Capelli “O zaślubinach Merkurego i Filologii” (lat. “De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii”). Oprócz przekazywania tego złożonego tekstu w języku ojczystym, Notker po pierwsze powoływał się na szeroką tradycję komentatorską w odniesieniu do Marcjana, a po drugie dawał mu kilka własnych komentarzy. W jednym z wyjaśnień poetyckiego obrazu świtu lub Bogini Aurory Marcjana, Notker, pod wpływem komentarza Remigiusza z Auxerre (IX w.), rozpoczął krótką opowieść o ludziach ambronów – komentarz do słowa “ambronum”, które było zniekształceniem pierwotnego “ambrosium”, tj. “nieśmiertelnych”, co dotyczyło cech Aurory, a Marcjan w ogóle nie wspomniał o tym etnonimie. Łącząc w stos wyobrażenia o różnych ludach północnej i wschodniej Europy z różnych źródeł antycznych i średniowiecznych, Notker podążył za Remigiuszem, przedstawiając ambronów jako kanibali i przy okazji postanowił dodać, że w jego rodzinnych Niemczech również Wioletowie (Słowianie połabscy) “*nie wstydzą się przyznać, że mają większe prawo niż robaki do jedzenia swoich rodziców*”. Oprócz przeglądu samego fragmentu Notkera o Wioletach, tekstu źródłowego Marcjana

i wskazanego błędu Remigiusza dotyczącego ambronów, w artykule omówiono również prawdopodobne inne źródła Notkera oraz kontekst kulturowo-historyczny, w którym tworzył swoją pracę. W rezultacie okazuje się, że zamieszanie w ludach północno – i wschodnioeuropejskich, ich nazwach i zwyczajach jest od dawna grą literacką, która sięga starożytnych geografów i historyków, takich jak Ptolemeusz i Herodot. Przy tym same narody mogły nawet zniknąć (jak te same ambrony), ale przekazać swoje imię lub cechy sąsiadom (geograficzne, ale nie zawsze historyczne). W taki szereg etnonimów wchodziły również Wielety, przy czym podobne geograficzne wyobrażenia o nich występują u innych autorów epoki (na przykład w XI wieku u Adama Bremenskiego). Jednakże, Notker miał powody do demonizacji Wioletów, przypisywania im barbarzyńskich i dzikich cech. Jest to Wielkie pogańskie Powstanie w 983 roku, które ogarnęło znaczną liczbę narodów słowiańskich na terytorium dzisiejszych Niemiec. W trakcie powstania, kierowanego przez Wioletów, niszczone kościoły i niemieckie instytucje władzy, przywracano pogaństwo; wszystko to towarzyszyło wielkiej przemocy. Notker, współczesny wydarzeniom, kontynuując grę literacką, włączył Wioletów do barbarzyńców, a nawet kanibali, co było przyczyną pojawienia się tego fragmentu. Jednocześnie krótki przegląd innych źródeł o Słowianach połabskich i bałtyckich i ich pogaństwie nie potwierdza informacji Notkera, a tym samym wzmacnia teorię o grze literackiej w geograficznych opisach “barbarzyńskiej” Europy.

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di libri

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**JOSÉ MANUEL LOSADA**, *MITOCRÍTICA CULTURAL: UNA DEFINICIÓN DEL MITO*, MADRID: AKAL, 2022, 824 PAGES.<sup>1</sup>

From time to time, academic writers astonish the general and specialized audience with the launch of a volume that addresses a very particular, at first sight well-known topic, changing the perspective scholars had had over it. It has happened in the 20th and 21st centuries with fields such as Horror Fiction, Comparative Literature, Feminist Studies, etc. The publication of *Mitocrítica cultural. Una definición del mito* adheres to this trend, meaning the culmination of a fifteen-years long process. Prof. José Manuel Losada (Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain) has offered what many scholars have been searching for decades: a useful, practical, and complete tool to define and analyze myths and their cultural manifestations. As Dr. Losada mentions along the volume, one of the main objectives is setting things clear: what constitutes a myth, and what does not. To do so, a clear, working definition is presented in the “Introduction,” which is developed in the following chapters. In a free translation, that definition argues that a myth is “a functional, symbolic, and thematic narration referred to extraordinary events related to the sacred and/or supernatural. These events may have a historical background and they pledge to an individual or collective (but always absolute) cosmogony and eschatology.” However, we can never lose the perspective that, as Losada has repeated on several occasions, this is a definition of Myth, a very useful, very complete one, but subject to discussion or re-evaluation.

As for practical issues, *Mitocrítica cultural* is divided into two parts, being the first a general introduction to key terms and a contextualization of myth in contemporary times. The second part, the most important one within the book, approaches how different myths, or myth-related notions, have evolved in Western, European history and culture. There, the author also addresses a deconstruction of the different elements that make a myth a myth, analyzing how they work, how they are combined, and how they should be understood by the reader and the myth critic. Finally, all of this is completed with the inclusion of four indexes: on the different myths included in the volume, on key concepts, on works mentioned, and on proper names.

Myths, half-literature, half-religion, have been a constant affecting any given civilization or culture since, at least, the advent of writing systems. They have addressed crucial topics and questions such as “what are we?,” “where do we come from?,” etc. Myths have contributed to explain what was unexplainable, to comprehend what was incomprehensible. In consequence, myths have been created, worked with, modified, substituted, and forgotten as their existence has suited human cosmovision(s). *Mitocrítica*

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<sup>1</sup> This book review is part of the activities of the Research Groups “Poéticas y textualidades emergentes. Siglos XIX–XXI” (Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain) and “Estudios interdisciplinarios de Literatura y Arte -LyA-” (Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, Spain), and of the Complutense Institute for the Study of Religion and the Institute of Humanism and Classical Tradition (Universidad de León, Spain). Besides, the final version of this review was completed during the months I spent as a visiting scholar at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, towards whose Department of English I am strongly thankful. I would also like to express my gratitude towards Department of English at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, which granted me the opportunity of visiting Nebraska leaving temporarily my obligations in Spain.

*cultural* successfully explains how this complicated (and convoluted) process has come to an existence.

Focusing on the first of the mentioned parts, one of the most interesting questions addressed by Dr. Losada is that of globalization, or how myths (born in local, particular traditions —although referred to universal notions—) have been affected by the current global processes our world is going through, being this a problematic relationship. Losada assesses that

El mito se opone a la uniformidad global de igual modo que las minorías comunitarias se oponen a la intrusión de instituciones administrativas de nivel superior. En contrapartida al falso “mito” del igualitarismo propuesto por los paraísos artificiales, el mundo mitológico propone la complementariedad: ni los dioses ni Dios han querido a los hombres iguales, amorfos, indiferenciados, sino desemejantes para que se ayuden y sostengan mutuamente [Myths are opposed to worldwide uniformity like minorities oppose administrative institutions’ actions. Before the false “myth” of egalitarianism, proposed by artificial paradises, myths offer complementarity: neither gods nor God have ever desired men to be equal, shapeless, all alike, but dissimilar in order to mutually help and sustain] (2022: 66).

So, the global world is a side-, reverse-effect of myth, and the conflicts that have shaped human history may be understood (or interpreted) through the lens of myth(s).

This argued relation of myths with history is re-visited by Dr. Losada along the second part of *Mitocrítica cultural*. Indeed, “Chapter 8” is devoted to History and how mythification processes work. Going back to the definition of myth, myths “may have a historical background.” Losada adds that

El acontecimiento narrado por el mito ocurre en un tiempo, pero no el tiempo circunscrito en las coordenadas de la historiografía moderna, sino en el de una ficción que apunta a unos referentes absolutos malamente enmarcables en esa historiografía [The narrations included in a myth happen in a specific period of time, but they are not limited by the coordinates established by modern historiography; on the contrary, the address absolute referential points impossible to narrow down to what historiography says] (2022: 475).

Thus, myth and History, despite going hand in hand, have several friction points, for myths transcend history. This is even more strongly addressed in the volume when certain “mythical” historical figures (e.g. Napoleon, Alexander the Great, Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar...) are recreated into narrations sharing similarities with myths (and are understood as such by the general audience). Losada is crystal clear: “no son mitos” [they are not myths] (2022: 485), adding that they may be considered as pseudo-myths or characters who have suffered a mythification process. As mentioned, this is one of the main strengths of the book: discerning tares from wheat. In a similar way, literary “myths,” such as that

of Don Quixote (addressed in pages 391–402), are re-evaluated through the lens of this approach, separating them from “real” myths.

However, what is more relevant in *Mitocrítica cultural* is how the author analyzes both the elements that constitute a myth, and how myths relate to them and to the structural narrations in which they are usually included. Regarding the first of these aspects, probably the most relevant chapter is “Chapter 9,” in which Losada deconstructs the structure of myth. To do so, *Mitocrítica cultural* differentiates between the concepts of “myth,” “theme,” and “mytheme,” explained the latter as

la unidad temática y mitológica mínima cuya indispensable dimensión trascendente o sobrenatural lo capacita para interactuar con otros mitemas en la formación de un mito. Si los temas tienen razón mítica, es decir, atravesada de trascendencia, son mitemas; de lo contrario, son únicamente temas narrativos [the thematic and mythic entities whose transcendent dimension allows to interact with other mythemes to form a myth. If themes have a mythical foundation (linked to transcendence) are mythemes; being this not the case, they are just narrative themes] (2022: 536).

Once again, clarifying concepts, as seen for historical characters. Concerning the second of the aforementioned aspects, we can read “Chapter 3” and “Chapter 6” together, as explained below.

As we have mentioned, a myth is narration halfway between literature and religion and, in consequence, shares characteristics that belong to both cultural manifestations. Losada has successfully addressed this hybrid nature of mythical narrations, explaining both how they connect with literary pieces and how they cipher religious notions such as cosmogony and eschatology. So, the author includes a discussion on concepts such as genre or chronotope that are usually associated with mere literary narrations. For instance, when discussing time and myth, Losada discerns between immanence and transcendence, marking these the frontier between narrative and mythical conceptions of time. To have a myth, we need the former, as stated in the definition *Mitocrítica cultural* offers. When addressing characters, Losada also discerns between literary *personae* and mythical incarnations, what he terms as “prosopomito.” Regarding the religious dimension of myths, Losada has placed together chapters 10 and 11 to address two of the fundamental questions religions have traditionally observed: origin(s) and conclusion(s). Myths have usually tried to answer the questions “why does everything exist?” and “where do I come from?” Thus, human cultures have constructed a series of mythical cosmogonies around these narratives, explaining the beginning of everything and everyone:

El mito indaga el significado originario del mundo; quiere saber [...] El mito presta atención y busca interpretar simbólicamente los acontecimientos extraordinarios en el extremo de los tiempos, donde el tiempo roza con el no tiempo [Myths search the original meaning of the world; they want to know

[...] Myths pay attention to, and aim to symbolically explain, extraordinary events at the edge of time, where time and no-time collide] (2022: 573).

*Mitocrítica cultural* addresses this theme with a fruitful evaluation of polytheistic and Judeo-Christian approaches. As for eschatology, we are in front of a similar problem, for it “se pregunta, sobre todo, por el futuro, pero no por los futuribles inmediatos, sino por el futuro final, definitivo y absoluto de una persona, de un pueblo o el universo” [asks, above all, about the future, not the immediate future, but the final, definitive, and absolute future of a person, a community, or the Universe] (2022: 615). Thus, since the future remains convoluted in shadows, myths have traditionally played (and still play) a crucial role to approach it. In this section (“Chapter 11”), the author also addresses one of those cultural notions that is usually mistake with myths: the eternal return, or the cyclical conception of history, subverting the Western conception of time. This analysis is interesting for *Mitocrítica cultural* confronts the vision that is probably more familiar to us (Judeo-Christian, medieval-based, projection of history) with extra-European notions, closer to a circular vision of evolution.

In conclusion, as seen in the previous paragraphs, *Mitocrítica cultural. Una definición del mito* offers guarantee for the researcher when dealing with myths or myth-related narrations, giving us the opportunity of clearly working with them. On the other hand, José Manuel Losada also gives us the chance of stating what is a myth from what is not, proposing tools and hermeneutic devices to do so. In consequence, our task as cultural researchers has become easier thanks to the enormous amount of work already developed by Dr. Losada. His volume has become one of those giants’ shoulders from which we can contemplate the academic horizon. Myths were shaped when knowledge could not explain everything, they were created to enlighten our ancestors’ minds offering plausible and acceptable explanation to the most transcendental questions. Today, like in mythical times, *Mitocrítica cultural* has also become a lantern to illuminate our scholarly path and to solve our transcendental doubts.

*José Manuel Correoso-Rodenas, Madrid*

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