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The Three-Header from Vaćani

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The main subject of this study is the three-headed fragment from Vaćani in the Museum of Croatian Archeological Monuments. The author has attempted an art historical analysis, and, subsequently placed the fragment within the context of the pre-Christian cultural landscape of Croatia. Although the fragment can not be dated with absolute certainty, the author believes that on the basis of relevant early Slavic comparative material there is a high likelihood that the piece belongs to the early Slavic past. On the basis of information of the linguistics and cultural anthropology relating to an in depth analysis of the cultural landscape, the author also raises some issues connected to the presumed migrations of the “Croats” and the “Slavs.”

Key Words: Vaćani, Dalmatia, Croatia, Slavic Art, Croatian History, Medieval History, Slavic Pagan Sanctuaries, Slavic Migrations

One of the most intriguing pieces of stone sculpture in the collection of the Museum of Croatian Archeological Monuments/Muzej hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika in Split is what appears to be a fragment of a tapering column bearing representations of three faces in fairly high relief (figs. 1). One of the faces is almost complete (fig. 2), the other is rather damaged but legible (fig. 3), and the third is obliterated beyond recognition (fig. 4). The fragment was acquired by the Museum more than a hundred years ago, and although it was recognized as a possible relic from the pre-Christian world of the Slavs, it has never received a systematic study. Several times it was mentioned in passing, most substantially by Tonči Burić in an article devoted to the problems of Sventvid in Istria, wherein doubts have been expressed, for good reasons, concerning the identification of our three-header as that particular old Slavic deity.¹ This study will attempt an art historical analysis of the piece seeking to identify the artistic language used in its making, and the artistic and cultural context to which, consequently, it should belong. The reader will be disappointed to learn, and so also is the author, that no firm conclusions could be reached on the basis of an art historical analysis alone. The piece is simply too damaged, and what can be read is so general that no firm conclusion is warranted. Still, we think it would be useful to present our analysis and, placing it within the presumed pagan Slavic context, try to seek an answer to the intriguing question: could the Vaćani faces be a memory of the long-gone Slavic pre-Christian past? Such an effort based principally on the criterion of quantity may, in our opinion, lead to some interesting conclusions, and bring us within the sphere where the question of the Vaćani sculpture, and even some much more complex issues, may be fruitfully discussed, if not yet altogether resolved².

- 1 Burić 2005, p. 465. The sculpture is briefly mentioned in Prijatelj 1954, p. 68, stating that the Museum of Croatian Archeological Monuments (MHAS) believes that the work is an authentic object from the pre-Christian Slavic past. According to the information received from the Museum, there is no documentation concerning the discovery. Vaćani was identified as an early Slavic site by Lujko Marun (Marun 1897, pp. 141–142). In the same work Marun has identified a number of potential early Slavic sites, some, in our opinion, quite successfully. Also, Iveković 1924, p. 18, fig. 7, who describes the location where the sculpture was found as “Suvid, a hillock near Bribir, in Piramatovci, section Ždrapanj, underneath Bribir.” Investigations at Bribir were initiated in 1889.
- 2 On the “criterion of quantity” saying that the more links between two phenomena we can establish, the higher probability that they are related see Belaj 2007, p. 209



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

The fragment is ca. 35cm tall (all measures are approximate), its width including the relief of the faces is between 27 and 29cm, that of the body of the column ca.16. The relief of the faces is about 6cm, the height of the faces varies between 21 and 16, and their width from 16 to 18. At the base the fragment is ca. 23–24cm wide. The top of the column today has a low domical shape. There is a hole in the base ca.10cm deep. The material is yellowish limestone, not too hard.

As already noticed the piece is a badly damaged fragment of a larger whole. Whereas part of the damage may be accidental, it appears that some of it was deliberate. One of the faces is almost totally obliterated and it seems that that side was grossly modified

on purpose so as to better adhere to a relatively even surface, when the stone was reused, probably as a part of a wall. The hole at the bottom may be a place where some metal bar was inserted possibly as a prop when the piece was exhibited, as there are within the hole traces of some gray, apparently rather recent binding medium.

The obliterated face (fig. 4) was destroyed by crude and uneven strokes, and only at one spot can one recognize traces of the original surface – on the body of the column right above the place where the face ended.

The recognizable but damaged face (fig. 2) has also been exposed to crude re-carving, the nose, except for the upper edge is gone, the eyes were savagely pried out so what we see today are two rather deep, irregular holes. The only detail which may have retained some of its original surface is the mouth. It is formed as an elongated narrow triangle with a small lozenge shaped cavity in the center. The upper part of the skull has been knocked away, but at the spot where the head merges into the column surface one notices a number of small, wiggly lines which could be interpreted as hair. Similar but longer seem to appear below the chin representing the beard. On one side there may be a trace of an ear. It is not clear why the re-carver had to pry the eyes out, when he could have just flattened them.

The key source of information is, of course, the least damaged face (fig. 1). It is oval, slightly pear-shaped, the eyes are rounded and they bulge out as little domical protrusions. The lines defining the eye sockets continue into a triangular, rather regular nose. The putting mouth is formed as a shallow upturned moon sickle with an elliptical indentation in the middle. There may be traces of a moustache on the right side below the mouth. Along the edge of the skull we again discern traces of hair.

On the surface of the fragment one can observe a number of long straight vertical lines and short horizontals, drawn with a ruler and again probably having to do with the way the piece used to be exhibited.

There are few more aspects which need to be brought up, either as highly hypothetical or as questions. It may be that on the left side of the obliterated head there are traces of an ear, in which case the head would appear to have been taller than the rest. One could also speculate about the possibility of traces of hair along the ear, which might raise the question – was that head female? On the cheek of the best preserved head one can just make out something that looks like



Fig. 4

a series of tiny circles – a natural feature of the stone, freak damage, or an element of adornment or beard?

One may conclude, we believe, that the original form was a free standing tapering column with three projecting faces. The lower part was cut off, and the face area crudely re-cut when the stone was reused. Why were the eyes of the damaged face savagely pried out, whereas those of the mostly preserved face were left almost intact? Was that face identified as particularly evil at one point in ideological history of the piece? After Christianization? Or was the preserved face turned toward the inside of the wall when the stone was reused, and somebody decided to pry out the eyes of the only face that showed? In that case, was this done by Christians to spite pagans, Heretics to spite the Catholic, Muslims to spite Christians?

The style of the piece may be described as “primitive” but the sections where the original surface appears to have been preserved indicate quite a competent level of carving, smooth and finished. The preserved detail also seems to have been cut in with precision and competence. Detail of the preserved face (fig. 1), i.e., the eyes, the nose, the mouth, may be simple but the master definitely knew how to carve and incise with a secure and experienced hand. It is a stylistically “naïve” piece but the sculptor was not without training. Looking at the work in general one is somewhat reminded of the later medieval “stečaks” such as frequently appear in the Dalmatian hinterland, especially in terms of small, apparently flattish surfaces such as the lips. Another confusing detail is the hair. It took a lot of patience and skill to render it as it was. One is inclined to conclude that we have in front of our eyes a work of an artist who prefers a high degree of stylization, symmetry (eyes of the preserved face), parallelism of planes, but who does it as his stylistic preference and not as a consequence of poor technique. This is compatible with what one may broadly

call “Pre-Romanesque” esthetics, but not necessarily only so. It could still be a work of well-trained carver of some later (or earlier, e.g. Roman provincial) period who has not mastered, or does not care for, the art of human figure.

The form of the face could be, indeed, related to Roman provincial or Celtic art. In particular, the perfectly rounded, bulging eyes remind one of Celtic both sculpture and pottery. The representation of the eyes and the nose is also “Celtic,” whereas the mouth seems also close to local later medieval “folk” sculpture. In general, the best suggestion seems to be that the sculptor was formed within the provincial Roman/post Roman art including the traditions of the local Illyrian-Celtic population³.

So much about the form. How about the function?

38 | Numbers one, three (i. e., two plus one), five (four plus one), seven (six plus one) and nine (eight plus one) seem to play an important role in art and architecture of both the “primitive” and not at all “primitive” civilizations – from the sacred circle of innumerable religious traditions to the triangular composition of the High Renaissance. On our territory the number three figured prominently in both the Greek (Zeus, Hero, Athena) and Roman (Jupiter, Juno, Athena) pantheons. The main Celtic gods also formed a triad (Taranis, Esus, Teutates). Christianity features the Holy Trinity, particularly en vogue in the Carolingian period. Three faced pearls were discovered at Prozor, Kompolje and Donja Dolina, and were linked to the Celtic trade if not the outright manufacturing. A representation of the Holy Trinity on late medieval frescoes at St. Brcko at Kalnik shows an image which could be called a very inflated three-face pearl – three repeated faces of the Members of the Holy Trinity painted next to one another. Such images continue in rural areas of Europe, e.g., western France into the 18th century. The Celts are known for a conflated image of a three-header, a head with three faces, three noses and four eyes, which are shared between the central and side faces. The famous

3 As some fairly striking analogies within the art of the Celts we suggest: Head from Msecke Zebrovice (Bohemia), 2nd–1st ct. B.C., Kruta 1999, p. 66; terra-cotta vase from Mala Vrbica, second half of the 1st ct. B.C., *ibid.* p. 381; column with relief faces from Pfalzfeld, now in Bonn, ca 450–350 B.C., Krön 1980, p. 206; bronze mount from Dürenberg (Austria), 400–350, B.C., Megaw 1996, p. 74; two-headed Hermes from Roquepertuse (France), 3rd–2nd ct., Moreau 1961, pl. 55; four-headed panel from Entremont (France), *ibid.*, pl. 57. Analogies of the facial detail with that of the Msecke Zehrovice piece is striking.

“Mačak” bracket from Rudina (12th ct.) is an impressive Romanesque rendering of that Celtic model.⁴

Thus: is our three-header from Vaćani a Roman or Greek, a Celtic, or a Christian Trinity, or something else?

It is amazing how little we, as a Slavic language speaking nation, have done to investigate the Slavic component of our past. The fact that the Vaćani fragment was recognized as “Slavic” and then never studied in depth is just another case in question. We have done an extensive and remarkable job studying the links of our earliest post-Roman (and also much later) art with the classical and provincial Roman antiquity trying to see Rome, pagan or Christianized, everywhere without ever seriously asking the question: what has been the contribution of the Slavic element in the population called nowadays Croatian, the genetic picture of which is roughly 50% native pre-Slavic, 25% Slavic, and 25% other⁵. The Slavic genes may not be overwhelming, but the cultural genes, as represented by the key bearer of cultural identity, language, were rather sturdy. After all, the Croats are a rare example among the nations that settled within the old Roman Empire who have retained their non-romance language. Such people could not be mere barbarian, they must have had a certain rather sophisticated culture of their own⁶. Do we have in the three-header from Vaćani a proof of that Slavic cultural tradition?

With this we enter another section of our inquiry, that of a potential pagan Slavic context as a framework for understanding the three-header from Vaćani.

It is well-known that the pagan Slavs worshipped many headed or many faced idols. There is even a literary underpinning for that multiplicity. A Russian 15th century text, a compilation of questions and answers says (I translate): “How many heavens are there?” The answer: “Perun est mnog” (There are many Peruns). A Lithuanian *dajna* tells us that there are four Perkunai (the Baltic Perun), “Perkuns are four: the first one in the East, the second in the West, the third in the South, the fourth in the North.” Scandinavian cosmology maintains a scheme whereby the heaven is supported by four groups of dwarfs (*Austri, Vestri, Nordri, Sudri*)

4 Goss 2009a, pp. 11–12. Moreau 1961, pl. 74. Krön 1980, pp. 68–75. Goss 2007, p. 28. Balen-Letunić 1990, pp. 41–48. Domljan 1993, pp. 333–336.

5 For the issue of genetics: Jurić 2003, *passim*, especially p. 41, 63. Also: Battaglia et al., 2008, Rootsi et al., 2004, and Semino et al., 2000 all with the participation of D. Primorac.

6 Goss 2009a, p. 11.

representing the four winds⁷. This, of course, reminds us of the multi-headed, or multi-faced Slavic deities of old chronicles. Saxo Grammaticus saw a four-headed Svantevid at Rujan. There was also a seven-headed Rugevit, a five-headed Porevit, and a four-headed Porenutius. Three-headed gods stood in Szczecin, Wolin and Branibor (Brandenburg). That last one was identified as “Triglav,” and destroyed in 1157 when Albert the Bear seized the stronghold of Branibor. A later tradition renamed the Triglav into a goddess Trigla. A statue of “twins” made of wood and datable to the 11th–12th century, was discovered at Fischerinsel, the place some identify with the famous Slavic fort of Radogošč. In 1848, a four-headed god was found in the river Zbruč in Galicia; a four-headed god was also found in Preslav, the ancient Bulgarian capital, to list just a few better known examples. In his important book, Slupecki has collected a number of examples of single and multi-headed figures of idols, both in stone and wood, noticing Celtic analogies, and also similar products of other peoples (e.g., Turkish). Many of them are rather crude examples of incision in the rock (Wolgast), some equally crude two plane relief pieces (Lezno), some reveal better sense of rounded form (Powiercie, Kolo, Lysec), and some a fairly high degree of sculpting sophistication, as, for example, the famous four-headed “Svantevid” from Zbruč. Saying that some of the detail may recall the piece from Vaćani again does not get us much further. One should however note that the multiple-faced idols are usually associated with an upright columnar form (Zbruč, Ivankovtse, Yarivka, Fischerinsel). This seems to be the only firmer visual element placing our piece within the sphere of pagan Slavic idol sculpture, be it in wood or stone⁸.

Of course, there is Triglav in Slovenia and Troglav in the Dinara. The three-facedness related to Triglav and Trigla finds a surprising reference in the names of two villages near Daruvar in western Slavonia – Treglava (cf. *Trigla*) and Trojeglava. In spite of the fact that western Slavonia has suffered seven depopulations and repopulations in the last five hundred years or so, the area between Bjelovar, Daruvar, Garešnica and Kutina is a true treasure-chest of old forgotten “gradišta,” entire townships probably relinquished when flying the Turks, and of place names relating to pagan Avar and Slavic populations. This is an additional argument to seriously consider the possibility that a “Triglav” once stood in Treglava and Trojeglava although the villages

as we see them today offer little historical or archeological interest. This should be another point in favor of our three-header as a pagan Slavic piece, and also another point for the criterion of quantity⁹.

However, in order to substantiate what we have tried to do up till now, we must make a decisive step into the unavoidable question of the “arrival” and/or “migrations” of the “Slavs” and/or the “Croats.” As we know, various dates have been proposed for the immigration, while some voices have been raised questioning the very concept of “migration.” Obviously, our conclusions about the Vaćani piece would be necessarily colored by the answer to the above questions, and, *mutatis mutandis*, if one could prove that the Vaćani sculpture belongs to pagan Slavic art, it in itself may become an important witness for the issue. As we very well know, the question of the migration of the Croats is one of the most debated and least resolved in Croatian history. Solutions most frequently proposed include one or two migrations of the “Croats” (“Slavs”), occurring around 600 and/or 800 in the contexts of either the Avar conquests (600), or of the anti-Avar wars of Charlemagne (800). As noted, there are scholars who doubt the idea of Croatian migration, or any major Slavic migration at all¹⁰.

This is not the place to enter again into all the intricacies of the issue, and this writer does not consider himself competent to do so, in particular considering research outside his own field. One can only admire enormous efforts of top scholars to come to grips with the problem. Yet even an informed outsider would, we believe, notice that many of the conclusions are in fact very promising, but rather exclusive throwing the light on only one part of the issue. By relying on the materials which seem quite definitive, and on those which I have been collecting in my own and in closely related fields, I propose to do the same; i.e., to present what the *facts* gathered can tell of the “migration/non-migration” issue, determine the position of the Vaćani piece within such a context, and let those better qualified check it against the conclusions by best brains in other fields.

9 Goss 2009b, in press.

10 I want to make it absolutely clear that I have no intention whatsoever to enter into controversy or critique of works of many distinguished authors outside of my own expertise. I want to present the materials which I claim to understand, and offer them as *complementary* to what has been done elsewhere. The exceptions would be made if one encounters obvious errors of facts or dubious points of methodology.

7 Goss 2009a, p. 11–12.

8 Slupecki 1994, 198–226.

The area in which the evidence is rather definitive leaving, apparently, little room for major debate or correction is genetics. As already stated, the Croats “are” ca. 50% natives (i.e., Illyrian/Celtic population of Dalmatia and Pannonia), ca. 25% Slavs (ranging from 29 in Pannonia to 23 in Dalmatia), and 25% other. This means that the proportion of Slavic blood in the veins of an average Croats is rather low, albeit not negligible, and, that in spite of that somewhat low percentage, the Slavic element proved surprisingly tenacious as the people calling themselves “Croats” have spoken and speak a Slavic tongue. In other words they imposed some of their “Slavism” on the others¹¹.

40 | What is language? I would suggest that language is a kind of a cultural “genetic marker,” a major, possibly the major component of identity and culture. Through language one expresses one’s worldview (mythology, ideology), in itself another important component of “cultural genetics.” As expression of a worldview is unimaginable without the space within which it occurs, language (naming, showing – in Croatian *kazivanje*, *po-kazivanje* – of landscape elements) also quite directly impacts the way one sees and arranges one’s surroundings (“cognitive geography”). This is yet another “marker” of the kind we are here interested in. As in the process of structuring the landscape according to a certain worldview expressing formula, the man intervenes in its environment through the work of his own hands, and as visual arts are one of the aspects of that work, they should also be seen as a tool expressing one’s worldview, thus another marker within the sphere of “cultural genetics.” Human environment, the cultural landscape of a certain group, place and period, is thus a huge book in which history has been recorded. It is particularly useful for understanding such aspects of our identity as “the intangibles of history,” or “allusions and hopes,” as they have been called by some of the most distinguished scholars in humanities, and without which there is no understanding of either the past or the present. It seems to me that good results may be obtained if one may be able to reconcile the facts offered by both “natural” and “cultural genetics.”¹²

We are slowly coming to a realization that “landscape” is the highest form of visual arts, a huge *gesamtkunstwerk* embodying both the natural (find

elements and man-made (manufactured) forms. In those terms, the natural landscape is an enormous *objet-trouvé* further rearranged and elaborated by human intervention. This need not involve just images, but also sounds and movement, i.e., participation of all forms of artistic expression. It is definitely within the domain of study of art history in a very wide sense of a word, not involving just the visual arts. To improve his performance, an art historian, expert in charge of visual art forms which constitute a visual arts language, would exchange information with some other fields of the Humanities.¹³

First of all, with the linguist who will tell him what names have been given to certain points in the landscape, what language they belong to, what is their etymology, who might have been the speakers, what may be comparable forms elsewhere. Next, art historian would depend on the cultural anthropologist who would tell him why a certain name was chosen, what was the mechanism and meaning behind the choice, and what this may mean for the worldview (identity, culture) of the naming agent¹⁴.

It is extremely lucky for the historian of art of the part of the world called “Croatia,” to have at hand some of the best experts in linguistics and cultural anthropology when it comes to the pre-Christian Slavdom, and to be able to rely on their work. This is exactly what this author has been doing. Without the precious work of Radoslav Katičić in linguistics, and Vitomir Belaj in cultural anthropology, the lines that follow would have never been written¹⁵.

That place names constitute an important evidence in historical studies is nothing new. The areas inhabited by Southern Slavs are full of places bearing old Slavic references – names of gods, of rituals, of old obsolete words long gone from the language, etc. We have been slowly building a corpus, primarily in the Pannonian zone. The corpus may take decades to complete, as it is important that at least the most interesting discoveries be checked against their landscape. This is exactly what has been done also by linguistics and cultural anthropology over last two decade in the area of the Southern Slavs. Individual place names are not seen any more in isolation, but related within a system. This in itself was made possible by the research of

11 See note five, and Goss 2009a, p. 5.

12 Goss 2008, pp. 23–26. Cunliffe 2008, p. 28, 139. My favorite words on the topic are still those by Ernst Kitzinger, who has described the matter the Humanities deal with as the “intangibles of history.” See Kitzinger 1972, pp. 99–102.

13 Goss 2008, p. 25.

14 Goss 2008, pp. 13–17.

15 Belaj 2007, Katičić 2008. I am also indebted to the archeologists Andrej Pleterski and Juraj Belaj. For relevant works by Ivanov and Toporov, please see bibliographies in Belaj and Katičić.

the Russian scholars, Ivanov and Toporov, who, some forty years ago, recognized structural relationships between the elements, and thus enabled researchers to establish the importance of certain points in the landscape. It became possible to recognize the essential elements of the fundamental myth centering on the clash between Perun, the thunder-god, whose place is “up there”, on a mountain, and Veles, the snake, the god of the underworld who is chased back by Perun’s lightnings into the depths of the water whenever he dares attempt to climb the mountain. The interested reader is referred to anthropological literature for details of the myth which is common to many groups of both Indo-European and Non-Indo-European nations, and has even pre-Indo-European roots, and is related to the cycle of the year, the change of seasons, and rituals contained therein. In a nutshell, Perun’s son, Juraj/Jarylo is abducted by Veles’s agents in the dead of winter, and spends his youth as a shepherd of Veles’s wolves. He escapes, crosses the river, changes his name into Ivan, and at mid-summer marries his sister, Mara. He is unfaithful to her with Danica, and is killed to be born again in the midst of winter. And so on, year in, year out. An additional bone of contention between the Thunderer and the Snake is Perun’s wife, Mokoš, who spends half of a year with her husband, and another half with her lover, the god of the underworld. I apologize to my anthropologist colleagues for this drastic oversimplification¹⁶.

The outstanding Croatian linguist, Radoslav Katičić, has identified several “stages” where the segments of the myth have been played out, including place names such as *Perun*, *Perunsko* (*Perun’s place*), *Vidova gora* (*St. Vid’s Mountain*), *Gora* (*Mountain*), as opposed to *Veles*, *Volosko* (*Veles’s place*), *Dol* (*Hollow*). Between them there is often an oak forest, *Dubrava*, *Dubac*, where the conflict between Perun and Veles takes place. Building upon Katičić’s insights, the Slovene archeologist, Andrej Pleterski, Croatian ethnologist and cultural anthropologist, Vitomir Belaj, and his son, archeologist Juraj Belaj started searching for patterns within such clusters of place names. The conclusion, by V. Belaj, is as follows: “These are not just points in the landscape any more... Mythically interpreted landscape transforms itself into an ideogram, read by those who within the culture were trained to do so. As ideogram is in fact script, the structured points in the

landscape represent a written source about the early Slavic paganism.”¹⁷

The pattern that has emerged is that of a sacred triangle the characteristics of which are:

- Of the three points usually in a visual contact with one another, two are occupied by male deities (Perun, Veles; Juraj), and the third by Mokoš.
- One of the angles measures ca. 23 degrees (representing the deflection between the imagined orbits of the Sun on the equinox and the solstice, in Croatia 23 degrees 27 minutes).
- The two shorter sides form a ratio of 1 to square root of 2.
- The longest side usually links the two key opponents.
- Perun’s point is always on an elevated ground.
- The female point is usually next to water.
- There is usually water between Mokoš and Veles.

Elements of the myth and its representation could be considered pre-Indo-European. In conclusion, Belaj underlines the tremendous, practical, impact of the “myth in the landscape.”

“There is something even more important. The incorporation of the myth into the newly occupied territories was, obviously, an essential part of making the new land one’s own... This is what us, who live here nowadays, albeit we have been blown together by many a wind of history, makes in a mythical and ritual way its legitimate owners.”¹⁸

If the view of the “myth in the landscape” is correct, and the body of evidence is building up daily, than, again, the Croats, and the other Southern Slavs, would have brought along to the Roman and Greek world within which they had settled a fairly sophisticated culture. They imprinted some of its essential mythical features on the new land in the process of taking it, and thus perpetuated some of their deepest experiences about the self and the world. They re-made the picture of their old country. They, simply, stuck to their tradition. It would be foolish to assert that a nation capable of doing that, immediately forgot everything about their artistic practices, although they had moved from a land of wood to a land of stone, from a land of wood-building and carving, to a land of building and carving in permanent materials. Finally, from the world of paganism which they projected on their environment, to a land of Jesus Christ who very soon asked them to become His faithful followers, what they duly did, while retaining

16 Goss 2008, pp. 8–13, Goss 2009a, pp. 3–6, both with extensive references to the work of V. and J. Belaj, R. Katičić and A. Pleterski.

17 Belaj 2007, p. 454.

18 Belaj 2007, p. 423–424.

some of their pre-Christian lore until today¹⁹.

Assuming that there had been a migration, do we have any concept how artistic and other cultural materials might have traveled? The Arab writer Ibn Fadlan saw in 922 a group of Russian merchants among the Bulgars on the Volga worshipping a number of small idols placed in a circle, in the middle of which stood a bigger one, addressed as "My Lord." We do not know whether those "Russians" were Slavs or Varangians, but it really does not make much difference. What is tremendously interesting is that a sanctuary, in this case the rounded and/or polyconchal, was portable. One had to just unpack the "idols," draw a circle, place them in the right position (possibly one in each conch projecting from the rounded core), and adore them! Nothing exceptional as Cosmas tells us that the Czechs brought their Gods along, and Thorolf, when he went to Iceland, took along a plank from a sanctuary of Thor bearing the God's image, and when he reached the coast he threw the Thor into the waves and settled where the plank landed. A wooden multi-header might have traveled in a bag from White Croatia to the Adriatic coast, assuming that such a migration did occur.²⁰

The formula defining the form of a sanctuary may have also traveled for thousands of miles, as it was linked to the highest *sanctum*, the chief executive God of the Slavic, and related, pantheons. Sacred circles of simple kind are ubiquitous throughout the Slavic world. They have been found at Tushemla, Prudki and Gorodok near Smolensk, two of them at Trebiatow, one at Parsteiner See and at Saaringen on the territory of Polabian Slavs, at Pskov, etc. Sacredness of the circle is attested by the Egil Saga mentioning a circle marked by ropes within which the judges sit; the Frankish Lex Ripuaria demanded that oaths be sworn within a circle surrounded by hazelnut trees, also sacred to the Slavs. Elsewhere I have extensively written about the problem of pagan and Christian polyconchal structures among the Slavs. Below, we will say a few words also on some possible sacred circles we have located in Continental Croatia.²¹

While preparing the text for the chapters on Pre-Romanesque and Romanesque for the grand exhibition "Slavonija, Baranja i Srijem" (Zagreb 2009) we have combed through all the 1:25,000 maps between the Danube and the Ilova rivers, and even such

a preliminary efforts yielded a huge quantity of place names relatable to the Avars and the Slavs. We quote a select few. The Avars are recalled (what is remarkable always in a Slavic form!) by such names as Obar (Slavic/Croatian for Avar, with a regular change from A to O), Obrovo, Okrugljak (Rounded Place), Kruga i sl. (Obrovo polje near Šag, Okrugljača near Sibinj and Valpovo, Okruglica and Obrovac near Tenja, Okrugljak near Slavonski Brod, Okrugljak and Okruglica near Jakšić, two Okrugljaks near Nova Gradiška, Okrugljice and Okruge near Cernik, Okrugljak near Slatina, Obrov vrh on the Papuk, Okrugljak near Gradina; and, of course, Okrugljak, Kruga and Oborovo in or near Zagreb, and Obrovac in Dalmatia).

Still richer is the treasury of early Slavic names linked with mythology as reconstructed by cultural anthropologists. Perun occurs but rarely in Slavonia (Perunika near Orljavac), but more frequently in Istria and Dalmatia (e.g., at Žrnovnica), as Perun's seats were taken over by Christian saints, but his competitor, Veles (Volos) the Snake is commemorated by numerous place names (Vološka dolina in Baranja, Velišanci near Retkovci and Valpova, Veleševac near Sisak, Veleškovec near Marija Bistrica, and then endless names such as Zmajevac, Zminjak, Zmijnjak (Dragon or Snake Place), Dol (Hollow), Black Puddle, Devil's Mud near Đakovo, Devil's Back in Baranja, itd.). An interesting sequence stands in eastern Baranja – Zmajevac (Dragon's Place), Vražja leđa (Devil's Back), Đavolja greda (Devil's Beam), Vološka dolina (Volos's Valley), Zminjak (Snake Place), whereas on the southern side of the Drava, right across, there is the famous sanctuary of Our Lady (Mokoš weaves by the water, and is often succeeded by St. Mary, and other powerful female saints), and also Bijelo Brdo (White, i.e., Dry Hill – Perun's seat, also the most famous site of the Early Slavic "Bijelo Brdo" culture). We add also a number of "Holy Water" or "Spring" sites, most numerous around Daruvar (the best known being a triple spring issuing forth from underneath the chapel of the Holy Healers, SS. Cosmas and Damian near Kreštelovac, but also at Daruvarski Brestovac, Oborova šuma, etc, and then at Orolik, Okučani, Emovaci and Čačinci). Above Daruvar there is Stari Slavik (Old Slav Place), and we have already mentioned the villages of Treglava and Trojeglava. This sample of a sample was collected on what is less than a quarter of the territory of the Republic of Croatia²².

And here are some other place names from Panonian Croatia which can be related to figures or

19 Goss 2009a, p. 5.

20 Belaj 2007, pp. 83–84. Slupecki 1994, pp. 17–18, 122–130, 185.

21 Slupecki 1994, pp. 122–130.

22 Goss 2009b, in press.

concepts Belaj has associated with early Slavic myths. Dubrava (place of the battle between Perun and Veles) – Oak Forest (Dubovac, Dub, Dubovnik, Hrašće, Rašće, Hrastik, Hrastovac, Hrastovica, Staro rašće, Rastik, Lug, Lužan, Lužanjak), Bukovje – Beech Forest (Bukevje, Bukovica), Gaj – Grove (Lug), Bor – Pine (Borje, Borovac), Lesje – Hazelnut (Leskovac, Lešće; hazelnut is sacred both to the Germans and the Slavs, and also the first – and the most nutritious nut three – that colonized the North after the last glacial age!), Orah – Walnut (Orehovica, Orašje, Orešje), Gora – Hill, Mountain (Brdo, and so also Staro Brdo, Golo Brdo, Bijelo Brdo, Dobri vrh, all associated with Perun, so also Perunika, Pogani vrh, Pogana gradina, Svetinjski breg), Dol – Valley (Dolina, Jama, and other names associated with Veles. e.g. Zmajevac, Veles, Glamočine, Glamača /sacred lake to which we shall return/ Zvjerkuš, Zveričke, Zmijačina, Zminjak, Zmijno, Vražjak, Vražnjača, Vražje brdo, Vražja jama, Vražje oko, Vražje vršje, Vražji do, Vražje blato, Vragića brijeg, Zvirišće, Crna mlaka, Crna lokva, Crna jama, Poganovo polje, Ižišće, Plazur), endless names beginning with Vuk – remember, Juraj was the shepherd of Veles’s wolves (Vučjak, Farkaševac, Farkaš međa, Vuka, Vučica); Ivan (Ivanovo polje, Ivanovo selo, Ivanova jama, Ivanjski krst, Ivana greda, Ivan dvori, Ivanja reka, Ivanovo, Ivanec, Ivanščica; it is of course difficult to decide whether the name Ivan refers to the pagan Juraj/Ivan, to St. John, or to the Order of St. John who held vast estates in Croatia), Mara (Marino selo, Marijanci, Marjančaci, Marin dvor; as above, it is not always clear whether we are dealing with Ivan’s sister, or Our Lady), Juraj (Đurđ, Đurđička, Đurđić, Juranščina; St. George seems to have consistently taken over places associated with Juraj/Jarilo), Triglav (Treglava, Trojeglava, Trorogovac), altars and sacrifices (Trebljevina, Trebljevine, Trebarje, Trebišće, Konjsko, Konjščina, Kutina)²³.

Taken by themselves, place names are interesting linguistic material. They acquire a new cultural meaning when we discover meaningful interrelationships. I would like to conclude this section by listing some from my recent practice.

1. Trema.

Trema, Trem, is an old Slavic word signifying, according to Katičić and Belaj, a big *blockbau* building, a distinguished building, a tower. The meaning is close to words such as “hram,” and “kreml.” Modern Croatian word is *trijem* (štokavian) and *trem* (kajkavian) mean-

ing a porch. A place called Trem or Trema would imply the presence of a building worthy of a chieftain. So far we have uncovered five such locations in Continental Croatia²⁴.

The most extensive is a small, closed high plateau called Trema surrounded by hills to the east of Križevci. It is full of place names which can be put together in a meaningful pattern according to the models offered by cultural anthropologists. There are Dvori and Dvorišće (Court and Courtyard), the place where the big log-built “Trem” would have stood, the seat of the local lord, and the place where the marriage between Juraj and Mara took place. To the northwest, beyond a low beam, there is the hill of Đurđić with the church of St. Juraj (George) the tower of which retains Romanesque details. The church stands on a hillfort, and to the north there is an extensive cemetery with an excellent view of all of the great mountains of northwestern Croatia – Kalnik, Ivanščica and Medvednica. The Ivanščica was a Perun place as demonstrated by the Belajs, the significance of the Medvednica would be discussed in a minute, the Kalnik is unexplored but promising. Another church, of St. Juliana, for this part of the world a very rare Netherlandish Saint, stands on another hillfort to the southeast of Dvori/Dvorište. St. Juliana is a saint that triumphed over devil. The church has been believed to be a 16th ct. building, but a new, unauthorized restoration produced a number of elements which may point to a much earlier date. The third significant point is the Staro Brdo, the highest peak in Trema (226m), with a great view toward the east and southeast, as far as the Požega Mountains in Central Slavonia ca. 100 km away. That the name “Trema” referred to the entire plateau is revealed by the fact that a number of other places bear the prefix “Trema;” Trema–Budišovo, Trema–Osudevo, Trema–Pintići, Tremski Prkos, Tremske livade. Another interesting name is Vražje oko, on the beam between St. Juliana and St. George, and also referring to the marshy land in the little valley to its west.

Vražje oko (Devil’s Eye) could be associated with Veles, but the Snake probably had its main Trema apartments at Đurđić, where, subsequently, Veles was tamed by St. George, the snake killer. St. Juliana who

24 Belaj 2007, p. 138. Katičić 2008, p. 99. Of course, not every “Dol” or “Jama” (Hollow or Pit) is related to Veles, nor is every “Brdo” or Gora” (Hill or Mountain) Perun’s domain. Each case has to be evaluated on its own, within its surroundings, and in relation to other place names. This is what makes this kind of research time-consuming, strenuous and slow.

23 Goss 2008, pp. 13–15.

triumphed over devil could have succeeded Mokoš. If planned investigations confirm our hopes we might have the first well-preserved Carolingian building in northwestern Croatia, bearing a dedication to a saint whose presence here after the Carolinian period would not be very likely. Perun would have, consequently, occupied the highest peak, the Staro Brdo (Old Mountain), on the eastern slope of which one finds a deserted village with traces of a circular building or area. It could be anything but it could be also a trace of a sacred circle – only excavation might tell. But it is significant that right opposite to the Trema hills, on the southern slope of the Kalnik we find two more such circles, at Igrišće (“Place of Rituals”), next to ruins of a church of St. Martin (Carolingian Saint), which appears to consist of an elongated aisle and an added, polygonal (Gothic?) sanctuary, and at Mihalj (St. Michael), at stone’s throw from an enormous rectangular hillfort with rounded corners, accompanied by traces of a square building. In either case the circles do not seem to have been fortifications as their walls are too thin, and they are in no particularly meaningful relationship to the neighboring building, church or otherwise. The same is true of another such odd couple, at SS. Kuzma and Damjan at Kladeščica in the eastern Medvednica, and the circle at Pogano St. Peter on the western Papuk, to which we will return. Of course, only the shovel can tell whether we are dealing with a Slavic sacred circle, or with a lime pit or coal maker hut.

The view from the cemetery at Đurđić in spite of its low height (209m) is fantastic and it may have been a relay point between two major systems, of northwestern Croatia and central Slavonia. The view from the top of the Staro Brdo may have been even better, but nowadays it is obscured by the forest which covers the peak. The spot it might have linked up to was another low, but strategically placed hill, once the site of another church of St. George, at Đurđička Rudina west of Daruvar, some 80km east of Đurđić. It has the view of the Medvednica, Ivanščica and Kalnik in the west, the Bilogora to the north, the Moslavačka Gora to the south, and, most importantly, the Petrov Vrh (St. Peter’s Peak) at the western end of the Papuk to the east. The significance of the latter will be explained soon²⁵.

The second Trema, Trem, Tremi is the top of the hill of the village of Jakopovec to the south of Varaždin. The hill at a lower altitude also features a well-pre-

served Romanesque church of St. Jakob (Jacob, James, the significance of the patron will emerge in a moment) on a hillfort, while from the top we have a commanding view of the holy mountain of Ivanščica, and of Kalnik, as well as of the Drava river flatlands around Varaždin. One wonders is this Trem did not contain a log palace of some early Varaždin “župan.”

Next we have the Tremski Breg (Trema Hill) above the village of Šumečani to the East of Ivanić, one of the oldest settlements and possessions of the Church of Zagreb in the 11th century, along a road to another such ancient settlement further east, Čazma. The vicinity of this yet to be even basically explored Trema features a Đurino Brdo (St. George’s Hill), Stupovi (Place of Columns), and what at the first glance appears as traces of a Roman road. It also features a family the name of which is Tremci. Identification of yet another Trem near Varaždin, at Gornji Kneginec, was just announced²⁶.

Finally, a hamlet called Trem near St. Ivan Zelina (another documented early settlement and possession of the church of Zagreb, late 12th ct.) is mentioned in a document from 1412²⁷.

2. St. Jakob.

Vitimir Belaj has noticed that if we extend the line which goes from the peak of St. Jakob (St. James) at the western end of the central massif of the Medvednica through the hill of the Medvedgrad castle, we hit the church of St. Marko in the center of the Upper Town – the medieval Gradec – of Zagreb. Independently, I have confirmed the same. Belaj has additionally constructed a sacred triangle with the third corner at Jarun (Jarilo’s place), once on the southern bank of the Sava. The Hill of St. Jakob is also called Veliki Plazur (the Big Crawling Place), and that of Medvedgrad Mali Plazur. Veles must have crawled up from the river trying to reach Perun on the lovely peak of St. James. On his way he was met by Perun at Bijenik (west of Šestine and exactly on the line linking Jarun with the Veliki Plazur) and hit him (“Bijenik” from *biti*, to hit) with his lightning. The Zagreb Prigorje offers an incredible wealth of material, which we are currently exploring. There are most like-

26 Those two “Tremi” have been recently visited and are yet unpublished. Our colleagues from the Preservations of Monuments Office in Varaždin, Ivana Peškan and Vesna Pascuttini Juraga are preparing a study which would also include the “Trem” above Varaždin. We just learned that the same two colleagues have located yet another “Trem”, near Gornji Kneginec, vis-a-vis Jakopovec!

27 Dobronić 1979, p. 159.

25 Goss 2008, pp. 17–22.

ly several layers of cultural landscapes involved, one definitely pre-Roman. Elsewhere, we intend to give a more extensive reckoning of this extremely complex and revealing investigation in progress²⁸.

3. Zmajevac.

Perun had to face Veles even in what is today almost the center of Zagreb. There is an unpaved road, Zmajevac (Dragon's Trail) running up to the Mirogoj hill from the end of the Rockefeller Street. At the end of the trail, on the plateau of Bijenik, Perun confronted Veles, and chased him back into the marshes at the spot where there is today Zvijezda Square.²⁹

4. Budinjak

In Belarus folk poetry Veles is often assailed by Perun's lightnings while hiding in a shack called in Belorussian "budiniak." Morena Želle recently discovered traces of a tetraconch building at the Budinjak hill in the Žumberak. It was underneath a later Greek-Catholic church of St. Petka, the saint which succeeds Mokoš in Eastern Christian traditions. Do we have here the entire Slavic Trinity together – Veles hiding in a Budinjak, Perun releasing his lightning, while Mokoš watches from the sideline waiting for the outcome³⁰. By the way, as I have shown elsewhere, a tetraconch stands at the beginning of Christian Slavic architecture in stone in a number of western Slavic countries – in Poland, in Bohemia, in Moravia, and, here, possibly in northwestern Croatia, if we ever manage to date the Budinjak tetraconch with any precision³¹. Now, if the Slavs did not migrate how to explain the appearance of the word "Budiniak" in two such distant places as Belarus and Croatia. Used in a very similar mythical context! The Slavs, of course, are not an ethnic but linguistic group. But so also are Italians, the French, the Spanish. The "Asiatic," Hungarian speaking inhabitants of the Carpathian basin are genetically 60% Slavic and only 2% Asiatic!³²

5. Pogano St. Peter

As the final stop of our trip let us return to the western Slavonia, and recall the villages of Treglava and Trojeglava. The reference to the three-headed pagan

Slavic god may also bring to one's mind an extremely interesting and relatively well-preserved building, a unique trichoncal chapel standing in the middle of a deserted cemetery on a high plateau between the villages of Toranj and Strižičevac (Strigevazzo of immigrant Italians). It is a tall building consisting of three broad, contiguous conchs, without a square entrance bay which regularly makes its appearance in trichoncal buildings, and so also at the Croatian Coastland. The entrance is placed at the south between what one may call the side conchs, whereas the central conch, the altar area, is directed toward the north. Its high quality mature Gothic detail of door and window frames, tracery, and interior support elements (preserved up to the springing of the vaults) points to some powerful and cultured patron, probably a member of the Pukur family, who rose to the peak of their career in the 14th century. The building probably contains traces of an earlier church. Here is an architectural form which irresistibly recalls the three-face sculptures of Pagan Slavic gods. The adjacent fields have provided no surface archeological material, which may mean that the building was not associated with a settlement. Did it arise on the site of an early Slavic sanctuary? As a truly significant piece of Croatian medieval art the Toranj triconch should be an object of a thorough architectural and archeological study, and it deserves a scholarly monograph³³.

The northern conch of the Toranj directs our eyes toward another crucial spot of the western Slavonian landscape, the westernmost tip of the Papuk mountain where, in a wide saddle between two peaks, the Petrov Vrh (614m) and Pogani Vrh (639m), there is the site of Pogano St. Peter. The site ("Crkvište" – i.e., "ruined church") is a sizeable medieval village (parish is mentioned in the late 14th century), with ample traces of stone structures, residential and possibly fortifications. Its main feature, retained in local memory (although the area was inhabited by orthodox immigrants ever since the 16th century!) is a rounded area, a circular mound too small to be a chapel or a meaningful fortification tower, and sunk into the ground. It appears to have stone foundations. We may have even identified the locally notorious "inscribed rock" which nobody could read. One could possibly make out something that looks like a badly damaged *crux gemina*, but this is far from certain. The site, of course, needs a thorough investigation³⁴.

Below the site is the area called Dubrave, then

28 Belaj 2008, pp. 310–311. Katičić 2008, p. 189. Goss 2009c, pp. 263–270. A diploma paper in progress by Ms. Tea Gudek has unearthed a wealth of material in the Zagreb Prigorje area, which will be published after sifting.

29 Goss 2009c, pp. 269–270.

30 Katičić 2008, p. 191, 204. Belaj 2007, pp. 379–381. Želle 2006, pp. 170–171

31 Goss 2009a, p. 12.

32 The concept of "linguistic group" has been explained to me by Mislav Ježić, for which I am eternally grateful.

33 Goss 2008, p. 14–15.

34 Goss 2008, pp. 15–17.

Glamočine, an extremely interesting name to be commented upon later, and Ivanova jama (Ivan's hollow). To the east there is a lower peak called Crna mlaka (Black Puddle, 506m). Together, one might say, a very nice example of the "Belaj landscape."

The Petrov vrh (St. Peter's Peak), the lower of the two prominent hights (614 m), the last of the peaks as the Papuk collapses toward the Daruvar plain, was probably Veles's domain, to be tamed in post-pagan times by the Prince of the Apostles (a church of St. Peter stands also in Veleševac near Sisak). The undulating configuration of the descending ridges indeed gives an impression of a snake crawling up, and then down, toward the Pogano St. Peter gap, to attempt to disturb the divine peace of Perun the Thunderer, sitting on top of the higher, Pogani vrh (Pagan Peak, 639 m), a lovely ideal pyramid (Whether Veles had also another line of attack, from the Crna mlaka, may be decided by somebody more expert in those matters). However, when Perun noticed Veles's crawling he intervened, and hit him in the area of Dubrave, as he usually does. Ivan's hollow introduces another moment of the myth. Juraj has already escaped from Veles, crossed the water and became Ivan, to marry his sister Mara. Where is Mokoš? South of the central scene we have a hill with the ruins of one of the most important, biggest, and most beautiful Benedictine monasteries in Croatia, St. Margaret in Bijela, a powerful female Saint, in whom one may see a successor to Mokoš. The appearance of the site of St. Margaret (by the way, as St. Juliana, a female Saint that triumphed over devil) within a Slavic "sacred triangle" would be truly amazing.

It is equally amazing how the "stage" of the "Divine Battle" is seen from every important medieval site in western Slavonia within the range of tens of kilometers. If the complex could be explained as we just did, then the artist of genius staged his drama indeed in front of a full house³⁵. The Petrov vrh is visible from

Kalnik, and on bright days from Ivanščica, as also its relay point, Đurđička rudina. It is visible from St. Jakob on the Medvednica, which thus communicates in a roundabout way with the Kalnik and Ivanščica, closing the huge circle of the Houses of the Lord in the western and central portion of the land between the Sava and the Drava rivers.

In March 2009 we took Professor Belaj to Bijela and Pogano St. Peter. Two days later we received his verdict. The Petrov and the Pogani vrh, and St. Margaret form a perfect "sacred triangle"! Moreover, Belaj eliminated one point of doubt we had had, and that is the absence of a water course between Mokoš and Veles, as the Bijela flows to the south of the monastery hill. There is a small creek to the north of it, called, believe me or not, Boževac! Almost 500 years after the Croatian population left the beautiful upper Bijela valley fleeing the Turks!³⁶ This is not any more just an academic matter. Huge ruins of the monastery stood less than a century ago. St. Margaret must be placed at the top of a priority list and promptly and thoroughly explored, as it may hold a key to many a mystery of our past³⁷.

In passing, the link between St. Margaret and Bijela/Bela seems to reoccur elsewhere! The parish church at Margečan to the southeast of Ivanec is dedicated, as the name tells us, to St. Margaret. It stands above the creek called Bela, and the same name is born by a castle on a steep hill further southeast above the Bela, which, as the entire area, belonged to the Hospitallers. Another such combination exists in Slovakia³⁸. Why? We still need to find out.

This is a small portion of the huge collection of data that is being collected. But even that small selection suggests to me the following:

1. The place names and key landscape points were selected by a speaker of Slavic language. This language is different from languages spoken previously in Dalmatia and Pannonia, being Latin, Greek, Illyrian and Celtic, about which we know enough to realize the difference. This language left no trace in the previ-

35 Please see previous note. The lovely pyramidal shape of the Pogani vrh raises, of course in a very preliminary way, the question: is there a deliberate choice of the form of a mountain, is there, so to speak, an "iconography of landscape". St. Jakob on the Medvednica is also a fine pyramidal hill. So is the Sveto Brdo on Velebit, a known Perun seat. I have noticed on my trips to Rijeka that there is, within the group of peaks seen from the throughway between Kikovica and Oštrovica, a fine pyramidal peak. Finally I took a map and looked up its name. It is called Bogdinj (God's Peak)!!! Marun has notice a "haystack form" of the hill called Sutvid near Živogošće. Marun climbed the hill (1155 m) and was convinced that it was a Slavic sacred mountain. If so, could the unulating ridge

of the western Medvednica, or of the ridge running from Gradec in Zagreb through Medvedgrad to St. Jakob, and, equally so, the ridge crawling up from Daruvar to the Petrov vrh be the image of Veles's attempts to reach Perun's seat?

36 Professor Belaj's lecture in Rijeka on March 13, 2009.

37 Andrić 2005, passim.

38 I thank J. Belaj for the information, and I. Peškan and V. Pascuttini Juraga for pointing out the "coincidence" during a research visit to Margečan-Gradišće.

ous, Roman or Pre–Roman period. Thus it must have been brought here and imposed upon both the land and the native population. Striking analogies, something we shall return to shortly, show that similar tongues, Slavic, were spoken within a wide area from the Laba to Rus, from the Baltic to the Adriatic. The wealth of the early Slavic, or re–Christianized, names is enormous, and in many cases meaningful patterns reflecting early Slavic worldview (mythology) could be established. We need to expand this corpus, a task of generations of researchers.

2. Acculturation of a landscape, creating of a meaningful cognitive geography does not happen overnight³⁹. Whoever did it had spent some time, at least several decades, before the process was fully under way. Obviously, it was done by people believing in a different set of ideas and values from those of Christianity. Briefly, they were pagan. This paganism was firm and ingrained, and its traces have survived in customs and in the landscape until today⁴⁰. Thus we are dealing with the speakers of a Slavic tongue, participants in Slavic pagan worldview, who had not been present on our territory in previous periods. They had spent some time here before they converted to Christianity, a process which went on along with assimilation of the natives, their culture, and, as genetics teaches us, their blood⁴¹. When and where did they come from?

3. A decade ago Mladen Ančić has demonstrated how it is possible to show for some Slavic–speaking groups where they had come from. Obodriti came from the Laba area (Polabia) to eastern Pannonia, Delminjani (Delminzi) and Lievljani also from Polabia to what is today western Herzegovina (on the Glamoč question, a few words later), Bužani from the Bug river to Lika in the Highlands (offspring of Buga, one of the seven mythical foremothers and forefathers of the Croats). Viš(lj)eviči from Wislica on the Vistula settled in Southern Dalmatia (Dukes of Hum)⁴². To this laudable effort of Ančić's we can add: Moravians to Moravche (Moravče or Moravce)

near Zagreb, to the Highlands (Moravice), to Sirmium (Morović), and to what is today northern Serbia (the Morava river region); Sorabs to the Highlands (Srb) and to Serbia; (G)lupoglavi⁴³ from Silesia to Lupoglav near Zagreb and to Istria; Volynians to the Banovina region (Volinja) from Volynia or from Wollin; Dulebs from Ukraine or Bohemia to the area to the northeast of Zagreb (Dulepska and Dulepski potok near Vrbovec)⁴⁴. The offspring of Kosences (Kosić?), another of the seven forefathers settled next to Buga's children in Lika (Kosinj). Tuga, Buga's sister may have left her trace in the Croatian noble family of Tugomirići. Finally, the royal tribe, of Horovatos (Croat, Hrvat) captured the best lands in the hinterland of Zadar, which since times immemorial is called "V Hrvatih" (At the Croats)⁴⁵. They came from the "White Croatia" as again witnessed by a dozen ancient place names linked to the Croatian name. This list need not be perfect, nor is it complete. But it keeps growing.

Ančić has placed the arrival of all those groups within the context of the anti–Avar campaigns of the Charlemagne⁴⁶. The King of the Franks needed soldiers, soldiers need land, and would turn settlers after the victory. What we see are splinter groups of larger Slavic ethnic bodies the appearance of which in what is today Croatia is best associated with Charlemagne's martial endeavors.

Additionally, one is fully justified to recall such place names as Odra (river near Zagreb and in the Baltic), Žitomir (a village in eastern Medvednica and in Ukraine), Kozelin, a famous archeological site in the eastern Medvednica (also Koželin, Kuzolin) and Koszalin in Poland, Požega in Croatia and Požoga in Polabia⁴⁷.

A particular attention should be paid to (G)lamo/ač. Some scholars have associated it with the Delminians (Dlamočani, hence Glamočani), but this is probably not so. Glamač (Lamatch) was a sacred lake of the Polabian Slavs, and Slupecki has proposed that there was a Glamač, Lamač, Glamoč, etc. in each major political

39 B. Cunliffe has a splendid description of the process when discussing some prehistoric situation (Cunliffe 2008, p. 139, 145, 177).

40 Multiple examples in Belaj 2007 and Katičić 2008.

41 Please see note 5.

42 Ančić 2000, pp. 74–80. Also Mužić 2008, p. 32 for some perspicacious insights into the appearance of the "Croats" in "Dalmatia." Of course, the name *Delminium* in Dalmatia was known in the Ancient times. However, there are also Delminzi in Polabia. I would be very happy to have further clarification by linguists.

43 On the (G)lupoglavi (Glupyeglovi), Barford 2001, p. 130.

44 Barford 2001, p. 103–104 Du(d)lebi in Rus on the Bug, p. 111, 251 Dulebi (Doudlebi) in Bohemia. The Volynians lived close to the Dulebi. None of this tribes is located far from what Barford also sees as the site of the Croats (pp. 111, 251).

45 Delonga 1996, p. 202.

46 Please see note 42.

47 Slupecki 1994, p. 67, 109, 184.

or territorial unit representing the central, holy spring of the tribe. Delminzi (Delminians) lived next to the above mentioned Polabian Glamač. They reinvented it upon their migration to Dalmatia's hinterland. The place name otherwise occurs from Polabia, through the Carpathinas to Slavonia and Herzegovina⁴⁸.

But there is more to our Glamoč. It is a word and concept borrowed from the Langobards as clearly narrated by Paulus Diaconus. A certain whore gave birth to seven children and threw them into a fish-pond. King Agelmund passed by and poked at the infants with his spear, until one of the babies clutched the weapon. The king pulled him out and declared his heir. As he was pulled out from a "lama" (pond) he was called Lamissio (also Laiamicho or Lamicho). A fine example of cross fertilization between Slavic and Germanic mythologies!⁴⁹

One should also notice that Florin Curta in his extremely careful scholarly works in which he has raised the well-known doubts about the origin and migrations of the Slavs lists a number of names from the Eastern and Southeastern Balkans which are not just Slavic, but find their echo as far as the Polabian Slavs, e.g., Dragubites = Dragoviti, sg. Dragovit, Ardagastus = Radogost; Peiragastus = Pr(ij)egost; Dragameros = Dragomir, to list just the ones which are the most obvious and easiest to unravel⁵⁰.

48 Slupecki 1994, pp. 164–166.

49 Foulke 2003, pp. 26–27. As Foulke notes the word "lama" also means water in provincial Latin of Northern Italy. Here also, I would like to have further clarification by linguists. However, the wide spread of the "glamoč" and the like seems unquestionable

50 E.g., Curta 2001, pp. 91–115, and Curta 2006, pp. 72, 96–97, 151. I like in particular Radogost, which is also the name of the famous fortified place of the Lutizans, yet to be definitively localized (Radogošč or Rethra), to which Slupecki has dedicated an entire chapter (pp. 51–69). Also, in Curta 2001, p. 254, the place name *Priseaca* is mentioned, obviously a modern Romanian for the old Slavic word *Presjeka* or *Preseka-Prisika* (place where two forests meet/are separated from each other), found all over the Slavic world, and very frequently in our material in Croatia (from *Preseka* near Vrbovec to *Pag*). I would like to make abundantly clear that I appreciate the vast erudition (especially in the Byzantine sphere) and zeal for scholarly precision displayed both by Curta and his followers in matters of Croatian such as D. Dzino (Dzino 2008), however I can not see their conclusions as "final". In his introduction to the *Making of the Slavs* (2001) Curta openly disclaims the use of linguistics, tacitly accepting the incompleteness of his own conclusions. I do the same, but I do not claim that what I have concluded is "final", it is just a complement to the fine work of other scholars, Curta included. When Dzino declares

4. The first mention of the Croatian name on the territory of Croatia is most likely in an incomplete inscription from the royal estate of Bijači near Trogir – "... atorum et iup..." which could hardly be interpreted but as "... Croatorum et iupanus..." i. e. "Ego × Dux Croatorum et Iupanus Y." The style of the fragment points to the time around 800 as it forms a part of a large and ever growing corpus of analogous material from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina which Ante Milošević has been successfully collecting. The epigraphy is compatible with such a date. Although not 100% proof, the Bijači fragment is a very strong argument for the appearance of the Croats in Central Dalmatia under the aegis of the Carolingian expansion around 800, as recently suggested by Mužić⁵¹.

At a presentation of a book toward the end of 2008, Professor Igor Zidić has asserted that what our art history lacks are collections of facts. If we do not know the facts how can we expect foreign scholars to know them? Only nowadays is Tomislav Marasović publishing a corpus of Pre-Romanesque architecture in Dalmatia. We have a fairly good corpus of Romanesque sculpture in medieval Slavonia. Also of Baroque painting in Istria, of Pre-Romanesque inscription on the territory of Croatian principality. A proto-corpus of wall-paintings in Continental Croatia is being prepared. Laudable but isolated and unrelated efforts. We have no corpus of interlace sculpture, of medieval painting on wood, of Istrian frescoes... to mention some areas where the absence of such a body of information is sorely felt. In this study we have relied on a corpus which is being put together and has been growing daily. It is yet incomplete but the *FACTS* contained therein tell me the following: there were two migrations of people speaking Slavic language and worshipping Slavic gods, one within the framework of Avar conquest, another of Charlemagne's anti-Avar wars, thus around 600 and 800, basically what the main-

that the White Croatia did not exist, he does nothing to support his statement, let alone try to show that the place names that Lowmianski (by the way, referred to by Slupecki as "overcritical scholar") associates with the Croats behind the Carpathians (Lowmianski 2004, pp. 123–126), do not refer to the Croats. The White Croatia and the Croats beyond the Carpathians are abundantly recalled by Barford 2001, e.g., p. 74, 99, 251 in a book for which Curta himself wrote a laudatory jacket note. This sounds awfully like sweeping under the rug what one does not like, or what does not fit with one's theories. We all do it.

51 Delonga 1996, p. 52. Milošević 1999, 2003, 2003b, 2009. Mužić 2008, pp. 31–33.

stream of Croatian history has always maintained. The second migration of “splinter groups” brought here also the bearers of the Croatian name, a limited but well trained and efficient group of mostly military people which emerged as the core of a future nation⁵². As genetics show us, the Slavic layer was thin but not negligible, and culturally tenacious and politically and militarily powerful enough to impose itself upon the native majority. It was also open enough to within a rather brief period of 200 years start successfully assimilating assets of the Mediterranean culture it had encountered in the new country.

What is within such a picture the place of our three-header from Vaćani?

The models and the means of transmission have been accounted for above. It could be an image of a Slavic pagan idol. Its form and technique is compatible with the provincial Roman and post-Roman sculpture in Dalmatia. It would be useful to know more about the circumstances of its discovery, but unfortunately this information is lacking. The likelihood that it was a work of pagan, pre-Christian art is rather high. Having described the basics of the cultural, political and spiritual context, one may say that the Vaćani sculpture by its topic (a multi-faced religious object) fits with the Slavic pagan tradition, whereas it also fits with the process of assimilation of some aspects of the local tradition, as confirmed by a reasonable skill of carving. It would be going too far to declare it a symbol of an ongoing assimilation, but it would be equally wrong to summarily reject it as a witness of that process. It is also a witness of the fact how much we still have to learn, and how many corpora of facts we still have to collect.

So be it!

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⁵² Please see again note 42.

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Troglavac iz Vaćana

Ključne riječi: Vaćani, Dalmacija, Hrvatska, slavenska umjetnost, hrvatska povijest, srednjovjekovna povijest, slavenska poganska svetišta, slavenske migracije

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GLAVNI PREDMET ove studije je fragment stupa s tri lica u Muzeju hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika u Splitu nađen u Vaćanima ispod Bribira. Povijesno-umjetnička analiza pokazuje kako nema razloga da se fragment ne datira u pretkršćansko slavensko doba, no nema ni konačnih dokaza da je tome tako. Komparativna analiza s brojnim primjerima poganske slavenske skulpture u širokom krugu od Polablja do Rutenije pokazuje da Vaćanski fragment posjeduje značajke pretkršćanskoga slavenskog idola.

No presudni su po mojem mišljenju naponi lingvisti kao što je Radoslav Katičić i kulturnih antropologa poput Vitomira Belaja, koji su povezali lingvistiku i mitologiju s pejzažom na temelju otkrića ruskih istraživača, Ivanova i Toporova, koji su uspjeli izolirati ključne vidove staroslavenske mitologije i povezati ih uz pejzaž. Na temelju toga mi smo počeli polagano slagati obrise najranijega slavenskog kulturnog pejzaža u smislu organizacije prostora, što je pak domena povijesti umjetnosti.

U najkraćim crtama, univerzalni slavenski mit priča o borbi Peruna, boga munje i nebeskih visina, i Velesa zmije, boga podzemlja, u kojoj Veles nastoji osvojiti brdo na kojemu sjedi Perun, a ovaj ga svojim munjama tjera u vodeno podzemlje gdje je Velesu mjesto. Bogovi se svađaju i oko Perunove žene, Mokoš, koja sjedi uz vodu i prede, te ljetne mjesece provodi kod muža, a zimske u podzemlju kod Velesa. Katičić je pomnom analizom literarnih ostataka obradio detalje mita posebice na našem području, a Belaj je, proučavajući toponime, zapazio da postoji stanoviti sustav prema kojem se u pejzaž smještaju glavni likovi. Perunov je dvor na gori, Veles isto može biti na povišenom terenu, ali nižem od Perunova, no najčešće je u kakvoj baruštini. Mokoš sjedi uz vodu, obično na Perunovoj strani. Likovi čine sveti trokut kojem je jedan od kutova oko 23 stupnja, što je prividni otklon između zamišljenih orbita Sunca u našem kraju na ekvinočij i solsticij, a dvije od stranica odnose se kao $1:\sqrt{2}$. Belaj je identificirao niz takvih struktura (Ivanec, Liburnija, Zagreb, te Prozorje–Dugo Selo s Jurjem Be-

lajom, a s Katičićem Žrnovnicu kod Splita, itd.). Belaj vrlo točno prepoznaje te trokute kao ideograme, tj. pismo, te bi oni bili zapravo pisani spomenici slavenske prisutnosti. Zaključuje da su, projicirajući temeljni kozmički mit na novoosvojeni pejzaž, doseljenici taj pejzaž definitivno učinili svojim. Te su točke u pejzažu poslije kristijanizirane po stanovitom ključu tko slijedi koga, te su i danas dio naše kulturne baštine, ali i vizualne realnosti.

Neke pojedinosti te svete geometrije mogu se preispitivati, no činjenica ostaje da postoje “uzorci” u pejzažu. Evo nekoliko jednostavnijih primjera, odnosno činjenica.

1. Trema: prema Belaju i Katičiću znači “velika zgrada od balvana, toranj, reprezentativna zgrada”, isto kao hram ili kremalj. Za sada smo otkrili pet (!) takvih “Trema” u kontinentlanoj Hrvatskoj. Trema je mala zatvorena visoravan istočno od Križevaca, upravo natrpana starim toponimima. U Đurđicu bio je možda položaj Velesa (sv. Juraj često sjeda na Velesa, Juraj Jari- lo je sin Perunov kojeg Velesovci otimaju usred zime i odvođe u Velesov svijet, gdje odrasta čuvajući Velesove vukove; zatim sredinom ljeta Juraj prelazi rijeku, postaje i Ivan i ženi svoju sestru, Maru, kojoj je nevjeran, te je stoga ubijen da bi se ponovno rodio sred zime); kod crkve sv. Julijane, svete koja je svladala vraga, bila je Mokoš, koju slijede jake kršćanske svete, a na Starom brdu, najvišoj točki ovog malog hrvatskog Tibeta, bio je Perun (na obronku su tragovi starog naselja s mogućim svetim krugom, kakvi se možda nalaze preko puta na Kalniku, u Igrišću i Mihalju, na Kladišćici na istočnoj Medvednici, i u Pogano St. Peter na zapadnom Papuku). Iako je najviša točka u Tremi tek 226 m, jasno se vide Medvednica, Ivanščica i Kalnik, dakle, velike kuće bogova zapadnog međuriječja, a isto tako i Moslavačka gora i srednjoslavonske planine. Iz Đurđica u Tremi vidi se vjerojatno Đurđička rudina kod Daruvara, strmi brežuljak i sjedište stare crkvene župe (*St. Georgii de Saplioncha*), koji je slične visine, ali i on ima sjajan pogled na daleku Medvednicu, Ivanščicu i Kalnik, na Moslavačku goru i na

Petrov vrh na zapadnom Papuku. Po mojem mišljenju ova dva položaja sv. Jurja su relejne točke koje povezuju pejzaž zapadnoga i središnjeg međuriječja. U Tremi nadalje postoje Vražje oko (Veles), te Dvori i Dvorišće, mjesto sredoljetne svadbe Jurja Jarila i Mare. U Tremi nas čeka još podosta arheologije i detaljno istraživanja Sv. Jurja i Sv. Julijane (možda karolinška), ali barem znamo gdje treba tražiti. Ovog proljeća otkrili smo još nekoliko Trema – Trem, Tremi, strmi brežuljak u Jakopovcu, jednom u nizu starih sela južno od Varaždina, s romaničkom crkvom sv. Jakova (taj koji put sjeda na Peruna), dok je na samom vrhu položaj Trem, dakle to je možda bio “kremlj” nekog ranog predvaraždinskog župana. Trem je brežuljak nad nedalekim Gornjim Knegincem, Tremski je breg kod Šumečana, gdje žive Tremci (!), a selo Trem se spominje godine 1412. kod Svetog Ivana Zeline.

2. Medvedgrad. Povučemo li crtu sa Sv. Jakova na Medvednici kroz Medvedgrad, ona će proći kroz položaj crkve sv. Marka na Gradecu. To nikako nije slučajno. Belaj je već pretpostavio da je Medvedgrad (Mali Plazur) Velesov dvor (Veles je i zmija s medvjedom glavom), dok je na lijepoj glavici Sv. Jakova (Veliki Plazur) stolovao Perun. Hrnat Medvednice sa zapada od Podsuseda kao i onaj od Gradeca preko Prekrižja koji se sastaju pod pravim kutom na Sv. Jakovu svojim svijanjem pokazuju plaženje, plazurenje Velesovo kako bi dosegao Perunov dvor.

3. Zmajevac. Nekoliko stotina metara od mojeg stana u Rockefellerovoj nalazi se nepopločani put Zmajevac koji se penje na visoravan Bijenika. Tuda je plazio Veles kad se pokušao uspeti iz svoje močvarne kuće na današnjoj Zvijezdi, a na visoravni Bijenika dočeka ga je Perun, bio munjama i otjerao natrag u baruštinu gdje i pripada.

4. Budinjak. Katičić se mnogo bavio bjeloruskim pjesmama i gatalicama u kojima Perun nije Velesa koji se krije u kućici, Budinjaku. Budinjak je ime brda u Žumberku gdje je Morena Želle iskopala tragove četverolisne građevine ispod nekadašnje grkokatoličke crkve sv. Petke, a to je jedna od svetica koja sjeda na Mokoš. Po mojem istraživanju, četverolisti stoje na početku slavenskih arhitektura u trajnom materijalu (Krakow, Prag, Mikulčice no. 4., a sada i u Hrvatskoj, ako se dokaže da se radi o ranosrednjovjekovnoj crkvi, što ne mora biti slučaj, jer se četverolisti i dvolisti javljaju i u poganskoj slavenskoj arhitekturi), kao i osmerolisti, što bi moglo objasniti i iznimno čestu pojavu višelista u najranijoj hrvatskoj arhitekturi u Dalmaciji (a sada smo Belajevom metodom našli i jedan u Kamenici u Zagorju). Ako se Slaveni nisu selili iz

nekog zajedničkog središta, kako se onda ime Budinjak nalazi u Žumberku i Bjelorusiji!? Slaveni nisu etnička, nego jezična zajednica (Ježić), kao uostalom i Talijani, Francuzi, itd.

5. Pogano St. Peter. Između Petrovog i Poganog vrha na krajnjem zapadnom Papuku nalaze se tragovi starog naselja, župe Pogano St. Peter (spominje se u 14. st.). Petrov vrh lijepo predstavlja zmiju koja se penje iz voda Daruvara, *Aquae Balisae* (Sv. Petar može sjesti na Velesa kao u Velešovcu kraj Siska), zatim se spušta u udolinu prema Poganom vrhu kroz Pogano St. Peter (ovdje je možda trag svetog kruga). Pogani vrh je fina piramida, podsjeća i na Sv. Jakova, a gotovo je identičan oblik i Sv. Gore na Velebitu i Bogdinja nad Grobnikom. Piramidalni oblik može se dakle pripisati Perunu, a valoviti Velesu! Mjesto božanskog boja na zapadnom Papuku vidi se na desetke kilometara diljem zapadne Slavonije, sa svih važnih srednjovjekovnih točaka, a preko Đurđičke rudine veže se sa sklopom Trema–Prigorje/Zagorje. S Medvednice (Sv. Jakov) se po bistrom vremenu jasno vidi Petrov vrh, s Petrovog vrha Kalnik i Ivanščica, pa se tako golemi krug zatvara.

U ožujku 2009. odveli smo profesora Belaja u Pogano St. Peter i nakon toga nam je narisao ono što smo intuitivno naslutili: prekrasni sveti trokut koji kao treću točku ima samostan sv. Margarete u Bijeloj (točka Mokoše; sv. Margareta je kao i sv. Julijana nadvladala vraga). Ovdje se u trokut uklapa jedan od najvažnijih spomenika hrvatske povijesti (nažalost danas u potpunosti pod zemljom).

Ovo je tek sićušni uzorak koji stižemo ovdje prikazati. No taj paket nam kaže sljedeće.

1. Netko se ovamo doselio i proveo dosta vremena u poganskom stanju, jer su se toponimi i strukture pejzaža duboko uvukli u bit zemlje, a i uvelike odredili strukturu kršćanskog pejzaža. Brojnost toponima koji su izravno staroslavenski ili staroslavenski, no promijenjeni, ali prepoznatljivi ili kristijanizirani je golem. Taj netko je govorio slavenski jezik i poznao slavensku mitologiju.

2. Prije desetak godina Mladen Ančić je pokazao kako se za neke skupine može pokazati otkuda su došle – Obodriti iz Polablja u istočnu Panoniju, Delminjani i Lijevljani iz Polablja u zapadnu Hercegovinu, Viš(lje)vići s gornje Visle (iz Wislice) u južnu Dalmaciju. Dodajmo: Moravljani u Moravče, Morović i današnju sjevernu Srbiju, Sorabi u istočni dio gorske Hrvatske i u Srbiju, (G)lupoglavi iz Šleske u Istru i istočno od Zagreba (Lupoglav), Volinjani iz Volinije (ili Wollina?) na Banovinu (Volinja), Bugini potom-

ci s Buga u Bužane, Kosićevi (Kosences) u Kosinj u Lici, Duljebi u okolinu Vrbovca (Dulepska, Dulepski potok), i konačno, vladarsko pleme Hrvati u srednju Dalmaciju (zaleđe Zadra “V Hrvatih”). Pojavu tih “splinter groups” je najlakše smjestiti u kontekst protuavarskog rata Karla Velikog kad su se razni interesi našli potaknuti da se okoriste padom Avarije kako bi stekli bolja staništa. Danas poznajemo desetak toponima tipa (G)lama(o)č, od Polablja preko Slovačke do zapadne Hercegovine, a otkrio sam da je sveto jezero Glamač polapskih Slavena (dokumentirano kod Radogošča – Rethre) posuđeno od Langobarda. U sveto jezero Lama bačeno je sedmero djece blizanaca, od kojih je preživio Lamassio, koji je pograbi bio koplje langobardskoga kralja Agilmunda, te je ovaj poduzetno djetesce proglasio svojim nasljednikom. Slupecki pojašnjava da je Glamač, i sl., središnji sveti izvor plemena. Dakle, one mnogobrojne “svete vode”, primjerice one oko Daruvara, su zapravo Glamoči baš kao i Glamočine na zapadnom Papuku.

3. Hrvati. Prvi spomen hrvatskog imena na našem teritoriju je vjerojatno nepotpuni natpis iz Bijača “...atorum et iup...” (... *Dux Coratorum et Iupanus...*) koji oko pola stoljeća prethodi Trpimirovoj povelji, a osamdesetak godina Branimirovu natpisu iz

Šopota. Fragment iz Bijača nalazi stilske sličnosti s danas velikom skupinom reljefa u Hrvatskoj i zapadnoj i središnjoj Bosni, koje Ante Milošević uvjerljivo smješta u kasno 8. stoljeće. Iako ne stopostotni, bijački je fragment jak argument za pojavu Hrvata pod tim imenom u srednjoj Dalmaciji oko godine 800., dakle u vrijeme karolinške ekspanzije u Dalmaciji, koju kao jak argument pojave Hrvata u Dalmaciji navodi Mužić.

4. Dakle, činjenice koje imamo i korpus kojih dnevno raste, pokazuju da su postojale dvije slavenske selidbe, odnosno selidbe govornika slavenskog jezika i štovatelja slavenskih bogova, koje su se dogodile zaista u 7. stoljeću i oko godine 800.

Ovo nudimo kao komplementarni materijal mnogobrojnim vrijednim studijama “selidbe Slavena i Hrvata”. Unutar tog konteksta nije teško razumjeti pojavu Vaćanskog fragmenta. Svojom ikonografijom uklapa se u tip prikaza slavenskih poganskih idola, stilom odgovara općim značajkama predromanike, ali pokazuje i stanovitu vještinu klesanja koja je nezamisliva bez ugledanja na rimsku i poslijerimsku umjetnost u Dalmaciji.