

SAINTS OF THE
BALKANS

Edited by

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and
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INTRODUCTION

Mirjana Detelić and Graham Jones

The cult of saints is a field of enquiry in need of continual revisiting. Constant revision of our interpretations of data is demanded in the light of new discoveries and understandings – not least those which result from the insights afforded by interdisciplinary and intercultural studies. Complex phenomena which operate on many levels demand the engagement of disciplines ranging from history to psychology via archaeology, topography, onomastics, literature, theology, anthropology, ethnology, culturology, sociology, and others besides. Among the critical issues whose exploration can be particularly helped by examining material from the Balkans is the relationship between inherited beliefs predating Christianity and the Christian model of the world adopted later, for example as concerns the rural calendar, attitudes towards the dead, and the treatment of relics. These cannot be understood well enough without multidisciplinary work that encompasses such skills as comparative folklore studies and broad environmental fieldwork. The same, broad context is also needed for studies in art history and history of literature, history of religion and mythology, as well as in comparative linguistic and Slavonic studies. The present volume grew out of an initial partnership between the Department of Language and Literature in the Centre for Scientific Research of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts and the University of Kragujevac with the intention of presenting the cult of saints in the context of Balkan folklore. The way in which this aim broadened out is illustrated by the first two essays in the present volume, both concerned with the very beginning of Christianity in the Balkans, well before the generally supposed arrival of the Slavs. Because of its geographical position at the crossroads between East and West, the Balkans has always been the cauldron in which eastern and western, and northern and southern influences were invited, altered, and in a new shape transferred again. There is a tendency – well described in several of the essays here – for the study of saints in Balkan historiography to be particular and inward-looking. In fact, as the broad sweep of topics here illustrates, the large themes our contributors address are more universal than regional and have an importance for Christian cultures wherever found.

Of the fourteen essays presented here, the first two discussions help to establish historical foundations. Milena Milin explains ‘The beginnings of the cults of Christian martyrs on the territory of Serbia’, and Alexander Loma explores hagio-toponyms. Milin writes that during the so-called Great persecution, the most numerous Christian martyrs in the Roman provinces Pannonia II, Moesia I and Dardania, are known to have suffered in Pannonian capital of Sirmium. Their names, noted already in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, are sometimes epigraphically testified. The cults of martyrs were carefully cherished in Sirmium (St Irenaeus and Sinerotas, for example, whose *martyria* have been discovered), but many of them (sometimes with martyr’s relics) were spread to the eastern and/or western parts of the Roman Empire. There they were worshipped even mo-

re than in their homeland (St Anastasia, for example, was venerated in Constantinople, Zadar, Rome, and Fulda).

Loma asserts that after settling down in the seventh century in the Byzantine province of Dalmatia, the Serbs, not unlike their kinsmen and neighbours the Croats, found themselves exposed to the influences of a local Christianity, whose terminology and nomenclature were basically Latin, though impregnated with Greek admixtures. This situation is reflected in the oldest loan words and names of Christian provenance in Serbo-Croatian, and place-names with *sut-* from Latin *sanctus*, while some names of saints were adapted in a phonetic shape based on middle-Greek pronunciation, for example Ilija (Elijah), Varvara (Barbara), Vlaho (Blasius), and so on. After the schism and together with the gradual shifting of the centre of their medieval state under Nemanjić-dynasty southeastward, the Serbs definitely turned to the Eastern Church and adopted Church Slavonic as their liturgical language. Nevertheless still survive some remnants of this original syncretism among the orthodox Serbs, not only in onomastics, but also in their folk calendar, as Loma demonstrates.

Three contributions address devotional themes from the Middle Ages. From the historians' perspective, Tatjana Subotin-Golubović describes the cult of Michael the Archangel in medieval Serbia, while Danica Popović explores the ecclesiastical and political programme represented by the eremitism of St Sava of Serbia. The concept of *desert* is one of the important categories not only in the history of east-Christian monasticism, but also in the entire medieval civilisation and its religious mentality. The art historical view is taken by Branislav Cvetković, discussing the icon and its functional adaptability in medieval Serbia.

Religion was harnessed to national political agendas both in the time of St Sava and as medieval attitudes gave way to modern. Miroslav Timotijević describes how leading members of the ruling Despotic family Branković were remodelled first as saints and then, in the Nineteenth Century, as historical heroes. They seem to have provided a model for the parallel veneration of the sainted Stefan Štiljanović, popularly though unofficially viewed as the last Despot of the medieval Serbian state. The growth of devotion to his relics is traced by Jelena Dergenc.

From here the narrative moves into the field of popular understandings, customs, and folklore. Gerda Dalipaj reports from her fieldwork on saint's day celebrations and animal sacrifice in the Shpati region of Albania, focusing on how these reflect local social structure and identities. Račko Popov describes the hugely important Balkan devotion to the conflated saints Paraskeva, also represented as Petka, together providing a saintly personification of women's rest days and other themes. Popov's essay traces the cult in Bulgaria, Serbia, Romania, and Greece, and Paraskeva/Petka's personification of Friday, her role in winter as patron of wolves and mice, and her summer aspect as rival and substitution of God's Mother. Manolis Varvounis surveys the cult of saints in Greek traditional culture, and Ljupčo Risteski lays out the concept and the role of saints in Macedonian popular religion. In Risteski's view, the starting point is a notion that self-consciousness of popular religion is basically Christian, in spite of its scientific definition and multilevel structure which are conspicuous only from the point of view positioned outside the traditional culture. Christianity, though, popular as well as official, is based on the cult of the saints. This cult is here fully analysed on Macedonian folklore material and widely illustrated by the author's field research. Varvounis argues that the cult of

saints in Greece may be considered as an outcome of basic traditional and religious behaviour of the Greek people. A contemporary Greek's concept of Christian saints is compatible with the concept of gods and heroes of ancient Hellenes. The cult of saints provides a connection between ancient heritage and Orthodox Christian reality. This can be exemplified, for example, by the practice of votive offerings, which is based on a response system and, by itself, can be recognised as a special kind of buy-and-sell relationship between the believers and the saints. A person offers his or her veneration only to those saints whose miracles promise to help them flourish in the desired way. Votive offerings in blood retain the leading characteristics of ancient rites and are linearly connected with them.

Three detailed folkloric studies bring the book to its climax. Mirjana Detelić presents two case studies of the saints in the 'twilight zone' of oral literature: Petka and Sisin. The basic structural prepositions of oral literary genres are more strict but less in number than those of written literature. This results in very firm control of form and expression in the centre, speaking from the genre point of view. On the periphery, though, this control weakens and the inter-genre transversability grows, and even becomes free. Thus, in terms of literary theory, a twilight zone is formed, where only those texts are encouraged which offer the best genre mixture. Biljana Sikimić surveys the large corpus of material which reflects popular beliefs about saints who punish wrongdoers (and the innocent!) by winding their guts. The phenomenon appears to have begun with a cursing motif adopted in the name of St Jeremiah for the banishment of snakes and involved *inter alia* the christianisation of Balkan incantation rhymes. Mirjam Mencej concludes with a study which brings the narrative full circle, linking Christian lore with pre-Christian ideas: Saints who act as the wolves' shepherd, an aspect of the ancient figure known to scholars and literature as The Master of the Animals. Mencej argues that this represents the transfer of the identity of this mythic figure from the Slavonic deity Volos/Veles to local and regional saints and other *persona* of Christian provenance. There are echoes here of themes in the second part of Sikimić's essay, in which she demonstrates some possibilities of demonologic reconstruction. Considering the Balkans as a folklore continuum it is possible to reduce different demons to a common minimum of their key functions and predicates, types of communication, chronotop, etc. This way the author reconstructs a type of 'protodemon' with different nominations in different Balkan languages.

The editors are delighted to have this opportunity for its contributors, scholars of several Balkan countries, to have their work made available to worldwide audiences through a revised edition of published material in English translation. The SASA Institute for Balkan Studies has as one of its principal remits the exploration of historical themes from a variety of academic perspectives, and most of these essays first appeared in a SANU volume, edited by Mirjana Detelić, whose title in English translation was 'The Cult of Saints in the Balkans'. It was the first collection to address the cult of saints in this way since the end of Communism allowed the free study of religious history and devotion free of ideological constraints. This present volume is among the first fruits of a collaboration between SANU (and in particular the programme, 'Christianity in the Balkans') and TASC, the Trans-national Database and Atlas of Saints' Cults, represented by its Director, Graham Jones, of St John's College, Oxford, and the University of Leicester. The editors would like to thank their respective institutions and colleagues too numerous to name for their kind support which has made this possible.

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE CULTS OF CHRISTIAN MARTYRS AND OTHER SAINTS IN THE LATE ANTIQUE CENTRAL BALKANS

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Abstract: Christianity reached the inner parts of the Balkans more slowly than its maritime districts, where it may have gained converts as early as the time of the Apostles. By the fourth century, a major Christian centre had developed at strategically important Sirmium (modern-day Sremska Mitrovica).¹ During the Diocletian and Galerian persecutions substantial numbers of Christians in Sirmium and its hinterland were detained and/or executed. The names of individual martyrs and the dates of their deaths are listed in the Martyrology of pseudo-Jerome (*MH*), parts of which originated in the fifth century, and mentioned in patristic texts (J.-P. Migne ed., *Patrologia Latina* [*PL*], Paris, 1841-), and vivid descriptions of many of their *passios* can be found in the Bollandists' hagiographic collection, *Acta Sanctorum* (*AA.SS.* 1863). Specific documentation is provided by epigraphy. The testimonies of tombstones are often of crucial importance for establishing the historicity of certain martyrs or for identifying objects associated with their veneration. Epitaphs also mark a succession of otherwise unrecorded devotees of the new religion, with Greek, Latin, and Oriental names. Though the archaeological sources are only partly reachable because the antique core of Sirmium lies beneath the modern city, new data come to light from time to time during building construction.

Judging by their names, the first Christians in Sirmium were mostly Greeks in the opinion of some scholars (Popovic 1993, 25-26). This would point to a spreading of the new religion from the south. However, there are more Latin names than Greek, as I pointed out in *Starinar* (Milin 1996, 247), and the inscriptions are difficult to date with precision. In *MH* Latin names are far more numerous (cf. *MH* April 6: '*In Syrmia Rutinae moderatae romanae secundae cum aliis septem*'). The martyrs of Sirmium whose names are preserved outnumber those from other cities of Pannonia, as well as those of Moesia I (principally the northern half of modern-day Serbia) and Dardania (lands to the south, reaching into what became Kosovo). However, not all of them lived in Sirmium. Christians of the wider hinterland were doubtless among those attracted to the city. The martyrs certainly included some from Singidunum (modern-day Belgrade), capital of Moesia, including the first martyrs (according to tradition), *presbyter* Montanus and his wife Maxima with whom he fled to Sirmium (*AA.SS* III, 615-7).

¹ Not only was Sirmium capital of Lower Pannonia, a deep corridor of Roman territory along the west bank of the Danube between what are now Belgrade and Budapest. From 298 it was one of the four capitals of the empire alongside Trier, Milan, and Nicomedia, and seat of the Prefect of Illyricum, whose territory stretched from present-day Hungary to the Greek mainland and islands. Here emperors often lived and four church councils were held, including disputes between Niceans and Arians about the nature of Christ which resulted in the Sirmium formulas.

Members of the church carefully nourished the cults of martyrs. Their bodies were placed in sepulchres and *martyria* were built where the *memoria* of the day of their martyrdom was annually kept. Their names were noted both in East and West and remain in the Kalendars to the present day (AA.SS.; Delehay 1902, forming the volume *Propylaeum ad acta sanctorum novembris*; Velimirovic 1991). Already in the fourth century, some of them were venerated in other parts of the empire and sometimes their relics were translated. In the following century Sirmium was plundered and partly destroyed by Huns, and then by Avars, and during the next century the Slavs arrived. Changing masters and invaders caused the old population to become refugees, taking with them the memories of their martyrs.

According to hagiography, Montanus and Maxima, refugees from persecution in Singidunum, were thrown into the Sava when they would not renounce their faith. The river carried their bodies as far as the ninth mile, where they were buried. According to *MH* it happened on March 26, most probably in 304. Details of the story occur in the *Passio* of Polion from the neighbourhood of Cibalae (present-day Vinkovci) (AA.SS II, 425), but it cannot be established whether the *elogium* in their honour was made on the basis of some earlier legend, now lost, as suggested by Jarak (1996, 287). Their cult travelled to the west, but was not particularly popular there in contrast to those of other Sirmium martyrs (Zeiller 1918, 105ff, 121ff). In late antique Sirmium itself there is no epigraphic or other evidence of Montanus' and Maxima's cult, and in later centuries only the existence of their feast-day remains.

The first bishop of Sirmium, Irenaeus, was about thirty, with a wife and family and parents still alive, when he was brought before the provincial governor, Probus. His *passio*, which scholars consider trustworthy (AA.SS. *Martii* III, 1668, 555-68), goes on to tell how Probus talked to him about the effect on his family, as if wishing to avoid pronouncing the death penalty. However, the young bishop quoted Matthew 10:37 to him: 'Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.' After again refusing to make an offering, Irenaeus was beheaded on a bridge across the Sava, *Pons Basentis*, in some manuscripts also called the bridge of Artemis, and his body was thrown into the river. The execution was said to have taken place on Easter Day, April 6, 304.

There are quite a few antique and early medieval testimonies of the cult of Irenaeus. A church dedicated in his honour was discovered in a north-western Sirmium necropolis. A fourth-century epitaph found there and published in a preliminary edition in the exhibition catalogue (Dragoslav Srejić ed., *Rimski carski gradovi i palate u Srbiji* ['Roman Imperial Towns and Palaces in Serbia'] SANU, Belgrade 1993), has the specific phrase '*In basilica domini nostri Ereni*' (Popovic 1993, 26). As to the place of execution, *Pons Basentis* linked Sirmium with the west, the city's other bridge was its link with Singidunum to the east. V. Popovic (1993, 18), linked 'Basentis' with the present day river Bosna, but some earlier interpretations associated it rather with the smaller river Bosut. Interestingly, another church is dedicated in his honour on the right bank of the river Sava at Mačvanska Mitrovica, dated with some certainty to the tenth century. Just as it is not known how long the necropolis survived, and the saint's martyrdom with it, it is a big question as to when this second church may have been established. The first building was erected on late antique foundations and rebuilt three times. It is supposed that the first rebuilding took place during the stay of a Frankish mission in the tenth century. The

second construction was an Orthodox church in the Byzantine style, with three apses, mentioned in a Papal letter of 1229 as a cathedral of the Greek rite. In the same century the church was rebuilt for a third time as the seat of the bishop of Sirmia (Serbian Srem), provided by the Benedictines, and contemporary Latin charters record its patron as St Irenaeus (Popovic 1980, 2, 3, 6). Of great interest is the testimony of Theophylact, an eleventh-century archbishop of Ochrid, regarding the reputation of Irenaeus and the belief in the healing power of his relics. Chapter 54 of his *Martyrium SS XV martyrum*, printed as Vol. 146 in J.-P. Migne, *Patriologiae cursus completus, s. Graeca*, hereafter *PG* (and known in more recent editions as *Sources chrétiennes*), tells at 220 of a Bulgarian who visited places where miracles occurred and who, having heard about Irenaeus, started from Ochrid for Mitrovica (Zeiller 1918, 81 n. 3; Delehaye 1933, 256 n. 6). Finally, acceptance of his cult by the Slavic population is evidenced by belief that the saint, being from Srem, was *ipso facto* a Slav (Velimirovic 1991, March 26).

Widespread, popular memory of Sirmium's first bishop is obscured by the cult of his deacon Demetrius, about whom it is written only that he was martyred on April 9, three days after Irenaeus, together with a number of unnamed Christians including four virgins (*AA.SS.* III, 614-5; *MH* 8, *Id Apr.*; Syriac Breviary 441; Vickers 1974, 343-5). There is no evidence that Demetrius was commemorated in late antique Sirmium. A church mentioned in *The Miracles of St Demetrius* was built during the first decades of the sixth century and dedicated in honour of a high officer of Thessalonica of that name, patron of the city (Barisic 1953). Indeed it is from Demetrius that the town got its name, (Di)mitrovica. There are two general views regarding the problem of identifying St Demetrius, deacon of Sirmium, with his namesake, the 'megalomartyr' from Thessalonica. However, either two different martyrs share the same name (Popovic 1987; Popovic 1998; Milin 2001), or the Sirmium Demetrius is in the origin of the cult of Thessalonica's patron. The first to offer the latter possibility was Delehaye (1933, 228-9). Zeiller (1918, 81-83) wrote: '*...martyr de Thessalonique... qui n'a d'existence que dans la legende, mais qui s'est substitué au modeste clerc de la métropole pannonienne.*' More recently this hypothesis has been supported by Vickers 1974 and others.

The silence in contemporary *martyrologia* about a martyr called Demetrius from Thessalonica is sometimes taken to indicate that he never existed in that city. Partisans of the other hypothesis use it as confirmation that the cult was transferred from Sirmium, though there is no mention of a translation of the relics from that city. Nevertheless, the same argument is used by partisans of the opposite hypothesis, who distinguish the Sirmium deacon from the patron of Thessalonica. They go even further in their attempts to interpret the Thessalonica cult, searching for its origins in an ancient pre-Christian cult such as that of the Macedonian Kabir people (cf. Popovic 1987, 117, and Popovic 1998, 46, who accepts an earlier, similar point of view). Vickers (1974, 344) rejects this: 'Rationalist explanations... since they rest on analogies which are frequently superficial and in particular do not take account of the fact that Demetrius does not seem to have been honoured originally as a military saint.' He also challenges the idea that a connection between Christian saints and local, pre-Christian cults is justified in every case. Christianity took roots and spread within Thessalonica and northern Greece as early as the time of the first apostles, and the number of recorded Christian martyrs was so large that it is hard to understand why a new, non-existent case should be invented (Jarak 1996, 275). However, if the supposition about a translation of relics of Demetrius to

Salonika is correct, the flourishing of the saint's cult in Sirmium began only after this saint, celebrated and honoured in Thessalonica, was translated back to Sirmium.

It should be noted that the iconography of Demetrius of Thessalonica always represents the saint in military uniform. Up to now there are no images of the martyr of the same name represented in deacon's robes. Even more interesting and valuable is one later, written testimony, *Litaniae sanctorum Syrmiensium*, in which Demetrius is first called 'deacon' and next time 'patron of the diocese', information ignored by later scholars (Zeiller 1918, 83, n. 2). It is clear that this preserves and transfers information from *HM*, so the supposition about two different martyrs is certainly possible, though Jarak (1996, 276) argues against it: 'Finally let us mention an astonishing result of the new thesis about Demetrius: two saints named Demetrius were worshipped in Sirmium in the fifth century.' The author rejects V. Popovic's study entirely, without taking into account the long-held opinion identifying Demetrius of Thessalonika with a pre-Christian deity. Furthermore, the proposal that there were two saints allows that the cult of Demetrius of Thessalonica developed in Sirmium with the construction of a church of St Demetrius there by the early fifth-century Prefect of Illyricum, Leontius, and that it merged with the local cult of the martyr with the same name. Either that, or they pushed one another into the background, and it really makes no difference whether the relics of the Sirmium saint were translated to Thessalonica before that or not. The question of the identity of Demetrius of Thessalonica does not fall within the compass of this paper.

Much clearer is the route of the relics and cult of St Anastasia. Tradition holds that she helped Christians in Aquelia, Thessalonica, and Sirmium, and her martyrdom under Diocletian, according to *MH* on December 25, 304, is accepted (Zeiller 1918, 84-86). The *Miracles of St Demetrius* also mentions a *martyrium* built in her honour, and near her church was Leonthius' church honouring Demetrius. About her first *translatio*, see Theodoros Anagnostes' *Historia Tripartita* ii, 65 (Delehay 1933, 246). In Patriarch Genadius' time, in the mid-fifth century, her body was translated to Constantinople, and then in 804, a part of her relics was translated to Zadar. The occasion is recorded in an inscription on the *arca* in Zadar cathedral, as well as in the writings of Constantine Porphyrogenitus (905-59) (cf. Zeiller 1918, 84). Soon afterwards these relics were translated yet again, to Fulda in Germany (Nikolajevic 1979, 43-52). As early as the fifth century, Anastasia's cult spread from Constantinople to Rome, where it overshadowed the glory of the saint of the same name, daughter of Emperor Constantine. A belief arose that the third- or fourth-century church, named *titulus Anastasiae* after its founder, was dedicated in honour of Anastasia of Sirmium, and so her name entered the canon of Roman liturgy. It was also believed that her relics were kept in the church of St Saba in Rome (Nikolajevic 1979, 18).

A somewhat similar journey was made by the cult of four Pannonian martyrs known as the Four Crowned Ones (*Quattuor Coronati*). Their *passio*, with a foreword by Delehay, is in *AA. SS.* III, Nov. (See also Zeiller 1918, 88-103; Vulic 1934, 1-22, with a translation of the hagiography; Mijovic 1966; and for the development of their cult in Rome see Guyon 1975, 505-61.) According to this, four skilful stonecutters named Claudius, Castor, Sympronian, and Nikostratus were noticed by the emperor Diocletian during a journey through Pannonia. He ordered them to make porphyrian columns with capitals for a new temple. Working in the name of Christ, they were very successful. A man named Simplitius joined them and soon accepted Christianity and was baptised. All

five declined to make a statue of Asclepius for the emperor and were tortured after declaring their allegiance. As they were unwilling to renounce Christ, the emperor ordered them to be put into lead caskets and thrown into the river. Forty-two days afterwards, a Christian named Nikodim found the caskets and buried the bodies in his own house. From there the action moves to Rome, where Diocletian went from Sirmium. The situation is repeated. The Roman *Quattuor Coronati* refuse to make offerings to Asclepius and die in torture. Their bodies are buried five days later in the Via Labicana. As their names were not known, and because they were martyred two years later but on the same day as the Pannonian martyrs, they were buried under the names of the Pannonians, with the exception of Simplitius. The hagiographer thus made a compromise between Roman tradition and the Pannonian *passio*. It is known that the Quattuor Coronati were honoured in Rome as early as the fourth century as Pannonian martyrs, but by the end of the fifth they were considered Roman. A priest appointed to their cult is evidenced in the sixth century, and in the following century Pope Honorius built a church in their honour. It is also possible that refugees from Pannonia in the sixth century brought with them not only memory but also relics of these martyrs. Certainly relics were kept in the basilica on the Caelian Hill in Rome during the mid-ninth century (Guyon 1975, 508-12, 560).

Putting aside the difficulties in accepting the ‘Pannonian’ or ‘Roman’ version of the martyrdom, even the question from where in Pannonia they originated is itself problematic. It may be Sirmium, to which ‘the emperor returns’ as it is said in the text, while the quarry in which the artisans were working appears to have been that situated on Fruska Gora, in the text ‘Mons Pinguis’, a mountain in present-day Voivodina (Zeiller 1918; Mijovic 1966, no. 35). Critics of this hypothesis point out that there is no porphyry on Fruska Gora. Moreover, there are chronological difficulties. For example, Diocletian was not at Sirmium during the persecution. It looks likely that the story about Simplitius was a late addition, as pointed out in Vulic’s analysis of the *passio* (1934, 15-16). He also suggested (pp. 13-14) that the author of the *passio* would have known that the name of Fruska Gora was *Alma Mons*, so there was no reason to call it *Mons Pinguis* if he really was from these parts. Recently, the suggestion was offered that the stonecutters’ quarry should be looked for in the vicinity of Sopianae (Pecs, Hungary), where porphyry is found regularly (Symonyi 1960, 165-80). What is important is that the cult widened. In the Middle Ages, the group were patrons of stonecutters and sculptors, and images of them as patrons of the appropriate guilds could be found in Rome, Florence, Arezzo, and elsewhere. They were also patrons of freemasons, particularly in England, and their cult was especially widespread in Belgium (Mijovic 1966, 59, no. 26).

During Galerius’ times, yet another Christian martyr was renowned in Sirmium, a gardener called Sineros (Sinerotas). His *passio* is trustworthy and well preserved. As early as in the fourth century a chapel was dedicated in his honour in the north-west of Sremska Mitrovica with a cemetery around it. Both the martyrdom and cemetery were discovered during the nineteenth century (Ljubic 1888, 98ff). The identification of Sinerotas’ *martyrium* was based on important epigraphic evidence found there: *Ad beatum Syneroti martyre; ad domnum Synerotem... interrantem ad dexteram inter Fortunatanem et Disiderium* (*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, CIL, III 10232 and 10233). The second inscription may preserve a slightly distorted name of a martyr Fortunatus, cited in *MH* April 9, together with others, *Donati[?us]*, *Hilari[?us]*, *Concessi, Mari...* It is clear that

the memory of Sinerotas was cherished in Sirmium, but it is also probable that his cult was venerated in the West though it did not spread as far as Anastasia's. In France, in the Auvergne, St Sirenat is venerated and identified as Sinerot from Sirmium (for a Latin version of the French name, *Senerus*, and *Serenus*, cf Zeiller 1918, 88, n. 2).

A further group of seven martyrs from Sirmium was venerated in northern Italy. In Aquileia the cult of Donatus, Fortunatus, Venustus, Hermogenes, Romulus, and Silvanus is confirmed, although overshadowed by local martyrs (*AA. SS.*, Aug. iv, 1867, pp. 411-13). As cited by Bratoz (1987-8, 170-171), two Pannonian martyrs were commemorated only for two days and martyrs from Aquileia for fifteen to twenty days. The author also cited that the cult of the first-mentioned martyrs probably reached other towns too, Milan for example.

In contrast to the translations and doubtless accounts of more widespread cults, the commemoration of the Sirmium martyrs Irenaeus, Sinerotas, and others whose historicity, judging by the written evidence, seems quite probable, remained only in their own city. Further material about them is scarce, except for Irenaeus. What survives is very useful to historians, but of little interest to those who deal with hagiography as literary genre. As the population changed in the sixth and seventh centuries, the names of these Sirmium martyrs, though embedded in calendars and hagiographies, were slowly forgotten. In the plain of Pannonia, open to permanent destruction, persecutions, and plunder during the period of the great migrations, conditions did not favour the development of cults and oral legends into written hagiography.

The exempla from Singidunum include that of the deacon Ermilus, executed with his jailer and friend Stratonicus. The *passio* in the *Menologium* of Symeon Metaphrastes (PG cxiv, 553-66; see also Zeiller 1918, 106ff.), an expanded, tenth-century version of an older text, in which Singidunum is not mentioned, asserts that Ermilus was interrogated by the emperor Licinius himself, but this is not credible. An older text was published in *Analecta Bollandiana* [89 (1971), 10-20], and translated into Serbian by D. Todorovic (1998, 15-26). He dates it to the seventh or even the sixth century from the mention of Singidunum. According to the alleged imperial order, Ermilus was tortured and threatened with death if he would not make offerings to gods. Ermilus withstood the torture. When the emperor was informed that the jailer Stratonicus wept for Ermilus' pains, the emperor ordered him to be brought to him also. Stratonicus declared himself a Christian and a friend to Ermilus. He, too, refused to make offerings to the gods, and they were both thrown into the Danube. Their bodies emerged at the eighteenth mile, where pious people buried them.

Both martyrs are mentioned in *Prologue of Ochrid*, as well as in the Synaxarium of the Church of Constantinople, where they were celebrated on January 13. However, their cult was never very popular among Slavs – whereas in Constantinople hagiographers developed the story through the centuries and, in accordance with the genre, added details which make their use as historical source-material very difficult. For example, Ermilus goes to jail singing psalms, 'The Lord is my helper, I shall not be afraid...' (118:6-7), and 'Shepherd of Israel, harken...' (80:1-2), and both recite the gospel. A voice from heaven encourages them, saying: 'You ended your race, you kept your faith' (Epistle of Paul to Timothy, 4:7-8). The voice from heaven is heard twice more, by Licinius and by all present. An angel appears to the martyrs, encourages them, and exhorts them.

Even the basic details are treated with caution, though attempts have been made to date more precisely both this event and the persecution of Christians in Singidunum generally. It is clear from the text that it is not dealing with the major persecution during Diocletian's reign. On the other hand, Licinius could have pursued an independent religious policy between the death of Augustus Galerius (311) and his alliance with Constantine and acceptance of the latter's policy of religious tolerance. Since his attitude could have changed on the eve of his clash with Constantine, it is possible to allow a dating of this particular persecution to 315 (Mirkovic 1979, 21-27). The dating by Zeiller (1918, 105), between 307 and 311, is not convincing.

In the important city of Viminacium (present-day Kostolac), where the Roman Legion VII Claudia was stationed, no martyrdom material or legends are preserved. Nevertheless, a fourth-century bishop of the city, Amantius, is known from the *Acta* of the Council of Serdica in 343. He was probably succeeded by Ciriac (Zeiller 1918, 148-149, 598; about Christianity in Viminacium, see also Zotovic 1993, 339-48). Epigraphical monuments and finds, among them a christogram on the side of a tomb (Korac 1998, 33-66, with photograph), also testify to devotees of the new religion. (Epigraphic evidence is in Miroslava Mirković (ed.), *Inscriptions de la Mésie supérieure* 2 (Belgrade, University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philosophy, 1986), 216 [*Cristus Deus Dei filius*], 217, 218; 219 and 220 [christogram].)

An analogous case is that of Naissus (Niš), birthplace of Constantine, who renovated the city. Names of its bishops from the fourth to sixth centuries testify to a developed Christian community (Zotovic 1993, 158, 509). There are no texts or traditions of martyrs, though one source claimed that Naissus was among the first cities where miracles were brought about by relics – specifically those of St Victrix (Zeiller 1918, 108). Much later, in the twelfth century, it was noted at Jovan Kinam that Naissus possessed the relics of a St Procopius, whose cult was brought from the East but it is not known on what this claim was based, or which St Procopius is meant (Zeiller 1918, 108, n. 2; similarly, Delehaye 1933, 246). Very much venerated in the Middle Ages, this saint even became the eponym of the south Serbian town Prokuplje after relics of Procopius were brought here from Niš (Jirecek 1959, 486). Eusebius mentions him as a lector from Caesaria, but in the later development of the legend he became a soldier. Consequently he is honoured as a holy warrior and is represented as such (Delehaye 1955, 119-139). So this too is an example of inverse proportions in the development of hagiography and the trustworthiness of its data.

The story of the early Christian martyrs Laurus and Florus is linked with the same geographical area. They were said to have been put to death in Ulpiana (Lipljan) (cf. *AA. SS. Aug. III* [1737], pp. 520-2; *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, August 18; for Slavonic translation, see Mijovic 1964, 339; the hagiography was translated into Serbian by R. Popovic, *Bogoslovlje* 1–2, 1990, 99–107). *HM* does not mention them, though they are noted in Greek *menoia* and *synaxaria*. Earlier sources can not be reached (cf. Zeiller 1918, 103-4). In their hagiography, much is open to discussion, and some information is clearly incorrect. Thus the emperor Licinius is represented as the empress Elpidia's son (Zeiller 1918, 103-104). In fact it is not even certain when these martyrs died. In Laurentius' version from the thirteenth century, the teachers of Florus and Laurus were killed in the time of Hadrian (cf. Mijovic 1964, 341), who justly doubted this, if only because Byzantium is said to be the empire's capital. It was said that these two

builders and stonecutters, helped by their strong faith, twice healed injured people by prayer. They were commissioned to build a temple, but added a cross and dedicated it to Christ, and consequently, after torture, they were sent to the governor of Illyria. When they refused to renounce Christianity, they were buried alive in a well. Hagiography held that their relics were translated during Constantine's reign to his new capital, Constantinople. Mijovic (1964) did not consider it probable, since Ulpiana was the see of a bishop from the fourth century on. It is more likely that their execution happened somewhere between the sixth and the latter half of the seventh centuries. Fleeing from barbarians, clergy probably took with them martyrs' relics from Ulpiana (Mijovic 1964, 342). This evidence is likely to be correct since it is known that in Constantinople at that time many chapels were dedicated to martyrs (Dagron 1974, 388-409). The names of some saints (Irenaeus, Menas, Acacius) were mentioned by Theophanus and Leo Grammaticus, but martyrs from Ulpiana are not among them. It is reasonable to assume that the emperor built shrines for martyrs connected with the neighbourhood of his birth. How much they were venerated in the Middle Ages is evidenced by their images in the *Menologia* in Staro Nagoricino (Macedonia), monastery in the Patriarchy of Pec and in Gracanica (both in Kosovo), where they are represented in the frescos of the monastery church. Besides this, they are protectors of the guilds of stonecutters and stonemasons in some European cities, while in Russia they are patrons of agriculture and especially of horses (Mijovic 1964, 344-345).

Finally, an hypothesis should be mentioned about identifying Florus and Laurus with Castor and Pollux. It was discarded by Delehaye, pointing at the occasion that Florus and Laurus were known only in the Greek calendars but not together with Helen, who appears always with Constantine on May 11 (Delehaye 1955, 174; Zeiller 1918, 103, no.2; Mijovic 1902/3, 347). She was associated with the martyrs from Ulpiana only in a late compilation from the sixteenth century.

An important place in the history of early Christianity is given to bishop Niceta from Remesiana (present-day Bela Palanka). He brought Christianity to the Dacians, Alans, and Bessi, tribes on both sides of the Danube (today's Bulgaria and Romania). He was also the author of many valued and much-used theological texts in Latin. Published in Burn (1905, pp. 1-136), they include the books *Instructionis*, *De Spiritus Sancti potentia*, and *De lapsu virginis*. In a spacious foreword, Burn explored the life of Niceta, the question of the authorship of some of his works, the manuscript tradition, and so on (i-cxliii). Niceta's episcopacy at Remesiana at the end of the fourth and beginning of the fifth century is witnessed by two papal letters, one addressed to him personally (Letters of Pope Innocent, 21 from 409, and 22 from 414; cf Zeiller 1918, 549). He was also a friend of Paulinus of Nola, whom he visited in 398 and 402 and whose verses record Niceta's missionary work and his journeys to Epirus, Salonika, Stobi, and Skoplje (Carm. xvii, vv. 16-20: *Ibis Arctoos procul usque Dacos /ibis Epiro gemina videndus, et per Aegeos penetrabis aestus / Thessalonicen;* vv. 193-6: *Tu Philippaeos Macetum per agros, / tu Stobitanam gradieris urbem, / ibis et Scupos patriae propinquos / Dardanus hospes;* vv. 205-8: *nam simul terris animisque duri / et sua Bessi nive duriores / nunc oves facti duce te gregantur / pacis in aulam..* cf also Carm. xxvii, xxviii and epist. xix.). It is possible that Niceta was the author of the canticle *Te Deum Laudamus* (Burn 1905, 97-125; but an unsolved issue in the view of Zeiller 1918, 552ff). However, both in Byzantium and the Latin West Niceta was forgotten for a long time, which is why the *Te*

Deum was thought to have been written by a bishop of the same name in Aquileia or Rome (Zeiller 1918). Niceta is mentioned in *Zitiya Svyatih* ('Lives of the Saints') and in Russian tradition; it is even thought that he was a Slav (cf. *Prologue of Ochrid*, July 24: 'It seems that he was Slav, and as such he preached the Gospel in the territory of Niš and Pirot, as stated by Philaret, *Saints of the South Slavs*'). But the origin and development of local legend was also cut off during the Great Movement of Peoples – either that, or the legend, if it ever existed, was lost.

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THE CONTRIBUTION OF TOPONYMY TO AN HISTORICAL TOPOGRAPHY OF SAINTS' CULTS AMONG THE SERBS

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Abstract: In researching the cults of saints among the Serbs, especially on a deep chronological level, we confront a lack of documentary sources which may be partly overcome with the help of the indirect evidence provided by toponymy. The author's study of Serbian place-names based on Christian hagionyms or heortonyms has demonstrated how this discipline can identify religious dedications (*patrocinia*) which were forgotten or changed over the course of time.

The history of Christian cults among the Serbs is hard to write, mainly for two reasons, both connected with the tumultuous past of those parts of the Balkans where the Serbs live or lived since their arrival in the seventh century. One is the repeated breaks of continuity in the life of the Church and the other the lack of written sources, which I discuss in my bibliographic note at the end of this essay. Consequently any attempt at reconstructing sacral topography from Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages depends heavily on indirect evidence from folklore and place-names.

The autocephalous Serbian Church became independent of the Byzantine patriarch (at the time seated in Nicaea) in the early thirteenth century by the efforts of St Sava, who also promoted the Serbian variant of Church Slavonic as its liturgical and literary language. For the Serbs this activity also meant a turn from the Western Catholic Church to Eastern Orthodoxy, leading to a break with some of their earlier Christian traditions. More than 500 years earlier the Serbs, not yet Christians, settled in parts of the late Roman provinces of Dalmatia, Upper Moesia, South Pannonia, Dardania, the Mediterranean Dacia, and Praevalis, the southern part of Dalmatia, approximately modern Montenegro and Albania, where Christianity was already deep rooted. They met an ecclesiastical organisation dependent on Rome and on Latin as the liturgical language, and also local saints, especially martyrs, whose memory was cultivated by the great archiepiscopal centers such as Salona in Dalmatia and Sirmium in Pannonia. The evangelisation of the Serbs was, it seems, gradual and more or less peaceful (cf. Maksimović 1996). As among many other peoples, Christianity was propagated downwards from the top of society and mingled with the remnants of the older religions. As a result a Christian terminology arose, based on Balkan Latin, but permeated by number of Greek words and forms of saints' names and showing some semantic shifts due to the overlapping of Christian and non-Christian cults. Shared by Croats and Serbs, this terminology is better preserved among Roman Catholics than among Orthodox, because it was largely abandoned by the Serbian church in favour of Slavonic nomenclature. Nevertheless many relics of it still survive in Serbian folklore and place-names. For example, in the folk calendar the days of saints Martin and Vitus and of the archangel Michael still approximate to feast-days celebrating them in the Western Church. (Of course, as in the West, other saints are also venerated on these days in the official menology of the Serbian church: St Menas and St Stephen of Dečani, the

fourteenth-century Serbian king, on St Martin's day, *Mratinjdan*, November 12, the day following Martin's feast in the West; the prophet Amos on *Vidovdan*, St Vitus' day, June 28, thirteen days after his day in the West; and St Cyriacus the Recluse on the archangel Michael's day, *Miholjdan*, October 12, which comes thirteen days after the West's Michaelmas and four days before the feast celebrating his shrine on Mount Gargano, Italy.) The form of these feast names, *Mratinjdan*, *Vidovdan*, *Miholjdan*, implies their borrowing at a very early date. Similarly, in place-names some archaic types characteristic of the Catholic coast are to be found deep in the interior: thus *molstir* 'monastery', *koludri* 'monks', both Greek words mediated by Dalmatian, or saints' names with the prefix *sut-*, *suto-* or similar, from Latin *sanctus*, *sancta*. Such toponyms are characteristic of Adriatic coast (Jireček 1879, 20ff.; 1901–1904, 57f.; Putanec 1963; Šimunović 1986), but more recent research has brought to light a number of them dispersed across territory where Serbs settled (Loma 1987; 1990; 2001). They occur in inland Montenegro and in middle Bosnia, reaching east as far as the Lim and Ibar river valleys, and to the northeast perhaps even as far as the Iron Gates, for we find in the Danubian regions of today's Serbia a few probable instances: *Sumrakovac* < *Sanctus Marcus*, *Sumorina* < *Sancta Marina*. In the same region another trace of an early western influence is the place name *Biskuplje*, attested in the fourteenth century. While Old Serbian *jepiskop*, *piskup* 'bishop' is borrowed directly from Greek *epískopos*, the form *biskup* implies Latin mediation (cf. *JF* 49, 1993, 209).

In the distribution of particular saint's names, interesting interrelations between the West and the East are to be observed. For example, Orthodox Serbs usually designate the Virgin Mary by the Slavonic compound *Bogorodica* translating Greek *Theótokos* 'Mother of God', while the designations *Gospođa*, *Gospa* 'Lady', *D(j)evica* 'Virgin', *Marija* 'Mary' are more common among Roman Catholics and others. Nevertheless, *Děviča* is in Old Serbian the normal adjectif to designate an object of the Virgin's cult, and *Gospođa* 'the Lady' is often related to her both in toponymy and in the folk calendar, where the Assumption feast is called *Velika Gospođa* (or *Gospojina*) 'Great Lady' and that of Virgin Mary's birth *Mala* ('Small'). As for *Marija*, a very popular personal name among Serbs, there are toponymic instances which testify that it was in use throughout the lands where Serbs settled. It was used also to designate the Virgin, not only in petrified conjunctions going back to Latin *Sancta Maria* such as *Sutomore*, *Sukmar* in Montenegro, *Sutmar*, *Stomorina* in Bosnia, but also in the living language, at least during the first decades of the Nemanja dynasty. In close proximity to two churches erected by Stephan Nemanja in honour of the Virgin Mary in the late twelfth century are found at Bistrica on the Lim, *Marijino Brdo* 'Mary's hill', and at the confluence of the Kosanica and Toplica, *Marina Kula* 'Mary's tower' (cf. Loma 1990, 6f.). At the same time, some saint's names show not only in Orthodox but also in Catholic usage a phonetic shape based on the Middle Greek pronunciation: so *Ilija* 'Elijah', *Mihovil* 'Michael', *Varvara* 'Barbara', *Vlaho* 'Blaise', even *Isus* 'Jesus'. On the coast there are hybrid toponyms such as *Sut-Ilija* 'Saint Elijah', *Sut-Vara* 'Saint Barbara', where Latin *sanctus* is joined with these Middle Greek forms of the hagionyms, adopted in Dalmatia during Byzantine rule. Deep inland, in today southwestern Serbia, the place name *Sutelica* seems to preserve the genuine Latin pronunciation *Sanctus Elias* (Loma 1987). The shared name of two ancient monasteries dedicated in honour of the archangel Michael, in western Serbia and in Vojvodina respectively, (*Sveti*) *Kovilj*, from **Μῆkovilj*, shows Middle Greek /i/ in place

of the eta, but on the other hand Latin *ch* /k/ for Greek □, while elsewhere Middle Greek /ch/ absolutely prevails, even in Dalmatian toponyms such as *Sutmiho* (cf. Loma 1990, 7).

Normally, these names with *sut-* bear witness to very old cults, but here too some caution is recommended. A recent paper by the present writer deals with the place-name *Sutivan*, occurring twice on the Adriatic islands and once in the Lim valley, in the very heart of the medieval Serbian kingdom. Both insular *Sutivans* are named after St John (*Sanctus Ioannes*), and the same has been held true for the mainland example until recently when, in a district about 50 miles upstream, on the upper Lim, a homonymous word *sutivan* was attested, meaning ‘a steep, rugged area’. Similarly, in the neighbouring regions of Montenegro there is the term *su(n)tulija*, designating an abyss, a precipice, which is supposed to go back to Greek *synteleia*, although the same form occurs otherwise as a variant of *Sutilija* ‘Saint Elijah’. The following development appears to have taken place.

Firstly, Greek *synteleia* ‘end, termination’ received, in a Christian eschatological context (e.g. Matthew 13:49), the sense of ‘the end of the world’, which led further to the meaning ‘cataclysm’, attested in Arumanian. Then the word entered South-Slavic, where it underwent the semantic shift to ‘precipice’: Macedonian *sindilija*, Serbian *su(n)tulija*. The latter form indicates an earlier borrowing than the former and it may have been mediated by Dalmatian. The change of sense was probably due to the influence of Slavic *propast* ‘downfall, catastrophe; abyss, precipice’, cf. Serbian dialect *sodom* ‘precipice’ going back to the biblical place name *Sodom* (Genesis 18-19). Next, the word *su(n)tulija* ‘precipice’ came to be associated with *Sutulija/Sutilija* ‘Saint Elijah’ by the resemblance of sound, and also the similarity between the objects denoted, for in the Balkans Elijah shared aspects of the thunderer deities Roman Jupiter and Slavic Perun in being the eponym of steep peaks. Finally, this appellative being once reinterpreted as ‘Saint Elijah’, it was in a part of its area transformed into the name of another saint, St John: *Sutivan*, presumably because of the ancient custom of rolling burning wheels down hillsides on John’s Nativity feast, which coincides with the summer solstice. The same semantic association may explain Serbo-Croat *sunovrat* ‘precipitation; precipice’ against Czech *slunovrat*, Russian *solnovorot* ‘solstice’. Be that as it may, the question whether *Sutivan* on the Lim is named after a St John’s church or after a steep slope remains open. Only archaeological and dialectological research can take it forward (Loma 2001).

If even in such cases, where the hagionymic provenance is obvious, a direct connection to the saint’s cult can not be always established with certainty. The uncertainty is much greater where the adjective ‘saint’ is omitted. This tends to be the rule with Slavic designations, because the place-names of underived type with an explicit indication of sanctity such as *Sveti Stefan* ‘Saint Stephen’, *Sveti Randel* ‘Saint Archangel’, are extremely rare, and the possessive adjectives such as *Stepanja*, *Jovanja*, *Savina*, *Arandelov-ac* largely prevail. In these cases we face the dilemma as to whether the eponym of the (sacred) place was the saint or a person named after them. The situation ought to be clear where the dedication coincides, for example if the churches in *Jovanja*, *Savina* or *Arandelovac* are dedicated respectively in honour of St John, St Sava and the Archangel Michael, but it is ambiguous if *Stepanja* ‘Stephen’s church’ has for its patron St Nicholas, say, which is the case with a small medieval church between Belgrade and Valjevo in north-west Serbia, only mentioned in written sources towards the end of the

eighteenth century. Either it was originally dedicated in honour of Stephen and later changed its patronal saint, or it was named in honour of St Nicholas by some man named *Stepan* 'Stephen'. If a place-name has no direct reference to a sacral object, the choice between alternative explanations is still harder to make. A village *Ivanja* may have been named after a feudal lord named *Ivan* 'John', and only in the case of an *Ivanja* lying near an ancient monastery dedicated in honour of St John is the hagionymic provenance more probable (Loma 1987, 13; 1990, 7).

Anyway it is true that in the course of time various substitutions of saints' cults took place, even at a relatively late date. It is noteworthy, also, that in districts settled by Serbs, continuity of old cult places was as a rule much more durable than the individual cults on them (cf. Šuput 1997). We can mention here two instances from western Serbia, of St John the Baptist, Serbian Jovan Krstitelj, substituted for a local Jovan Stjenički, killed by the Turks in 1462 according to a contemporaneous inscription, or of St Spiridon of Cyprus replacing as church patron a local hermit Spiridon, whose memory is conserved by folk tradition. (More in my article in *Kolubara, veliki narodni kalendar za prostu* 2001, Valjevo 2001, pp. 122–133.)

Relevant to the topic above all are the cases of some very old cults submerged and recognisable only by means of a toponymic conjecture. Sirmium, on the left bank of the Sava west of Belgrade (modern-day Sremska Mitrovica), was a capital of the late Roman Empire as well as the theatre of martyrdoms, especially under the emperor Diocletian (cf. now Milin 2001 and this volume). It became the seat of an archdiocese that survived the migration of peoples so that some local cults could be transmitted to the Slavic newcomers. The city owes its new name to the continued cult of St Demetrius: Latin *Civitas Sancti Demetrii*, Hungarian *Száva-Szent-Demeter*, Serbian *Dmitrovci*, and so today Sremska Mitrovica. The toponymy of the region preserves the memory of other local martyrs too: Irenaeus and Serenus, both allegedly martyred at Sirmium, as well as Montanus from Singidunum, modern Belgrade. Muntalj, the name of a former monastery in Srem (Syrmia, the district of Sirmium), can be derived from the name of a martyr from Singidunum, Montanus, and the name of a locality in north-west Serbia near Sirmium, Širin, seems to preserve the memory of the local martyr Serenus (Loma, JF XLIX, 1993, 211). The most interesting case is perhaps that of Arilje in western Serbia. The bishopric of Arilje is older than St Sava's reorganisation of the Serbian Church and the present cathedral, dating from the late thirteenth century, is built on foundations traced back by archeology to the late Roman period. The church's patron since its last restoration is St Achilleius, a bishop from Larissa in Thessaly; nevertheless, in some medieval liturgical texts he is celebrated as a martyr, against historical truth. It has now been demonstrated that, in Nemanjić Serbia, the cult of Achilleius of Larissa overlapped, because of the resemblance of names, with the memory of Archilius, a supposed martyr of Sirmium, in whose honour the church at Arilje must have been originally dedicated. This is supported by the town's name, which goes back to Arhilije and not to Ahilije (Subotin-Golubović 1993).

Let us turn to the traces of an early Greek influence in this sphere, which are concentrated, as to be expected, in the south-east. A charter issued by the Byzantine emperor Basil II in 1019 notes, in somewhat corrupted form, two place-names in what is today central Serbia, which both bear testimonies of very old cults. One is *Divísiskos*, to read *Divonysiskos*, today's Djunis, where a ruined early medieval church is known as

Bogorodica Đunisija, ‘Mother of God Dionysius’. The original patron was obviously St Dionysius the Great. The other place-name is *Istaaglanga*. It may be corrected to *Stratlat*’ or *Silatlat*’, the later fortress of Stalać, which is connected in folklore and epics with the historically unknown personage Todor od Stalaća, ‘Theodor of Stalać’. This was in all probability the martyr saint Theodor Stratilates, ‘the General’, in whose honour the fortress and its church were dedicated. We may suppose that this dedication took place on the occasion of a conquest, judging by analogy with an event in 931, when the emperor John Tzimiskius, having conquered from the Russians the fortress Durostorum on the Danube, gave it the new name *Theodōroúpolis* in honour of the same saint, patron of Byzantine army (Loma 1990, 3f., 10, 14, 16). A further instance of an early spreading of Byzantine cults in Serbia is the name of the cathedral church of Prizren, *Bogorodica Leviška* ‘Our Lady of *Leviša*’, going back to Greek *Eleûsa* ‘The Merciful One’, a name of the Virgin Mary. It is attested on a thirteenth-century painting in the cathedral, but the name *Leviša*, for philological reasons, must be much older, contemporary with the earlier church on the same spot built in the ninth century or before. This is striking enough, for in Greece itself the epithet *Eleûsa* is not attested until the eleventh century (Loma 1989).

Finally, the interdisciplinary study of Serbian place-names may help advance the knowledge of ancient diocesan boundaries. For a very long time, it has been known that north-western part of Serbia must have fallen under the jurisdiction of the archbishops of Sirmium, because in the Middle Ages it was given the same name Srem, Latin *Sirmia ulterior* for the region of Srem, and *Sirmia citerior*, for those parts between the lower Sava and the Danube. Now in view of the cult of the Sirmian martyr Archilius at Arilje, we are permitted to move this boundary more to the south, over the mountain range separating the basins of the Sava and the western Morava. Moreover, since St Achilius, as substitute for Archilius, counts among the patron saints of Serbs in north-eastern Bosnia, it seems probable that this region belonged to the Sirmian diocese also. Furthermore, the Archangel Michael being the patron saint of the eleventh-century Adriatic state of Doclea (around Bar on the Macedonian coast south of Kotor), some early instances of his cult may be taken as indices to the sphere of influence of the Doclean archbishopric at Bar.

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of churches in the Old Serbian area, the classical work remains Petković 1950, but is now to be supplemented by Zirojević 1984, containing a lot of valuable new data gathered from Turkish sources. A survey of the dioceses of the Serbian church in the Middle Ages is given by Janković 1985. Two studies by Jireček, 1879 and 1901–1904, retain basic importance for research into the Christian topography of the Balkans. Additional material is provided by Skok Putanec, Šimunović, and others; for the Old Serbian area cf. especially Loma 1990.

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THE CULT OF MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL IN MEDIEVAL SERBIA

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Abstract: The division of the angel host by their ranks was proposed by Pseudo-Dionysius in his *De coelesti hierarchia*. All his texts were translated into the Serbian-Slavonic language by Isaija, a member of the monastery of St Pantheleimon on Mount Athos. Besides the translation of Byzantine literature, there was also the *Sermon on Michael and Gabriel* by a Slavonic author, Kliment of Ohrid. Kliment particularly stressed the warrior-like characteristics of the archangels, and their constant care for the well-being of humankind. Such works encouraged the veneration of the greatest of the archangels, Michael and Gabriel, in medieval Serbia, including the cycle of their yearly feasts.

The Eastern churches venerate angels on several times in the year. The Archangel Michael's feasts are on September 6 (19, New Style calendar), marking his supposed miracle at Chonae, when it was said that he split a rock to avert the destruction of a hermit's cell by flood-waters caused by ill-wishers, and on November 8 (21), his Synaxis (assembly for liturgical commemoration). The Archangel Gabriel is venerated on March 26 (April 8), the day following the feast of his Annunciation to Mary that she was to give birth to God's Son, and on July 13 (26), his Synaxis instituted in the ninth century, perhaps to celebrate the dedication of a church at Constantinople. Originally, the feast was observed on October 16 (Mateos 1962). Michael's Synaxis celebrates him as the Chief of the Heavenly Hosts, and is shared with the Other Heavenly Bodiless Powers: Archangels Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Selaphiel, Jehudiel, Barachiel, and Jeremiel. It was established at the beginning of the fourth century at the Council of Laodicea, which met several years before the First Ecumenical Council. The 35th Canon of the Council of Laodicea condemned and denounced as heretical the worship of angels as gods and rulers of the world, but affirmed their proper veneration. November was chosen because it is the ninth month after March (with which the year began in ancient times) and there were held to be nine ranks of angels. The eighth day of the month was chosen because the Day of the Last Judgment is called the Eighth Day by the Church Fathers. After the end of this age (characterised by its seven days of Creation), they asserted, will come the Eighth Day, and then 'the Son of Man shall come in His Glory and all the holy Angels with Him' (Matthew 25:31).

The Greek word *αγγελος* is the translation of the Hebrew word *mallach* used in the Old Testament to designate a messenger of God and executive agent of God's will. Angels make their appearance in such a capacity in the Book of Genesis (16:7-11, when an angel appears to Hagar in the desert), as well as in Exodus (14:19), Numbers (20:16), and so on.

Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite in his *De coelesti hierarchia* (PG 3, IX, 258-62) proposed that angels were classifiable into nine ranks: (1) six-winged seraphim, many-eyed cherubim, and Thrones; (2) Dominions, Virtues, and Powers; (3) Principles,

archangels, and angels (Mirkovic 1961, 77). Pseudo-Dionysius' works were translated into Serbian Slavonic by the elder Isaija, hegumen or abbot of the monastery of St Panteleimon on Mount Athos and a confidant of the Serbian Emperor Dušan, only the second chapter has been published (Ms 46 from Gilferding's collection; cf. Trifunovic 1982, 153-69. It must have encouraged the further development of Michael's cult among the Serbs.

Angels are rarely called by name in the Bible. Michael's name occurs three times in Daniel (10:13, 21; 12:1) and twice in the New Testament (Jude 9; and Revelation 12:7). As it follows from Daniel 12:1, Michael is the guardian of the Jewish people: *And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered.* Discussing the Eastern churches' veneration of the bodiless powers, Lazar Mirković emphasised that angels were thought of as protecting churches, kingdoms, cities and peoples by praying for them before the throne of God and by inspiring rulers to act for the benefit of their people (Mirkovic 1961, 77). Among texts which informed the devout medieval reader about biblical events was the *Paleia*, a chronological account of Old Testament history probably originating in late ninth-century Byzantium and translated into Slavonic by the end of the twelfth century among the southern Slavs. (The oldest known manuscript is from the second quarter of the fifteenth century, kept in the Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Belgrade. Cf. 'Палеја', in *Лексикон српског средњег века*, 487.) Its chapter 'On the war of Jericho' is far richer in detail about Michael than the corresponding passage in the Book of Joshua (Djuric 1983, 7). The archangel is portrayed with sword and spear, as a prince, a military leader (*archistrategos*), the commander of innumerable angels fighting against the forces of evil (cf. Revelation 12:7). In addition to being the leader of the heavenly hosts fighting against evil, Michael was also seen, by extension, as a helper of worldly rulers in their righteous battles. Thus one of God's messengers helped the Jews led by Joshua to take the city of Jericho (Joshua 5:13-15). It should be borne in mind that that text makes no mention of Michael's name. It is only in Origen's interpretation of the Book of Joshua that the celestial being that appeared before Joshua is identified with the archangel Michael (Origenes, *Selecta in Jesum Nave*, PG 12, 854).

Liturgical services honouring the archangel, especially the one in November, speak of his wider concerns. The portion sung at Matins includes two canons with abundant praise of the archangel's concern for mankind, emphasising that he is God's messenger and executive agent of the divine will. Thus Michael is able to rescue his supplicants from grave illness and to free them from the fetters of temptation (*stihira* or hymn in the eighth tone at Vespers: 'O archistrategos, deliver us from all our needs and sufferings and sicknesses and fierce sins'); he clears souls of haze and bathes the devout in the inexhaustible and never-dying light; and the ninth ode of the canon depicts Michael as patron of the wandering and the suffering (*Bratkov minej*, 'The Menaion of Bratko', Belgrade, National Library of Serbia MS 647; Belgrade, SANU MSS 58 and 361; Belgrade University Library MS 13; Patriarchy of Peć, MS 53. Printed menaia have not been used because they contain the uniform versions of both services of a somewhat later date.)

The Christian cult of the archangels originated in western Asia Minor and spread to Constantinople and the Aegean islands. For an exhaustive insight into these origins and the development of Michael's cult, with bibliographies, see Gabelic 1991, 20-30ff, and (with particular attention to Michael's association with healing waters and baptism) Jones 2007a. At first a mixture of Judaic and early Christian beliefs with local religious elements, the cult also evolved in Gnostic ideas about subordinating Christ to the angels. In response, a provincial council of Laodicea was called and its 35th Canon condemned these ideas as heretical. By the third century, the Christian cult of Michael, as also those of other angels, had gained ground particularly in Phrygia, where temples in his honour were erected by springs, or by water generally. These included Michael's principal shrine at the place called Chonae (Colossae).

St Naum (died *circa* 910), a disciple of Cyril and Methodius, dedicated in his honour a monastery he founded on the shore of Lake Ohrid, known today as St Naum's (Markovic 1920, 7). But it is not the only one dedicated in honour of Michael in the Ohrid area, for example the last in a series of small cave churches on a crag above the lake from Ohrid towards Struga. As the older layer of its frescoes dates from the 1260s or 70s, the church itself must be at least a little older (Subotic 1964, 299-328). Churches and monasteries dedicated in honour of Michael can be found further north as well, the earliest known monastery of the archangel being the cave lavra in the extramural settlement below the Fortress of Ras (D. Popović this volume; M. Popovic 1999, 278-88; D. Popovic & M. Popovic 1998, 15-61). It was built some 50m above the Sebečevska river; all round it, on the rocky hillside below the settlement's eastern and southern boundaries, was a complex of ascetic cells. The surviving fragments of its wall-painting correspond in style to the painting of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. In the late twelfth century the monastery had a scriptorium, where *The Gospels of Vukan* was copied. According to a note inscribed by one of the copyists, elder Simeon, the copy was made about 1202/3 under the rule of Nemanja's son Vukan (Marjanovic-Dusanic 1992-1993, 201-10). During his short reign at Skopje in the late twelfth century, Nemanja made donations to the city's old monastery of St Michael the Archistrategos.

After it became autocephalous in 1219, the Serbian Church carried out a territorial reorganisation. The newly-founded bishopric of Zeta had its see at the monastery of Michael the Archangel at Prevlaka (an area also known as Luštica or Ilovica) on a tiny island in the Gulf of Kotor. Originally, a Catholic monastery stood in its place, in the surviving Latin sources referred to as '*insula que S. Gabrielis dicitur*', and from 1166 dates a mention of an abbot of the monastery of *S. Michaelis Catarensis* (Markovic 1920, 73). St Michael's in Prevlaka also had a scriptorium. By order of Neofit, Bishop of Zeta, the *Ilovička krmčija*, Ilovica nomocanon or body of ecclesiastical law, was copied there in 1262. It was there that the same Neofit put the monk's habit on Jevstatije (Eustace), subsequently Bishop of Zeta and Archbishop of Serbia as Jevstatije I (1279-86).

King Milutin had a Serbian monastery dedicated in honour of Michael erected in Jerusalem (Nedomacki 1980, 25-70). The complex was completed in 1313 or 1315 and included a hospital. Milutin's original charter has not survived, but the information can be found in somewhat later sources (cf. Stojanovic 1932, 32, Karlovački rodoslov, sixteenth century; 75, 77, Cetinjski rodoslov, end of sixteenth century; 74, Koporinski rodoslov, sixteenth century). Archbishop Danilo II, a loyal associate of Milutin, had a church of St Michael built at Jelašnica, present-day Jelakce near Leposavić (northern

Kosovo) complete with court and palaces (cf. Ivanovic 1987, 453). At Gornja Nerodimlja near Uroševac there was a fourteenth-century monastery of St Michael; it was in its churchyard that King Milutin died in 1321 (Ivanovic 1987, 423-424). Another St Michael's monastery was in the village of Binač south of Vitina; assumptions that it was erected in place of a Byzantine bishopric from the time of the Emperor Basil II have not been supported by archaeological evidence (Ivanovic 1987, 399). Remains of ruined churches dedicated in honour of Michael are also sited in the villages of Lokvice (near Prizren, fourteenth century), Ljevoša near Peć (Ivanovic 1987, 473, 476), and Mušutište near Suva Reka.

King Milutin's grandson, Emperor Dušan, built a monumental establishment in honour of the Holy Archangels near Prizren, announcing his intention in the charter he issued to the Monastery of St Peter of Koriša in 1343. A document from the Venetian Archives dating from 1340 informs us that King Dušan took gravely ill that year. As his physicians were unable to help, Dušan vowed to build a church of the Archangels in Jerusalem should he recover. He later changed his mind, promising his sepulchral church to them while making generous donations to the Jerusalem monastery. The edition of the Charter is J. Šafarik: 'Хрисовуља цара Стефана Душана којом основа манастир Светих Арханђела Михаила и Гаврила у Призрену г. 1348', *Гласник ДСС XV* (1862). its translation by D. Bogdanović in *Задужбине Косова*, 345-6. This gesture of Dušan's lays emphasis on Michael's healing powers, as may be seen clearly from the surviving part of the preamble to the Charter to the Holy Archangels, where we read the words of gratitude for the miraculous healing: 'What could I give you, O my Lord and lover of mankind, for all that you gave me? for you raised me up when I fell and revived me when I died?' Speaking about the dedication of this imperial foundation, it may be interesting to draw attention to a paper that at first sight belongs to the domain of art history, dealing with the sculptural decoration of the main church. Proceeding from the surviving fragments, the author attempts a reconstruction of the contents of the lunette above the portal between the narthex and the nave. From her reconstruction it follows that, rather than offering a model of the church to the patron (as was usual for *ktetors'* compositions), the sovereign, on bended knees, is stretching out his empty hands, which may be interpreted as an offering of faith and hope – instead of giving, the *ktetor* feels the need to be given. 'In that sense, the empty hands embody a particular form of illuminated piety – it is a void tending to be filled with God's grace.' For more details on the subject, with earlier bibliography, see Danica Popovic 1994, p. 34.

A little digression will be made here in order to emphasise the necessity to examine the influence of liturgical literature on preambles to charters. This unquestionable but as yet unexamined relationship may be illustrated by this example – the preamble to Dušan's charter contains the following description of an archangel: 'Bright is your fiery face, and miraculous (your) kindness.' The second stihira at Vespers of the Service of September 6 ('On the Lord I call') (*Bratkov minej*) reads literally: 'Your face is fiery and your kindness beautiful, O Michael, leader of angels.' Doubtless the quotation from the preamble is a paraphrase of the Service of the Archangel. In this particular case all the four services paying homage to the archangels ought to be taken into consideration. Another interesting detail should not be overlooked either – both in the September and November services there figures another archangel, Gabriel. His perceived role in the life of man is equally important, announcing the forthcoming birth of the Saviour. Also, a

careful reading of both services for Gabriel – regardless of his principal function as God’s messenger and bearer of the good news announcing redemption through the forthcoming birth of the Incarnate son of God – reveals the presence of the captain of the heavenly armies. It follows that the two principal archangels are inseparably connected, each representing a different manifestation of the divine will. The interrelationship of the services for Michael and Gabriel call for careful examination.

For the building of his major endowment Dušan chose a site in the gorge of the Bistrica river about three kilometres upstream from Prizren. Previously it had been occupied by an old, probably early Christian, church dedicated in honour of Michael. Under the foundations of Dušan’s church an older sacral building has been archaeologically confirmed (Grujić 1928, 239-273; Nenadović 1966). Along the way from Prizren to the Holy Archangels there are a number of cave hermitages (D. Popović 1997, 129-54). In the mid-fourteenth century several churches dedicated in honour of St Michael were built or renovated. Despot Jovan Oliver had a new church built at the Monastery of Lesnovo, itself dedicated in the archangel’s honour and founded by Gavriilo (Gabriel), an ascetic of the eleventh or twelfth century, in place of an old, thirteenth- or fourteenth-century one; Protosebast Hrelja built a church at Štip (about 1332) and used it to endow Hilandar; a local lord, Radenko, built a church at Veles (Petković 1950, 9, 169-73; Gabelić 1998).

Michael was the protector of Byzantine emperors. His image became markedly warrior-like in the course of the seventh and eighth centuries, when the political situation gave rise to the militarisation of the state. Similar reasons may have strengthened Michael’s cult in medieval Serbia at the time of Milutin, whose conquests brought a rapid territorial expansion of his state. The same trend continued under Dušan’s rule. The manuscripts from Milutin’s times, when the Serbian Church carried out a liturgical reform, clearly show an increased interest in liturgical and edifying texts associated with the archangel’s cult.

It is not the purpose of this paper to look into the reception of the liturgical texts associated with this cult – that requires a separate discussion – but some major phenomena need to be noted. The oldest known Serbian menaion (mid-thirteenth century) – No 361 in the Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SANU) – contains a November service to Michael the Archistrategos; very archaic in structure, it has a single kanon for Vespers. Quite simple in structure, the service in SANU Ms 58 (late thirteenth or early fourteenth century) is also of the older, pre-Jerusalem type and close to the tradition of the veneration of the Virgin Evergetide (‘Benefactress’). The readings at Vespers include three parimias or proverbs – two from Ezekiel (1:3-20; 1:21-22) and one from Revelation (12:7-12) (SANU MSS contain the same three parimias as the *Parimejnik* of Novgorod of 1271. Cf. *Паримејник* 2000. At Agripnia a canon in the fourth tone is sung to Michael, and at Matins another canon in the second tone. From the first half of the fourteenth century dates also a section of the *Menaion of Bratko* containing both (September and November) services to Michael. Although somewhat longer than those from the two above-mentioned manuscripts, both services also belong to the pre-Jerusalem tradition. Services with similar contents and structure can be found in other, younger manuscripts as well. Neither the textual nor structural issues of the individual versions of these services have been dealt with in this paper; the purpose is only to point to some specificities of the textual aspect of the cult.

It should be emphasised that the study of the reception and influence of individual cults requires that all relevant liturgical texts be taken into consideration, *services* in particular because they constitute an important segment of any cult. The liturgical poetry associated with the cults of saints sometimes gives clues as to how to solve a quandary. One example is illustrative – a fresco depicting the mounted archangel Michael at Lesnovo (Gabelic 1977, 55-58). Its direct textual source is the Vespers canon to the Archangel from the service of November 8. The first troparion of the fourth ode of the canon reads: ‘O lover of mankind, you mounted your angels on horses and took the reins yourself, and your ride means the salvation for those who praise you faithfully: praise be to your power, O Lord’. (Translated from the text in Peć MS 53, a menaion from the last quarter of the fourteenth century).

Apart from full services of the menaion type, Serbian manuscripts of the fourteenth century, and later, include a series of other texts, hymnographic and in prose, that are not of primary importance for the observance of the cult. The library of the Serbian monastery of Hilandar on Mt Athos keeps several copies of an *akathist* or devotional hymn to the archangel Michael (Hilander MSS 621 and 743); a common *akathist* to Michael and Gabriel (MSS 96, 353, 356, 614); and a *paraklesion* (prayer) to the bodiless powers (MS 378). There is also a *eulogy* (MS 473), while in addition to prologues and menaions, the story of the miracle at Chonae also occurs in MS 482. Isidor, Patriarch of Constantinople (1347–1350), wrote a canon to the Archangel Michael, which is not part of the service (Hilander MS 631). Since this patriarch is not known as a literary writer, this may be the first information suggesting such an occupation of his (Bogdanovic 1978). Yet another poetical piece from the corpus of Serbian manuscripts is attributed to him – *akathist* to Michael and Gabriel (in the Akathiston of Orahovica). The Psalter of Kostajnica includes a canon of prayer to the Trinity, Michael the Archangel, St Nicholas and the Holy Virgin, while the Psalter of Gomirje contains a *paraklesion* to Sts Michael and Gabriel, archangels. (All the manuscripts mentioned here are kept at the Historical Museum of Croatia in Zagreb. Cf. Mosin.)

In addition to texts taken, and translated, from Byzantine literature, a Slav contributed to the consolidation of Michael’s cult among his co-nationals when Clement of Ohrid wrote a eulogy to Michael and Gabriel, testifying to the high level of his rhetorical skills and to his ability to mark out Michael’s powers as healer and warrior. This eulogy was highly popular among Orthodox Slavs, as evidenced by its 156 surviving copies made over a long span from the fourteenth to eighteenth centuries (Климент Охридски, *Събрани съчинения* 1, София 1970, 238-86. The second in this list of manuscripts is a mid-fourteenth-century Serbian prologue, Sophia, National Library MS 1039). While laying emphasis on the qualities of the archangels and angels as warriors, and on their steadfast concern for the well-being of mankind, Clement also praises his powers of healing.

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THE EREMITISM OF ST SAVA OF SERBIA

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Abstract: The description of St Sava of Serbia as a hermit can be interpreted literally or as a categorisation which depends on proposed and more or less severe criteria. In any case Sava's eremitic identity was never constant. The image of the saint as hermit and citizen of the desert was mainly the accomplishment of his hagiographers Domentijan and Theodosije, and especially the latter, a monk of Hilandar, the Serbian monastery on Mount Athos. It gave Sava's cult a new and strong accent. It took the image of the sacred representative of the Nemanjic dynasty, head of the Church, educator and miracle-maker, and brought it closer to the highest ideals of the epoch. It was precisely at that time that the 'congregation of Serbian Saints' was being constituted and the very best works of the ascetic genre in the Serbian language were being created – the *Life* and liturgy of St Petar of Korisa. So St Sava's eremitism was a learned and inspired creation of the Serbian monastic elite, most active at Hilandar at the end of the thirteenth and at the beginning of the fourteenth century.

The concept of 'desert' is important in medieval civilisation generally and religious mentality in particular. In the literal sense, the desert is a wild and inaccessible, usually rocky and often mountainous area, one which in the Near East offered the earliest Christian monks ideal conditions for seclusion, withdrawal from the world. Consequently the idea of the desert came to stand for the highest form of monastic life, Christian spirituality and sanctity. It was based on the rejection of materiality and the urge to gain the likeness of God and perfection of life in Him by imitating biblical patterns, especially that of Christ (Guilaumont 1975; J. A. T[homson], A. C[utler] 1991). Though dangerous and challenging, inhabited by wild beasts and imagined demons, the desert could represent a monastic paradise, not only because of its natural beauty, but also as a 'chosen', sacral space in which one could live in the vicinity of God. The concept of the Holy Mountain was very similar, and attracted monks for the same reasons (Talbot 2001, 263-25, with previous bibliography).

These two related topics are the subject of an extensive literature. Two good introductory works are Burton-Christie 1993 and Goehring 1999 (n.b. also Vööbus 1960, Festugière 1961, Chitty 1966, Peña *et al* 1980, Flusin 1983, Maraval 1985, Regnault 1990, Hirschfeld 1992, Patrich 1995, Morris 1995, esp. 31-64, and 1996). The absence of a Serbian contribution is being addressed by the present writer with a study "*Pustinje" i "svete gore" srednjovekovne Srbije - pisani izvori, prostorni oblici, graditeljaska resenja* [Deserts and Holy Mountains of Medieval Serbia - Written Sources, Spatial Patterns, Architectural Designs, Zbornik radova vizantoloskog institute 44/1(2007)]. A small number of hermits have a special place among the Serbian saints of the Middle Ages (Markovic 1920, Pavlovic 1965, Popovic 1999, 605). Among them is one of the greatest, St Sava of Serbia, who exerted a great influence on the eremitic life.

The end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth century were turning points in the process of creating an independent state of Serbia under the Nemanjić dynasty. Independence in 1217 and autonomy for the Serbian church two years later were followed by a series of actions aimed at the ideological reform of society and adjustment to the standards of the time. This process was described at the time as the creation of ‘the perfect nation’. It involved the assimilation of certain aspects of civilisation from elsewhere in Europe, especially Byzantium and including theology, liturgy, canon law, ideology, and art (Cirković 1981, 251-408; cf. also Cirković 1997, 53-63; Marjanović-Dušanić 1997). St Sava, born Rastko Nemanjić, youngest son of the founder of the dynasty and brother of the first king, Stefan, contributed to these reforms (Cirković 1998). He also had a crucial influence on the organisation of monastic life, having experienced Eastern monastic practice during his early youth on Mount Athos, and later in the deserts of Palestine and Egypt. In the long tradition of Christian monasticism, a special place was given to a mixed, flexible style of living which runs parallel to both the mainstream cenobitic organisation and the solitary lavriotic and anchoritic way of life (Papachryssanthou 1973, 158-180; Spidlik, Tenace, and Cemus 1999, esp. 231-59, *Les formes de la vie monastique*; Flusin 1993). There was already an older, local tradition in the Balkans, much influenced by the illustrious desert-dwellers in the tenth and eleventh centuries, such as St John of Rila, St Prohor of Pčinja, St Joachim of Osogovo and St Gabriel of Lesnovo (Pavlović 1965, 20-33; Dučić 1947). Thanks to them, important sacral points were created in the Balkans in imitation of desert places and holy mountains elsewhere in the Orthodox world (Malcev and Rangocević 2000, 9-24). They also inspired hagiographic and liturgical works in which their lives and exploits were lauded and ideal characters created (Ivanov 1931, 345-383, 394-418; La Bauve Hébert 1992).

Sava promoted this ‘larger than life’ concept through personal example, scholarship, and purpose. In this he was helped by the acceptance in Byzantine monasticism that it was not enough to have a high position in the hierarchy to gain spiritual authority. Rather, it was the experience of individual asceticism, which could be achieved only through the anchoritic, desert way of life. Individuals who walked that way were considered exceptional, persons close to God, predestined for the role of spiritual leaders (Morris 1995). Sava belonged to that category of ‘holy’ people who deployed both charisma and miracle-making, and – more than anything else – the gift of outspokenness (*parresia*) to mediate and address the Deity (Popović 2000, 138-56; on *parresia*, Flusin 1983, 178-81; Morris 1995, 89-90). He was also aware of the widespread understanding, developed in the ancient asceticism of Palestine – that charisma, gained in the desert, continued to radiate in new surroundings. So, it was believed, authentic ascetics wielded a protective influence on society and its institutions, and brought security to the state (Flusin 1983, 200-08; Popović&Popović 1999, 126-29).

Sava’s eremitism as related by his biographers offers researchers an interesting challenge, to understand the relationship between historical and hagiographical data. A history scholar is naturally encouraged to gauge the authenticity and nature of Sava’s desert experience, and that is the purpose of this study.

Sava was born in 1175 or 1176. His hagiographers, Domentijan and Teodosije, relied on well-known *topoi* when relating Sava’s growing up and the spiritual attitude manifest from his boyhood. (About the phases of a saint’s life and the mechanics of cult-making, Hackel 1981; Flusin 1983, 87-54; Galatariotou 1991.) ‘Having tried a little of the

knowledge from divine holy books,' he was instantly singled out from his contemporaries, avoiding their amusements and all 'vane superficialities'. He longed for exile from the world (Domentijan, 56-57; Teodosije, 104; on this emotion, Špidlik *et al.* 1999, 179-189). This desire was encouraged by stories about Mount Athos, 'about hermits there and about other desert places', which he heard at his parents' home from monks seeking charity from Sava's father Nemanja, who was famous for his generosity (Teodosije, 104). An encounter with a Russian monk, well educated and experienced, had an exceptional influence on the young Rastko. The monk told him 'everything about the desert order, what life in the community is like, about the separate life of two or three monks living apart, and the solitary life of those who live in a hermit's stillness' (Teodosije, 105). This valuable testimony clearly shows that a range of monastic lifestyles were in use at Athos – cenobitic (that is, fully monastic), lavriotc (in which monks spend their weekdays working in individual cells surrounding the coenobium) and idiorrhhythmic. Monks in idiorrhhythmic communities have private property, work for themselves, are solely responsible for acquiring food and other necessities, and dine separately in their cells, only meeting with other monks at church (Morris 1996, 37-46; Špidlik *et al.* 1999, 231-59). With help from the Russian monk, who became an intermediary, Rastko ran away to Mount Athos where, once safe from his parents' pursuit, he became a monk in the Russian monastery of St Pantheleimon. Here he was given the name Sava (the Serbian form of Sabbas) after St Sabbas of Jerusalem (died 532). His flight to Athos is described by both Domentijan (59-63) and Teodosije (105-116). Domentijan points at the higher, 'state-forming' meaning of Sava's action, as well as at his biblical model of eremitism: '[H]e loved desert life from his youth, imitating John the Baptist, Predecessor of Christ. For, as told by the Evangelist Lucas, [John] went to the desert and stayed there till the day of his announcement to Israel. And this man was... elected by Christ himself... who brought him to his Holy Mountain, and there he stayed till he was raised to enlighten his fatherland' (Domentijan, 59).

If the hagiographers were to be believed, the young Serbian prince's entrance into the monastic order and his settling on Mount Athos was well received by the inhabitants of this 'desert'. As a young brother in *coenobion*, he practised the prescribed forms of life and obedience, and performed exploits which are represented by standard *topoi*. Always keeping in mind sacred patterns from the 'lives of the ancient fathers', he practised severe fasting, ceaseless prayer, and night vigils. He mortificated and tortured his body by walking barefoot on rocks, dressed in coarse hair garments, and disposed himself to frost. He manifested meekness and eagerness, striving to achieve inner stillness of mind. Teodosije adds that Sava endured these temptations well, because he was 'young and strong and not much exhausted' (Domentijan, 63; Teodosije, 119; on the monk-ascetic's way of life, Regnault 1990, 75-96; the gradual path of monks' accomplishments, *podvig*, as a means of grasping a knowledge of God is discussed in the commentary *Κλίμαξ* [Latin *Scala Paradisi*] or *Ladder of Divine Ascent*, of the seventh-century monk of Sinai St John Climacus, Bogdanović 1963 and the English translation of 1982; see also Bogdanović 1968). One of Sava's fellows brought him near to the desert dwellers of Athos. As a young obedient he spent some time 'walking incessantly barefoot through desert, and to caves, and through earthly abysses, visiting holy men in the deserts'. (In Serbian hagiography a quotation from Hebrews 11:38 about 'deserts, caves, and earthly abysses' is common-place.) During Lent, Sava was ordered to provide food and other

necessities for monks who withdrew to the desert and devoted themselves to *hesychia*, retiring inward by ceasing to register the senses, in order to achieve an experiential knowledge of God, a traditional practice in preparation for Easter, a custom established in early Syrian and Palestine monasticism (Patrīch, 47; on the Lenten regime see Mirković 1961, 256-68). Sava of Jerusalem, namesake and model of Sava of Serbia, habitually spent Lent in the desert (Popović 1977, 136). Sava's hagiographers provide plausible data which points to the unbroken continuity of ancient practices, for example, the custom for big cenobitic monasteries to send food to the desert monks, recluses who 'fasted for three or five, or seven days, and each endured the fasting in accordance with his abilities'. Sava brought warm loafs to them every Saturday. On that day, the monks would change their customary 'dry eating' – restricted to boiled vegetables with no oil – with 'comforting' – the same vegetable food, but with oil and wine added. Warm loafs were considered to be specially alleviating of the effects of fasting (Domentijan, 67-69; Teodosije, 121; see also comments in Teodosije, 312).

During his stay at Athos, Sava directly experienced the most austere anchorites' way of life and Teodosije relates it in detail. These desert-dwellers lived traditionally on the steep cliffs under the top of Mount Athos. Sava asked for the blessing of his *hegoumenos* 'to let him see these monasteries and bow to them, and from there to climb to the top of Athos, and to see how desert fathers live and to have them bless him'. He got his permission, as well as an escort of brothers 'experienced in these demands of his'. It seems that Teodosije felt the urge to accentuate Sava's special, privileged status, because 'many, in spite of their great desire, could not easily get permission to see them'. Be that as it may, it can be seen from Teodosije's story that the event in question was one of Sava's most fundamental experiences. He was deeply impressed by 'their most severe life, and seeing their life of seclusion and stillness, free from disturbance, he wondered, and rejoiced, and ascended in spirit because he was allowed to see such holy men' (Teodosije, 116-17.) Teodosije's report should be understood as a synthetic, programmatic description of the way and purpose of hermit life, but nevertheless the best documentary testimony of this kind in Serbian medieval hagiography. The anchorites that Teodosije talks about had chosen solitude and renounced everything that belonged to the world: 'They freed themselves of everything for the sake of God. They did not till the land, buy necessities for their living, or cultivate vineyards and fields. All they cared for were prayers, tears, and being close to God in spirit'. They did not own anything, but 'ascended high above earthly matters by the impulse towards God, [and] were considered much wealthier than the rich'. Following the ancient habits of eastern ascetism, they dwelled in 'the fissures of rocks and in the caves of the earth', or they had 'narrow huts adorned with grass'. The most radical lived without shelter, 'as birds make their nests on the rock in the sea, and sat there, whipped by rain and winds, burned by sun and heat, frozen by winter and frost'. Like the ancient fathers whose exploits they wished to be worthy of, they dressed in coarse garments, slept very little, and lived 'without any comfort and without fire smoke'. Their drink was exclusively spring water, and their food 'depended on [their] abilities, for some of them just a crumb of bread and even this only seldom, [while] others satisfied themselves with fruits of the trees and with wild plants' (Teodosije, 117-118; on the way of life and activities of hermits see: Vööbus 1958, 256-278; Regnault 1990; Spidlik *et al.* 1999).

According to Teodosije, Sava was deeply affected by his encounter with the Athos 'desert' monks, and a new spiritual attitude changed him physically. 'Depicting in his soul their exploits and labors and their blessed occupation with God', he longed fervently to join them. Sava's desire was 'a malady of the heart', a comment which recognises a characteristic, strongly-felt experience of God, shaded by hesychasm – an eremitic tradition of prayer in which the individual retires inward by ceasing to register the senses, in order to achieve an experiential knowledge of God. In Christian ascetism this figures as a basic motive for going away to the desert (Bogdanovic 1968, 88-91). Finally, 'not hiding the cause of his change, he asked the *hegoumenos* to bless him and give him permission to join the desert dwellers'. Sava's 'inappropriate request' was resolutely denied, accompanied with the *hegoumenos*'s programmatic answer: 'It is not becoming that he, who has not yet strengthened his legs in obedience through the roots of the first degree of cenobitism, reaches for the peak of stillness and solitude, and lives as he likes before his time. Neither by timing nor by age it is becoming of you to ask for something like this, because everything ought to be in its own time' (Teodosije, 118). Thus Teodosije points at a generally accepted rule by which the beginners are not allowed to practice *idiorrhymia* as the highest but also the most dangerous form of monastic life (Spidlik *et al.* 1999, 237; see also Sveti Jovan Lestvičnik 1963, 30-31).

Instead, encouraged by his experience and understanding the purpose of *hesychia*, Sava restored the Hilandar monastery and there founded a *hesychastirion* or cell for ascetic prayer at Kareya (Zivojinovic 1972, 91ff). He dedicated the little chapel in the cell in honour of St Sabbas (439-532), his namesake and great model, the archimandrite of Palestinian monasteries. The influence of the Sabaite heritage on the activities of Sava and the institutions and masonry of the Serbian Church was surveyed by S. Popovic (2001, 385-407). Wall painting programmes which strongly depict the link between Sava and Sabbas are outlined by Djordjevic (1987b, 171-86, and 1987a, 75-76). The way of life in the Kareya cell was regulated in 1199 by a 'skete' constitution which prescribed a severe regime of almost ceaseless fasting and praying, silence and chanting of psalms. However, this was not in absolute isolation, because the desire for solitude was relaxed by the cohabitation of two or three monks (a skete is a community of Christian hermits following a monastic rule). According to the *typikon* or rule of Kareya, personal desire was not enough for seclusion in *idiorrhymia*; the approval of the monastic congregation was needed also, based on an evaluation of the monk's capacity to cope with seclusion (Sava 1986, 35-40; Mirkovic 1934, 52-67; Bogdanovic, foreword in St Sava 1986, 15). Led by the necessity of a spiritually fruitful solitude, Sava often withdrew to Kareya, according to his hagiographers (Domentijan, 96-97; Teodosije, 146). The hermitage remained even in later times a stronghold of the monastic elite and, as a place of 'great stillness', it also offered ideal conditions for writing and transcribing – as directly testified by Domentijan, who composed *The Life of Saint Sava* there (Domentijan, 96-97; on scribal activities at Kareja, Sindik 2000).

Throughout his life, Sava retained his elated feelings about the Kareya hermitage, as well as those towards Mount Athos generally. Often tired by political engagements and ecclesiastic or dynastic concerns, he would remember with nostalgia the places of his first experience of ascetism. According to Teodosije, he 'remembered also his first crucified life at Mount Athos, his slaving with modesty, his youthful suffering, barefoot walking, the dirty coarse garments, not washing, nightlong standing in vigils, permanent fasting,

his pure prayers untouched by the mire of wealth, exiting the world in spirit and ascending to God. Thinking himself deprived of it all, he was worried, moaning and calling himself poor and slaughtered' (Teodosije, 187). The important symbolism of Kareya is underlined by Domentijan's notion that it was constructed at a place 'enlightened and exquisite, adorned as in paradise with every beauty' (Domentijan, 96). Teodosije's Sava wept 'going out of the Mount Athos as if he was leaving a divine paradise' (Teodosije, 200). The comparison is no mere literary metaphor. Each Holy Mountain 'desert' represents *locus amoenus*, space which, when spiritualised by ascetics, obtains a timeless, heavenly dimension (Talbot 2001, 274-275; Flusin 1983, 171-178; Regnault 1990, 219-221). In selected allegorical images, the *arenga* of the Hilandar charter of Sava's brother Stefan I (crowned 1200/02) depicts the Holy Mountain of Athos as a field in paradise, 'decorous in appearance and beautiful by creation', with a 'gorgeous' tree in the middle in whose centre a 'sweet voiced' bird dwells – and this bird is Sava (Prvovenčani 1988, 55-59). The paradise motif had a strong echo in the arts (Radojčić 1966), while an interesting opinion, that the description of the Holy Mountain as paradise and Sava's role in it carried political messages, was offered by Beyer 1981.

In 1197/8, five or six years after arriving on Mount Athos, Sava was joined by his father Simeon, who had renounced power and now took monastic vows (Domentijan, 80-87, 259-279; Teodosije, 127-136). Calling them 'desert citizens', Domentijan says that by their exploits they 'inscribed their fatherland to Mount Athos... reestablishing for themselves the sacred road to Jerusalem' (Domentijan, 197, 313). Here the author links Athos with Jerusalem in the sacral topography of the Christian world and its role in creating the 'perfect'. (About the idea of Jerusalem, its function and meaning, see Kühnel 1997-8.) Domentijan showed his excellent knowledge of ascetic literature by the statement that Sava at Athos 'made the desert a city' (Domentijan, 197). Quoting the famous remark by Cyril of Scythopolis, Domentijan compared the place made desert by Sava with its ideal prototype, the Judean desert of his Jerusalem namesake (Patrich 1995, 353; Chitty 1966, 123-132).

Sava enlarged his experience during his travels to the Holy Land in 1229 and 1234, fulfilling an ideal of the epoch. (On the various reasons for which medieval pilgrimages were undertaken see Maraval 1985, 137-151; see also Ousterhout 1990; on the Jerusalem pilgrimage see Malamut 1993, 314-316; on visits to desert sanctuaries, 108-112 and *passim*.) Domentijan writes that Sava went to Jerusalem and the lavra of Sabbas in accordance with the 'desert education he got in his youth' and his own spiritual attitude. During his stay in the monastery, he admired the buildings of this monumental complex and bowed to its sanctities, kissing with utmost respect Sabbas' relics. Sava also 'inspected' the cave in which Sabbas stayed for years and the other 'places of desert dwelling where [Sabbas] lived in solitude and fasting, pain and suffering'. Moreover, he visited anchorites in the deserts around the Dead Sea, holy men 'who although in human shape, lived almost bodiless' and talked with them 'about spiritual things' (Domentijan, 176-77; Teodosije, 224-25; about the lavra of St Sabbas and nearby cave hermitages, see Patrich 1995, 57-106; also Hirschfeld 1992, 24-26). Later he also visited the lavra of St Euthimios the Great, one of the most respectable monasteries of Judean desert, as well as 'all deserts of Bethlehem and Jordan and all of Palestine' (Domentijan, 177-78; Teodosije, 225; on Euthimios' lavra, Hirschfeld 1992, 12, 74, 59-61 and *passim*).

On his second visit, his itinerary was extended to Alexandria and other places in Egypt and Libya and then Sinai. It seems that these pilgrimages were the result of a precisely made plan whose goal was direct contact with the sacred and with monastic patterns in Egypt and Palestine. (On these forms of monastic communities see Chitty). Syrian ascetic monasticism, entirely radical in concept and practice and the source of one of the original patterns of Christian hermitage, was not among Sava's favourites. Sava also visited famous places in the Mareotes and Libyan deserts, Scetis and the Thebaid. At his particular request, he was brought to the dwelling of St Arsenius as well as St Antony Abbot, fourth-century founder of Egyptian monasticism and ultimate model for all Christian hermits. Sava's goal, said his hagiographers, was to get to know the original forms of desert dwelling which in Egypt were still well preserved – 'intending to learn exactly everything there was about the ancient recluses, who truly lived the monastic life'. He talked with them about 'spiritual matters' – which means sophisticated, inspired theological discussions, in which Sava 'became an investigator of truth and a visionary of the deeds of those holy men he found still embodied, and to all of them he became a collocutor and brother'. (Sava's stay in the Egyptian desert is described by both Domentijan, 204-206 and Teodosije, 240-242; on monastic colonies in the Egyptian desert, see Chitty 1966, 1-81; Regnault 1990). The significance of Sava's pilgrimage to the famous deserts is best illustrated by one of Domentijan's comments. Comparing Sava's journeys to the missionary activities of the apostles, he writes that Sava had, in a way, bettered even Christ's disciples: 'And he, too, doing like the saints, went through all the east and west, south and north, and besides these sanctities also he visited mountains and caves, valleys and hills, deserts and towns and earthly abysses' (Domentijan, 206).

The final part of Sava's desert itinerary was a visit to the 'High Mountain', the Holy Mountain of Sinai. A place secluded from the 'rest of the world' but near enough to Egypt and Palestine and previously inhabited by Syrian monks, it represented a sacral point of the highest degree. Consecrated in ancient times by the presence of Moses and Elijah, Mount Sinai constituted in itself in early Christian times one of the most respected deserts of the East (Chitty 1966, 168-78). It could hardly be a coincidence that Sava decided to spend Lent at Sinai, linked as it is with 'terrible, wonderful, and holy deeds of God' (Domentijan, 208-209; Teodosije, 242-43). In that period of the year, the monks practised their ascetism with especial fierceness. The overall goal of Sava's desert journeys was to aid the sacral founding of the state and is probably best related by the Bogorodichan from Teodosije's Service of St Sava. This manifests a programme of the highest pretensions: 'But longing and searching for better still, to Jerusalem, Egypt, and Sinai you came and all hermits visiting there, by the rich hand giving to everybody, by their prayers your fatherland, Sava, you made rich' (Hilandarac 1970, 255).

Sava's experience of the *desert* was not only programmatic and conceptual. It seems that the choice of monastic life was the outcome of Sava's own spiritual habitus and vocation. At the same time, the nature of his eremitism was determined by his status as a member of the ruling family, head of the Church, and *spiritus movens* of the state and dynastic actions during the rule of three generations of Nemanjics. Doubtless Sava was received at Athos and in the deserts of Palestine and Egypt as an official personality with honours appropriate to his rank, behaving accordingly. On his overseas journeys he had selected guides and a large escort, generously donating to shrines which he visited. Where Sava is concerned, a kind of 'aristocratic hermitage' may be imagined at Kareya,

persisting for centuries, but especially in the late Byzantine era (Théoharidès 2001, 142-145). Researchers have already pointed at an ‘aristocratic’ component of Palestine monasticism, very different from that of Egyptian or of Syria, which were rural not only in character, but in their protagonists’ origins (Patlagean 1968, 110; Flusin 1983, 90-91).

Moreover, Sava was a partisan of moderate asceticism (Bogdanovic, Foreword to Sava 1986, 15, and Sveti Jovan Lestvicnik, 175-80). This influenced the choice of hagiographic *topoi* in describing his achievements, and the very weak, almost negligible demonic component (D. Popović 2000, 145). The influence of the *typicon* of Kareya was far-reaching, becoming a generally accepted model of ascetic monasticism. In at least two cases the initiative may well have come from Sava himself. Thus in the vicinity of Studenica monastery, a Nemanjic foundation, there are quite a few *hesychastiria*, and among them a particularly important one called Upper Hermitage, built on the steep cliff which tradition connects to St Sava (Temerinski 1986, 257-60; Stanić 1988, 256-58). Not far from the Nemanjic monastery of Mileseva, in a rocky canyon, the remains of some monumental buildings, all with the same use, were recently discovered (D. Popović 2002b, 108). In later times, hermitages were frequently built in the vicinity of the royal and seignorial foundations, and also near important churches, like the cathedral of Pec (Popovic&Popovic 1999, 129-130; S. Popović 2001).

Most of Sava’s successors spent some time at Athos, and many travelled to the Holy Land (Slijepcevic 1991, 132-87, with sources and bibliography). Particularly distinguished was archbishop Danilo II (1324-37), whose stay at Athos is described in the *topoi* of ascetics, with the epithet ‘second Euthimios the Desert dweller’ (Danijel 1989, 87, 100-104). Patriarch Ephraim (1375-1379; 1389-90) spent long periods in the ‘desert’ – more precisely in cave hermitages in the canyon of the Decanska Bistrica river, at Zdrelo near Pec, and at the Archangel monastery at Prizren (Pecki 1986; on the hermitages mentioned, see Ivanovic 1987, 395-396, 499-500, 509-510).

Sava’s ascetic ideals strongly influenced Serbian royal ideology by encouraging the concept of the ruler-monk (Marjanovic-Dusanic 1997, 274-286). Serbian dynasts, though, did not fulfill the eremitic model in practice – with exception of King Stefan Dragutin (1276-82) whose exploits, it seems, belong to hagiography rather than historical reality (Drugic 1988, 45-77; D. Popovic 1999-2000). Rather they realised the ideal of the desert by patronising hermits and literary and artistic works of high spiritual value.

All in all, the image of Sava as ‘hermit’ and ‘desert citizen’ was mostly the work of Domentijan and, especially, Teodosije, while the eremitism associated with him was a learned and inspired creation of the Serbian monastic elite which by the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth century was very active in the environment of Mount Athos.

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THE ICON IN CONTEXT: ITS FUNCTIONAL ADAPTABILITY IN MEDIEVAL SERBIA

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Abstract: The role of icons has always been a major issue for art historians and Byzantinists.² Research has demonstrated that sacred imagery played a large role in the devotional and ideological concepts of Byzantium and its neighbours, including Serbia. Following the sequence of icon-prayer-salvation, medieval people regarded icons as mystical intermediaries between them and the supernatural. As such, sacred images could acquire various benefits for the faithful through intercession of carefully chosen saints (Bakalova 2001, 130).

Although portraits of the holy persons were not to be used simply as magic tools, they could perform miracles proving that the power of God was close and effective. Sacred images were thus widely seen as remedies against the evil and corrupt in general. However, dualism in the usage of icons has constantly been – and still is – found among Orthodox Christians, revealing different human approaches to religion, one canonical and another superstitious. The correct understanding and use of an icon entirely depended on firm theological grounds: the Incarnation dogma and theories that emerged during the period of Iconoclasm. According to learned commentators interpreting the nature of holy images, icons ought not to be worshipped as objects. On the contrary, it was the holy prototype that was to receive one's prayer. Conversely, the icons were thought of as windows into Heaven, mirroring the images of the holy, and were therefore intended to transport the image of the holy prototype, elevate the soul of the beholder, and provide direct access towards Divine mercy on behalf of the believer, regardless of their social status.³

² This article is the final version of a paper given at the international conference, 'The intertwining of cultural influences: Medieval and baroque art from Budapest to Kotor,' at University College, London, April 7-8, 2001.

³ More recent studies on icons include R. Cormack, *Writing in Gold: Byzantine Society and its Icons*, London 1985; G. Babić, 'Il modello e la replica nell'arte bizantine delle icone', *Arte Christiana* 86, fasc. 724 (1988), 61-78; *Holy Image, Holy Space*, ed. G. Vikan, Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore 1988; D. Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response*, Chicago 1989; R. S. Nelson, 'The Discourse of Icons, Then and Now', *Art History* 12 (1989), 144-57; J. Pelikan, *Imago Dei: The Byzantine Apologia for Icon*, Princeton 1990; M. Barasch, *Icon: Studies in the History of an Idea*, New York 1992; A. Weyl Carr, 'Originality and the Portable Icon', in *Originality in Byzantine Literature, Art and Music*, ed. A. Littlewood, Oxford 1995, 115-24; *The Sacred Image East and West*, ed. R. Ousterhout and L. Brubaker, Chicago and Urbana 1995; H. Maguire, *The Icons of Their Bodies. Saints and Their Images in Byzantium*, Princeton 1996; R. Cormack, *Painting the Soul: Icons, Death Masks and Shrouds*, London 1997; A. Karstonis, 'The Responding Icon', in *Heaven on Earth. Art and Culture in Byzantium*, ed. L. Safran, University Park PA 1998, 58-80. Also see G. Podskalsky, R. Stichel, A. Weyl Carr, 'Icons', in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 2, New York-Oxford 1991, 977-81; B. Todić, 'Ikona', in *Leksikon srpskog srednjeg veka*, Beograd 1999, 252.

Portable icons were normally painted, or set in mosaic, on wooden panels, but could also be made in ivory, wood or steatite and enamel. In later periods, icons were also produced as printed engravings. (It is important to note that the Byzantines used the term 'icon' for all sacred images, regardless of material.) As objects of cult, they were used in liturgical ceremonies (Patterson Ševčenko 1991), in churches (Bakalova 2000), or in processions.⁴ Generally, icons could be integral parts of a political or ideological programme, especially if accompanied by portraits which contained donors' or artists' dedicatory inscriptions (Djordjevic 1989; Tatic-Djuric 1967; Mijovic 1966; Subotic 1993; Djuric 1985; Bakalova 2001). In this role, portable icons had significant counterparts painted on walls (Djordjevic 1978; Grabar 1979). These fresco-icons were often attributed with a specific function which was directly influenced by a political situation or state ideology, by the theological ideas of the donors, or simply by a common belief shared across a wide social background. A good example is the inscription which once accompanied the great apsidal mosaic icons of the Virgin and Child in St Sophia, Constantinople, after they were restored in 867: 'These icons, after being destroyed by infidels, are restored by orthodox rulers' (Lazarev 1986, 62). Medieval Serbs used both the Greek word *ikona* ('icon') and the Old Serbian phrase *sveti obraz* ('sacred image'), to denote the images of the holy.⁵ That is why the hieratic quality of the icon was so well preserved as its constant characteristic, whether on wooden panels, church walls, or on rocks in the vicinity of hermits' dwellings. The most interesting examples of the sacred images that are part of founders' compositions are surely the fresco-painted imitations of panel icons, as in the Psača monastery (Djordjevic 1994, 117-118, Fig 21).

From mobile toward immobile imagery

This deliberate shift of accent allows the reconsideration of icons in the context of church interior limitations. Sacred images fixed physically and conceptually were usually part of complex commemorative units. Even then, prayers were normally addressed to the icons placed either on the *templon* (the barrier separating the laity in the nave from the priests preparing the sacraments at the altar) (Babic 1979) or painted in other parts of the church (Djordjevic 1978, 85-86). Reflecting on icons, St Gregory of Nyssa wrote that 'painting, even if silent, is capable of speaking from the wall and being of the greatest benefit'.⁶ Numerous examples from saints' *vitae* and other medieval sources show that mural icons often played a big part in miraculous healings

⁴ As described in the paper by A. Lidov, 'A regular miracle: the Tuesday Rite with the Hodegetria of Constantinople', presented at the International Conference on Material Culture and Well-Being in Byzantium (400-1453), Lucy Cavendish College and St Catharine's College, Cambridge, September 8-11, 2001.

⁵ Direct translation of the Greek word *eikon* is the Old Slavonic word *obraz*. Cf. *Matije Vlastara Sintagmat*, Beograd 1907, 259-62.

⁶ Quoted after C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312-1453*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1972, 36-37. For the citation in Serbian translation see Kondoglu (1997, 143).

and visions.⁷ Specially venerated fresco-icons could be emphasised with marble, wooden, stucco, or painted frames, arches and ciboria, revealing a strong imprint of the person(s) responsible for the programme.

A good example is the frescoes in the Studenica monastery.⁸ The Virgin's church was painted by an anonymous Constantinopolitan master in 1209, and was the burial church of Stefan Nemanja, founder of the Nemanjic dynasty. Nemanja's son was abbot at the time, though later to become archbishop of the newly independent Serbian Church and known to history as St Sava. It was he who conceived the fresco programme in the *katholikon* (the main church of a monastery), introducing important ideological themes and for the first time the Serbian language in inscriptions on the wall paintings. The patrons of the ruling family were depicted under the painted arches, prominently displayed on four main pillars of the *naos* (the space where the liturgy takes place). The most interesting fresco-icons for us now are those painted around the abbot's throne in front of the south-western pillar. Because of their link with St Sava, the very setting of these fresco-icons requires an interactive approach to their correct understanding.

The central icon is the figure of the Mother of God with Christ child, bearing the epithet 'of Studenica'. This obviously set the icon apart for special veneration and for that reason it was painted immediately above the abbot's throne. Stressing the importance of the Virgin's fresco-icon, we find on the opposite pillar the figure of St Stephen the Younger, executed in 764/5, ostensibly for his opposition to Iconoclasm, shown holding a small double icon. Visually and symbolically, these two images are connected by a row of small fresco-icons in the western bay, painted in imitation of panels hung on a wall. This complex spatial setting is a direct adaptation of key theological ideas about sacred images as related to the needs of popular belief. For example, the lower part of the Virgin's fresco-icon is punctured by dozens of nail holes, the traces of votive offerings. Again, none of the faces of saints depicted on the row of small fresco-icons retains its pigment. It was probably taken by devotees hoping for a cure.

To the right of the Virgin of Studenica there is the figure of St Sabas of Jerusalem, namesake and patron of St Sava, emphasised with a painted arch. To the left we see the figures of Ss Barlaam and Josaphat, rarely painted in Byzantium. The appropriate angle of viewing is needed in order to perceive the hidden messages. One is to juxtapose the old St Sabas of Jerusalem with the young crowned Josaphat, which alludes to Sava through the shared name. Another connects Barlaam and Josaphat with the Virgin. Josaphat was a prototype of St Sava because both renounced princely life for the love of God (Djuric 1985/2; Djordjevic 1993).

⁷ See miracles described in *Acta Sanctorum* Nov. III, 886 E-F, cited by H. Maguire, *op. cit.*, 43; in the Life of St Anthony the Younger, cf. *op. cit.*, 92; in the Life of St Stephen the Younger (PG 100, col. 1076 A-B), cf. Kazhdan, Maguire (1991, p. 17).

⁸ On the monastery see two monographs: G. Babić, V. Korać, S. Ćirković, *Studenica*, Beograd 1986, and M. Kašanin, M. Čanak-Medić, J. Maksimović, B. Todić, M. Šakota, *Manastir Studenica*, Beograd 1986, with a full bibliography.

St Sava was also responsible for the programme in the Žiča monastery's *katholikon*, as well as that in the tower chapel. The busts of saints in the lower zone of the chapel were painted in imitation of panel icons hanging on a wall. Here is also found a sort of signature of Sava. Close to the small altar with the Christ's bust is seen again the icon of Sabas of Jerusalem, while to the right is the icon of St Theodore Studites, another of Sava's saintly models (Todic 1990-1991).

Less familiar examples of fresco-icons with unusual iconography or spatial setting, or unprecedented formal characteristics

This category of fresco-icons, if placed near historical portraits, could be invested with special ideas, subtle nuances of popular sensibility, or local particularities. Several icons of sainted doctors and royal ancestors have been selected as being probably the most venerated in medieval Serbian art.

The so-called king's church in Studenica monastery, the small but famous foundation of Stefan Uroš II Milutin, was built and frescoed around 1315 (Babic 1987; Todić 1998, 326-329 et passim). Dedicated to Ss Joachim and St Anne, parents of the Virgin, the church was built as the king's personal supplication to Divine mercy because his marriage with the Byzantine princess Simonis was childless. If Simonis had given a child to the king of Serbia, it might have become the heir of both the Serbian and the Byzantine crowns. That is why the king's church in Studenica was given rare patrons, a special arrangement of images, extremely small dimensions, and a site near the monastery's *katholikon* where the relics of Simeon Nemanja lay.⁹ The king's church is therefore an extraordinary example of the materialisation of medieval belief in saints as channels of the healing power of God (Kazhdan, Maguire 1991, 17). The portraits of the royal couple are painted together with the patron saints on the south wall. The king holds in his arms the model of the church, while St Anne holds in her arms the young Virgin. Painting the two couples side-by-side (Maguire 1988) stressed the obvious and deliberate coincidence between the main theme of the Virgin's illustrated cycle (sterility healed) and the historical context (Cvetković 1995; Todić 1990-1991, 329). The childless royal couple dedicated their lavish foundation to the biblical couple whose sterility was miraculously cured by Divine mercy. On the famous icon of the Enthroned Virgin from Sinai is found a similar opposition of Old Testament couples, connected by inscribed verse which comments on the miraculous conception (Weyl-Carr 1997, p. 372, Fig. 244). Medieval homilies and liturgical hymns were abundant with metaphors concerned with the sterile miraculously bringing fruit. The Virgin was born after the long and sincere prayers of her parents, an outcome celebrated by the huge fresco of the Virgin's birth covering the upper zone of the southern wall.

However, what makes iconography of the King's church in Studenica so distinctive are unusual busts of the two holy doctors - the *anargyroi* - painted above the royal portraits on the surfaces of the southwestern window jambs.¹⁰ The busts of Sts Cosmas

⁹ Cvetković 1995, 251-76. The relics of Simeon are held to have cured many pilgrims over the centuries.

¹⁰ Cvetković 1995, pp. 251-276. Cf. Ćurčić (1973, p. 194) and G. Babić, *op. cit.*, 22-24, 186, paid attention only to the comparison between the founders and their ancestors, and did not note the more obvious comparison made between founders and patrons.

and Damian are shown in a unique manner, not in frontal postures as usual, but almost bent towards the royal couple. Partly damaged, Damian is painted literally turned to queen Simonis, pointing at her with his medical instrument. Cosmas too is shown entirely in profile, with his right arm stretched out towards the king, almost touching him with the sharp end of his medical instrument. His penetrating look directed towards the king is something quite new, contributing in its own way to the spatial game created between the real and the painted (Hadermann-Misguich 1992). The busts of the two holy doctors render pictorial evidence for the numerous written descriptions of images of saints coming down from the walls to perform miraculous cures (Maguire 1988, 92). The unprecedented iconography of the two holy doctors brings together the imagery on the southern wall creating one semiotic unit. The king offers to the patrons the model of the church as the real embodiment of his prayers, expecting the descent in turn – and right above one sees the cradle with the baby Virgin. Something alike is to be found in the monastery of Staro ('Old') Nagoričino, in the church of St George. It was painted in the year of king Milutin's great victory over the Turks, as recorded in the founder's inscription above the western door. The king is depicted exchanging a model of the church for St George's sword, symbol of the military victory (Todic 1993).

Comparisons of royal and biblical couples can be found in medieval cult literature with exactly the same ideas and implications. The advisors of King Milutin probably had in mind the old Serbian *vitae* testifying that the king's own parents, as well as the parents of St Sava, had first to pray long and passionately for children, and when they finally got them it was due to God's mercy (Domentijan 1988, 55-56). We may find similar examples elsewhere in Serbian as well as in Byzantine monumental art, because the practical role of icons was particularly reflected in personal prayers and in the context of illness (Kazhdan, Maguire 1991, 14). For example, the *vita* of despot Stefan Lazarević, one of the last Serbian rulers before the Ottomans conquered the Balkans, told how he suffered from so-called '*leg illness*', probably an old war wound (Konstantin Filozof 1989, 122). It is interesting to note that the figure of St Panteleimon, another prominent holy doctor, was painted alongside that of St Gobdelas, a young martyr saint clad in royal garments, in two churches connected with the despot, in the monasteries of Resava (Todic 1995, 64) and of Kalenić (Simic-Lazar 1995, 132-133). In both cases St Panteleimon and Gobdelas face each other on opposite sides of a window in the southern apse of the *naos*. However, it is still uncertain whether the repeated combination of these two saints alludes to the despot's healing or to something else.

St Panteleimon was more widely venerated among medieval Serbs. His full-length portrait occurs in the southern apse of the *naos* of the monastery of Veluče, in central Serbia, placed between the *templon* screen and the Enthroned Virgin with Christ Child. Such a prominent place for Panteleimon was interpreted at one time as a sign that the Veluče church must have been the *metochion* (dependent parish church) of the great monastery of St Panteleimon on Mount Athos (Todic 1998-1999). However, an identical setting of the busts of St Panteleimon and the Virgin in the monastery of Hosios Lukas in Greece suggests that the sainted doctor's emphasised position was due to his significant role in the life of the faithful, rather than unproven relations between Veluče and the Athonite monastery (Maguire 1988, 42-46).

It is also well known that dozens of portrait icons exist of the canonised Serbian rulers and patriarchs. The practice culminated in the so-called family trees of the Nemanjić

dynasty, the most famous of them being in the monastery of Dečani.¹¹ The founders of the ruling dynasty and national church respectively, Simeon Nemanja and St Sava, constituted the main theme of this variety of Serbian icon painting, as for example on a small icon from the National Museum in Belgrade, painted in the first half of the fifteenth century (Djuric 1961, 107, Pl. LIV-LV). Here they are represented frontally, as expected for an icon arrangement. However, compared to their early portraits from the Mileševa monastery, painted around 1225, they differ significantly. Although damaged, the fresco portrait of Simeon has all the characteristics of a real icon, including perfectly frontal posture and an impressive, penetrating gaze. Painted to the left of the already canonised Simeon, the portrait of Sava is shown in a most interesting way. His head is slightly turned, and his eyes are not directed at the viewer. It showed that he was still alive at the time, but implied his forthcoming sainthood,¹² underlined by the accompanying inscription and a golden nimbus (Djuric 1992).

Simeon and Sava were almost always painted together. When their figures were separated it was for good reason. As seen in the monastery of Koporin, they were painted on two western pillars of the *naos*, facing each other. With their figures adapted to the height of the pillar surface, being much higher than any other figure in the *naos*, they appear to be supporting the vault of the church. As the most venerated national saints, it was an excellent way to stress that they had indeed been the pillars of the Serbian state ideology. Their figures are also separated in the monastery of Kalenić. Here their huge fresco-icons facing one another from the southern and northern walls of the western bay. They are accompanied by illustrations of the Virgin's two principal feasts, of the doctors Cosmas and Damian in the northern window-frame, and of Ss Cyricus and Julitta in the southern window-frame (Simic-Lazar 1995, 132-33, 149). Moreover, unusual marble consoles, of uncertain function, frame these fresco-icons. Surrounded by so many special iconographic and symbolic details, the southern and northern parts of the Kalenić western bay were transformed into special spaces dedicated to the veneration of Serbia's two most important national saints.

Archaeological evidence shows that fresco-icons were practically used and reused, adorned in many ways, damaged by kissing, touching, and candle lighting, and inscribed by graffiti (Cormack 1997). Two small monastery churches in the villages of Rudenica and Jošanica provide good examples. In Rudenica, a certain monk Paul left his own *ex-voto* inscription over the fresco-icon of St Paul, his namesake and patron.¹³ The painter Theodore who worked in Rudenica also left his signature, in the form of a prayer, on a fresco-icon of the Virgin in the altar space (Mirkovic 1931; Djuric 1974, 96-97, 223). Graffiti added later on the fresco-icon of an uncertain warrior saint in the Jošanica monastery may also show how strong were the ties between believers and their patron saints (Cvetkovic 1995/2).

Finally, an interesting portrait of an unknown nobleman should be mentioned, painted in the narthex of the monastery church of Veluče, central Serbia (Djuric 1990, 19, 25-27,

¹¹ For the Nemanjic family-tree in Dečani, see D. Vojvodić, *Portraits of Rulers, Church Dignitaries and Patricians*, in *Mural Painting of Monastery of Dečani. Material and Studies*, ed. V. J. Djurić, Beograd 1995, 295 (in Serbian). For the Nemanjic genealogies in general, E. Haustein, *Der Nemanjidenstammbaum. Studien zur mittelalterlichen serbischen Herrscherikonographie*, Bonn 1985.

¹² On St Sava's sainthood in his lifetime, Popović, *Čudotvorenja svetog Save Srpskog*, in *Čudo u slovenskim kulturama*, ed. D. Ajdačić, Novi Sad 2000, pp. 138-56.

¹³ Personal observation.

Fig. 4). It shows that historical portraits gradually adopted characteristics of icons. The nobleman was depicted in a manner usually encountered on representations of St Demetrius, holding a bow and three arrows, something not found on earlier portraits of the living (Zachariadou 1998).

The function of icons was evidently aimed at believers' spiritual or corporeal benefits. The sacred images were adapted to multifarious issues such as dynastic continuation, the celebration of important national saints, prayers for the good health of rulers or commoners, the introduction of learned comparisons with model saints, and development of new local cults. Icons remain the crucial instrument in the Orthodox stock of devotional practices and an unavoidable factor in overall painted programmes. At the same time, icons still play their part in complex units, preserving their significant role in communication with the faithful. Devotional practices of modern believers seem not to be much different that in olden times, with the hyper production of new icons and numerous votive gifts constantly being donated to the churches (Bakalova 2001/2).

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FROM SAINTS TO HISTORICAL HEROES:
THE CULT OF THE SAINT-DESPOTS BRANKOVIĆ
IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

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Nationalisation of religion and sacralisation of nation

In the history of the culting of saints the nineteenth century constitutes a distinct though as yet insufficiently studied epoch. Across Europe, this was a time of growing national self-awareness, which strongly impacted on a transformation of religious concepts. It was not a one-way process, the nationalisation of religion entailing the sacralisation of nation. The association of religion with nation gave rise to the concepts of 'national church' and 'national religion', often spoken and written about at the time. Thus Nikanor Grujić, archimandrite of the monasteries of Kuveždin and Krušedol and subsequent bishop of Pakrac, held that the Serbian church and religion decisively contributed to the preservation of national identity, and not only in terms of religion but also politically. He wrote in 1906 that 'our church is the church of the people which holds the whole life of a Serb, and thus the whole life of the Serbian people, in its power... [That] our people have not lost all awareness of their political life, and kept up their domestic life withstanding so many hostile attacks... is largely thanks to their national church...It has preserved the holy relics of our Serbian kings and emperors, and with them, as the visible monuments to our past political life, it preserved for the people the means by which to defend their political past against oblivion' (Rugarac 1906). Grujić's interpretation of the people's faith was based on his conviction that the latter was a steady attribute of the Serbian ethnos. Not only was his concept of a national church and religion at odds with the notion of popular religion as defined in ethnographic studies (Bandić 1997, 55-63). It also in fact reveals new concepts which were intended as agents of the newly-awakened national feeling and were shaped in the circle of lay intellectuals and learned higher clergy of which Grujić was a member.

The shaping of a national religion had a consistent effect on the cult of saints, including those of the last members of the Branković family, the most venerated local saints in the Metropolitanate of Sremski-Karlovci. Several of that family – the blind despot Stefan Branković (1417-76), his wife Angelina, and their sons Jovan and Djordje (the latter named Maksim in religion) – were canonised shortly after their deaths.¹⁴ Their relics were kept at the Monastery of Krušedol, built between 1509 and 1513 on the eve of the Ottoman invasion of Srem. The veneration of Jelena Jakšić, wife of Jovan, was also established there, but soon fell into oblivion and no further reference to her relics is known (Radojčić 1939, 289).

¹⁴ The most comprehensive work on their cult remains Pavlović 1965 (esp. 133-39, 146-55). See also Dinić-Knežević 1975, 5-44; Radovanović 1971, 295-313, and 1991-92, 151-64. On the genesis of liturgical texts, Trifunović 1970, 324-41.

During the restored Patriarchate of Peć, and especially when first the Metropolitanate of Krušedol and then that of Karlovci was founded following the ‘Great Exodus’ of Serbs to the Habsburg Empire in 1690, the cults of the despots joined those of the Nemanjić dynasty in the centre of a religious-political programme. They became one of the principal historical arguments for confirming an organised religious presence of Serbs north of the Sava and Danube rivers (Timotijević 1991-92, 127-49, esp. 127-28). This required that their cult be in conformity with the ideas of Baroque historicism, fully embraced by the religious culture of the Metropolitanate of Karlovci.

Already, a rationalist approach to history was gaining ground along with a tendency for its independent segments – *Historia Divina*, *Historia Ecclesiastica* and *Historia Humana* – to be subjected to the same rules of study and brought together into a unique whole. The process had a special bearing to ecclesiastical history which, in religious and political programmes of all churches, became an argument for the defence of their current ambitions. With the old hagiographic literature checked through for factual accuracy and historicised, a basis for the historical study of saints was formed. The foundations for such a conception of history were laid by cardinal Caesar Baronius (Pullapilly 1975). The Serbs came into contact with the new ideas as early as the seventeenth century, above all through Mauro Orbini’s *Il Regno degli Slavi*, and subsequently through the writings of his followers.¹⁵

Soon after the exodus to the Habsburg Monarchy, ideas of Baroque historicism became very topical. As a result, the exiled patriarch of Peć Arsenije III Černojević and his successors engaged Pavle Riter Vitezović, the Habsburg court historian, to prepare the volume entitled *Serbia illustrata* that would portray the national saints as historical figures. The book was never published but, owing to patriarch Arsenije IV Jovanović, it was replaced by Žefarović–Mesmer’s edition of Vitezović’s *Stemmatographia* a few decades later. This copperplate edition, based on Orbini, was the official religious and political manifesto of the Serbian Church with members of the choir of saints – *Serbia sancta* – so selected as to function in defence of the concept of the holy Serbian kingdom – *Serbia sacra* – that, ideally, coincided with the territory of the Patriarchate of Peć over which the exiled patriarch claimed jurisdiction (Timotijević 1998, 387 ff).

After the death of patriarch Arsenije IV Jovanović – when the head of the Orthodox Church in the Habsburg Monarchy bore the title of metropolitan – jurisdictional claims came to be reduced in terms of territory, which directly led to a reduced choir of saints. In the earliest printed editions of *Molebna pravila* (book of services to Serbian saints), commonly known as *Srblijak*, the selection of saints became clearly institutional in nature. It was narrowed down to highest-ranking figures from the state and church hierarchies, bearers of the state or religious legitimacy, whereas other categories of saints lost prominence (Curcic 1986, 73-74; Timotijević 2000, 222-231). Such a choice reflected the dual nature of the power exercised by the metropolitans of Karlovci, spiritual and secular, in historical perspective each with a distinctive institutional profile. By the time the reforms carried out by Maria Theresa and Francis Joseph eventually broke down the secular power of the Karlovci metropolitans, the cults of holy rulers had been largely laicised, which facilitated their inclusion into nation-promoting programmes. Decisive for the rediscovery and laicisation of medieval history was the publication of Jovan Rajić’s

¹⁵ On the place of Orbini’s work in Serbian historiography: Samardžić 1976, 2-27. – For the conceptual framework in which Orbini’s work was created: Brogi Bercoff 1991, 175-90.

Istorija raznih slovenskih naroda (History of various Slav peoples). Impulses for that book did come from Baroque historicism, but it was of a much later date. It appeared in the mid-1790s, at the time the middle class increasingly insisted on its national – in addition to religious – historical identity.¹⁶

The same period saw a gradual reduction in the number of non-working feast-days of saints. Although stemming from an Enlightenment-inspired state programme, such a tendency was widely supported by middle-class intellectuals. These ideas were the basis for Jovan Muškatirović's *Kratko razmišljanje o praznicima* (A brief reflection on feasts), published in 1786. Relying on the writings of early Protestant theologians, Muškatirović denied the religious necessity of feasts, while perceiving their traditional character very clearly. It was for that reason that the old hagiographic heritage was neither forgotten nor ignored. On the contrary, it was in shaping the national ideals that it attained its full meaning. It was through the cults of ancient holy rulers that the idea was being confirmed of the nation's historical predestination to be chosen and of its sacredness. The ancient Serbian monasteries became national historical monuments and the saints whose relics were deposited in them became the national historical heroes of a golden age of prosperity and glory. The first decades of the nineteenth century saw more and more demands for national history to be studied, and with an emphasis on the monasteries as institutions of the nation's collective memory. Monasteries, and with them the cults of the saints they venerated, were incorporated into a new view of national history. They were increasingly seen as the nation's cult objects and treasuries of the nation's memory. In that light, the ample literature on monasteries and their history published in the course of the nineteenth century may be interpreted as 'hagiographic' texts intended for shaping and promulgating the new cults of national monuments. Engravings and photographs of monasteries published in the nineteenth century had the same purpose.¹⁷ They became a new kind of propagandistic representations, the so-called realia, with the same role in the promotion of monasteries into national historical monuments previously played by mirabilia and memorabilia.

Krušedol as a national historical monument

The idea of Krušedol as a national historical monument was decisively influenced by Dimitrije Krestić (1807-1843), the monastery's assiduous archimandrite and its mainstay even under his predecessor Gedeon Petrović (1801-1807). It was at the time one succeeded the other as head of the monastery that Dositej Obradović, with permission of metropolitan Stefan Stratimirović, made a stay there preparing to cross into rebellious Serbia. According to what Dimitrije Krestić says in his book *Spomen drevnosti fruškogorskih manastira najpače manastira Krušedola* (The antiquity of the Fruška Gora

¹⁶ For an assessment of Rajić's *History* and its influence on the subsequent generations: Samardžić 1976, 57-9. – On the development of a taste for the national past and on its role in the shaping of national self-awareness: Smith 1996, 177-9.

¹⁷ Unavoidable for the perception of medieval monasteries as national monuments among the Serbs in the 19th century is: Nenadović 1857, reprinted in: Tosić 1985. – For the interpretation of the same notion in German-speaking countries, with which Ljubomir Nenadović was familiar: Nipperdeu 1968, 548-51 and 1977, 412-29; Alings 1996, 33-40, esp. 37-8.

monasteries, Krušedol in particular), it was then that the famous discussion about monasteries as guardians of religious and national identity took place (Krestić 1840, 4-5).

Krestić's book, as has already been observed, relied on earlier monographs on the monasteries, written in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Medaković 1985, 94). Differences between Krestić's view and that of his predecessors, however, are manifest in the entire structure of the book, written predominantly out of national motives.¹⁸ A certain similarity can only be found with texts appearing in periodicals from the late 1820s on. In that respect, the remark would not be superfluous that Krestić's text was first published in the issue of *Srbski narodni list* of 13 May 1839, and reprinted as a book only later. He interprets the monasteries of Fruška Gora as national historical monuments and subordinates everything else to that central idea. Thus Fruška Gora itself has a national character, being granted the status of historical patriotic space.¹⁹ Krestić therefore begins his book with the following words: 'Well-known is the beauty of Fruška Gora and the agreeableness of this, through the deeds of our forefathers, Orthodox area; and nature itself has lavishly adorned this place, where the memory of Serbian glory and antiquity has been shining till this day. The beautiful vine-planted hills and fertile valleys arouse the greatest pleasure in the heart of every traveller, and in the soul of a Serbian they arouse the feeling of national pride, honour and glory,' and he continues: 'The Serbian hand has left here the signs of its admirable courage and unswerving faith and of perseverance for the Emperor and the Fatherland.' Such merits deserve a monument, 'a column of gratitude' as Krestić puts it. Difficult times made its erection impossible, but instead of a monument, the monasteries were built: 'The shining towers of these holy abodes rest upon the people's praiseworthy valour. From the great deeds of their glorious forefathers the holy families rose, and in them a Serbian heart always finds sweet solace.' It is only after this introduction that Krestić emphasizes the importance of the Fruška Gora monasteries for the survival of Orthodoxy under Ottoman rule, 'when the merciless hand of Islam ruthlessly stifled all that bore a Christian name'. The monasteries are the 'sacred hearths' of national identity. Where there were none, the national flame died out. 'Therefore,' Krestić thinks, 'it is with a cheerful heart that a Serbian visits the holy places that preserved his Orthodox faith, the firm foundation of Serbian nationality.'

The foremost criterion for ranking holy places is, in Krestić's opinion, national. This was a novel conception, unthinkable in previous epochs, and it seriously interfered with the old hierarchy of Christian symbolic topography. Krestić is unequivocal: 'The Serbian holy places are worth of respect first.' There is also a hierarchy among Serbian monasteries, itself founded on national criteria. A monastery's rank in that hierarchy is decided by the standing of its founder in national history, rather than by its cult's religious strength or by the renown of the relics deposited in it, as it was in previous periods. Therefore, Krušedol is the foremost of the monasteries of Fruška Gora, 'because it is a cherished legacy and tribute from the generous hand of the last Despot'. The primary purpose of a pilgrimage to monasteries being to awaken the nation's sleeping historical memory, Krestić describes the founding of Krušedol and its centuries-long past. In conclusion, consistently with the interpretation of Krušedol as a national historical monument, he lists the most important manuscripts and ancient documents confirming

¹⁸ Such literary production was universal and typical at the time. For a general framework for its interpretation: Smith 1986, 179-85.

¹⁹ The concept was formulated by Friedrich Ludwig von Sckell (1750-1823). Cf.: Lipp 1987, 264.

the monastery's centuries-long existence. Shortly after that, similar ideas about Krušedol were expressed by an anonymous author (Anonym 1841) in the text *Srbski Fruškogorski manastiri* (The Serbian monasteries of Fruška Gora) published in *Srbska pčela* in 1840 and 1841.

The place of Krušedol within the national church and religion was defined the most consistently by Nikanor Grujić in the 1850s, at the time he was the head of the monastery (Ruvarac 1892, 96). Financially supported by prince Mihailo Obrenović, he completed the comprehensive renovation begun by Dimitrije Krestić thirty years before. As stressed in the old documents, Krušedol was given 'a new aspect', synchronised with the idea of monasteries as national monuments (Zeremski 1907, 91-92).²⁰ Formally speaking, it was the restoration of the entire monastery which, for the first time in its long history, was approached as a unique architectural whole. Its façades were given a uniform appearance and its roof levels made even. From that point on the monastic buildings were referred to in singular. In that way Krušedol became a national historical monument formally as well, the objectified memory of the continued collective existence. Accordingly, as shown by the monastery's surviving inventories, the public rooms of the monastic complex, even the cells, were duly furnished.²¹ The concept of monastic humility was replaced by the new concept of historical representativeness. At the same time, a series of interventions in the natural environment were undertaken with the view of fitting the monastery harmoniously into the national landscape (Smith 1996, 183-190; Alings 1996, 20-22). It reflected widespread ideas about a firm connection between nation and nature, as put forward by Johann Gottfried von Herder (Lipp 1987, 264). The nationalisation of the monastery's history immediately generated the nationalisation of the surrounding scenery. Accordingly, the monastic farming estate lost importance and was screened off by a fence, while the northern façade received the aspect of representative stage scenery with a Romantic park in front further opening onto the expanses of Fruška Gora.

Given that Nikanor Grujić non-modestly took for himself all credits for the general renovation of Krušedol, as shown by his posthumously published autobiography, one should recall that the works had actually begun under archimandrite Dimitrije Krestić. The latter fact is revealed also by the series of lithographs by Mihael Troh *Putešestvije po sremskim planinama* (A Voyage across the mountains of Srem), dedicated to the metropolitan of Karlovci Stefan Stanković (Matic 1986). The series is markedly propagandistic, intended to publicize the interpretation of Srem as the historic Serbian land, one-time despotate of the holy Branković. A special role in that context was assigned to Fruška Gora and its monasteries. Troh's lithographs, including the one depicting Krušedol (Fig. 1), were conceived in the spirit of national historical *topoi*, i.e. national historical monuments surrounded by national nature.²² Prominence was given to the monastic complex surrounded by the woods, whereas the saints, playing a prominent part in Baroque prints, were completely left out. That echoed the new idea of monasteries as historical national monuments. Such status of Krušedol was confirmed by the burial of

²⁰ The whole process of renovation is described in: Каковија репарацији сотворени сут на Зданијах Монастирја Крушедола за време надстојателства Г. Никанора Грујића Архимандрита Крушедолскога и от 11 јунија 1861 лета Епископа посвешченија: *Протокол Саборни 1831-1928*, 188 (MSPC 588; Timotijevic 2004, 356).

²¹ *Инвентар манастира Крушедола [The inventory of the monastery of Krusedol] 1890* (MSPC 599).

²² The same ideas underlie Lujza Koc's lithographs of the Fruška Gora monasteries of 1861. Relevant to the search for models are also Konrad von Hötendorf's drawings of 1828.

princess Ljubica Obrenović in the narthex of the monastery's main church in 1843. The burial in 1848 of vojvoda Stefan Šupljikac, a hero of the struggle for the Serbian Vojvodina, ultimately solidified the monastery's status as a national pantheon (Rugarac 1918, 61; Strika 1927, 55, 67; Manojlović 1937, 23). Jovan Subotić, among those who gave a speech at vojvoda Šupljikac's grave, subsequently wrote down in his autobiography: 'In the church of Krušedol repose then the representatives of three segments of Serbian history: from the time of Serbian independence, from the time when the Serbs came to these parts looking for a new homeland, and from the time when that homeland, the Vojvodina of Serbia, they obtained' (Subotić 1902, 131). Consistently with such a historical conception of monasteries, the cults of the holy despots became but an element in a much more complex historical reception of the national idea.

The saints Branković as national historical heroes

Concurrently with the interpretation of Krušedol as a historical national monument, the cults of the Branković were subjected to historical interpretations in which nascent national scholarship played a conspicuous and engaged part.²³ Even Sava Tekelija in his autobiography drew attention to this shift of fortune, emphasizing that the monks of Krušedol showed him 'several imperial crowns and attires of the Serbian kings', while of the relics of the holy despots he mentioned but 'the hand of Mother Angelina' (Tekelija 1966, 212). Those imperial crowns were in fact the old mitres recorded in the monastic inventories until the end of the nineteenth century as 'pearl-adorned despotic mitres'.²⁴ The Krušedol inventories of the previous century also contain entries for objects associated with the holy despots – memorabilia, but it is only in the course of the nineteenth century, when monasteries were historicised and the holy despots interpreted as historical figures, that those objects became increasingly put on display for pilgrims. Memorabilia and mirabilia were placed on the same level of historical reality and closely interrelated. In interpreting the monastery as a historical monument the objects that once had belonged to the Branković were given almost the same importance as their relics. The holy despots' relics, on the other hand, became the mortal remains of national heroes, the bones of the great men whose veneration developed within the framework of religious-national ideology.

In his book on Krušedol, Dimitrije Krestić speaks of the holy despots and their relics in the context of a general account of the monastery's history. He refers to the relics as 'the saints' bodies' and describes their historical destiny without any reference to their miraculous powers or to any other constituents of a cult. To Krestić, they are the mortal remains of the monastery's founders, followed by, in a historical continuity, the mortal remains of other national heroes buried at Krušedol: patriarchs Arsenije III Čarnojević and Arsenije IV Jovanović Šakabenta, metropolitans Isaija Djaković, Vikentije Popović Hadžilavić, Mojsije Petrović and Jovan Georgijević, bishop Nikanor Meletijević, count

²³ I draw attention to only one of several more extensive works from the mid-1880's that give a critical synthesis of the current historical knowledge of the Krušedol saints: Novašević 1886 (No 146, 1-47; No 147, 1-32; No 148, 1-70).

²⁴ *Инвентар манастира Крушедола (The inventory of the monastery of Krušedol) 1890*, 11/b, no XVIII/231. – The mitres are published in: Mirković 1931 (26, No 54; 28, No 58) and 1940, 36-7.

Georgije Branković and obercaptain Atanasije Rašković. To their memory Krestić pays almost as much attention as to the holy despots' relics. That connection was emphasised as early as the eighteenth century and cited regularly in visitational reports and monastic inventories, but a distinction was always made between the holy despots' relics, kept in reliquaries in front of the iconostasis, and the mortal remains of the great men buried in the narthex of the main church. The well-known report by the metropolitan Pavle Nenadović's visitational commission of 1754 and the monastery's unpublished inventory of 1774 are good illustrations (Ruvarac 1903, 282-283, 286-288).²⁵

However, the historicisation of the holy despots had already been carried out in Baroque historiography, as consistently expressed in Jovan Rajić's *History of various Slav peoples*. Dimitrije Krestić relies on it himself, taking over even some of Rajić's errors. But a significant novelty, nonexistent in Rajić's *History*, is Krestić's emphasis on the national context of the founding of Krušedol and on the monastery's historical role in the preservation of religious and national identity. The idea of Krušedol as an ancient metropolitan see, given prominence in the Baroque religious and political programme, was replaced by the idea of Krušedol as the 'despot's throne'.²⁶ Accordingly, the emphasis was laid on the role of despot Jovan Branković, and of his brother, bishop Maksim, in the founding of the monastery. Therefore one of the first documents from the monastery's archives to be published was despot Jovan Branković's charter, subsequently proved to be a forgery. The charter was copied quite promptly by Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, the first in a line of antiquarians visiting Krušedol, and it was published several times (Dobrasinovic 1999, 50).²⁷ The relentless insistence on its reprinting, as well as the listing of all the villages that the despot had endowed to the monastery, echoed an ever louder demand of the Serbs in Austria-Hungary to be recognised their own national space.

And yet, the cult of despot Jovan Branković as a historical hero neither gained strength nor rose to prominence within the national programme of the Vojvodina Serbs.²⁸ In the course of the nineteenth century, the cult of despot Jovan, just as that of his father despot Stefan, remained within the old religious frame and overshadowed by the cults of another two family members: his older brother, bishop Maksim, and his mother, nun Angelina, former despotess. That was certainly due to the Church, which gave priority to the family members devoted to monastic life. Instead on despot Jovan Branković, national programmes laid emphasis on another of Krušedol heroes, who was not even a saint. That was count Georgije Branković, whose mortal remains were translated to Krušedol from Heb by obercaptain Atanasije Rašković in 1743 (Radonic 1911, 614-615). The would-be despot of Illyricum was buried in a separate tomb in the northwest part of

²⁵ *Инвентар манастира Крушедола (The inventory of the monastery of Krušedol) 1775, 7/a-7/b*, where the reliquaries from the nave are described; 9/a-10/a, with a description of the tombs in the narthex (MSPC 621, Timotijevic 2004, 348).

²⁶ Krušedol was called so already in Vezilić 1788, 51 (separate pagination).

²⁷ On the publication of the charter: Anon. 1847, 147-8; Novaković 1875, 20; Dmitriev-Petkovic 1853, 224-6; I. Ruvarac 1879, 182.

²⁸ For the place of the national saints in the Christian interpretation of, and the Old Testament argumentation for, patriotism, see: Maširević 1903, 271-9, esp. 277-9, where special prominence from among the Fruška Gora saints is given to Prince Lazar, whose relics were deposited at Vrdnik.

the narthex of Krušedol's main church, exactly opposite to bishop Maksim's tomb.²⁹ In that way two symbolical funerary *topoi* were formed in the narthex: one was the tomb of secular, the other of spiritual leaders. Since the time of patriarch Arsenije III Čarnojević, the tomb of bishop Maksim received the metropolitans of Karlovci, while the tomb of count Georgije Branković was the burial place of highest representatives of the secular power. Therefore in 1848 it received the mortal remains of vojvoda Stevan Šupljikac (Ignjatovic 1966, 286), even in his lifetime regarded as being another count Georgije Branković. Therefore in a panegyric published on the occasion of the solemn reception of the vojvoda's body in Karlovci on 24 September the same year, count Branković is described as 'the most honest father of the Serbian people', who gave his life for the 'salvation of the Serbian people' (Zivkovic 1848, 4-6). After the count's death in imprisonment, another heroic saviour did not appear until vojvoda Šupljikac.

The emphasis on count Branković in the national ideology of the Vojvodina Serbs in the mid-nineteenth century, rather than on despot Jovan Branković, stemmed from important political reasons. Despot Jovan Branković had been a vassal to the Hungarian crown with which the Serbs were now in conflict. To celebrate him as the nation's historical hero was therefore quite inappropriate. Count Branković, on the other hand, had been a proponent of the Serbian pro-Austrian political orientation, which made him eligible for a national historical hero during and after the revolutionary events of 1848. Popular tradition, which played a significant part in nineteenth-century national ideology, did not preserve a memory of a heroic aspect of despot Jovan Branković. In folk epic poetry he is depicted as a melancholy hero whose sudden death brought an end to Serbian statehood, glorious at the time of the Nemanjić.³⁰ It is in that context that he is portrayed in the ideology-coloured graphic production. One of few examples is the second volume of Anastas Jovanović's *Spomenici srbski* (Serbian monuments) containing a historical portrait of *Djordje II Branković – the Last Serbian Despot*.

Mother Angelina as a national historical heroine

Changes in the old hierarchical structure of the Krušedol cults are observable in the monastery as early as the time of archimandrite Dimitrije Krestić. It was then that the nun Angelina, a former despotess, became the backbone of the worship of the entire family and was venerated as the most popular of the few Serbian holy women and one of the first national historical heroines.³¹

Some basis for this change was laid in the previous century. The veneration of her older son, bishop Maksim, was still at the forefront, just as it had been in the two previous centuries. Within the renovation of the monastery following a Turkish raid in

²⁹ Archival documents reliably confirm the digging of a new tomb: *Инвентар манастира Крушедола 1775*, 10/a. Cf.: Radonić 1911, 615, who erroneously assumed that the mortal remains of count Georgije Branković had been laid into the tomb of patriarch Arsenije III Čarnojević.

³⁰ Cf. the analysis of the poem *The Death of Jovan Despotović* in Kilibarda 1989, 79-83.

³¹ The popularity of Mother Angelina in the nineteenth century surpassed by far the other two cults of national holy women, St Anastasia, wife of Stefan Nemanja, and Jelena of Anjou, wife of king Uroš I. When speaking about the significance of Angelina's cult one should, however, bear in mind the renown of St Petka of Trnovo, venerated by the Serbian Church, and thus in the Metropolitanate of Karlovci, as St Petka of Serbia. Cf.: Mirković 1961, 69.

1716, bishop Nikanor Meletijević had a chapel – ‘small church’, as named in the sources – built and dedicated to bishop Maksim (Matić 1989, 17-26). That chapel, on the first floor of the eastern wing of the monastic complex, became the centre of a special worship of the nun that took root in the 1720s. Credits for that go to bishop Meletijević who laid in front of the iconostasis a representative reliquary holding a part of her relics.³² It was especially for the reliquary that was executed the first known individual representation of Mother Angelina, previously portrayed only together with the other family members. Her standing figure of a nun is in gilded silver. By the mid-eighteenth century the chapel had already been known as ‘the little church of Venerable Mother Angelina’ and it soon became the centre of particular piety.³³ Of course, the joint veneration of all members of the Branković family, cultivated in the monastery’s main church, did not lose ground to it.

Two formal reasons decided the introduction of the separate veneration of the former despotess. Since its foundation, Krušedol had both a female and a male monastic community. At first the focal point of St Angelina’s cult was her endowment, a small monastic church dedicated to the Presentation of Christ to the Temple, which became a parish church in the 1720s and eventually was detached from the monastery.³⁴ The other reason for Mother Angelina’s independent cult in the main male monastery was the fact that the relics of the holy Branković were burnt down by the Ottomans in a raid on Krušedol in 1716. A few surviving parts were gathered, deposited in two small reliquaries and laid on the thrones in front of the iconostasis in the main church. A hand of Mother Angelina, or a finger according to other sources, was subsequently restored to the monastery. For that reason, the relic was encased in silver, laid in a reliquary and put on display in the chapel (Krestić 1940, 12-13; Petković 1938; Pavlović 1965, 150-51).

The separation of Mother Angelina’s hand from the relics of other family members and its displaying in the chapel opened the way for a special piety that was cultivated primarily by women. In the latter half of the eighteenth century she became their miracle worker, an intercessor resolving their personal and family problems, as evidenced by votives and jewellery offered to her relics.³⁵ In the first decades of the nineteenth century the cult was so strong that the small church of Mother Angelina became the main cult

³² The reliquary is still kept in the monastery’s treasury: Krušedol 177/1-11. Its content in the course of the 18th and 19th centuries is known from inventories which show no essential difference from one another: *Инвентар манастира Крушедола 1775*, 12/б-13/а; *Инвентар манастира Крушедола 1890*, 10/а: ‘The left hand of Venerable Mother Angelina, despotess of Serbia, and on it a diamond ring, a plain wedding ring, a silver ring; three particles of the holy relics encased in silver; one footless cross encased in silver; a footless cross of holy wood encased in silver and set with gemstones; an icon of Venerable Mother Angelina made of silver and gilded; a medallion icon with a chain.’

³³ This is also evidenced by an inscription engraved on the chalice donated to Mother Angelina’s small church by metropolitan Nenadović’s sister in 1750: Timotijević 2004, 530.

³⁴ By the time of bishop Nikanor Meletijević the Church of the Presentation of Jesus had already had the status of a parish church but was still run by the monastery’s administration. This is evidenced by the report of a visitational commission that visited the church on 28 December 1732: D. Ruvarac 1902, 58. The report of count Feketi’s reambulatory commission speaks about tensions between the monastery and the parish: *Реамбулација грофа Ђорђа Фекетија 1757*, esp. 11 (ROMS M 10493). The full independence of the parish church from the monastery is confirmed by the book of accounts: *Протокол прихода и расхода цркве села Крушедола од 1768. до 1846*, esp. 15/а-16/б (MSPC 602). – On the church: Matić 1978, 69-86.

³⁵ *Инвентар (Inventory...) манастира Крушедола 1775*, 12/б-13/а; *Инвентар (Inventory...) манастира Крушедола 1890*, 9/б-10/а.

place within the monastery. During his stay at Krušedol, Sava Tekelija makes no mention of the holy despots' relics, kept in the main church, but speaks of Mother Angelina's hand as the monastery's central relic. A few decades later, Milica Stojadinović Srpkinja in her poem *Srpsko Vojvodstvo* (The Serbian Duchy) describes Krušedol as Mother Angelina's endowment. The rise of a piety associated with the nun's cult can be easily seen from the surviving documents in the monastery's archives, but it certainly was not an isolated phenomenon restricted to Krušedol. Between the 1750s and 1850s the status of family steadily rose and, accordingly, the status of woman. Her presence was increasingly felt not only in private but also in public life. The phenomenon was especially conspicuous in the domain of religion, the contributions to ecclesiastical institutions made by women becoming more and more frequent and significant. That was a proof of an increasingly active expression of female piety within institutional religion, which inevitably led to changes in the official veneration of certain saints.

The strengthening of Mother Angelina's cult also brought about changes in the symbolic topography of Krušedol. Next to the main northern entrance within the complex there was an old drinking fountain. The earliest sources dating from the first decades of the eighteenth century often refer to it, but they say nothing about its dedication. A century later, during the renovation, the fountain was dedicated to Mother Angelina. It then was given the aspect of a chapel and frescoed by Josif Slajd, a little-known painter from Arad.³⁶ The frescoes are now destroyed by damp, but it is known that the Venerable Mother was painted above the fountain. At the time of the extensive renovation under archimandrite Nikanor Grujić the exterior of Mother Angelina's small church was also renovated. The works were carried out in 1857 owing to a donation by Ana Ristić, the wife of a prominent lawyer of Sremski Karlovci.³⁷ In the course of the latter half of the nineteenth century her cult became so popular that the hosts of devotees, especially women, began to disturb the peace of everyday monastic life. For that reason the renovation initiated at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, under archimandrite Anatolije Janković, involved an overall restructuring of the monastic complex. The main entrance was transferred to the southeast wing and next to it a staircase to the first floor was built. Visitors were thus able to get to the chapel without passing through the rest of the complex. The chapel itself was renovated and in front of the entrance a large icon of Mother Angelina was displayed.³⁸

The structural change in the hierarchy of the Krušedol cults is observable also in the monastery's changed feast. In the eighteenth century the principal feast was Bishop Maksim's Day, celebrated on 18 January. Under archimandrite Krestić, the feast-day was 30 July, Mother Angelina's Day.³⁹ On that day, the hosts of believers would come to the

³⁶ The contract with Josif Slajd was discussed at the brotherhood assembly of 16 August 1840: *Протокол саборни (Congregational protocol) 1831-1928* (MSPC 588; Timotijević 2004, 356).

³⁷ *Поменик манастира Крушедола (Memorandum of the Krušedol monastery)*, 72/a (MSPC 622; Timotijević 2004, 369).

³⁸ The icon, a work of the little-known painter Petar Dragić, was donated to the monastery by Jovan Popović from Pančevo in 1888. It vanished during World War II, but it is known from the inventories and earlier literature: *Инвентар манастира Крушедола 1890*, 3/a. There is a mention of it in: Bogdanović 1904, 441.

³⁹ Instructive is the report on the monastery's principal feast submitted by archimandrite Dimitrije Krestić at the brotherhood assembly of 26 July 1828: *Протокол саборни 1799-1830*, 99/b (MSPC 613;

monastery and after the service a large procession would make its way to the village of Krušedol and back. At the head of the procession a banner was carried with the icon of the Virgin and Christ on one side, and the icon of Mother Angelina on the other.⁴⁰ The monastery's feast particularly attracted the sick and the troubled, and special prayers were read for them before Mother Angelina's reliquary.⁴¹ Around the middle of the century, the feast grew into a big popular festivity increasingly assuming the character of a national event. As Nikanor Grujić emphasised, it evoked 'the feeling of national grief for the nation's lost glory. For not only that at such assemblies the people could in the readings and songs at church hear about the glory of their saints, but they also could learn to remember their national glory by listening to the blind minstrel's songs about the glorious deeds from their national past'.⁴² While he was the archimandrite of Krušedol, Nikanor Grujić showed a vivid interest in Mother Angelina, more than in the other members of this holy family. One of the reasons was certainly the rise of her cult at Krušedol itself. His free translation of her *vitae*, which were preserved in a manuscript *menaion* for the month of July, was prepared for publication by Mitrofan Šević.⁴³ Grujić collected material for Mother Angelina's biography for as long as he was at Krušedol, but it was not published in his lifetime.⁴⁴ The work he had begun was completed by his spiritual son Ilarion Ruvarac, a Krušedol monk, who published one of the earliest historical studies on Mother Angelina (Ruvarac 1869, 13-17).

Archimandrite Grujić saw the veneration of Mother Angelina as an occasion for putting forward his ideas about a national religion that closely interlocks religious and national ideals. It is best illustrated by the sermons he preached on Mother Angelina's Day, in which the official liturgical sphere of the cult is transposed into the context of national religion (Ruvarac 1892, 94-101). Grujić interprets her cult in the light of the idea of her motherhood. Taking for his starting-point the fact that liturgical texts call her Venerable Mother Angelina, he links her motherhood with the nation. He interprets the saint in the light of the idea about the mother of a ruling family as the mother of the nation. She thus becomes a national historical heroine, a canonised role model to all Serbian mothers. Archimandrite Grujić's oration on the monastery's principal feast-day lists all those who were buried at the monastery. He first singles out Mother Angelina, the Serbian despotess whose actions 'brought her a chosen place with God and the blessed name of mother with the posterity'. Into the old structure of the Christian cult, where

Timotijević 2004, 365). Cf.: Milorad 1890, 267, with a list of feasts celebrated by the Fruška Gora monasteries that mentions but a single Krušedol feast, 'Mother Angelina's Day on 30 July'.

⁴⁰ A red-damask banner from 1903 survives (Krušedol 510).

⁴¹ Similar custom of prayer-reading was practised by the other monasteries on their feast-days throughout the 19th century: Milorad 1890, 267.

⁴² *Мисли Никанора Грујића о особинама и мишљењу српског народа* [Thoughts of Nikanor Grujić on characteristics and ability to think of the Serbian people], Chapter 'О црквеним и манастирским славама' [On church and monastery holy days], 474. Such form of celebrating feast-days at the Fruška Gora monasteries received some criticism: Milorad, 1890, 267-8. Cf.: Stefan 1928, 285-94; Popović 1910, 324; D. Ruvarac 1912, 221-2.

⁴³ 'Мајка Ангелина (Уредништво листа објављује превод животописа мајке Ангелине од Н. Грујића, као и препис овог животописа од М. Шевића)', *Српски Сион* 19 (1905), 551-3 ['Mother Angelina (The editorial board releases the Nikanor Grujić's translation of Mother Angelina's vita, together with the transcription of this vita by M. Sevic)]. Manuscript: *Menaion for July* (MSPC 164). On the manuscript: Радојчић 1939, 301-2. The critical edition of the vita from this manuscript: Stefanović 1986, 133-7.

⁴⁴ The text was published later, after the author's death: Grujić 1905, 549-53.

sainthood is earned through deeds for the faith, a national element was thus introduced, which is earned through deeds for the people. Deeds for the faith and for the people are inseparable, the concept of national religion bringing them into a firm relationship. Thus every national saint had a potential for becoming a national historical hero. Whether that would come to pass in reality depended on the desirable public virtue recognised in a saint's life which, as such, was eligible for the established national programme.

The constitution of the cult of Angelina's motherhood, which celebrated her as a national historical heroine, did not result from the then current inventing of a tradition (Hobsbaum&Ranger 1983). All liturgical texts, especially her sinaxarion vita, laid emphasis on her family role, her loyal and selfless fulfilment of her duties as a wife and mother. On that basis was in the nineteenth century built the religious and national cult of Mother Angelina as an ideal example of female virtues in a patriarchal society. As a distinct category, defined against male virtues, it appeared towards the end of the nineteenth century in the ethical writings of Dositej Obradović. A comparison between her sinaxarion vita, written in the mid-sixteenth century, and the female moral code advocated by Dositej Obradović and his followers, shows that it significantly changed in the late eighteenth century due to the inclusion of patriotism among fundamental public virtues as important in the edification of women as in that of men. According to Dositej, patriotism was supposed to replace religion. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the Enlightenment in crisis and a religious and national renaissance led to a revival of old Christian morals. Instead of replacing religion, as Dositej Obradović expected, national feeling became associated with it forming a unique religious and national identity. One of its pivots became the family and woman, as a wife and mother. She was the guardian of tradition, and especially of religion which was seen as the foundation of the nation's identity.

It was on these concepts that was formed the cult of Mother Angelina as a national heroine. The mechanism of its formation was very simple, as shown by the sermons of archimandrite Nikanor Grujić. The love of the family and religion was identified with the love of the nation. Through that channel the old religious ideals flew into national ideals. Among the works influencing the propagation of this new interpretation of Mother Angelina's cult was *Ogledalo hristijanske dobrodeteli* (The Mirror of Christian charity) written by Professor Nikola Dj. Vukićević as a handbook for Teacher Training School at Sombor (Vukicevic 1863). First published in Vienna in 1863, the book had several editions. It points to Christ and the Virgin as the foremost paragons of virtue, followed by the most prominent of all-Christian saints. Five national saints are included among them: Stefan Štiljanović, archbishop Arsenije I, St Sava, prince Lazar and Mother Angelina. Besides St Petka, she is the only woman saint included in the collection, and is interpreted as the example of a national historical heroine. Her personality assembles all the virtues ascribed to a female religious and national ideal. She receives basic domestic and religious education at her parents' home. Her parents 'provide for her studies, and she proves a diligent learner'. As a married woman, she is 'obedient' to her husband and lives with him 'in love'. She raises her children according to 'God's law'. She helps the Serbian people, 'who called and still call her their mother, mother Angelina' (Vukicevic 1863, 169-173).

At the same time, some more modern myths of national historical heroines were formed which were not based on sainthood, such as the myth of empress Milica, wife of

prince Lazar Hrebeljanović. In the mid-1850s a series of booklets by Mihail Rozen was announced under the common title *Galerija znamenitih žena srpskih* (A gallery of illustrious Serbian women). Those were the heroines of the Serbian Middle Ages sung about in folk poetry, above all princess Milica (Rozen 1866). The series included a contemporary heroine, princess Ljubica, wife of prince Miloš Obrenović, buried in the main church at Krušedol (Rozen 1866; Timotijević 2000). As the structure of a national heroine kept expanding, to the historical examples were added some contemporary ones which propagated a new and different place of the woman in national programme. A good illustration of such a myth is the poetess Milica Stojadinović Srpskinja who, in 1848, shaped her national ideals on the model of Schiller's *Joan of Arc* (Skerlic 1935, 85).⁴⁵ The cult of Mother Angelina fitted into the increasingly complex structure of a national heroine without losing its original strength and purpose. At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries it was at its peak, as evidenced by a series of texts published in theological periodicals (Aleksic 1905; Dimitrijevic 1914; Anonym 1923). They show that the cult of Angelina as a national heroine – a holy mother – remained in the old framework, the one propagating the woman's traditional, family-bound, place in a patriarchal society and her indirect participation in public life through her husband and children (Veselinovic 1894, 481-483; Nikolic 1904, 152-155; Pavlovic 1889, 202-204).⁴⁶

The strengthening of the nationalised heroic aspect of Mother Angelina's cult was endorsed primarily by the Church, the institution which assumed a religious-national character in the nineteenth century (Timotijević 1996, 7-31). In addition to pastoral theological texts, the latter is also reflected in the fact that her portrait was more and more often included in the programmes of wall- and icon-painting for parish churches in the Metropolitanate of Karlovci. Although she was usually painted as a counterpart of St Petka, different examples are also known. In the iconostasis that Stevan Aleksić painted for the parish church at Konak in 1909/10, the icon of Mother Angelina is placed above the side door and symmetrically to St Simeon. Portrayed in monk's habits, they pray before the Saviour as intercessors for the believing Serbian nation. Mother Angelina even occurs included among the so-called throne icons, as in the parish church at Bečej painted by Uroš Predić about 1890. Germane to the understanding of the meaning of these representations is the new iconostasis painted by Djordje Krstić between 1893 and 1897 for the parish church at Čurug that was damaged in the events of 1848/9. In a letter to the bishop of Bačka (preserved in the Archive of the Museum of the City of Belgrade), explaining his reasons for painting Mother Angelina next to St Petka above the iconostasis side door, Krstić interprets the saint as a heroine, a paragon of private and public virtues in whose actions religious and national ideals seem inextricably intertwined (Simic-Milovanovic 1956, 141-152). Attaching great importance to her sacrifice for her family, he goes on to say that in her old age she became a nun because she longed to 'approach the Serbian people with a saintly example, convinced that from that consecrated position – as a nun, she could influence Serbian mothers even more in

⁴⁵ Instructive for an insight into the legend surrounding this poetess: *Споменица Милице Стојадиновић Српкиње*, Одбор београдских девојака [*Memorial of Milica Stojadinovic Srpskinja*, The Committee of Maidens from Belgrade], Belgrade 1907. Unavoidable among earlier texts published in the theology press: Rajković 1884, 154-6, 161-3, 170-1.

⁴⁶ Some very conservative texts concurrently appeared in the theology press: Rakić 1894, 136-7, 151-3, 169-71, 202-3. For a synthesis, dealing with the 20th rather than with the 19th century: Radic 1998, 113-25.

order that honour, honesty and love should be cherished in every Serbian home'. All these sacrifices 'our holy Mother offers on the altar of Serbian happiness hopeful to save the people, at least spiritually, from the ferocious invasion of infidels and to tie them more firmly to their faith'.

Krstić's icon is a committed historical representation of the saint, compatible with the rules of national devotional art and intended for moral and didactic purposes. And yet, it was commissioned by the Church and, therefore, the representation of national moral *exempla* is directed primarily towards the celebration of the faith. Speaking about the Čurug painting, Krstić explains: 'Our holy Mother takes off her rich robe and puts on a black habit; standing before the candle in a dark cell, hands pressed together, she bids farewell to the despotic crown'. The religious roots of the cult are observable in other images of the national 'holy mother', largely because most of them were commissioned by the Church. She is usually depicted as a nun, and some of her images are fully in the spirit of old iconic conceptions. The historicisation of the saint and her transformation into a national heroine did not weaken the belief in her role as a heavenly intercessor or in the miraculous powers of her relics kept at Krušedol. The old cult and the new myth, the merits before God and the merits for the Nation were thus complementary to each other within the national religion.

The veneration of Mother Angelina spread across the Principality of Serbia owing to the Belgrade edition of metropolitan Mihailo's *Srbljak* published in 1861. Its presence had been felt even before, but mostly associated with private piety. For instance, the popular leader Toma Vučić Perišić had a church dedicated to Mother Angelina built in memory of his late wife at Gruža in 1857 (Pavlovic 1965, 153). In the Metropolitanate of Belgrade such examples are not numerous, because the place of woman in the national programme of the Principality, and subsequently the Kingdom of Serbia was different. As a result, some other types of historical heroines were also emphasised. In addition to empress Milica, this is best illustrated by the popularisation of the myth of a tragic heroine, the mother of the Jugović brothers. The cult of Mother Angelina as a national historical heroine did not cross the boundaries of the Metropolitanate of Karlovci. It was especially cultivated in religious schools for girls and various women's associations where she was recognised, among other things, greatly respected as a skilful embroider (Radojčić 1939, 126-130). Thus a Serbian women's society of Venerable Mother Angelina was founded in Budapest on 3 December 1898, as well as a boarding school for girls called 'Mother Angelina's Instructional School for Serbian Girls'. A few years later, the two institutions were moved to a building erected with the money of the landowner Lazar Dundjerski and his wife Sofija⁴⁷ (Fig. 2). The gable of this building, popularly known as 'Angelianum', contained a mosaic portraying Mother Angelina as despotess, in the regal attire and crowned. The cartoon for the mosaic was drawn by a famous Serbian painter Paja Jovanović, and the image became known owing to a reproduction published in the 1905 issue of *Nova Iskra*⁴⁸ (Fig. 3). Thus a century-long transformation of this saint's cult into the myth of a national heroine was completed.

⁴⁷ The building, constructed between 1904 and 1908, was designed by the architect Pavel Liptak, teaching assistant at the Polytechnical School in Budapest: Вујичић 1997, 48-50.

⁴⁸ 'Света Мајка Ангелина (сликао П. Јовановић) [The holy mother Angelina (painted by P. Jovanovic)]', *Нова Искра* VII/10 (1905) 315.

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The process of historicising the cults of the Branković and their interpretation in the light of national ideas was given its final form in the early twentieth century, at the time of archimandrite Anatolije Janković (1899-1928). Due to his efforts, Dimitrije Ruvarac published the book *Manastir Krušedol s obzirom na prava i dužnosti fruškogorskih manastira u XIX veku* (The Monastery of Krušedol with respect to the rights and obligations of the Fruška Gora monasteries in the 19th century) (Ruvarac 1918).⁴⁹ It was the first text on a monastery from the Metropolitanate of Karlovci based on critical historical method. Romantic historicism gave way to harsh critical analysis of sources, but the idea of a national function of Krušedol along with the cults of its saints was not abandoned. The only difference is in that Dimitrije Krešić's book spoke to emotions while the book by Dimitrije Ruvarac addressed the reason. Both, however, had the same purpose – to lay emphasis on a *topos* in the historical topography of national symbols. At the very beginning of the twentieth century archimandrite Anatolije Janković converted the old winter refectory to a repository where the monastery's treasures and the objects associated with the holy despots were put on display in accordance with all the principles of museum practice.⁵⁰ The historical reception of the Krušedol cults, and of the monastery itself, largely took on a museum aspect. This undertaking became the basis for the further reception of Krušedol where the former national monument was increasingly seen as a cultural historical monument.⁵¹ Thus the cults of the Krušedol saints gradually lost their intended national character that had marked their veneration in the nineteenth century.

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⁴⁹ Especially on the pages 75-6, the author announced his writing, at the request of archimandrite Anatolije Janković, a more exhaustive history of the Monastery of Krušedol; however, it never appeared. – Instructive for Ruvarac's view of the history of the Fruška Gora monasteries is a text published a decade earlier: 'Историја фрушкогорских манастира [The history of monasteries of Fruška Gora]', *Бранково коло* 4, no 43 (1898), col. 1369-1404.

⁵⁰ Such a display of the treasury lasted until the beginning of World War II, when all of the monastery's treasures were taken to Zagreb. They were returned after the war, but remained stored in the Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Only a few objects were restored to Krušedol.

⁵¹ This can be seen from one of the last surviving memorial books containing entries from 6 May 1939 to 19 July 1941. The type of entries makes it look more like a visitor's book: *Поменик манастира Крушедола* (MSPC 652). The same tendency was common to all the monasteries of Fruška Gora.

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THE RELICS OF ST STEFAN ŠTILJANOVIĆ

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Abstract: The cult of St Stefan Štiljanović, popularly but unofficially regarded as the last Despot of the medieval Serbian state, appears to have originated soon after his death in Slavonia, probably in 1543. Documentary evidence is found in the *Повесно слово* (Historical Letters) and *Похвално слово* (Commendation Letters), as well as the saint's feast-day liturgy, his Service. It was said that a band of Ottomans, led by a blinding light and suspecting the presence of treasure, dug up the grave of the saint. The Brief Historical Letter (*Кратко повесно слово*) reports that the Ottoman commander Amir, a relative of Stefan, turned the body over to Prior Teofil of the monastery at Šišatovac in the summer of 1543. The saint's remains lay there until World War II, when the area became part of the Nazi-sponsored state of Croatia. At the request of the archimandrite of Vrdnik Longin and after lengthy negotiations, the remains were moved to Serbia on April 13, 1942, and reinterred in Belgrade Cathedral to await their return to the now rebuilt monastery.

An important model of sainthood was established in Serbia with the establishment of the cult of the founder of the ruling Nemanjić dynasty, Simeon Nemanja, after his death in 1199 (D. Popović 1998, 43-53, and 2000a, 347-69). The aim and function of saints' relics were well known during the first years of the independent Nemanjić state (D. Popović 2000, 18-19), and the fall of Constantinople in 1204 brought about more favorable conditions for the full veneration of Simeon. The cult was created and led by his son Sava, who, eight years after his father's death, arranged the ceremonial transfer of his father's remains to Serbia, emphasising the cult's political significance. The further development of the cult is tied to the monastery at Žiča, the coronation church of Serbian kings from the Nemanjićs onwards and intended to be the seat of Serbia's newly independent church organisation. St Sava furnished it with imperial relics from Constantinople (D. Popović 2000, 17-33). Also, by donating relics collected on his journeys which were related to Christ, Mary, John the Baptist and the apostles, Sava formulated a complex programme which was to provide the young Serbian state with a requisite element of state ideology. With the additional presence on Serb soil of imperial relics, this also provided a foundation for the Serbs' entry into the family of European peoples (D. Popović 2000, 22-23). Moreover, it was with imperial relics that Sava endowed within his own community the Temple of the Holy Land, encouraging the idea of the Serbs as the chosen people.

The practice of embalming relics appeared in the medieval Serbian state with the later canonised members of the Nemanjić dynasty, the process not being allowed under the political circumstances at the time of Simeon's death (D. Popović 2000a, 52). It began with Sava's embalming of the body of his brother, the first king of Serbia, Stefan Prvovenčani (D. Popović 2000a, 52). Even though sections of the Church strongly resisted the tendency to favour whole, preserved remains,⁵² these became by far the most popular category of relics, and complex programmes were established around them. The

⁵² *Догматъ о почтаніи святихъ мощей по Стефану Яворскому*, 19.

relics of the sainted nobleman Stefan Štiljanović belong to this category. For nearly four centuries their power radiated from the monastery of Šišatovac on Fruška Gora in the Vojvodina, where they were regarded as its greatest treasure.

Štiljanović was a Montenegrin from the Paštrovići clan who moved north and was awarded lands by the Hungarian king in the first half of the sixteenth century during the then relentless advance of Ottoman rule. He established himself as a commander of Slavonian forces resisting the Turkish army. The exact time, place and circumstances of his death are unknown. Štiljanović is last mentioned as alive in a document from 1540, while an inscription from Šišatovac dated to 1545 places his body in the monastery (Kostić 1923, 72). After the Ottomans in 1543 had captured Valpovo, the town in Baranja awarded to him to administer and in whose defence he took part, Štiljanović seems to have moved to Siklos, where he died soon afterwards. Another account asserts that he was captured, but that the Ottoman commander Murat Bey spared his life and set him free.

The sources for the establishment of Stefan's cult and the circumstances of their arrival at Šišatovac are limited to hagiographic texts created there soon after their arrival (Trifunović 1970, 347). Legend says he was buried on the hill of Đuntir near Siklos. This belief, included in the interpolations added to the *Повесно слово* (Historical Letters, *Ibid.* 77), was widespread among the local population. Services were held there on the saint's day as late as the final decades of the twentieth century (Pandurović 1936, 57). Widespread admiration for Stefan's part in the defence of Slavonia led to his acceptance in popular tradition as the last Despot of the medieval state of Serbia, though he was never declared as such. The last legally acknowledged Despot was Parle Bakić, who was given the title in 1537.

The discovery of the miraculous nature of Stefan's relics is described in the Historical Letters and the Commendation Letter (*Похвално слово*), as well as in the saint's liturgy. It was claimed that one night a group of soldiers from the Ottoman army which had seized the city saw a blinding light that led them to unearth the saint's grave, hoping to find buried treasure. The text of the Commendation Letters describes this in great detail: 'The light sent from above was like a flame. The godless Agarene* soldiers saw the miracle. With haste the earth was dug up. The gullible thought to find a treasure-trove. However, they were wrong to hope, since the silver sought was not found by the greedy and the brigands and the murderers, but instead holy relics gifted with fine scent – a deadly disease upon the mad assassins and the devils, exile to cruel brigands.'⁵³ The liturgical service clearly notes the degree of the remains' preservation: 'The armies of the Agarenes stood amazed, looking at the miraculous sight: thy body incorrupt, preserved in the earth by divine power.' (*The term 'Agarenes', literally meaning 'descendants of Hagar', i.e. Arab, is possibly used here to mean Ottoman soldiers of Asiatic origin. It became, and is still sometimes used as a perjorative term for Turks generally.)

That the *elevatio* of the saint's remains, i.e. their extraction from the original grave, was performed as a consequence of miraculous portents seen by non-believers, requires some comment. Primarily, the motif reflects the historical circumstances after the Ottomans had conquered Baranja in 1543. Serbs did not represent the prevailing ethnic element there, and the area in general remained sparsely inhabited (D. J. Popović 1933, 359). Astonished by the sight, the Turkish soldiers were instantly convinced as to the

⁵³ *Похвално Слово светом Стефану Штиљановићу*, Источник 7/8, Belgrade 1993, 82.

holiness of the body they found, and this was considered a special confirmation, since it came from non-believers (Unknown citizen of Šišatovac, 287).

While the text of the liturgy does not explain how the relics came to be at Šišatovac, the Brief Historical Letter (*Кратко повесно слово*) on Stefan Štiljanović names a relative, the Ottoman commander Amir, as the person who in 1543 handed the body over to prior Teofil.⁵⁴ The Commendation Letter, on the other hand, notes that ‘pious men, with their hearts desiring to have such a pearl in their home, rescued it with honours from the hands of the Agarene chief. They laid (it) on the wagon with joy and travelled merrier than the God-father David of old before the Tabernacle. They arrived at their monastery with joy. The prior came to meet them with all the priests. Well-scented lamps they bore, singing psalms and hymns.’⁵⁵ It seems therefore that the *translatio* of the relics of Stefan Štiljanović did not involve a large number of participants, including the highest authorities of church and state and the ruler himself, as was the case with the transfer of relics during the time of the independent Serbian state. Then, under the influence of Byzantine and western European practice, they were pompous events with complex ideological and political connotations.⁵⁶ In this case the historical sources do not provide any information, but bearing in mind the troubled times and the half-deserted area of Srem, the conditions did not allow the translation of the relics to be conducted with the usual ceremony.⁵⁷

The founding and development of the cult should also be viewed in light of the fact that Šišatovac monastery was founded by monks fleeing from the monastery of Žiča before the advancing Ottomans. As an inscription at Šišatovac records, Prior Teofilo of Žiča, along with the monks Ilarion and Visarion, came to this region in 1520, found the ruined church of the Remetsko monastery, and founded a new community (Petković 1951, 31). Even though Žiča lost its initial importance during the later thirteenth century, following Mongol incursions and after the seat of the Serbian church moved south, it long retained an awareness of the ideological principles of the Serbian medieval state as formulated by St Sava. Prior Teofilo and his monks were doubtless guarding the tradition they carried from Žiča as they enshrined the new saint’s remains.

It is also important to note the close proximity of Krušedol monastery, founded a few decades earlier by members of the last Serbian family with legitimate claims to rulership. Members of the Branković family came to the region with relics of their ancestor, Stefan the Blind, and of Jovan, who was the last to bear the title of Despot in the family. It is well known that Jovan’s canonisation was expected. Also it would appear that these relics, when transferred to the monastery under the supervision of Bishop Maksim immediately prior to his death in 1516,⁵⁸ were not buried, but ‘as befitting their saintly status’, were enshrined in reliquaries placed by the altar (Timotijević 1991-1992, 127). The relics of Stefan Štiljanović therefore played a role in the sacralisation of the area into which, following the fall of Smederevo, the centre of Serbian spiritual life was

⁵⁴ The text of the *Кратко повесно слово* was published as an addendum to the work of Jovanović 1989, 77.

⁵⁵ *Похвално Слово светом Стефану Штиљановићу*, 82.

⁵⁶ On the *translatio* of saints’ relics in the Nemanjić state, D. Popović 2006, 189-204.

⁵⁷ On descriptions of the *translatio* of relics in medieval Serbian literature, Trifunović 1974, 283-287.

⁵⁸ Timotijević, *Крушедол*, 336. I am grateful to Dr Timotijević for also providing me with access to the contents of his unpublished monograph. [The monograph *Manastir Krušedol I-II* by M. Timotijević was out of print in Belgrade, 2008. MD]

being concentrated.⁵⁹ As the liturgical service of the translation of his relics puts it, ‘the people of Israel crossed the Red Sea, bearing the bones of Joseph, while we, in the God-given new Israel, people of the Lord, kissing the relics of Stefan with love, cross the waterless spiritual sea of this life’ (Unknown citizen of Šišatovac, 283). These lines harken back to earlier Serbian hagiography and also reminded their hearers of the most famous saintly act of Stefan, like Joseph distributing wheat to the hungry (Đurić 1983, 116-121; Marjanović Dušanić 1997, 210-15). The idea of the sacralisation of a country through the relics of predecessors has its Serbian roots in St Sava’s Life of St Simeon Nemanja, in which the founder of the Nemanjić dynasty is compared with Jacob and his sons with Joseph. The transfer of the relics of Simeon to

Raška is compared with that of the bones of Jacob from Egypt. The idea of Sava and Nemanja as creators and leaders of New Israel gradually disappeared during the fourteenth century, but the idea of the Serbs as the chosen people remained. Even in the sixteenth century, when the independent Serbian state was gone, the Serbs, as the New Israelites, gathered around the grave of Despot Stefan Branković in Srem, much like the Jews around the Ark of the Covenant.

Jelena, the wife of Stefan, subsequently arrived at Šišatovac and joined a nearby nunnery where she died not long after, her body being buried in the narthex of the church (Unknown citizen of Šišatovac, 293). A tradition grew that Jelena brought items that belonged to her husband, including as a cup, a set of clothes and a book containing the Psalms of David and the Church Constitution (Kostić 1923, 76). These secondary relics aided the cult’s development. It may be said that the cult of St Jelena Štiljanović functioned from the very start as part of the cult of her husband. They certainly share the same feast day. Her remains were later moved to the reliquary in which the body of her husband was kept. This mirrored developments at Krušedol, where the proclamation of the sainthood of Bishop Maksim (1516) and Despot Angelina (1516-20) completed the cult of the Srem Branković family,⁶⁰ the remains of Bishop Maksim being placed in the reliquary of Despot Stefan, while those of Mother Angelina were put in the reliquary of Despot Jovan.⁶¹ The idea of a holy family was complemented by the crafting of a joint liturgical service to commemorate the ‘Holy Despots’, emerging at the latest in the second half of the sixteenth century (Timotijević, *Kryuedol*, 338). The custom of burying the wife by her husband’s feet (*ad pedes*), originated in European medieval practice and occurred in Serbia in the case of Prince Vladimir and his wife Kosara, according to the Bar genealogy.⁶²

According to the liturgy for his feast day, soon after the relics of Stefan Štiljanović were moved to the Šišatovac monastery doubts were raised as to their authenticity. ‘Men who doubted thy incorrupt body ripped off the hand of the healer and bore it to the City of Emperors [Constantinople] and those saints who dwelled therein saw the presence of the Lord, had joy in their soul and kissed with their lips and spoke with their tongues... Admiring thy wonderful appearance and thy sweet scent, the saints of the Mother of

⁵⁹ On the institutional sacralisation of Serbian regions across the river Sava with the building of Krušedol, Timotijević 1998, 422-23.

⁶⁰ The key research on the cult of the Srem Branković family was done by Pavlović 1965, 133-40 and 146-55, Radovanović 1971, 290-305, as well as Timotijević 1991-92, 116-32.

⁶¹ More on the relics of the Branković family in Timotijević, *Kryuedol*, 324-43.

⁶² On this custom, Pavlović 1965, 278.

Cities did praise God and cried out: “Thou art wonderful in glory, oh Lord, and thy works are miraculous” (Unknown citizen of Šišatovac, 291). Though the story is probably apocryphal, it would seem that the brotherhood of Šišatovac was long aware that the relics were not those of aristocrats like the sainted Branković family. Štiljanović was a simple nobleman (Samardžić 1994, 132). In his lifetime he did not stand out for any special accomplishments. He even died a natural death, though subsequently he was given the character of a Christian soldier fighting the Turks. The brotherhood of Šišatovac needed to make sure that the sanctity of these relics was supported by arguments as powerful as the confirmation of authenticity by the first among equals, the Ecumenical Patriarch, and that these were woven into the devotional texts.

At the time when these texts concerning Stefan Štiljanović are presumed to have originated, the Peć Patriarchy was under renewal, and a confirmation of the relics’ authenticity could have been requested from the Serbian Patriarch. However, the Peć Patriarchy was busy establishing a church organisation and the monasteries of Fruška Gora could not have come within the sphere of its most vital interests. In addition, the cult of Stefan Štiljanović, having arisen and developed in Šišatovac, remained local and was certainly overshadowed by that of the Branković family. In these circumstances, the monks turned to fabricating and fortifying lore which was as convincing as possible.

As early as the first decades of the seventeenth century, particularly during the time of Patriarch Pajsije Janjevac, the Peć Patriarchy managed to consolidate its position in the Ottoman state, which was significantly upset by Serb uprisings. Conditions for closer connections between peripheral regions and the core of Serbia became easier, facilitating the visit of Patriarch Pajsije and the Belgrade Metropolitan Avesalom to Šišatovac in 1631, described by the Patriarch in the monastery memorial book (Petković 1951, 71). He gave the veneration of St Stefan’s relics as the reason for his visit. The Patriarch ordered a transcription of the hagiographic texts dedicated to this saint, and it is possible that he was himself the author of the *Кратко повесно слово* (Jovanović 2001, 6-7). During his visitation, the first known symbolic transfer of relics of the saint occurred. When the visitation committee visited the monastery in 1753 and described the reliquary holding the relics, it was noted that it was 123 years old, dating the reliquary to 1630, immediately preceding the arrival of the Patriarch (Rugarac 1903, 149). The reliquary, currently kept at the Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church, was fashionably made of nutwood, and decorated with bone and nacre marquetry.⁶³ On Stefan’s feast day, October 4, 1631, in the presence of the patriarch and metropolitan, it was ceremonially blessed, and the remains of the saint placed in it (Petković 1951, 71).

It is probably noteworthy that during the patriarch’s lifetime, translations occurred of the Emperor Uroš and of Simeon, i.e. Stefan Prvovenčani, the two saints to whom the most important literary works of the patriarch were dedicated. While the *elevatio* of the body of Emperor Uroš was the first proclamation of his sainthood, after lying ‘in the dark of the earth’ for 211 years, that of Stefan Prvovenčani in 1629 represented a confirmation of long-established sainthood (Jovanović 2001, 80-82). Patriarch Pajsije Janjevac cared particularly for nurturing national cults. His visit also reflects the influence of the Catholic Church with whom he maintained intensive contacts. In the time of the Counter-

⁶³ This type of reliquaries was used to display the relics of St Teodor Tiron in Hopovo, King Stefan Prvovenčani in Studenica, and the Archbishop of Peć Nikodim at the Patriarchy of Peć. Han 1989, 205-15.

Reformation, special attention was being given by Rome to the celebration of saints as a function of inspiring a new, active piety (Wittkower 1967, 1-21).

The visit also occurred at a time when Stefan's cult found itself under assault from within the Catholic Church; claims that the relics of Šišatovac in fact belonged to the Franciscan preacher John Capistrano.⁶⁴ Renowned for his achievements across Europe, John was particularly distinguished in the defence of Belgrade against the Turks in 1456, alongside Janos Hunyadi. He died from the plague soon afterwards in a monastery in Ilok, where his relics were kept until the Ottoman conquest of the town in 1526, when they disappeared (Gavrilović 1866, 17-61). King Mathias Corvinus, son of Capistrano's comrade in arms Hunyadi, had already asked for his canonisation, but John was not beatified until 1690, and proclaimed a saint only in 1724 (Radović 1950, 88). From the early sixteenth century, and particularly from the incursion of Suleiman the Magnificent which threatened to overrun Europe, the popularity of those saints tied to the struggle against the Ottoman Empire rapidly increased in the Catholic Church. In this environment there was a need to support John's cult and to locate his lost remains in one of the monasteries of Srem.

Several other important visitations took place at Šišatovac, including that of the Patriarch of Peć Maksim in 1666 (Petković 1951, 71), Belgrade Metropolitan Pajsije in 1680 (*Ibidem*), the exiled Patriarch of Peć, Arsenije III Čarnojević in 1702, and the Metropolitan of Karlovci Vikentije Popović Janjevac in 1715 (*Ibidem*).

Faced by Ottoman onslaughts following the defeat of Austria in 1690, the relics of Stefan Štiljanović had to leave Šišatovac. In this they were in the company of the most revered of the Srem relics – such as those of Teodor Tiron from Hopovo, the holy family of Branković from Krušedol, and of Prince Lazar, moved in the Great Migration of 1697. These relics were accompanied by the patriarch and bishops, while common folk, monks and priests followed behind (D. J. Popović 1954, 36). The monks of Šišatovac ended their journey in the town of Edun, and laid the relics of Stefan in the church of the Holy Ascension.⁶⁵

The cult now began to transcend the bounds of Fruška Gora. An inscription from 1743 talks of its widespread presence of this cult, a priest from Požarevac, Stefan Aranitović, writing of his desire to visit and kiss the relics of Stefan Štiljanović 'with all his heart' (Stojanović 1984, 2, no. 2864, 140). The almost total destruction of the relics of the Branković family when the Turkish army, retreating from Srem, burned the monastery of Krušedol, had a considerable impact on this development (Pavlović 1954, 245-46). Even though the popularity of the Branković family increased as a result of their burning (Timotijević, *Krušedol*, 341), it considerably reduced the number of relics on Fruška Gora. This benefitted the cult of Stefan Štiljanović, which would become one of the most popular cults of the Metropolitan of Karlovci during the eighteenth century (Pavlović 1965, 150).

⁶⁴ The legend of Kapistran's body being buried in Šišatovac is mentioned in the Chronicle of the Franciscan Monastery of Ilok, as well as the book: *Cronografia istorica del ducato e provincia del Sirmio*, printed in Rome in 1700.

⁶⁵ D. J. Popović 1954, 36. This episode is also mentioned in inscriptions from the monasteries of Šišatovac and Grgeteg, though in the latter the town of Žankurtaran is given as the place where the relics of Štiljanović were deposited. Стојановић 1984, 1, nos. 1940 and 1963, 454 and 458.

In fact the monasteries of Fruška Gora enjoyed a revival in that century, helped by the arrival there of Patriarch Arsenije III. Šišatovac became the second most revered monastery of the district (Štraser 1989, 367). When Arsenije's successor, Isaija Đaković, chose Krušedol as the seat of the new Metropolitan see, these monasteries found themselves at the very centre of Serbian church life.⁶⁶ As part of a religious-political programme of the Metropolitan of Karlovci, primarily aiming at defending the privileges of the Serbian people on Austro-Hungarian territory, particular attention was paid to the cults of national saints, particularly those whose relics were within the see (Medaković 1988, 118). The relics of Prince Lazar were moved from St Andrew to the Vrdnik monastery, while those of Emperor Uroš arrived at Jazak in 1705.

The flourishing of the Fruška Gora monasteries in the eighteenth century was reflected in the increase in patrons and their gifts. The monastery in Šišatovac was no exception (Štraser 1989, 372). A special group of patrons were members of the military.⁶⁷ As early as the sixteenth century officers were buried in the narthex of the church at Šišatovac (Grujić 1939, 358), which thus became a counter to the monastery of Krušedol, a mausoleum of high-ranking clerics.⁶⁸ St Stefan became tied to the idea of courage as the main characteristic of the Christian soldier, as the cult of St Maksim Branković from Krušedol had previously become an example of spiritual principles.⁶⁹ Some of the most distinguished representatives of the military nobility were buried at Šišatovac, including Sekula Vitković, the brothers Josif and Jovan Monasterlija, and Vuk and Trifun Isaković (Grujić 1939, 358). All made provisions for their burial while still alive, accompanied by significant gifts, requesting resting places in the immediate vicinity of the relics of the saint (Štraser, 372-78).

Visitations to the monastery of Šišatovac by high dignitaries of the Church continued, those by the Metropolitan of Karlovci-Belgrade Mojsej Petrović in 1726 and Vikentije Jovanović in 1733 being part of the implementation of monastic reforms (Timotijević 1989, 341-366). In this period the visitations gained the form of ephemeral baroque spectacle with the participation of the Metropolitan. Emphasis on relic veneration now had a dimension of political propaganda and served to glorify church institutions (*Ibidem*). The spirit of baroque magnificence certainly attended the event which may be said to represent the pinnacle of eighteenth-century veneration of Stefan. This was the transfer of his relics to a new reliquary ordered by the archimandrite of the monastery in 1760 during the time in office of Prior Vićentije Popović, longest-serving head of the monastery.⁷⁰ It was a very expensive casket made of heavy nutwood, decorated with semiprecious stones and medallions and padded with silk and velvet, typical of the period (Timotijević 1996, 68). The ceremony was attended by the

⁶⁶ Timotijević, *Сремски деспоти Бранковићи и оснивање манастира Крушедола*, 127.

⁶⁷ Donations by members of military circles were so dominant during the eighteenth century that D. Ruvarc calls them the patrons of Šišatovac. See D. Ruvarc, *Опис фрушкогорских манастира 1753*, 131.

⁶⁸ Krušedol, as a mausoleum for hierarchs, gained this character with the burial in the narthex of its founder, Bishop Maksim. Timotijević, *Крушедол*, 352-60.

⁶⁹ On the formation of the cult of Bishop Maksim as ideal hierarch, modelled after St Sava, see Timotijević 1991/92, 149 (with previous literature).

⁷⁰ Vićentije Popović came to Šišatovac in 1728, becoming a monk, prior in 1739, and in 1751 was awarded the rank of archimandrite. He was at the head of Šišatovac until 1774, when he became Bishop of Vršac. Mileusić, 208.

Metropolitan, Pavle Nenadović. An inscription describes the translation in detail. The Metropolitan, having completed the blessing of the newly erected cemetery church of Ss Peter and Paul, led a procession, followed by the people, towards the monastery church, where he ‘blessed the new reliquary and sprinkled holy water upon it, [and] with the archimandrites, priests and deacons carried the bones of St Stefan from the old reliquary to the new. Upon that day was a great celebration and joy in the monastery... The heads of all the monasteries were present, along with the proto-priest of Srem, and a number of priests and plain folk’ (Petkovic 1951, 76). The spectacle recalled the visit by the Patriarch Pajsije (Timotijević 1989, 365).

Archimandrite Vićentije Popović also initiated the construction of a new monastery church. It was a large, stately building⁷¹ that better reflected the increased popularity of the cult and the increased inflow of the faithful and the improved financial state of the monastery, helped by the popularity of the relics and pilgrims’ gifts. In order to foster the cult, Vićentije Popović placed his own large and costly pectoral cross with seven large emeralds around Štiljanović’s neck, cursing anyone who would dare remove it. One of the most distinguished gifts in the new reliquary was a gold box given to Vićentije Popović, when Bishop of Vršac, by Empress Maria Theresa (Mileusić 1992, 57). On May 26, 1780, Popović also moved the relics of Stefan’s wife Jelena, wrapped in cloth, from their previous location in the old church into the reliquary of her husband (Timotijević 1989, 77).

Ideas of rationalism and enlightenment, which were gaining acceptance in the Habsburg state during the reign of Empress Maria Theresa and gained full affirmation during the reign of her son Joseph II, began to penetrate the Metropolitan of Karlovci during the late eighteenth century. As part of the general tendency to limit the power and authority of church institutions, both Catholic and Orthodox, a dramatic reduction of the Orthodox calendar was imposed, in which only the day of St Sava remained as a feast of a national saint. The veneration of relics also changed in character. They were less frequently mentioned as *relics* and more often as *bones*, thus reducing their mystical component. During the nineteenth century, with the awakening of national awareness, a general ‘nationalisation’ of cults took place (Pavlović 1965, 265). Relics began to be decorated with flags, tricolor strings, and other objects which were supposed to give them a national character and suggest a place in the Serbian national corpus. Thus Stefan’s good works were emphasised, and in 1821 his distribution of wheat to the hungry was depicted in the dining hall of the monastery by the painter Arsenije Teodorović, commissioned by Lukijan Mušicki, formerly prior (Simić 1957, 87-89). The motif was doubly powerful since the Serbian people were facing famine due to a drought.

Popular assemblies were still held on Stefan’s feast day, October 4. An inscription from 1925 described the saint as ‘dressed in luxurious clothes. The pillow is of white silk, with gold embroidery, his shirt of thin linen, the red embroidered shroud lined with a gold border, the curtain upon the head embroidered with pearl and decorated with precious stones, the head-dress embroidered with gold by “mistress Jelena”. Upon the shroud is a fabric of gold and green atlas-cloth, some seventy silver buttons with fringes of red silk. The buckle and greave upon the hand of vermeil. The crown also of silver, with precious gems. A small pectoral cross of large amethyst and one panagia of silver bearing the Serb coat of arms’ (Mileusić 1992, 34-35).

⁷¹ On the architecture of the new church of Šišatovac monastery, see Matić 1989, 225.

The relics of St Stefan remained in Šišatovac until the Second World War, when the area became part of the State of Croatia. At the request of the Archimandrite of Vrdnik Longin, and after lengthy negotiations, the relics were allowed to be moved to Serbia on April 13, 1942, together with the relics of Prince Lazar and Emperor Uroš. Dr Radoslav Grujić accompanied them to Belgrade. In his report, submitted to the Holy Synod in Belgrade several days later, he noted that a detachment of German troops saluted the relics, and ‘upon crossing the bridge in Belgrade, the Serbs met the relics and carefully moved them from the German transport truck to a car of the Serbian Red Cross and around 5pm brought them to the Cathedral Church’.⁷² The relics of St Stefan continue to lie in the Church of the Holy Archangel, beneath the iconostasis on its south side, awaiting their return to the currently rebuilt monastery of Šišatovac.

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SAINT'S DAY CELEBRATIONS AND ANIMAL SACRIFICE IN THE SHPATI REGION OF ALBANIA: REFLECTIONS OF LOCAL SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND IDENTITIES

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Abstract: Shpati, in the administrative district of Elbasan, lies in Middle Albania, south of the ancient city of Elbasan (formerly known as *Skampini*), between the rivers Shkumbin and Devoll and the roads of their valleys which followed the route of the ancient *Via Egnatia*. This geographic position carved out the specific physiognomy of the Shpati region, whether as the consequence of resistance and isolation, or of adaptation and openness to continuous change. From a systemic point of view, the area overlaps into further regional networks, while remaining prominent for being at 'the edges' of the state society as it existed for much of the twentieth century.⁷³

The region is composed of two sub-regions: *Shpati i Sipërm*,⁷⁴ meaning 'The Upper Part of Shpati' and commonly known as 'Mountain Shpati'; and *Shpati i Poshtëm*, meaning 'The Lower Part of Shpati' and known also as 'Field Shpati'. The former is composed of three communes: Zavalina, which includes six villages; Gjinari, with 11 ; and Shushica, with 9 nine. The lower part of Shpati is composed of four communes: Shirgjani, Gjergjani, and Gostima, each with seven villages; and Tregani, with twelve (Dalipaj 2006).

The ritual animal sacrifice known in the Balkans as *kurban* finds, in modern Albania at least, different expressions in different units of social structures. These, though they overlap or intermingle, form the basis for people's sense of regional belonging and identity and how they deal with their differences and commonalities.

My ongoing field work has been among the newly-settled (post-1990) families from these villages who moved to the city of Elbasan – specifically on its eastern and south eastern outskirts. The aim is to give an overview of social life at the beginning of the twentieth century, based on collective memory and taking into consideration the issues which the collection of oral testimony raises. Cultural practices are processes, in terms of the space and the time in which such research is based. Consequently the researcher needs to be aware of the difficulties of writing the past through people's memories while living in the present. All possible information has to be gathered in context, though the precise location of the period of time to which respondents refer is a highly difficult target.

The Shpati region

At the beginning of the twentieth century both sub-regions differed in their religious affiliation, modes of subsistence, social organisation, and so on. Upper Shpati was composed mostly of Orthodox villages, which lived as self-sustaining peasant communities. The area is particularly known for its crypto-Christianity. People say of themselves that they are *laramanë* (pied, many-coloured), and the term 'crypto-Christian' is found mainly among formally well-educated people of the region, and in textbooks.

⁷³ For more on Shpati see Tirta: 1987 a.

⁷⁴ All the local terms are as they appear in local dialect.

Lower Shpati, on the other hand, was composed of more Muslim villages, which lived under the system of *chiflig* (feud and farming).

The two sub-regions can be better understood not as isolated dyads, but rather in terms of their resemblances, and in their ways of dealing with difference and similarity in further regional terms. This is because, while they appear to hold and express differences versus one another, they nevertheless remain interdependent (Keesing/Strathern 1998: 68–79; Dalipaj 2007). Historical evidence shows that over time many of the families of the Field Shpati originated as detachments from huge families of the Mountain Shpati (Tirta 1987b: 32; Muka 1987: 98). Large families were characteristic of the Upper Shpati, numbering around 30 to 40 and sometimes even 50 or 80 members.⁷⁵ Families in the Lower Shpati did not extend beyond seven or eight members and the villages also contained populations from elsewhere (Tirta 1987b: 29–35). Christians and Muslims lived together, sometimes literally. K. Dedja from Zavalina told us that in 1933 R. B. from Osteth of Sulova came to their house and stayed there with his family. Dedja said that his father hosted the family because, while they belonged to the Islamic religion, they were of the same kin (R. B. was originally from the kin of Dedaj). He added that he had heard a lot the expression *o i farë* ('is the same seed' – meaning 'of the same kin') from his father (as reported by Tirta 1987b: 37). The ethnographer Rrok Zojzi, in his report on an expedition to the valley of the river Shkumbin, noted that friendship was sacred for the *shpatarak*. When a Muslim died in the house of his Orthodox host, the hosting family called the imam to conduct the proper religious funeral ceremony, just as 'the ancestors' custom asked them to behave' (Zojzi 1949: 44–45).

The relief and location of the two sub-regions has also shaped specific needs which solidified their reciprocity. For example, the villages of Field Shpati have been much more exposed to invasions, during which families retreated to Upper Shpati and shared their lives with the inhabitants there (Tirta 1987a; 1987b). More importantly, the dominant economic resource was transhumance pastoralism. This required the movement of cattle to high pastures in the Upper Shpati during the summer and the use of the fields of Shpati during winter. Conversely, possible lack of feed for their own cattle during winter led the people of Upper Shpati to settle for a part of the year in the villages of field Shpati, where agriculture provided an adequate means of production. In terms of law and administration, though Upper and Lower Shpati had their own councils of elders (*kuvendi i pleqve*), meeting respectively in Gjinar at the place called *Fusha e Kuqe* (The Red Field) and at *Kodra-Bujarës* (The Hill of *Bujarës*), assemblies for the whole region met in Gjergjan at *Hunda e Bregut* (The Nose of the Riverside).⁷⁶ Although the law of *shpatarak*s remains oral, people in both areas carefully obeyed the norms which they called *zakon vendi* ('local custom'), or *vendçe* ('through local customs').⁷⁷ According to Nikolaidu, Metropolitan Archbishop Kozma of Pelagonia invited the Orthodox leaders of the Shpati without success to abandon the old customs and behave according to the canons of the Church and biblical commendments (Nikolaidu 1979: 118). Local tradition has it that old men knew and could ponder the issues through these norms, and an old

⁷⁵ Muka 1987: 95–97. The demographic conclusion is drawn by the author based on the characteristics of the dwellings in both areas.

⁷⁶ Zojzi 1949: 41; Gjergji 1987: 65.

⁷⁷ A lot has been written on this local unwritten law; see, for example, Zojzi 1949, Hasluck (1954) 2005, Nikolaidu 1979, Tirta 1987a and 1987 b, Ulqini 1987, Gjergji 1981 etc.

man (*plak*) was ‘a wise man who arranged the world’ (Ulqini 1987: 209). In local everyday language ‘the world’ (*bota*) means both the natural environment and the people living in it. People also differentiate the world of humans from the world of dead people, the world of *largëqoftit* (devils from which humans ‘should keep away’, creatures which should not even be mentioned), and so on.

A Shpati village is known as *fshat* and *katund* and represents a small social unit, which lies in a well specified territory with widely recognised unalterable borders. Location has been a determining factor in the organisation of territory, and land was of three kinds: communal, familial, and shared – the latter belonging to specific families but in collective use at certain times of the year (a phenomenon known as *hapja e vërrinit*). Each village had its own council of elders, and their meeting was known as *gjyq* (‘court’). Each kin had its own representative who sat in the first row and each family was represented by its own *burrë për derë* (‘man of the family’) (Zojzi 1949: 40–41; Ulqini 1987: 209, 211). So, each village had both independence and self-sustainability, and obligatory cohesion or mutuality. As for marriage, there were two criteria: belonging to the same religion as a prerequisite and belonging to the same village as a strong preference. If the first was not possible within the same village, marriages could take place outside the village, but always within the same religion. People use the expression ‘A good daughter is married within the village’.

Feast-days and *kurban*

Ritual also bound these communities together. Communal feasts took place in each sub-region. For example, in Zavalina, in the place known as *Breg Shëndlli*, on July 20, people from all the villages of the Mountain Shpati and beyond celebrated a huge feast, which they called *Shëndëllia* (St Elijah’s Day, July 20 in the church’s calendar). At the same time, each village has its own feast, some of which include blood sacrifice (*kurban*), particularly in Orthodox villages, and also in Muslim villages where such feasts include *Kurban Bajram* and *Bajrami i Madh* after the fasting month of Ramadan. It seems that the *place* and *time* of the sacrifice takes precedence over, and conditions other rules. In the Upper Shpati, the Orthodox village of Selta celebrates *Shëmrinë* (the feast of the Assumption, August 15 in the church calendar), as does Pashtresh; Zavalina celebrates *Shëndëllinë* (St Elijah, July 20) as already noted; Gjinar celebrates *Shmrenën* (St Marina’s day, July 17); Jeronisht people celebrate *Shën Premten* (St Paraskeva), and so on. However, different people report different dates for these celebrations. One and the same informant may even report two different dates. When asked to explain such differences, the informants give two reasons, one of which is the use of the *alla turka* (literally ‘Turkish’) calendar. They report it as ‘our own calendar’, telling the researcher that it is ‘different from your calendar, which is *alla franga*’ (literally ‘Frankish’, a Levantine term for western European). They say that the *alla franga* calendar precedes the *alla turka* by 13 or 14 days. For example, the first day of spring in the *alla franga* calendar, is March 1, while according to *alla turka* it is March 14. According to the informants, the calculation of these religious feasts by the *alla turka* calendar is a prerequisite, otherwise calamities may occur. During my interviews in June 2007 among the *Bërdufi* families who settled gradually after 1989 in the eastern outskirts of Elbasan, I recorded a story about a boy from the *Ranxha* kin. Three or four years before, they said, the boy came back from migration, and insisted that the people in Selta celebrate Saint

Mary's Day not according to the *alla turka* calendar, but *alla franga*. Next morning the boy unaccountably died. People believed it was a curse for changing the date. So it happens that people mention different dates if they switch between the *alla turka* and *alla franga* calendars, but the feasts must be celebrated *alla turka*. When people are asked what they mean by *alla turka*, they say: 'It was the Turks who brought this calendar' or simply: 'Because this calendar is very, very old'.

A typical feast is that on St Marina's day, July 17, in Gjinar, when people (mainly men from Gjinar, but many other people join in) go to the mountain to a place 200-300m wide which is called *Qorraz*. Local people also call this place *Kisha e Shmrenës* ('the Church of St Marina' – Margaret in the West and also called Morena) or *vakuf* (sacred place). They report that a star from the Mountain of Bukanik is said to have fallen here, showing that the place is sacred. People also say the place was shown through a *gumërata*, a regional term for a large stone with juridical significance, used to demarcate a territorial boundary. Informants reported that the whole village shared the expense of buying a cow and sacrificing it at the door of the church, sprinkling the stones of the front door with its blood. Then the cow was prepared for lunch. The sacrifice, and also the cooking, was done by the *akçi* ('cooks'). These village cooks took no reward, except prestige. At the time the informants were speaking of, there were three: Petër Kërçyku, Muç Mufali and Kol Shnjaku. The meat was boiled and not fried, hence the name of the cooking spot, *veni ku zihet mishi* ('meat boiling place'), 100m from the church. People believe that long ago, on the day of this feast, a deer would approach the place where men were sitting, and would sit down with them. After it took a rest, the villagers would catch the deer and sacrifice it. But one year they caught it before it took a rest (some informants say 'without waiting for it to lap some water'). Since then the deer had never approached again, and the villagers substituted a cow or an ox. According to Tirta, where the legendary belief in the sacrifice of wild animals such as deer and wild goat has survived, is also associated with legends concerning Zana (Zara in the Shpati dialect), the deity of wild nature (Tirta 2004: 116). For example, a song commemorating the building of the castle of Petro Petrosi in Lleshan has a theme common to many countries: the wife of the youngest brother, here called Zara, is sacrificed so that the castle may stand (Tirta 2004: 349).

At Gjinar, each villager brought *raki* (plum brandy) and *meze* (starters) which were communally shared. The ceremony was led by the priest. The toasts began only with *raki*, greeting the day of St Marina and wishes for abundance, well-being and good luck. Then, toasting each other, people recalled their family and kin members, making general or specific wishes for each of them. Then the meal started. Not all the meat of the sacrificed cow was served. Half was put aside and divided in pieces for each family of the village. Each member should eat a piece of it, even a tiny one, to enjoy abundance and well being.⁷⁸

After the meal, men gathered to determine the order for the irrigation water. Considering the many quarrels, troubles and even death threats around this process (Gjergji 1981: 5–6), the sharing of irrigation water throughout the year was a very important event. A further important feature of the feasts which began during the

⁷⁸ To my own field data has been added some fieldwork material of A. Gjergji, from the Archive of Ethnology, IKP, Tirana.

twentieth century was the propagation of the written Albanian language, promoted by visiting patriots such as Lef Nosi.

Another type of sacrifice, not related to specific religious feasts, was performed by village communities to deal with shared issues such as drought, flooding, strengthening the foundations of bridges, and so on. The symbolic sacrifice of straw in fires is attested from Shelcan in Lower or Field Shpati, where in the late evening the whole village gathered to burn straw, gather the cinders and take them back to the fields, in the belief that the abundance of the harvest was burned down in the fire and reborn (Tirta 2004: 277–278). Presumably, the ash actually acted as a fertiliser.

Feast-days and sacrifices of the kin group

A kin group is called in Shpati *fara* ('seed') or *fisi* ('kin'). The people of one kin acknowledge that they come from the same ancestor, although their memory does not recall this ancestor. Different branches of the same kin have settled in different villages of the region, or even in other regions.

Most of the prominent kin groups of Shpati celebrate together a specific religious feast involving the sacrifice of an animal and communal eating and entertainment. If different kin groups live in the same village, they celebrate their separate feasts but people from other kin groups are welcome to join in. In Gjinar, the kin of Mufalak and that of Uruç celebrated *Shën Mhillin* (Archangel Michael's day), that of Dedaj *Shën Gjergjin* (St George), of Kërçyk *Shën Shtjefnin* (St Stephen), of Bezhan *Shën Mitrin* (St Demetrios), of Peçi *Shënkollin* (St Nicholas), of Topi *Shëmartinë* (St Martin), of Karaj *Shënkollin* (St Nicholas), and the autochthon Shqau *Shën Premten* (St Paraskevi). Informants say that there are kins which arrived later in the village, for example the kin of Karaj and that of Bezhan, who came from the village of Selta. Everywhere a branch of a kin settled, it vigorously observed its own feast and also the feast of the present village, and also, though faintly, the feast of the village from which it came. Thus in Lleshan, a Muslim village between Gjinar and Shelcan, two Orthodox villages, a branch of the kin of Gjollin settled, coming from Selta and remaining Orthodox. They continued to celebrate the feast of their own kin and that of Selta village.

At kin feasts a ram or lamb is sacrificed and cooked by the *akçi* of the village. The feast is arranged in one of the houses of the kin, probably the most distinguished, and is joined also by daughters from the kin group who have married within or outside the village, affines, godfathers and blood-brothers. (Blood-brotherhood is a form of institutionalising close friendship between two men from different families. It involves mutual duties and rights, just as in the case of two brothers, with the exception of property rights. This is why sometimes it is called also *vëlla pa hise* ('brother without the right to [property] share'). Tirta has suggested that these feasts are given in honour of the leader of the kin group (Tirta 1987: 13). The cooked meat is distributed among the relatives who bought it and also to other people around, this act being called *bëj hise* ('making shares'). Indeed, the Albanian word *hise* conveys not only the meaning of sharing, but also a kind of predestined or sacred right that the others have over this share, such as should not be contested by either party.

In Gjinar, *Shtanasi* (the feast of St Athanasius, celebrated in winter on January 18 and in spring in mid-April or May) is also celebrated jointly by the whole village, not only by the kin of *Shqau*. Informants say that there are two types of *Shqau* kin. One of

them is autochthonous, the other comes from *Hija e Tomorrit* ('Shadow of Tomorr', a mountain in South Albania) and were probably Slavs. Although I have not witnessed any significant difference between these groups, the latter has been excluded from the celebration of *Shtanasi*, as explained earlier, but not from the village feast of *Shmrena*.

Family feast-days and *kurban*

In the Shpati region, different names for 'family' are used, such as *familje* ('family'), *shpi* ('house, household'), *tym* ('smoke'), *zjarr* ('fire'), and *derë* ('door'). According to the concept of *shpatarak*, family and house are inseparable. The family – the patriarchal one – was the smallest economic and self-representative unit.

Certain universal feasts could be celebrated within the small family group. These include *Pashka* (Easter), *Dita e Verës* (The Day of Spring), *Shën Gjergj* (St George's day), and *Uji i bekum* ('Blessed Water' – the Epiphany). Except for Easter, when a lamb was sacrificed in the yard early in the morning, on these days a fowl would generally be sacrificed and its blood sprinkled on the stones and stairs of the house. Often the sacrificial bird or animal would be the first to enter the house in the morning, *përshëndetsi këmbëmbarë*, 'the first salutatory being which brings prosperity', and thereby thought to bring luck to the house, for which reason it was taken to every corner of the house so as to bring prosperity and luck.

Building a house was an event of huge importance. If the building was damned the curse would fall upon members of the family. So, before starting the foundations, the place where the house was to be built had to pass various tests. For example, it was believed that building a house over a sacred place would bring calamity to the family (Tirta 2004: 340–341). Informants in Gjinar declared that they had tried to sow the lands of churches after they were pulled down during the communist regime, but nothing came of them. Also they report how many calamities have occurred to families who used the stones of churches to build houses. When starting the foundations of a house, work always begins from the east, the direction of sunrise, symbol of a new beginning. With its head in the same direction, men of the family sacrifice an animal, mostly a lamb or ram, occasionally a black chicken or cock, and its blood is spattered on the foundations. There is a strong preference for black. Informants said that white 'shines', i.e. it attracts attention and does not allow good luck for the family, whereas because black does not 'shine', good luck is not distracted and black also turns away curses. Sometimes the head of the animal or bird is left in the foundations, sometimes, if it has horns, these are put on the front of the house to protect its inhabitants from the evil eye. The meat is the *risk* or *hise* (share) of the workers, who eat it during the building process. When entering the new house people again sacrifice a bird or animal, sprinkle its blood on the threshold, stairs, and stones just outside the house. It is said that no house has ever been built without a sacrifice, even during the dictatorship. Labourers before beginning work ask whether a *kurban* has been made in the foundations. If so, all subsequent problems must be acts of God; if not, the ground is expected to counteract and cause structural problems and accidents for the workers. Apart from the head of the sacrifice, people also put money, gold, silver or jewellery into the foundations. According to Tirta, these represent the head of the family (man or woman) and take their place. It is widely believed that the building of a house seeks the head of the head of the family (Tirta 2004: 340–57).

Kurban is also related to important moments of family life: for example, when a house is built, when two members die in close succession, when members survive a serious accident, and to accompany rites of passage. A chicken is often sacrificed at the site of an accident, its blood is spattered around, and then sugar is poured out. The corpse of the chicken is thrown away, because it is believed that it traces a way back to the bad luck. When two members of the same family die in quick succession, a black chicken is sacrificed and put into the coffin of the second dead person in the belief that it is the death of the animal that the deceased will take with them, not the human.

Concluding remarks

As Keesing and Strathern have noted, ‘the supernatural order to some extent modelled the human social relationship... People with fragmented clans often have a cult of ancestral spirits for each clan, and people with a centralised state are more likely to have a high god or centralized pantheon... The supernatural world which religions posit is a transformation of the one humans live in, as well as a projection of it’ (1998: 308). The celebration can be seen as a regenerative act for the community: people meet, recall each other, relatives and ancestors refresh collective memories, recall events; units of communities get together to greet or get to know each other and build new relations; delicate issues of community are solved, as in sharing out irrigation water; the community asserts itself and its boundaries; the kin group and the family acknowledge common descent and economy. All these imbue the individual with a feeling of belonging. Also, it must be stated that at all levels sacrifice is understood as an Orthodox rite and *zakon vendçe* (‘local custom’). Through rites and customs, members of Upper Shpati villages explain and find their solutions; validate social acts and sustain the moral and social order; and reinforce the ability to cope with difficulties and unforeseen events (Keesing and Strathern 1998: 304). They refer to themselves as the Mountain Shpatarak and remain loyal to local traditions and norms. At the same time, they refer to God as the God of every human being, Muslim or Orthodox. They refer to Muslim people as formerly Orthodox, thus rationalising their differences and building on their similarities. For example, in the Muslim village of Dumre, Rrasë, people sacrifice a chicken or a cock for *Shën Gjergj* (St George), and with its blood trace a cross on their foreheads. Upper Shpati people explain that this is because the Dumre villagers were formerly Orthodox, and that they ‘mix up cultural features’. Lower Shpati Muslim say that Orthodox rites are not purely so, but intermingled with theirs, hence the similarities. Each community explains that the others have borrowed cultural features from them. Furthermore, both sides admit to participating in each other’s celebrations. As an example, Orthodox women who could not bear children joined in the *Sulltan Nevruz* celebrations in Lleshan, a Muslim village in Upper Shpati. It was a kind of pilgrimage to a *vakuf*, formerly the church of *Shmrija* (St Mary), where the women moved some pieces of clay on which they believed had remained carved the traces of a horse. All Shpati people call themselves *Shpatarak*, and have shared in historic initiatives, for example famously resisting Ottoman expeditions (Tirta 1987: 23–25).

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PARASKEVA AND HER 'SISTERS': SAINTLY PERSONIFICATION OF WOMEN'S REST DAYS AND OTHER THEMES

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Abstract: This paper explores the many and various facets of the cult and traditions of St Paraskeva in traditional Balkan culture, immensely important and widespread from the early Middle Ages to the present. Multilevel functions are given to St Paraskeva by the traditional calendar, and the author offers a discussion of them in three major sections: *Paraskeva, personification of Friday*; *'Paraskeva in Winter', patron of wolves and mice*, and *'Paraskeva in Summer', Mary's rival and substitute?*

In the calendars of the Orthodox churches, no other saint has so many feast days as St Paraskeva – 55, no less, and they include every Friday of the year. The Greek word *Paraskevi* stands for Friday, literally 'preparation day', the eve of the Holy Day, the Jewish Sabbath. In all south or east Slavonic languages the word for Friday is *Petak*, literally 'fifth', from *pet*, 'five' – hence the name by which Paraskeva is known in the Balkans, *Petka*. The remaining three feasts are patronal days, commemorating three canonised saints with the same name: On July 26, Paraskeva, a Roman saint known also as *Venus* because, it is said, she was born on a Friday, *veneris dies* (indeed, in Romania St Paraskeva is known as *Sfinta Vineri*); on October 28, a Byzantine saint of Iconium; and on October 14, Paraskeva of Epibata, later named *Trnovska* (of Trnovo) (1022-55), who was again said to have her name because she was born on a Friday. She is also honoured by Bulgarians on Bright Friday, i.e. the Friday after Easter (Mesnil and Popova 1993; Popov 1999, 126-145).

The only information about the Roman Paraskeva is in her *vita*, in which she appears as a second-century peripatetic preacher summoned by the emperor Antoninus Pius (d. 161) and tortured by him in boiling oil. Healed by her of blindness from a splash of oil, the emperor halted the persecution of Christians. Paraskeva was eventually beheaded by a city governor, *Tarasios*. For her healing of Antoninus, she became venerated as a healer of the blind. Another miracle links her with healing: she slew a poisonous serpent into whose pit she was thrown by a governor *Asclepius* – his name is that of the healer god whose attribute is the coiled serpent also associated with *Mercury*.

A *passio* of St Paraskeva of Iconium was written by John of Euboea (mid-eighth century), depicting her as a holy woman executed during the persecution of Christians under Diocletian. She had taken her name from the day of her baptism. This Paraskeva 'developed a personality and functions of her own on Russian soil' (Riasanovsky, Struve and Ekkman, 1980, 39). Icons of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries from Novgorod show her as an ascetic wearing the red of martyrdom. She holds an Eastern cross professing her faith, or a vessel which holds the perfume of martyrdom. She was depicted with St Anastasia or St Barbara or St Juliana; sometimes with male saints. In Russia she was patron of fairs and traders and of marriage.

The third Paraskeva is certainly historical. She was born to wealthy landowners at Epibata on the shore of the Sea of Marmara near Constantinople in 1022 and died in

1055. As a young woman she gave her clothes to the poor and fled to Constantinople to lead an ascetic life. From there she fled from her searching parents to Chalcedon and later lived in the church of the Theotokos in Heraclea Pontica. One of her visions of the Virgin Mary led her to travel to Jerusalem, and also to spend time in a convent in the Jordanian desert. She returned to Constantinople and then, still only 25, moved to the church of the Holy Apostles in the village of Katikratia, where she died two years later. In 1238 her relics were translated from Katikratia to the church of the Forty Martyrs in Veliko Trnovo, capital of the second Bulgarian empire during the rule of Ivan Asen. In 1394, they were moved to the last Bulgarian capital, Vidin, and two years later translated again to the Ružica church in Belgrade, after which event the saint was called also Petka Srpska (Serbian Paraskeva). After the fall of Belgrade to Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent in 1521, the relics were translated back to Constantinople. In 1641 the Prince of Moldavia, Duke Basil, known by his nickname Vasile Lupu, bought them from the Ottomans and brought them to Trei Ierarhi monastery at Iași in Romania. Finally in 1888 they were moved to that city's metropolitan cathedral, the church of the Visitation of the Mother of God (Mesnil and Popova 1993, 746).

Paraskeva's cult was massively widespread through the Balkans, especially in the years of Ottoman rule. At about the time that the Ottomans conquered Trnovo, St Paraskeva (known as Petka) was made a patron of the city and got her second name, Trnovska. In the same period, Patriarch Ephthimie wrote for Ivan Sisman (a member of the former Bulgarian ruling dynasty) an account of the life of the saint, and the church instituted a special service in her honour on her feast day, October 14, which is described in Dragan's *menaion* of the monastery at Zograf on Mount Athos (Ivanov 1970, 424-433). Data from the same period records that she was then patron of more than 33 churches and monasteries in Bulgarian lands from Lozengrad to Struga and Vidin (Georgieva 1984).

During the time of Ottoman rule, cults of local saints such as Petka, John of Ril, Naum and his Seven Brothers, and Sava of Serbia, became particularly popular (Georgieva 1984). Combined in understandings of Petka was her patronage of the home and family, of female domestic work, of domestic animals and the fields, and of health and wellbeing. From the Balkans, her cult spread elsewhere in the Orthodox world.

I - Paraskeva, personification of Friday

Detailed ethnological studies have looked at Petka's mythological character, and the connection between her name and ideas about the fifth day of the week (counting from Monday, not, as usual in the Christian world, from Sunday, and likewise with Jewish tradition in which the Day of Preparation, Paraskevi, relates to the Sabbath, our Saturday, as God's day of rest) (Sveshnikova and Civyan 1973; Mesnil and Popova 1993). A series of Russian researchers have presumed that the saint is a Christian successor of the east Slavonic deity Mokosh (Rybakov 1981, 387; Ivanov and Toporov 1983; Uspenski 1984, 94-96). Others have connected her with the Earth Mother and with similar chthonic figures including Cybele, Demeter, and Persephone (Sudnik and Civyan 1980; Venedikov 1987, 30).

In Bulgarian tradition, two days of the week, Wednesday and Friday, are considered inauspicious and consequently have attracted taboos. They are also considered holy days

for women, because both are onomastically connected with female saints, Paraskeva and St Sreda ('Wednesday', literally 'middle'), an entirely popular, non-canonised saint in whose honour, nevertheless, churches have been dedicated. The saintly personification of Wednesday is mostly to be seen in the veneration of *Rusa sreda* ('Red Wednesday') or *St Rusa*. The fourth Wednesday after Lent, or the Wednesday after Whitsun (50 days in both cases after, respectively, Ash Wednesday and Easter) is a very inauspicious day in the vicinity of Radovish in Bulgaria. Women do not wash their hair or they will become mad. A widespread legend says that St Rusa punished a mountain goat-girl, in a way similar to Granny March (*Baba Marta*), because she took her herd to pasture and disobeyed the taboo against working on Wednesday (Delinikolova 1960). There are similar ideas regarding 'mad' or 'black' Wednesday associated with St Theodorus Tyro (March 2 and the first week of the Lent) and 'Rusalna Week' (literally, 'belonging to Rusa'), June 3 to 10. St Todor's Week is also known as 'Crazy Week'. Saturday within that week is known as Horse Holiday and is supposedly connected with the Roman Consualia (July 7 and August 21 in summer; December 15 in winter). Rusalna Week is analogous to the Roman Rosalia, the spring festival to commemorate the dead.

In south-east Bulgaria, in the region of the Strandza mountains, the eve of each Wednesday and Friday is called *skolas* (Bulgarian verb *skolasvam*, 'I am finishing my work in time', with a Greek origin). Each housewife is in a hurry to spin or weave what she planned for that day, because the following day every work with wool or other fabrics is forbidden. On Wednesdays and Fridays it is forbidden to wash or bath, to make dough, or bread, or to cut firewood. These days in the week are obligatory fasting days. On both eves, all married couples are bound by sexual taboo because the child then conceived will be born unlucky and ill. Such a destiny in popular belief is also attributed to all children born on a Friday (Popov 1994). (That similar ideas existed in the West is evidenced by the rhyme which includes the line 'Wednesday's child is full of woe', and the superstition that bad luck attaches to Fridays which fall on the 13th of the month.)

It is held that the saints appear to disobedient women in the form of a snake, to scare them off from breaking the taboo. This zoomorphic incorporation is very close to ideas regarding the house snake, protectress of home and family. In other cases, the saints appear to women who have broken the taboo and warn them of impending punishment. Stories and memorata recorded the fate of women who became ill or mad because the saint beat them with their attribute, a staff or rod (*paterice*), 'something every saint has'. Bulgarian and Serbian folklore says that women who sew and knit on Wednesday or Friday prick and pierce the saints' eyes with their needles. It is even more terrible if it happens on 'young Friday', that is any Friday which coincides with the new moon (Stanojević 1929, 54). Consequently, they severely punish women who work on that day.

Analogous beliefs connected Sunday, in Slavonic languages Nedelja (literally, 'not working') with St Nedelja (otherwise, St Sunday), whose feast day is July 7. The fourteenth-century Patriarch Ephthimie of Trnovo wrote 'a word in praise of the megalomartyr Nedelja' (Grasheva 1982, 171-86). St Nedelja is often represented as very sad in popular belief and legend. Her eyes are red from crying, and her clothes are dirty. The cause of her tortures and misfortunes are those of the girls and brides who work on Sunday. Whenever they clean their houses and yards on this rest day, garbage 'flies straight into the eyes of St Nedelja' and makes her clothes dirty. When they sew and knit, they pierce her beautiful face. A popular song from the Sersko district of Bulgaria tells

how St Nedelja begs Kara Bogdan ('Black Bogdan'), a well-known character in folklore, to let all women know that work on Sunday is forbidden:

Whoever makes dough on Sunday
 Puts mud in my eye.
 Whoever cleans on Sunday
 Makes my clothes dirty.
 Whoever embroiders on Sunday
 Makes my black blood flow.

'Black' is used here as poetic hyperbole (*SBNU* 10 [1894], 14-15).

Suggestively, in Bulgarian tradition Petka and Nedelja overlap and intertwine. Popular song often contains the phrase 'Sveta Petka, hem Nedelya' ('Saint Petka, and [Saint] Nedelja'). Sometimes they are represented as sisters or cousins or otherwise related to other saints (Popov 1991, 14). Similar beliefs exist with the Serbs, to whom 'St Petka is Nedelja's mother or the two are sisters' (Nedeljković 1990, 166). A song from Caribrod, in Bulgaria, tells the myth of how the saints divided the world between them. The motif is very well-known, and in this particular variant three brothers and three sisters take part. The brothers are St Nicholas, St Elijah, and Archangel Michael, who respectively gain power over water, sky and heaven, and souls. The sisters, 'who fly in the shape of birds', are Nedelja, the Virgin Mary, and Petka (*SBNU* 10 [1894], 24-25). In Bulgarian iconographic tradition, two 'sisters', Petka and Nedelja, are often shown together (Božkov 1994). In the ritual known as *koleda* (young adults' 'trick-or-treat' house-to-house procession to mark the winter solstice and encourage the onset of spring), as performed in the vicinity of Sofia, there is a song about St Mitar, an hypochoristic form of Demetrius), who set on fire one of the monasteries on Mount Athos. His relatives, Petka and Nedelja, go to God to beg mercy for him (*SBNU* 3 [1890], 5-6):

St Petka, his aunt,
 St Nedelja, his cousin,
 They dressed in black clothes,
 Black clothes and green;
 And they went to beg,
 'O God, dear God,
 Release St Mitar.'

Similar personifications of days of the week are known in Romania and Greece. A Romanian triad of demonic saints are Joimarița (cf *dies jovi*), Martolea (cf *dies martii*), and Sfinta Vineri. In Greece, a terrible nocturnal sister of St Petka is described, St Peftarga (literally, like Petka, 'fifth day', but relating to the eve of Friday) (Mesnil and Popova 1993). The attributes of these four are the spinning wheel, laundry-beater, and pestle, with which they beat and punish women who disobey injunctions against domestic work. Sometimes it is believed that demonic and nocturnal saints emerge from cemeteries in the shape of '*povampiren*' (according to some Bulgarian ideas). The military rider saint Theodore, and his female hyposthesis, *Baba Tudorica* (Granny Theodora) or *Sveta Tudorica* (St Theodora), strike with *paterice*, or the hoofs of Theodore's magic horse, those women who work in the night during Theodore's week (Popov 1994). Many Bulgarian and Romanian ideas about Tudorica or Theodora overlap those of a demonic St Petka who intends to kill the children of disobedient women in their cauldrons of boiling water. These ideas are analagous to east Serbian beliefs about nocturnal horsemen named

Todorci ('belonging to Theodore') and *Vlach Sentodjери* ('those of St Theodore') (Zečević 1974; Kostić 1978 425).

Personification of weekdays is also found among Aromanian nomads (Cincar or Kucovlach) who have permanently settled in the Rhodope villages. For them, Wednesday is androgynous, either a man or God's Mother herself. Thursday is a woman, *Moe Dzohi* (Granny Thursday). She always goes around with an arm-held spinning wheel and a hand-held spindle. Friday also is woman, St Vinerya (that is, from Venus, as already noted), represented as a middle-aged woman dressed in widow's black. She can heal various diseases and is venerated particularly on 'young Fridays' of the New Moon (*Armynite v Bylgaria* 1998, 179-181).

Independently of the general attitude that every Friday in the year is bad enough, Bulgarians believe that twelve of them are exceptionally dangerous, hard, and black. In the calendar, they are distributed always before certain major Christian festivals. For example, Mitrovdan (St Demetrius' Day), Koleda (for which see above), Vasiljevdan (St Basil's Day), Epiphany, St Tryphun's Day, Todorovdan (St Theodore's Day), Easter, Rusalna/Nedelja Week, Petrovdan (St Peter's Day), Velika Gospojina (Feast of the Assumption), and Krstovdan (Holy Cross Day). A group of these feast days coincides with one of the most inauspicious periods in the calendar, always understood as times of passage. These are 1) *Mrsna* or *Pogana Nedelja* (respectively the feasting and fasting, 'Impure' Week), the period from the old towards the new astronomical and solar year, connected with the winter solstice and the impure period of God's Mother after the birth of Christ; 2) *Todorova Nedelja* (Theodore's Week, the passage from winter to spring), and 3) the *Rusalska Nedelja* (that is Rusalna, or Rusalja Week - the passage towards summer, associated with Christ's Ascension). According to Bulgarian beliefs, these three weeks are 'sisters'. Furthermore, they are inauspicious and dangerous because the first is connected with the emergence of the demon Karakondzula, the second one with the demonic riders, Theodore and his nocturnal horsemen, and the third one with the Rusalke (women shamans who fall into trances) and fairies who cause *rusalska bolest* ('Rusalska disease' - a kind of madness). It is believed everywhere that the Wednesdays and Fridays of those three weeks are the darkest and maddest of the year (Popov 1991, 87-90). In eastern Serbia, in the river Timok valley, Friday of the *Rusalna Nedelja* is called *Sveta Petka Rusalna* or *Rusalnica*. Before that day, mothers of dead children should not eat cherries, or their children in the Otherworld will be hungry. For that reason, the first cherries they pick, they must give away to others (Stanojević 1929, 46; 1933, 62). There are similar inauspicious Fridays also in Serbian popular tradition (Nedeljković 1990, 180). The culmination of those twelve 'black Fridays' is Good Friday, the day of Christ's Crucifixion. As a consequence, and probably as a way of compensation, the following Friday of Bright, or Easter Week, is, with the Bulgarians, the greatest yearly holy day in honour of St Petka.

II - 1 'Parasceva in Winter': protector of wolves and mice

In the Bulgarian traditional calendar, Winter St Petka is a holiday/holy-day with special economic and social significance, but this Petkovdan ('Petka's Day') falls on October 27, and must therefore commemorate St Paraskeva of Iconium (feast day October 28) rather than her namesake of Trnovo (October 14). Across the Balkans, on this day or on

Mitrovdan (St Demetrius' Day, November 9), the seasonal work cycle moves from summer to winter. Employers pay bonuses to day-workers, and farm labourers bring back the cattle from their upland pastures. People prepare for the autumnal season of weddings and *slava* (special family gatherings, usually on the day of their patron saint). Consequently, Bulgarians have a proverb: 'Winter St Petka collects holy days, anniversaries, and *sluzhbite* (labours). On that day at *megdan* (commons, places where games and contests take place), girls not yet of marital age dance in circles and young men and their parents choose future wives and daughters-in-law. On the same day, heads of families organise *ovcada svatba* (the mating of ewes and rams) or *myrleneto* (the mating of cows and bulls). While this lasts, women are forbidden to weave or knit in case it interferes with the fertility of the livestock. For the further health of the livestock, specially made loaves are distributed.

Petka is sometimes represented as a male character Petko. In Dobrudza region in Bulgaria, it is widely believed that 'St Petko is the guide of St Demetrius'. In a song from Razlog, it is said that

St Nedelya fell asleep
On St Petko's lap /.../

Inhabitants of the middle parts of the Old [Balkan] Mountain still believe that St Petko is a beast that most often appears in the shape of a wolf (Popov 1991, 126-130). This idea is probably connected with the widespread belief in Petka's patronage of wolves in Bulgarian lands. Winter Petkovdan marks the beginning of the long-lasting period of 'wolves' holy days' which usually spans over twelve days. As the three big winter holy days – 'St Archangel' (the Western Michaelmas), Petkovdan, and Mitrovdan – are separated by two periods of about a fortnight, they form a triad in popular perception, characterised by the same system of ritual and stereotypical behaviour. All three saints are understood as Rulers of Winter and Snow, have mythological links with belief in the Underworld of the Dead, and are in some degree patrons of wolves and mice. Bulgarians believe (or hope! – much as with the Western 'White Christmas') that the first snow must fall on one of these three days, and therefore the adages: 'Winter begins with St Peter's day'; 'When St Demetrius spreads his long, white beard, from it the first snowflakes fall'; 'It always snows on St Archangel ('Michaelmas') because the saint brings snow on his boots.' In many Bulgarian districts, on the Saturdays before these three great holy days, women make *zadusnice* (commemorations of the dead), of which the first two are not in the church calendar. In popular perceptions and songs, St Petka is often represented as a mediator between the world of the living and that of the dead, watching and walking secretly or openly with the righteous and sinful souls in the Otherworld, for which privilege she has pleaded with God. Meanwhile, in line with his universal character in Christendom, Michael escorts dead souls and judges their sins. Everywhere this saint is called *Dušovadnik* ('Who draws out the soul'). On the feast days of Petka and Michael, as on any death and memorial day, women prepare special loaves most often named after these two saints – *sta petka i rangelovoto* ('St Petka and Archangel').

Finally, these three calendar days come at the beginning of three cycles each consisting of twelve 'wolf' or 'mice' days which are severely obeyed in popular culture. In the region of Plovdiv, the twelve days between Petkovdan and Mitrovdan are called *ščuri* or *pogani*, both meaning 'dark' or 'impure', and in the Strandži region, *Vlči pogano* ('Wolves' impure [days]'). By their features, they correspond with the *mrsni* or

‘unbaptised’ days from Christmas to Epiphany (the feasts of Christ’s nativity and baptism). Women do not work with wool, they do not weave, nor do they spin. They do not cut fabric to shape, and neither may they make any clothing, particularly not for men. It is believed that for a man who takes on clothes made in this period, wolves will attack his herd and even he himself. A man buried in such clothes will become a vampire or werewolf (Popov 1991). In the general belief of Bulgarians, the cycle of ‘mice holy days’ begins after Mitrovdan (St Demetrius’ day). The most popular ‘master of the mice’ is St Nestor, whose feast day is the day after Mitrovdan (November 10). On that day, a ritual mating of mice is performed, to encourage them to be merciful and leave house and village (Grebenarova and Popov 1987). After the Archangel’s Day begins the twelve-day ‘wolf’ period, whose last day is dedicated to the most bloodthirsty and terrible wolf, Kuculan, Natlapan, or Rumulan, the tail-less leader of the pack. Under the obvious influence of the ‘wolf holy days’ in the Bulgarian calendar, a proverb originated about people who love going on visits: ‘Their visits are as frequent are the holy days of wolves’ (Stoichev 1915, 148).

As the calendar references mark the passage from one seasonal economic cycle to another, it is unsurprising to find that Petkovdan, Mitrovdan and St Archangel’s Day are also celebrated with blood sacrifices and feasts, *kurbans* (Dalipaj, this volume), which in Trakija are known as ‘Hen’s Church’, ‘Lord’s Church’, and ‘God’s Spirit’ or ‘Lela’s health’ (Popov 1986). Black hens are ritually sacrificed in some sacred spot within the village territory, such as a grave, spring, or *paraklis* (small chapel). Only married women take part in it (in contrast to the precedence of men in the Albanian feasts described by Dalipaj in this volume) and they set the table for a mutual feast and dancing around the cauldron in which the hens are cooked. Some scholars see this as a ritual expression of gratitude to the forces of nature on which the yearly agricultural work depends. They note that women consecrate this ritual *trapeza* (table) to daimons and saints. Among the former are dragons, protectors of the village from misfortune, fairies, and demons of illnesses such as smallpox and epilepsy, who are everywhere called by their taboo names, *lele*, ‘Sisters’, or ‘Sweet’ and ‘Honey’. The women are also devoted to saints Petka, Demetrius, Archangel Michael, and, naturally, the Mother of God as the outstanding patron of women, children, house, and family.

II - 2 ‘Parasceva in Summer’: Mary’s rival and substitute?

In the Orthodox canon, Bright Friday of the week after Easter is associated with Mary the mother of Christ as the source of life, with hymns celebrating her as ‘Life-giving Spring’ and a Lesser Blessing of the Waters. Bulgarians know it also as ‘Summer St Petka’, ‘Summer Petkovdan’, ‘Most Holy Petka’ (in the district of Plovdiv), or ‘St Petka Balaklaja’ (the latter word being the name of a type of fish) (*Stranica* 1996, 238). Early in the morning before sunrise, heads of families circle the fields for protection against hail and other summer misfortunes. During these ritual processions, which serve the idea of the power of the magical circle, special songs are sung:

Dark green water,
 In vain you are green,
 As the ‘Empty Week’ is
 On St Petka’s feast day.

After this procession and before lunch, the entire village gathers at sacred places named after the saint. These are usually stone crosses, healing springs and wells, caverns in the rock, stone holes, or little chapels, located either in 'the wild', or as markers of the borders of the village's common land. There, the men slaughter sheep and calves, bought collectively or by a sick person. In the latter case, the meat is then eaten by those present as an intention of his good health. They dedicate *kurban* to Summer St Petka, and women make a rich holiday *trapeza* on tablecloths spread on the ground. During the day, gatherings and fairs are organised, with music, song, and dance. Sometimes men take part in duels or horse-races for health and fertility that year. The priest is obliged to consecrate *kurban*, as well as the water with which he sprinkles those present in order to encourage summer rain, prevent endless hail, and to protect the corn sheaves in the fields from burning. In that sense, the entire rituality of the Summer Petkovdan is analogous to the ritual features of the holy days of the saints dedicated to the protection against natural elemental powers in summer, such as those against hail, of whom the most famous is St Elijah with his 'sister' Fiery Mary or Marina.

During the feast of Summer St Petka, another essential feature of her cult is highlighted, namely belief in her intercessory healing powers. On the eve of the feast, people in need of a cure go to holy springs to spend the night there, or near to chapels (*paraklis*) named in her honour, or in caves, or on the stone floors of her churches. This is the case with the church in the city of Pestera, which is on that day visited by sick and barren women from across the district (*Arminyte v Bulgaria* 1998, 222). In that respect, it is notable how many springs and chapels with Petka's name are to be found in the low mountain regions in the south-east of Bulgaria, Strandza and Sakar. According to local lore, St Petka Balaklija appears by her spring in the form of a golden duck or some other bird, or in the form of a fiery cross above the chapel. If the sick see this sign, they will most certainly get well. By the spring or in the church they leave thread from their clothes, or gifts such as woven scarves and aprons, stockings, and food for the saint. They wash their faces with the healing spring water and drink it for their health. According to tradition from Thrace, the saints' healing springs are efficacious for eyes. In Asenovgrad in middle Rhodope, on summer Petkovdan the entire settlement organises a solemn procession with a miraculous icon of the Mother of God, which is brought out from her church in the city, and carried to the rocky chapel of St Petka, built on the foundations of a temple of Cybele (Marinova 1996, 108-09).

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THE CULT OF SAINTS IN GREEK TRADITIONAL CULTURE

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Abstract: The cult of saints in Greece depends heavily on traditional religious behaviour. Indeed it may be argued that the believers' concept of Christian saints today is closely compatible with the concept of gods and heroes among the ancient Hellenes. An example is the practice of votive offerings, which is based on a response system and represents a contractual 'buy-and-sell' relationship between believers and saints. A person offers their veneration only to those saints whose miracles promise to help them flourish in the desired way. Votive offerings made as the sacrifice of living creatures ('offerings in blood') retain important characteristics of ancient rites and can therefore be argued to be linearly connected with them.

The way a contemporary Greek understands Christian saints is similar to the way the ancient Greeks understood their gods and heroes. This provides an impression of continuity from Antiquity to the present. Indeed, it may be argued that 'pre-Christian survivals' are still alive in the popular beliefs and culture of modern Greece (Varvounis 1998a). Early Byzantine church officials tried hard to eradicate remnants of the old religion in Christian cults (Varvounis 1998b). They met with resistance from people who felt the need to preserve their deep-rooted customs by absorbing them into the new religion, which eventually led to the giving to old customs of new, Christian names. As a result, popular cults of saints linger in Greek traditional culture between the poles of Classical concepts and Orthodox dogma.

In traditional societies of farmers and shepherds, people lacked the technical abilities to do much to harness nature in the improvement of the crops and animals on which the survival of kin and society depended. So they turned to magic, which promised them physical and psychic renewal. Consequently, cults of saints for Greeks, often associated with the idea of good fortune, are much developed, ardently cultivated, and coupled with special veneration of particular saints on their feast days. An example is St Demetrius, on whose day (October 26) the casks of young wine are opened, and the cycle of annual magical customs is closed. This is accompanied by zoomorphic masks and mimic actions (*djamala*) which symbolise the germination of the seeds sown in the autumn, so that sympathetic magic may help them take root in the spring (Megas 1963). In the same way, farmers tried to make the seeds take root by prayers and various magical rites on the autumn feast day of St George (November 3). Winter sowing also coincides with the feast day of the Presentation in the Temple of the Mother of God (November 21), when dishes prepared with various grains are offered in order to encourage the future harvest, and, it is believed, the farmers' general wellbeing. With this cycle also belongs the feast of St Andrew (November 30) because the folk etymology of his name, *αντριεύω*, 'to get strong', associates his veneration with the strengthening of the crops.

St Modest (December 18) is protector of animals yoked to the plough, so his devotees believed that he helped them in the work of ploughing (Imellos 1992). Similar functions are observed in relation to the cult of St Tryphon (February 1), protector of vineyards, and of St Charalampios (February 10) and St Blaise (February 11), who both protect

domestic animals and herds and flocks against wolves, jackals, and other predatory beasts. In Greek and Balkan lands St Charalampios is also a protector from plague and diseases which attack animals. His festivities are accompanied by magical-religious rites, for example the making of the so-called 'one-day shirt', ritually woven, cut, and sewn in silence in a single day, and consequently considered to be imbued with magical properties (Megas 1923).

The feast day of St George (April 23 or Easter Monday when it otherwise falls in Lent), closely associated with pastoralism, is widely celebrated across Greek society. The official element of these celebrations involves parties and feasting. In the Peloponnesos in central Greece, shepherds provide roast meat for the festive board to gain the saint's protection and prosperity the year through. Perhaps St George's Day has its pastoral character because it coincides with the day when the shepherds start off for the mountain pastures (Spyridakis 1952). In many country parts, for example in Arachova in Parnassus, traditional contests are organised in honour of the saint: running, shooting, horse-racing, and shot-putting. The winners' prizes are offered to the saint (Varvounis 1995-96). Also it is worth mentioning that in legends and poems about St George and the Dragon, very popular among Greeks, survives a modified, ancient myth concerning Perseus' slaying of Medusa.

Saints' days put people in close touch not only with the supernatural, but also with one another through mutual celebrations. For example, when the locally appointed watchmen of vineyards and water wardens celebrate their protector, St Demetrius, their entire villages join the party. It is at village feasts that Greek farmers make offerings of animals to St John the Theologian (May 8), who they believe can send hail to destroy crops. St Marina (July 17) is associated with the ripening of figs and grapes, and is also protector of little children to whom she gives health and fast development, so these fruits are distributed after the Eucharist among the whole congregation.

Fertility and procreation generally are associated with St Elijah, successor of the attributes of Zeus, and venerated at little churches high up in the mountains as well as in villages on the plains. It is believed he sends clouds and rain (Megas 1923). On his day, therefore, not only are offerings made but also magical rituals are performed in connection with the weather. Given farmers' dependence on the weather, it is easy to understand the importance of Elijah's cult. The explanation for Elijah's celebration especially in churches high in the mountains can be found in a legend about the Old Testament prophet which has its echo in Homer's tale of Odysseus' voyage to Arcadia. St Elijah, disappointed in seamen, went in search of the place where nothing was known about galleys or the sea, and found it only on the mountain tops. Once again a classical myth found a Christian interpretation, but succeeded in retaining its essence.

Analogous symbols of agrarian society can be found in the commemoration of saints venerated in August. The feast of the Assumption of the Mother of God (August 15) is celebrated throughout Greece in village assemblies, but particularly in agricultural districts. There, processions are organised for the benefit of the harvest, not only on that day but also on the ninth day after the Assumption (August 24). A whole line of taboos is connected with the celebration of the Decollation, or Beheading of St John (August 29): elderly people believe that on that day no-one should eat anything of the colour of blood, for example black grapes, black figs, and so on, if both harvest and the health of the family are not to be endangered (Niketas 1959; Megas 1963, 231; Varvounis 1992).

September is full of saints' days protecting symbols of the community wellbeing. St Mamet or Mamas (September 2) is protector of shepherds, so their festive board is full of meat (Marava-Hadzinikolaou 1953). The feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God (September 8) coincides with the fruit harvest, grapes, nuts, and so on, so these are brought to church and distributed to the congregation after the Eucharistic liturgy. In agrarian districts these gatherings are accompanied by offerings of livestock. After this feast day, farmers begin to prepare for the new sowing, obeying the cycle of calendar customs of traditional culture.

Ordinary people traditionally honour God and the saints by ascribing them human features, not only in form and shape, but in character and reactions too. So, according to their legends, saints are jealous, and revengeful, and they punish mercilessly anyone who disobeys them. Possibly the most vengeful is St Cassian (February 29), with whom many legends are connected which seek to explain why he is celebrated only every fourth or leap year. According to Greek legend, St Cassian was celebrated every year until God punished him, and although it is believed that all God's punishments are deserved, the punishment of St Cassian is excluded. It began when Cassian complained that the feast-days of other saints were better venerated than his. God became angry and answered him that people knew what, how, and why they celebrated and reproached him that he did not help people as St Nicholas did, by watching over them day and night, especially sailors and fishermen. So God punished Cassian by ordering that he be celebrated only every fourth year. The common opinion is that St Cassian is celebrated by lazy and idle people (Loorits 1954; Loukatos 1985).

Folk fables discuss saints of both sexes who severely punish people who do not observe their feast-days. Enraged saints can destroy casks of wine, flood flour containers in water mills, destroy the grape harvest, drown cattle, break dishes, send hail, and confound human endeavour. They can even send the punishment of death. Numerous saints are given by-names relative to the punishment which follows failure to observe their feast-days (Loukatos 1985). For example, Christopher (May 9) is Hail-Bringer (Aikonmidis 1973), Blaise is Calf-Strangler (Loukopoulos 1938), and the Mother of God (July 2) is Sheaf-Burner (Megas 1963).

According to legend, saints terrified farmers and shepherds because as well as bringing prosperity they could provoke infertility, drought, parasites in wheat, and plagues of mice, and were bringers of poor or failed harvests (Alexiadis 1987). Nevertheless, saints were merciful to those who worked on their feast-days not for personal advantage but on the land of poor people or orphans. So the holy days so important both for men and women's physical and psychic health were proscribed not only by rules of social life but also by religious codes of ethics.

Within this context of punishment and mercy may be assessed the practice of votive offerings based on a system of a buying-and-selling relationship between believers and the saints. A person promises to honour those saints who he or she thinks will perform miracles which will help them prosper. Saints on their part, sometimes by terrifying visions and carnal punishments, try to protect their own speciality and to prove their potential. So they punish those who try to alienate themselves from church and icons. Blasphemers are those who 'blindly bow' in church instead of honouring saints and giving them gifts as 'real believers' do (Florakis 1982).

This gift-giving to saints, which can be in the form of material objects, animals, or personal belongings such as black dresses, or of work in the church during certain hours, always represents reciprocity for miracles the saints have already done. The economic basis and corresponding relationship between people and the saints are thereby kept harmonious. While the saints value gifts by a supernatural standard, the individual's honour of the saints is expressed in an everyday way.

An important place in Greek tradition is taken by communal offerings, in blood (that is, by the sacrifice of animals) as well as otherwise. Normally grain, wine, and oil are offered, though the community can also offer the first, blessed sheaf of the harvest; a preparation of boiled grains of one or many different sorts; and a loaf for the Mass, representing people's basic food (Aikaterinidis 1965). According to traditional folk-opinion, the offering can also be of flowers and decorative plants (Deuteraios 1981-1986; Varvounis 1994). In the case of blood-offering, the animal is ritually slaughtered, cooked and eaten during the communal feast on the saint's day.

These blood-offerings stand in direct continuity with Antique rites, and retain the main features – for example: the sacrificial animal is blessed by the priest at the festival of St Paraskeva of Lesbos (Aikaterinidis 1965), and the killing happens inside the church, in front of the altar, according to the practice of Farassa (Asia Minor) (Loukopoulos – Petropoulos 1949). This aspect of communal offering can be seen in many parts of Greece, and in northern parts it is called *kurban*. In some parts, though, especially the islands, the offering is not a sacrificed animal, but ritually prepared meat served during the congregational feast on the saint's day.

Many saints are admired in consequence of the folk-etymology of their names (Minan 1975). Thus the name of St Minas (November 11) is thought to come from the verb *μηνώ*, 'to relate, inform, reveal', and so it is believed that he can find lost or stolen items (Milikou-Markantini 1984). These abilities are also associated with St Fanurius (August 27) whose name is believed to have its etymological roots in the verb *φανερώνω*, 'to reveal'. Connected with the cult of Fanurius is a custom of making cakes and pies. According to popular belief, these sweets are designated for the peace of the soul of the sinful mother of the saint (Aikaterinidis 1965, 163-170). Those who wish to find lost objects or get rid of general depression or passion should pray in church on the eve of St Fanurius and afterwards attend the Eucharist in its entirety. As for St Mark (April 25), it is presumed that farmers explained his name by the word *ναρκώνω*, 'turn to stone, become rigid', to make him turn snakes to stones and so rid the sown fields of their presence. This folk-etymology explains the purely agrarian character of his feast day (cf. Sikimic on St Jeremiah, this volume).

Many festivities of the Greek traditional annual calendar are connected with soothsaying and weather prognosis. This reveals the great need of mankind to limit its insecurity by foretelling the future and thus entering the supernatural world. Weather prognosis is usually connected with the feast days of God (that is, of Christ, a cult divine rather than saintly or angelic), such as the Transfiguration (August 6), and the great feasts of God's Mother. An interesting range of charms are performed on the feast of St John the Baptist's Nativity (June 24), which marks the summer solstice and is considered a leading holy day because of the great number of customs associated with it. The rite called *κλειδωνάς* (fortune-telling on St John's Eve) and many others (such as the telling of dreams, and making charms with cinders, mirrors, eggs, crushed pencil lead, well

water, or fruit seeds) are performed with the purpose of disclosing the future, personal or familial, and especially the future of girls nervously anticipating their weddings (Megas 1963). The custom of young people jumping over fire on St John's Eve to get health, success, and long life, also comes from Classical times. Similar customs have been noticed among peoples of south-eastern Europe in connection with the festivities of other saints: for example, St Elijah or the so-called 'impure days' (Imelos 1972 and 1980). Participants in *κλειδωνάς*, a word which derives from the ancient Greek κληδών an accidental, favourable word', for example a good omen or the voice of God, are girls. On St John's Eve, the eldest son of living parents is chosen to bring so-called 'mute water' from the well in silence. Each of the girls puts in the water vessel an object: a small coin, a ring, or, more often, an apple. The vessel is then closed and left overnight on the roof or some other place 'where the stars can see it'. In the morning, the girls take their objects together with a little of the water and agitate the rest. If the water turns to the right, the girl will marry who she will; but if to the left, her wedding will not be to her liking. In some parts, girls wash their hands with the water taken from the vessel and go to the road, where the first male name they hear will be that of their future husband (Lawson 1910, 304).

Many saints give health, according to the Greek traditional belief that medicine is the product of a marriage between natural observation and metaphysical theory. In that context, the archangels Michael and Gabriel (November 8) are considered as healers. On their day, people fast and sacrifice animals. St Barbara (December 4), protector and healer of little children, is venerated by the consumption of boiled corn and other grains. The latter appears to be derived from the antique rite of *panspermia*, an offering of grains to the deity of fertility or to the dead ancestors.

St Spyridon (December 12) is venerated as protector against epidemics. St Elefterios (December 15) is invoked by pregnant women hoping for easy childbirth. His name is etymologised as coming from *ελευθερώνω*, 'to liberate'. For childbirth and marks on the body of the newborn, St Simeon (February 3) is held responsible. His name is associated with the etymology of the verb *σημειώνω*, 'to sign'. It is believed that St Simeon puts his sign on the children of women who worked on his feast day. St Paraskeva the Roman (July 26) is venerated with communal gatherings and offerings on account of the belief that she helps with eye problems. According to the hagiography of St Pantaleimon (July 27), he is able to heal any disease. On the feast of the Decollation of St John the Baptist (August 29), rigorous fasting is prescribed and ritual fires are lit as prophylaxis against malaria, which occurs in many agrarian parts of Greece (Varvounis 1994). The celebration of Lent (the Holy Forty Days before Easter) (March 9) is connected with magical and symbolic meanings of the number forty, and is associated with opulence, magical doings (for example, by the planting of forty plants, knitting with forty threads, and so on) to secure the health and wellbeing of traditional society (Spiridakis 1939).

The function of healing is characteristic of other saints, too, for example Ss Styliion and Eustrateos (January 9), and St Pelagia (October 8), protectors of the newborn. Foremost in protection against the evil eye and charms is St Cyprian (September 14). It is believed that St Antipus (May 4) and St Philip (November 14) help against toothache (Miliku-Markanioni 1984). The general healing power is given to Ss Cosmas and Damian, the 'doctor saints' (July 1 among the Orthodox), who were said to be particularly healthy during their earthly lives. They are joined by St Mercurius

(November 14), St Anne (July 26), known for her purity in the belief that she conceived Mary, Mother of God, without original sin, and Ss Anthemius and Macarius (January 19), protectors against hernia.

People of traditional society also connected the veneration of saints with their wish to access supernatural power on behalf of their trades and professions. Thus sailors and coastal dwellers celebrate St Phocas (July 23, September 22) and St Nicholas (December 6), with customs intended to secure safe journeys by sea. Butchers venerate the Archangels Michael and Gabriel (September 29). Teachers and pupils have as their school patron the Three Kings (January 30), connected with numerous customs and givers of prophetic gifts to the Christ Child. In the armed forces, the infantry venerate the knightly St George (April 23), the artillery St Barbara in her tower (December 4), and, to add a modern example, pilots the winged Archangels. Shoemakers are protected by St Spiridon (December 12) and tailors by St Sophia (June 2) (Varvounis 1992). Historically, each trade had its own patron, whose day was sumptuously celebrated (Papahristodulu 1951).

The veneration of the saints often shows local characteristics. They are reflected in many details (in toponyms of the area in which the church is built, in the name of the ruler who built the church, in memorata of miracles, in the iconographical type of the icons with different names for the saint, and so on).

The most celebrated cult is that of Christ's mother Mary, known in most churches of the Orthodox world as Theotokos, God-bearer (Koukoules 1931). The greatest number of churches and monasteries is dedicated in her honour; her miracles are the greatest, and all over Greece the assemblies on her day are the most numerous (Kefalliniadis 1990-1995). Many tales recall her miracles, often attributed to her image on icons. It is believed that the Virgin helps mankind, and that she is particularly devoted to the Greek people.

In local celebrations, the cult of a saint is often accompanied by primitive theatre (*dromena*), with elements of original forms of symbolic theatre, or, as it is called in folkloristic terms, 'popular offertories'. They mostly dramatise the desire for resurrection and revival of nature, which in the minds of traditional people is connected with harvest, and human survival. Thus, on the day of St Lazarus, on the Saturday before Holy Week, children go from one house to another, taking an icon of the saint and singing appropriate songs. In Epirus this procession has the features of an offertory, masked children circling around the resurrected Lazarus (Megas 1963). In the Aegean, on Holy Cross Day (September 14), the figure of a dead man is processed, symbolising the coming winter as much as the crucified Christ (Megas 1963).

Numerous symbols of fertility go together with cults of saints: for example, ritual bathing or the mirroring of bride and bridegroom in the wells and springs of St John the Baptist on January 7 and masked processions in south-eastern Europe generally during the so-called 'Impure Days' from Christmas to Epiphany, December 25 to January 6. The same power is connected with the feast day of St Dominica (January 8) when Greeks from southern Bulgaria and Macedonia practice the rite called *babos* or *mamis*, honouring mothers and thus celebrating the fertility necessary for the survival and procreation of traditional society. In this ritual the most important role is taken by the oldest woman of the village, who symbolically represents birth and baptism. The ethnologist G. Megas thinks that in this ritual is preserved a memory of the time when women ruled

(γυναικοκρατία). The central person of this holy day of women and mothers is Mami: usually the oldest woman in the village. She is solemnly dressed. Different rituals, depending on the area, are connected with this day. In Trachia, for example, women in the morning bring to Mami water from the well and then they dress and adorn her with flowers, especially with basil, as well as with some symbolical objects. Thus arranged, Mami goes out of the house and leads the procession of women on its way to the village square. In central Macedonia women dress in their best suits, with necklaces of golden ducats around their necks, and thus enter the village. They bring with them a meal prepared the day before and a cake of soap. Each woman symbolically washes Mami's hands and presents her with a soap as a gift. They also solemnly adorn and dress the mummy with *their* ducats. Women enjoy themselves, sing and dance in circles, led by Mami. In that manner they go around the village square, market place, various pubs (only the pub-owner is allowed to leave the house on that day and to work), and main streets. After the party, women go home and Mami tells them to surprise their husbands and provide them with progeny (cf. Loucatos 1985).

Finally, similar features of the cult of fertility and healing can be recognised in the ritual of *anastenaria* on the day of Ss Helen and Constantine (May 21). This ritual derives from the Classical custom of dancing on fire and hot cinders. It was brought to modern Greece from southern Bulgaria, specifically the village of Kosti, and is practised today in many villages of Greek Macedonia, notably at Aghia Helena of Serres, Mavrolefki Drama, and Laghada. This ritual represents true sacrifice, the purifying (catharsis) of the *anastenari* through dancing on hot cinders with music, in a trance of near-ecstasy, which points to its origin in the Dionysiac mysteries. A rich bibliography includes the observations of scholars across a number of disciplines (Megas 1963).

Sacrificial blood offerings (*kurban*, see Dalipaj, this volume) are often thought to be a part of magical cult of fertility, readdressed to God, asking for his merciful provision of an abundant year. A characteristic example is the killing of a cockerel on St Athanasius' day (January 18): each family does so 'for good fortune', so that the gift is given in anticipation of good things in return, health and fertility. At some church gatherings for the celebration of a saint's day the same sorts of symbolic meals are made as in the rites for fertility. Examples are boiled wheat with honey and butter, as in Pontis, and the meat of an animal killed in the churchyard in the saint's honour. This food has magical features and can bring fertility to the members of the family.

Each district of Greece has its own saint, in whose honour gatherings are organised, ritual offerings performed, and processions made with the saint's image. The rejoicing devotees do not forget to make offerings of money to the saint's church. The man carrying the icon at the head of the procession gives a special, normally very rich, gift. He and his family are then particularly honoured in the village during the following year (Varvounis 1995, 81–84).

From a scholarly point of view, the official and popular celebration of saints are of special interest as two forms of nourishment of their cult. For example, the celebration of military patron saints sometimes simply takes the form of celebration of the patron saint of the locality. Members of a particular military branch may celebrate a saint associated with the memory of their origins, as mentioned earlier. The Greek gendarmerie and national police celebrate also the day of St Irina and Artemia (May 6), and the military celebrate the Mother of God (today the Feast of the Assumption, and earlier that of her

Shroud) (Alexiadis 1987). The provincial police celebrate St Eustachios (November 2), postal workers St Zenon (April 12), motorised military forces St Christopher (May 9), and harbour police St Nicholas (December 19). The cult of saints at state offices demonstrates the close connection between church and state, as one important feature of Greek social life. Examples are state holidays, such as that which commemorates the Greek Insurrection of 1821 which coincided with the Feast of the Annunciation (March 25), and the day commemorating the end of hostilities in 1940 (October 28), which is very close to the feast of the Shroud of the God-Bearer. These coincidences are interpreted as representing the bestowal of special favours by the supernatural world on the Greek people. However, Greek ethnology does not pay enough attention to the very interesting phenomenon that in this way the state honours and encourages popular tradition.

It is well known that traditional culture underwent many novelties and transformations during the years of crisis from 1940 to 1950. For example, customary gatherings and processions were and still are for the most part neglected. Hence the customs here described can be observed for the most part in new forms, indicating fresh streams of popular culture (Varvounis 1994-1995). Nonetheless, the love of traditional people for the saints' remains and their belief in the possibility of saintly help (Meraklis 1972). In addition, it should be stressed that changes in the cult of saints are often small and provoked by the faster tempo of living. People are generally afraid to cut the tradition off, and this is what makes the cult of the saints resilient, even in the changed conditions of life (Meraklis 1986).

The decade from 1970 to 1980 was marked by the emergence of cults of new saints, righteous man and women and wonder-workers. The best-known example is that of St Nectarios (November 9), born in 1846. He served in the monastery on the island of Aegina and after his death in 1920 his cult spread all over Greece. There are also those of St Ephraim (January 3 and May 5), whose cult is centred in the monastery of Nea Makri in Attika, and of Ss Raphael, Nicholas, and Irene (April 9), supposedly murdered by Ottoman soldiers on Lesbos in 1463. It is said that the inhabitants of Lesbos maintained an ancient pilgrimage to a ruined monastery near the island of Thermi, north-west of the capital, Mytilene, on 'Bright' (Easter) Tuesday, though the specific reason for the pilgrimage had been forgotten. In 1959 clearing of rubble began in preparation for the building of a chapel and remains of a burial were found which became attributed to Raphael, identified as the last abbot. The further supposed relics of a deacon, Nicholas, and a young girl, Irene, were discovered after a series of visions. The three were declared to be wonder-workers and a new monastery was built where they are venerated by Orthodox Christians from around the world (Dubish 1990).

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THE CONCEPT AND THE ROLE OF SAINTS IN MACEDONIAN POPULAR RELIGION

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Abstract: Religion is arguably the most important problem for anthropologists and its research is accordingly challenging and complex – even more so if the study concerns that category which ethnologists variously call ‘popular religion’, ‘folklore religion’, ‘popular Christianity’, ‘popular theology’, and so on (Bandic 1991, p. 10; Eliade 1992, pp. 177-9). The purpose here is to introduce material from Macedonia illustrative of the basic characteristics of this category, located against the backdrop of the customary bi-cultural functioning of societies as between ‘primary’ and ‘subsidiary’, ‘big’ and ‘small’, ‘learned’ and ‘traditional’, ‘elitistic’ and ‘popular’.⁷⁹ In the Balkans as a whole, popular religion was characteristic of Christianity over a long period, was broadly observed, and most closely relates to agrarian communities. This is important, because such communities dominated medieval cultures in the region, those individuals with ‘higher’ or ‘learned’ religious understanding being concentrated in very narrow circles, particularly in towns and other centres where the church had a significant presence. This was especially the case during the period of Christianisation. Indeed, popular religion’s dominance in the face of official religious teachings and cults is evident in pre-Christian, as well as Christian periods.

Pope Gregory the Great (590-604), faced with the need to bring into the church peoples whose religious behaviour might not be in harmony with some aspects of official teaching, advised missionaries in the Balkans to be adaptive.

‘There is no need to destroy temples of idols of that people. Only the idols should be cast away and the water consecrated, because if temples are well built, they can be transferred from the cult of demons into the service of the true God... A custom of this people is to slaughter bulls as an offering to their demons and there somehow the character of the ceremony should be changed. On the day of consecration or on the anniversary of the blessed martyrs... let the religious holy day be celebrated at the common *trapeza* [Greek, ‘table’]. But the animals which are offered should not be given as an offering to the devil, but slaughtered to be eaten in honour of God, and the people will thank our God who gave them all and fed them.’⁸⁰

All kinds of cultural layering can be seen in the popular religion of the Macedonians – pre-Indo-European, Indo-European, Palaeo-Balkan, Oriental, Slavonic, Christian, Muslim, and so on. However, one particularly salient feature of popular religion in Macedonia, likely enough shared with other traditional cultures of the Balkan region, is that mythico-religious thinking in popular culture does not recognise such differentiation

⁷⁹ Compare Bandic 1991; Rihtman-Augustin 1988; Eliade 1992.

⁸⁰ Letters of Gregory the Great (*CIL*).

and segmentation. The people do not know that in their religion there are elements of varying origin. People consider their faith, especially their mythico-religious world-view, as complex and all-embracing because in their view it functions perfectly. So devotees of popular religion, here realised under the protection of Orthodox Christianity, do not question the intensity of Christianity, especially Orthodoxy. On the contrary, the whole of this complex and spacious system of popular religion functions as if it were Christian - that is, Orthodox. Here is what a woman in the village of Robovo, Verovsko, in north-eastern Macedonia, told researchers in 1995:

‘I didn’t note it very correctly. But I know when I went to the field, I made a loaf beforehand, and when it was around noon I went to the field. But there, under the village, there is a road and so down, and one up, and you know what winds are blowing there, so you can see nothing /.../ Those fairies are wind-blowers /.../ Not three days passed and I started to have bad headaches. And you know, when it hurts it’s only the left side that hurts /.../ It is only one side that hurts, and the moment the rooster crowed left night - Stop, that’s it. In the morning again at the same time.

‘I have a daughter-in-law, and she says: “Listen, there is a woman there, in the monastery of St George near Stip. Go to her!” I went. She is crossing herself there, icons are there, nothing else is there, she’s crossing herself, she’s praying, and she says: “Auntie, don’t go to doctors any more. You were flown over by fairies from your left-hand side. If they had caught you by the hair, there where you would fall down, you would also die. To you, St Petka [St Paraskeva] is a patron. Don’t you go to *lekarstva* [practitioners and places of professional medicine].

“I have a fairy *samovilsko drvo* [a piece of wood enchanted by fairies which can be used against them]. I’ll give you a piece so you make incense for yourself. And you go to the church on the day of the Holy Mother of God, and light two candles after the Liturgy is over - one that goes up and one that goes down, and you will be all right.”

‘It was told to that woman which wood to pick for that medicine. She, and her father, and her father-in-law, they all built up a little church of St George. And she told them St Paraskeva came to her and told her, “In this and that place, there is that wood.”

‘Do your children believe or not? Since I came from there, since I censed myself with this wood, I got faith, and the faith is needed a little, you know. /.../ And I also lit the candles in the church. I don’t have headaches any more, not even one side, since then. /.../’ (Vrazinovski *et al.* 1998, 284).

Saints in popular religion and their functions

From the moment that Christianity was officially recognised as a world monotheistic religion begins a period of mutual interference by Christian doctrinal values within the structure of popular religion. Christian images of God and of saints are included in the official pantheon of popular religion of many peoples – Macedonians are no exception – and because of this cultural interaction such images became rendered in many localised variations. They exemplify the way and form of mythico-religious perceptions of the world, as well as the structures of value-systems in the life of people through the ages. Take the comments of a woman informant in the village of Dunje, Mariovo, southern Macedonia, recorded in 1994:

‘The Lord [*Gospod*] is sovereign, maker and ruler of the earth, and of everything which lives on it. God [*Bog*] can not be seen. God is invisible – an airy body. He is in the skies... (Vrazinovski *et al.* 1998, 232).

‘In old times, God was much believed in. When people crossed themselves, one said “Give, God”, another said “Bad God”, and that was *mnogubostvo* [polydeism, many gods]. People got bored by holy days that were every day. Then the Lord said: “Wait! People want there to be only one God. I will send them a vision that the Son of God is going to be born and he will command the people, so it will be known in whom to believe.”

‘And then the Lord divided religions so it would be known which one is Orthodox, which one Catholic, which one Muslim...’ (Vrazinovski *et al.* 1998, 227).

Popular images often give saints mythic and demonic features. Like other demonic creatures known to popular religion, they can metamorphise, appear and disappear, and so on. So the same woman informant tells us:

‘Saints change shape. They change into snakes, too. And dogs. They change into everything /.../ Listen, last year I was ill. Once, there came a *smok* [blind-worm, the ‘snake’ of Aesculapeius]. But it was not *smokce* [literally, ‘little *smok*’, using the hypochoristic noun], it was *svetce* [literally, ‘little saint’]. I couldn’t shoo it away. My arms, like this, I couldn’t move them! This *smokce-svetce*, no way to shoo him off.

‘I sit down there, and the *smok* sits down too. Two weeks I was ill to death. On the third week I went out of my home and said: “Christ, it’s enough! Either you take me or you forgive me! There are no wounds on me, there is no illness in me, but torments I have. /.../

‘Five weeks I was made to go to the monastery of St George to worship. Afterwards I got well’ (Vrazinovski *et al.* 1998, 286).

A male villager of Kadino Selo, Prilepsko, western Macedonia, recorded in 1994, had similar ideas:

‘So, a saint changed into a *smok*. The patron saint of our church is St Elijah. St Elijah turned into a *smok*. We call these *smokovi* ‘angels’. Angels. St Petka [St Paraskeva], see, or Mother of God - that is what we call *zmiite* [snakes]. So this means, Mother of God is turned into a snake, St Petka turned into a snake. And those others, male saints, turned into *smokovi*’ (Vrazinovski *et al.* 1998, 286).

Here is a Macedonian informant’s exquisite description of basic functions and attributions of God and the saints, still in associative connection with the popular pantheon. It was published in 1972.

‘The saints distributed their services. St Elijah is put in the heavens to catch the *lamja* [a demon half-way between a dragon and a Persian *azdahaka*, the latter a flying creature with many heads], which drinks the rain, and to throw fiery stones on her to frighten her away or kill her. St Bartholomew, together with the other eleven apostles, is ordered to beg the sun to diminish from summer to winter. St Nicholas is for seas - to take care of people and protect them from the waves of the sea, not to let them drown. St Jeremiah - to kill snakes and *smokovi*. St Haralampia - to keep *cuma* [a demon, more often not a symbolic figure for plague, which brings death, usually to children] under his feet and not let her kill people. The Unbriable Saints Cosmas and Damian – to heal all kinds of diseases and illnesses without being paid. St Naum, St Andonija, and St Spiridon – to heal *ulaite* [mad people]. St Archangel [Michael] – to take souls out of humans. Illnesses, there are saints too. To take people and to arrange their deaths, and to shout at the illnesses, not at St Archangel [Michael] and God, because people die (Cepenkov 1972, 40).

Thus in popular perceptions the basic power of saints derives from their direct connection with God and ‘divine powers’.

Basic components and forms in the structuring of sacred and profane space

There are two main mechanisms by which space is sacralised. Most often it follows people’s cultural needs, situationally or contextually, and involves ritual (Risteski 2001). Such sacralisation is normally temporary, activated, concluded, and activated again by ritual moments. The second mechanism is more important in the context of this study since it is the means by which it is understood that the space permanently ‘radiates’ (Elcinova 1996, 52-3). Such space acquires a special power, *potentia*, which popular terminology names in various ways. Here sacrality is further maintained and empowered by ritual. Sacred spaces become references around which the whole of cultural life is concentrated and profane space is structuralised. In Macedonian popular religion, sacred spaces of the second type fall into four main classes.

Churches and monasteries are dedicated in honour of Christian saints and sanctity attaches to the place in which a sacred object is located, or to the object itself following signs of sanctity from the saint such as miracles and visions.

Holy places or forests (*vekavski mesta*, ‘saintly places’) constitute the most widespread category, with clear and recognisable attributions of sanctity. Whatever comes within their domain – buildings, objects, remains – carries the sign of sanctity, so that people’s ritual and social relationship with these places is thoroughly structured.

Sacred stones, of which a significant number is connected with sanctity and the beneficial influence of the saints, are most often cultic and healing. Normally they are today named after Christian saints, such as those of St Atanas and St Elijah at Konopista and the Cattle-farmers’ Stone named for St George at the village of Visebesrovo near Ovče Pole.

Sacred waters similarly form an important segment of popular imagination. They too are known for their sanctity and power to heal.

Miracles: A special form of establishing and structuring sacred space

Belief in miracles lies at the heart of popular religion, representing an action or event outside the domain of human actions. A man or woman either has no influence on miracles, or can eventually take part in them by obeying strictly prescribed and regulated forms of ritual behaviour. Miracles can result from the activities of mythical and demonic beings, but most often they are the result of actions of saints together with God’s help and providence.

Such beliefs are illustrated by the following verses, translated literally from the Macedonian, regardless of metre.

*Thank God for the great miracle,
For this miracle is for wonder!
The bright moon stopped
Together with the sun,
And with them the bright star
Stopped on the Golden-topped Mountain.*

*I thank God for the great miracle.
The bright moon I don’t understand,
That stopped with the sun,
And with them that bright star,
But I understood that the Holy Mother of God
Was holding Jesus in her arms,
And with her, celestial angels in the sky;
She stopped on the Golden-topped Mountain,
To build the sacred monastery... (Obredni 1986, 203-204).*

The miracle itself is most often interpreted as a sign, with either good or bad implications for the community..

...I am not a girl,
 I am the holy Sunday [*sveta Nedelja*]
 And if you do not believe me,
 Let us go to the field.
 Everybody will bow to me.
 When they went to a field,
 At first there was white wheat;
 All bowed to her.
 Then the girl blessed it:
 ‘Without you, let the church not be!’
 But the barley did not bow.
 The girl cursed it... (Obredni 1986, 192).

Temples are built in places where some miracle happened, a sufficient sign for confirmation of the saint’s power: healing the sick, protecting the weak, punishing ritually or socially unfit individuals or communities.

Healing functions of the saints

The power to heal and prevent sickness is one of the most important functions of the saints, achieved by means specific to, and characteristic of, traditional cultures. Foremost is the miracle, whose manifestations begin the very moment a few basic relationships are established between the supplicant and God and the saints. In popular religion, the way in which these relationships are established is completely outside doctrinal Christian teaching. In accordance with all other mutual relationships with beings belonging to the Other World, other reality, traditional communities and individuals employ forms of behaviour which are wholly ritual. These include prayer, gift-giving to the saints, *kurban* [blood-offerings], *beskrvna zrtva* [non-blood-offerings] such as ‘*krevanje*’ [the breaking of a loaf], and reverence of sacred and healing material objects belonging to, or directly connected with, the saints. In popular understanding there is absolute reciprocity between what is offered and what is expected back. In a great number of ethnographic and folklore examples, people decide on the basis of what they are getting from the saint whether or not they will continue to offer what he or she needs. If the saints are not sufficiently diligent, people turn their icons back to front, a warning for the saints that the relationship will be broken if they do not do better.⁸¹

Forms of healing are represented here by the following examples in the following verses, again translated literally, with no attempt to replicate metre. The first is a song sung by women on the Feast of the Mother of God on August 28, 1999, at the monastery of the Holy Mother of God, in the village of Manastir (whose name itself means ‘monastery’),

⁸¹ Personal fieldwork, Mariovo region, recorded 1999.

Mariovo region, while they wove wreaths of flowers to be placed at the entrance of the church and above her icon.

God's Mother goes for a walk through the *gora zelena* [?mountain forests],
 Through *gora zelena*, Mother, through to a sacred place.
 In this place she found, Mother, a holy monastery.
 [...]
 There she found the mother of two dear brothers
 St Demetrius, Mother, and St George.
 Their mother saw her from afar:
 'Bujrum, [a cheery greeting] *Bujrum*, my dear Mother, come to be my guest,
 To be my guest, Mother, to sit here at the head of the table,
 To sit at the head of the table, Little Mother, of the Holy Table,
 To bless my guests near and far.'
 [...]
 'To your guests, my dear son,
 To the sick, dear son, that they go away in health,
 Next year, my dear son, and come back to me.
 Next year, my dear son, to our home
 To our home, son, to our home.'⁸²

Since they continually provide the saints and mythical beings with everything they need, traditional rural communities and individuals expect that they should permanently shield them against all disasters, especially sickness. So when sickness appears, especially epidemics, it is presumed that some significant breach in the relationship between saints and people has occurred. Perhaps the reason is perceived to be inappropriate behaviour within a ritual or social plane. For this, punishment from God and the saints is due. Or it may be that the saints are not properly obeying their duties. Depending on the attitude of the rural community, measures are taken to find what caused the breach. One is a searching out of infidels, witches, sorcerers, bastards. Another is the investigation of why the saint stopped doing his or her duties. Most often, people go to the priest, who as the nearest representative of God can also be blamed as the cause of the trouble. After that the condition of the icons in the church is checked, and, in the case of big misfortunes, even a public prosecution can be organised, even anathema of the saint because of his or her misbehaviour. This means, for example, a breach in gift-givings and offerings for a certain time.

After these intensive ritual activities, the working of saints is most often expressed in miraculous healing of the sick and/or destruction of the cause of misfortune.

...My mother was the caretaker in that little church. And then came a man from Bitola, his wife, he, and a child, but a mute child. [...]
 'Granny, open the door, let us see if you have some water there. I had a dream.'
 This child was mute for twelve years. And he was a Communist, a military man, and he dared not say what he dreamt.

⁸² Archive of the Institute of Ethnology, Skopje (AZE).

He dreamt that he should come to Robovo village in Berovsko, and in his dream the Holy Mother of God came to him, a woman dressed in black, and she cries to him:

‘Don’t you take this child anywhere! Take it only to Berovsko Robovo, to the church of the Holy Mother of God where there is a water [that is, a well or spring]. With this water it will be washed and the child will heal.’

They came into church, they prayed to the Holy Mother, to All Saints, to St Archangel [Michael], to the Old Man God, and then they came to where this water was. They made their bows, the mother came and fetched with water, and left her gifts to the Holy Mother of God. She washed the child’s face, gave it a little to drink, waited a little, washed its face again, and sat down to eat. [...] And when they sat down, the child said:

‘Daddy, let us go!’

And when he heard it, the man did not know what to do, he was so overcome. So he said:

‘Granny, is it possible that my child will become a man?’

‘My son, whatever the Holy Mother of God told you, she is going to make it!’

And they went away satisfied’ (Vrazinovski *et al.* 1998, 278-279).

Saints as bringers of fertility

Fertility and welfare of people, animals, and plants are perceived to lie within the domain of God’s power, and the power of saints and other mythical beings. Everything in nature depends on their activities, and during the yearly calendar, during life- and ritual cycles and at all other appropriate moments, people work to make their relationships with the saints as good and strong as possible. While God is considered a general giver and holder, saints’ power is seen as stronger and more actual. Thus the prophet Elijah is the foremost patron of fertility, after God, by means of his perceived influence on the conditions that determine the size of the harvest: water, grain, thunder, lightning, and hail. Numerous field ethnographic and folklore recordings confirm these characteristics of St Elijah.

‘Fiery Mary [in folk tradition, the sister of Elijah] went for a walk,

And she is walking for four years.

/.../

‘ “I watched a great miracle,

That people do not believe in me any more [literally, ‘The fate in me has fallen apart’],

That the law doesn’t work any more.

/.../

‘ “Give me, Brother, the keys of the heavens,

And let me close the cloudy sky [one of several skies understood in tradition, namely the one that produces the rain]

For rain not to fall in nine years,

For the dry earth to crack nine *lahti* in depth [*lahat* is the distance from fingers to elbow).”

/.../

‘Her brother gave her the keys of the heavens.

She locked the cloudy sky.

It didn’t rain for nine years,

The earth cracked nine *lahti* in depth.

/.../

‘All widows got together,

They prayed to St Elijah,

St Elijah prayed to God,

And God felt mercy for them.

So he let light rain fall’ (Obredni 1986, 192).

‘So, the word goes that St Elijah was the most terrifying saint of all, because he carries thunder that God gave him. /.../ And then St Elijah got angry, everything went silent, the wedding and all, three days and three nights. After that /.../ that was St Elijah, the greatest servant of God, responsible for thunders. He also rules the weather, and thunders and all’ (Vrazinovski *et al.* 1998, 262-263).

Other saints can have the same function, for example St Nedelja (literally, ‘St Sunday’). Here is a song for St George’s Day sung in the district of Mariovo, published in 1960.

‘... St Nedelja went for a walk

Down the river, up *lakatea* [?]

She picks flowers of all kinds

Flowers of all kinds, white, red,

White, red, grey, green.

St Nedelja, George’s mother, shake your skirts, skirts and sleeves,

Skirts and sleeves, and long hair,

On our field,

On our field, to give birth,

To give birth to wheat and wine,

Wheat and wine, honey and milk (Risteki 1960, 42).

Saints as protectors

One of the functions of saints is to protect individuals, those named after them or who have made a vow to honour the saint; families, particularly those with a relationship with the saint in the form of *slava* [celebration of the family patron’s day] and/or keeping his icon in the house; communities, whether village, town, and region, and so on, and including the village and town *slava*; and professional and trade groups such as butchers and greengrocers, again each with its *slava* [saint’s commemoration]. For example, St Naum is protector of the Ochrid region and its lake, while St Clement is patron of the Macedonian Orthodox church and protector of the Macedonian people.

Some saints protect men, others women, typically St Petka [literally ‘St Friday’, otherwise known as St Paraskeva, ‘The Penultimate Day’] and St Nedelja [‘St Sunday’].

‘Farmers of Mariosko are very superstitious. /.../ Among the most widespread, deep-rooted among the population is the veneration of St Petka. It consists simply of veneration on each *petak* [Friday, literally ‘fifth day’] but not in honour of the patron of the little church of St Petka, who is celebrated only once a year, on October 14, and whom the villagers themselves can easily distinguish from their own St Petka by a very old custom of unknown origin and coming from nobody knows where. /.../ Superstitious belief in St Petka ascribes to her the following rule. She protects people, stands for them in front of God, protects them from drought, *pomor* [the sudden deaths together of many people], infertility, thunder, and generally of many other evils and misfortunes. In return, she [St Petka] expects to be honoured by the veneration of Fridays. That’s their custom. She’s described as a woman who by night walks from one to another door of people’s houses, knocks on them, climbs the roofs, and appears in the hearth in the shape of her face or her whole body, very often naked. She dictates to them the conditions for her regular celebration, she appears in their dreams, mostly to women, and then she either speaks to them, judges them, or predicts their future. It’s interesting how men celebrate her. On Fridays they are allowed to pick firewood, to take manure to the fields, to repair their ploughs, to do anything but ploughing. /.../ Sunday is not honoured as much as Fridays! (ES 1992).

Saints as punishers

In popular belief, saints punish those who do not obey social or ritual rules, especially non-believers. Such perceptions have acquired strong social connotations and regulative influence on social relationships and everyday behaviour. They could also be understood as an important ethical normative for respecting differences between people.

‘Of those who set fire, Turkish rascals, some started to pluck the eyes of saints, saints made of wood. They started to scratch them, and soon they lost their sight. They immediately became blind, lost their sight, could not see anything. And what of the village they set on fire was burnt, but the church was not. In those times, these people believed, whoever plucked the eyes of saints, the eyes with which saints were looking, it helped if they were *kauri* [Christians]! And so they plucked their eyes (Vrazinovski *et al.* 1998, 252-256).

Methods and forms of obtaining the saint’s benevolence

Prayer

The most simple but efficacious way to obtain what is wished from God or the saints is by prayer. In Macedonian popular religion there are many ways to pray. Here is one

example, on the occasion of the family *sava*. While crossing himself with his right hand, the head of the family takes his hat off with his left and says this prayer:

‘O Lord and St Tanas [or whatever is the name of the family saint], Give us what is good! O Lord and St George, stamp with your feet on the necks of our enemies and thwart their intentions. O Lord and St Demetrius and next St Nedelja [*sic*], be helpful to us. You turned the evil into good... O Lord and Holy Mother of God and her friends St Barbara and St Catherine, be helpful to us, protect us from demons!’ (Tanovic 1927, 210).

Girdling of sacred places

Ritual circling and girdling of sacred places, especially greater churches, or temples, is very often found in Macedonia. Observation of strict ritual rules and conditions enables specific perception, construction and reconstruction of space, time, the sacred and the profane, the sick and healthy, and so on. Girdling has been noted by numerous researchers and surveyed in detail (*e.g.* Rusic 1924, 96-99). N. I. Tolstoy thought it was a secularised, secondary form of a more archaic ritual, creeping, that is, crawling or going on one’s knees around a church, forming a ritual circle (Tolstoy 1995, 161-187). More recently observed forms of this ritual include laying a long strip of linen, candles, or woollen threads around the church three, five or seven times. Believers later used these items for their health or the health of their family, or they left them in the church, thinking that the counter-gift they would receive would be what they needed. They had become tertiary relics or fitting votive offerings.

Milenko S. Filipovic, in a study of customs and beliefs in the Skopje valley, wrote that on the patronal feast of the monastery of St George in the village of Deljarovce, the visitors girdled the church with white woollen thread. It has been said that barren women often girdled the main votive church in Skopje, St Petka (Filipovic 1939, 513).

The girdling of churches and monasteries that V. Rusic noted in many parts of Macedonia in the early decades of the twentieth century have been spotted during fieldwork by the present writer. It is now happening at sacred stones, held to be efficacious in healing diseases and infertility. For example, barren women are prominent among the people who come on St George’s Day from various parts of Macedonia to the *Govedarov Kamen* (?Shepherdess or Cattle-farmers’ Stone?), a sacred and healing stone in Ovce Polje. They girdle the stone three times with red and white woollen thread, and later they sit on the stone and make belts of threads which they must wear until they get pregnant. In the vicinity of this stone, even a ‘tomb’ of St George was built.

‘The sacred place is *Govedarov Kamen* and people like to go there. /.../ The stone is connected with St George’s Day /.../ He made an apparition, St George, and because of that they made this connection, because we have here a monastery of St George in Bogoslovec. And St George said that it should bear his name – St George’s Day. And this Stone, because of that, this [Cattle-farmers’?] Stone, they

named the [Cattle-farmers'] Stone 'St George's Day', 'The Stone of St George's Day' (Vrazinovski *et al.* 1998, 136-142).

Offerings

Kurban, blood-offerings

Blood-offerings, *kurban*, constitute one of the most widespread ritual actions aimed at strengthening relationships with the inhabitants of the Other World. Every important holy day in the popular calendar, every festivity of the patron saint of a church, is celebrated by offering animals in his or her honour. For example, here is what was said by an informant at Valandovo in 1970.

'I will tell you about *kurban* which is given to three saints, St Peter, St George, and St Demetrius.

'We, every St Peter's Day, take an old ram, and a spit, and we go to the spring /.../ People are satisfied with St Peter's doings and because of it they slaughter a *kurban* for him, from 1912 on.

'In the place called Manastir, in the monastery of St George, there is a custom to kill *kurban* on St George's Day /.../'.⁸³

In some parts of Macedonia, villagers have positioned sacred stone crosses, often at the cardinal points of the compass. In the vicinity of these crosses there is, or is customarily believed to have been, a little church. Most of the crosses are named after the patron saints of the community. As a token of veneration of the saint, every year *kurban* is slaughtered on them. In some cases their origin is remembered. For example, in the case of some misfortune, especially meteorological, the village made a vow [*obrica se*] to the patron saint that they will make him or her *kurban* if he or she protects them.

'It was raining too much, and there was much hail, so they make a vow to St Athanasius, to make *kurban* to him, and so they slaughtered two lambs, and two men of the same name circled around the village with the lambs skins, and *kurban* was cooked there. They circled the whole village with these skins to prevent hail, because earlier that year there was too much hail, and the whole village was circled on the day of St Athanasius, which was vowed to be a holy day.

'Also on St Elijah's Day, the same thing, the same way, a sheep is slaughtered. On the same place, on the cross.

'St Demetrius, St Demetrius asks for *kurban*, an ox! An ox is wanted for St Demetrius, but our village is poor, and we can't afford one. So we go and buy a ram and we kill him! /.../' (Vrazinovski *et al.* 1998, 132-133, no. 184).

⁸³ Archive of the Institute of Folklore, 'Marko Cepenkov', Skopje (AIF), ML. 1725. recorded by Lazar Gosev.

Non-blood offerings

Besides *kurban*, popular tradition makes it possible to establish connections with God, the saints, and other mythical beings, by offering them food other than meat. Most usually, during the festivities of the saints, people make ritual loaves which they offer in a ritual way. In Macedonian tradition the ritual is called *krevanje leb*, and it has a strong symbolic meaning. In most cases the act of offering the sacred loaf to the saint is performed by the eldest man in the house, the head of the house, in the place of the priest. These ritual loaves are prepared either with wheat-germ or without (*presen leb*, *presnik*, *presnacka*, and so on).

Gift-giving to the saints

In Macedonia a very clear difference is made between offerings to God and the saints, gifts, and rewards. Sacral exchange of valuables always has the connotation of gift-giving, and profane exchange of reward (Risteski 1998, 71-80).

Gifts are mostly given to the saints after the performed action – they have deserved them. Although sacred gift-giving also includes exchange of valuables, meaning that what is given should be given back, gift does not have such strong pretensions to reciprocity as has *kurban*. A gift could represent the oldest and the deepest expression of gratitude for good deeds done. It means that a gift should in itself have this sacred category of power or force which the gift-giver wants to transfer to the gift-getter. In this sense objects given to the saints, since they remain in the church, become directly connected with them by being placed put on the icons, the altar, and so on. Afterwards they are sold to believers, who expect that the saints will present them with an additional gift – health, fertility, and so on. Thus the gifts are put into circulation. The following remarks were recorded in the village of Konopiste, Bosavija region, in 1996.

‘Here, up here, this stone is called St Athanasius. On St Athanasius’ Day, in Winter, they go from here, from the whole county, and they go there with gifts. Whatever anybody is fond of, a scarf, a shirt, which one wants to give it to the church, *na vakavot*, they have to circle with it there, they circle with it on the stone, and afterwards they take it to the church, and they leave it there.

‘There go those who can not have children, barren, not only women, infertile people. To somebody, it helps.

‘Three times you have to circle. You have to kiss the stone. In the morning you have to leave a gift to the stone, and afterwards with that gift we go to the church, we take it there, and afterwards this gift is being sold. Three times you have to circle. You say to yourself, “Come on, St Athanasius, if there any help you can give us. If we have done anything wrong, you forgive us! /.../’ (Vrazinovski *et al.* 1998, 133).

Sacred and healing objects

Sacred, healing, and 'living' icons

Visual or iconographic rendering of popular images is one of the most important mechanisms in expressing, forming and fulfilling people's thoughts and consciousness. In popular religion, icons acquired a special position in the conceptualisation of mythical space and time, if not the world itself, as representatives of the celestial empire, unique objects to which people communicated in the most direct way. Icons are sacred because it is believed that saints or their spirits live in them. Consequently the relationship with them is very specific and often does not correspond with the church's rules, teaching, or recommendation. Prayers, sacral gifts, and the recommendations or reproaches of individuals to the saints, are expressed exactly in icons. Gifts to the icons are put on their right side. Where the gift is money, a banknote is brushed across the icon, anticipating that the saint will accept it. Money is left only with those icons by whom it is supposed that the gift will be accepted.

The healing power of the icon is tested when disease comes. Besides gifts, parts of the sick person's clothing can be left overnight on the icon, believing the sick person can be healed the instant he or she puts the piece of clothing back on. Sometimes icons are brought to the sick person in the hope of making them better, especially those of saints famous for healing, for example Haralampia, Andon, known as Andonija, the Mother of God, Petka, and others,.

'Whatever sickness they are sick of, the icon of St Andon is brought to the sick person as well as the Gospel, because people believe that as soon as his icon is brought to the sick, the sick, if they are for dying, will die, and if they are to live, they will get better' (Tanovic 1927, 27).

Stevan Tanovic, who recorded this in a study dedicated to customs in the neighbourhood of Gevgelija, published in 1927, wrote that to the church of St Spas (*Ispas*, Ascension), people came from various parts of Macedonia, Strumicko, Vodensko, Beresko, and stayed there from two or three to six weeks, lying every evening under the healing and miraculous icon of St Spas (*Ibidem*, 71).

The present writer found during fieldwork that in the monastery of the Mother of God Most Pure in the village of Manastir, Kicevsko region, there is an icon of the Mother of God which people believe has powers of bestowing healing and fertility. It stands on a stone pedestal with an opening through which devotees crawl, believing they will be healed.⁸⁴

During the performance of *pokrsti*, ritual circling of the village, its territory and church, with the intention of protecting the community and its crops from evil influence and to obtain sufficient moisture for the growth of the crops, all portable icons are brought out.

⁸⁴ AZE, fieldwork in Kicevsko, 1999.

In almost all parts of Macedonia, sick people, especially sickly or under-developed children, lie on the ground so that the *krstonose* [literally ‘cross-bearers’] pass over them. Thus the icons’ beneficial influence will be transferred to the sick. Tanovic noted in the neighbourhood of Gevgelija that where a sick person could not be brought, his belt was placed on the ground instead. Women put *mekike* [sour dough made with a generous amount of wheat-germ] in a scarf to be passed over in the same way – and afterwards give it to animals for health (Tanovic 1927, 62).

Special healing powers are attributed to the so-called living, flying, or wandering icons. M. K. Cepenkov wrote that Musa, the highway robber, burned a monastery dedicated in honour of the Mother of God at Knezin and then ‘the icon of the [Mother of God] Most Pure, flew from that monastery to the monastery which is now hers’ (Cepenkov 1972, 151). In another legend about the same icon, from the monastery of the Mother of God, Kicevska [that is, in or near Kicevo], it was said:

‘The icon that is now in the church of the Mother of God Most Pure was miraculous, as I was told by the head of the monastery and an old woman from Kicevo. Also my father reassured me that it was truly a miraculous icon’ (*Ibidem* 181-182).

The cult of these miraculous icons is very strong, even today. A legend about a miraculous icon from the village of Konjce in the Radovisko region was noted by Cepenkov at the end of the nineteenth or beginning of the twentieth century. The present writer found a living cult of these icons during fieldwork at the very end of the twentieth century.

‘In the village of Konjche there is a church which serves this village and many others as a monastery, and in it there is a miraculous icon. This icon is of cloth, and it has the face of the Holy Mother of God. This icon was found up there in the mountain owned by a family from Konjche. On the day of the Saints Tzars [Helen and Constantine] it was that a man found this icon and from that time on the villagers go to that very place where the icon was found on the day of the Ss. Tzars. Not only the people from Konjche go there, but also from other villages, and they consecrate the water there for health and for fertility of the land which should be protected by the Holy Mother of God. That water, being left at the place where the icon was found, is believed to be lifegiving and miraculous as the icon itself.

/.../ Many sick people who went to Konjche by the time the icon was found became well, and many sick became well if only their cap or shirt or something else of theirs was brought to the icon.

It is remembered by villagers that from the day the icon was found people were healthy and the fields were fertile...’ (*Ibidem* 183-184).

Another legend about a miraculous icon in Veles is a good example for the attitude of people towards this type of icon.

‘In the city of Veles there is a woman whose name is Marija Zrzanova. She has a miraculous icon with the face of the Holy Mother of God. This icon is very old and it is not very big. It’s average, and has two wings that cover it. People who are sick or otherwise unhappy bring to Marija Zrzanova anything they have, God bless us, at home, shirts, to stay overnight, and by night the icon tells Marija what shall happen to these people, bad or good.

‘Those who didn’t bring shirts took the icon to their home to the sick person and the icon told their family whether they would die or get well. If the sick person was not to die, the icon was very joyful and happy that evening. All people who looked at her, joyous and smiling, were reassured that the sick person would get well. And if the sick person was to die, the icon stood unhappy and sad. Even if he took only one little poppy seed, the sick person would die. When people see her so sad, people are sure that the sick person will die, and they all begin to mourn, the same way that the Mother of God mourned.

‘By this sadness of the icon, everyone is sure that the sick person will die, and he really dies, and the other will live with whom the icon is gay’ (*Ibidem* 185).

Washing the cross

One of the most frequent actions for healing the sick is the application of water used in the ritual washing of a cross. This is most often done in suspected cases of enchantment of children and of women who have just given birth. The crosses used in such washings are numerous, and are considered especially healing and sacred. They may be wooden, silver, or of some other metal. They are guarded and kept on the Holy Table in the sanctuary, or they are carried in the processions of the people who deal in this kind of popular medicine. The cross is ritually placed in a basin of water, and care is taken to notice if bubbles are released from the cross. If so, it is believed that the child [if it is a child who is sick] is indeed enchanted, and the child is made to drink from the water three times. The rest of the water is used to wash the child’s face. Healers recommend that the child should sleep with the cross (Tanovic 1927, 122-123).⁸⁵

Passing children through the silver girdle of the Mother of God

Tanovic marked an interesting custom in the vicinity of Gevgelja in the first half of the twentieth century. In healing women whose children died young, as early as the first day after their birth, the child on its first day was passed through a silver girdle, in some places called simply ‘The Silver Girdle’, but more often ‘The Girdle of the Holy Mother of God’ or ‘God’s Mother’s Silver Girdle’. The girdle was the property of the church, and for each child passed through it, it was necessary to pay a metal coin. For a cure to hold, those children who didn’t develop well were also also passed through the girdle, before sunrise (Tanovic 1927, 120-121).

God’s Mother’s Hand

⁸⁵AZE, fieldwork in Malesevija Porece, Strumicko district, in 1999-2000.

The cult of God's Mother is especially developed to protect women, influencing particularly their fertility. When child-bearing and -raising is needed, prayers are addressed to her with the invocation, 'God's Mother, help us' (*Ibidem* 105). To ease the birth of a child, some women or midwives use God's Mother's Hand, *Bugurujcima R'kicka* [a plant shaped like a sponge, which, when it is placed in water opens and acquires the shape of a hand with five fingers]. By magical analogy with this 'opening' or 'widening' of God's Mother's Hand, it is anticipated that the woman will also 'open' easily and deliver her child. This plant was brought by *hadzi* who went on *hadziluk* [pilgrims to the Holy Land, as opposed to *hodocasnik*, the term for a pilgrim to other destinations].

Passing under a flower-wreath woven on the patronal festival of the *hram* [temple, shrine]

Church patronal festivals attract people from the neighbourhood, and other villages and towns. Many come even a few days earlier to help with the preparations, but also to sleep in the church or churchyard for their health or to heal some sickness. One of the most important rituals, reserved for women, is weaving wreaths of flowers or basil to be placed above the wall painting of the patron saint above the church entrance, and over the icon on the iconostasis on which is represented the saint or God's Mother. Where there is a sacred or healing spring or well in the church or monastery precinct, such a wreath is woven and placed also above the water, as at the monastery of St Elijah in the village of Lisice in Velesko region. While the wreath is being woven, women sing hymns according to folk-song formulae. People around them hand them bunches of flowers, mentioning the names of their family, for help. After the wreath is finished, a young girl dances with it in a circle [*go ziagruva*] in front of the church, three times. Then, while two people hold it, everyone else passes under it, believing in its sacred, healing, and fertility-bringing power. At the monastery of the Mother of God in the village of Manastir in Mariova, the present writer was told that it was barren women in particular who passed under the wreath.⁸⁶ After that the wreath is placed above the wall-painting at the entrance door of the church.

Passing through the sacred shift (*anginisana kosula*)

Tanovic wrote that the *anginisana kosula* [sacred shift] was used by women as protection against an evil spirit after childbirth. The shift was made by three *prajasani babi* [women past childbearing age] during *gluvo doba* [literally 'death time', the hours between midnight and first cockcrow] before first light on Sunday. In the later morning, the bishop would wear the shift during the liturgy (or during the consecration of a church). Then he would give it back to the women who had woven it and they would distribute it in small pieces, believing that any family who possessed a piece would escape the spirit's torture (Tanovic 1927, 111).

Scratching the saint's eyes

⁸⁶ Personal fieldwork, village of Manastir, Mariova, recorded in 1999.

Scholars in the past noticed, as have recent ethnologists, that images of saints on church wall paintings appear to have a special role in healing. People, especially barren women and those with eye-trouble, scratch the eyes in such paintings and drink the dust with water, believing that the power of fertility or healing will be transferred to them (Filipovic 1939, 514).

Fertility nuts

In the yard of the monastery of God's Mother at the village of Treskadec, near Prilep, there is an imposing chestnut tree. According to contemporary legends, the fruit of this tree has a particularly strong effect on fertility. As a result, barren women eat three of these nuts, expecting to get pregnant.⁸⁷

Conclusion

All the foregoing stands testimony to a rich system of popular religion, which despite standing on numerous and varied foundations, functions, and syncretic structures, has an exceptionally significant place in the religious, and more generally the cultural, consciousness of people living in traditional societies.

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SAINTS WHO WIND GUTS

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Abstract: Taking an integrated approach to a corpus of folk texts about a saint, the linguistic anthropologist also ought to make an inventory of all other texts associated with any of the saint's attributes in a given area. The pattern of describing a saint's folkloric status and attributes is not essentially different from the one aimed at providing the full description of a demonic being. The folkloric figure of St Jeremiah is shown here only with respect to the action of "winding the guts" attributed to him by the south-Macedonian texts for getting rid of snakes. On the other hand, the paper cursorily sheds light on other ways in which magical texts are Christianized. The latter part of the paper proceeds from the motif of "winding the guts" towards a possible demonological (re)construction. In case of such a wide and continuous area as the Balkan Peninsula, a "proto-being" - whose nominations vary from language to language - may be reconstructed only by reduction of its various demonic creatures to a common denominator (key functions and predicates, communication modes, chronotopes etc). The available folklore material involving punishment by winding the bowels reveals an undeniable Balkan dimension. Beyond the Balkan area, the texts with identical structure do not, however, contain the motif of winding the guts, but they work out various kinds of punishment instead. The concluding picture calls attention to some overlaps between the investigated areas and to an inventory of actors in this specific action. The same interest is attached to the existing structure the nominations of patients at the microtext level.

Magical text: active saint

The cult of St Jeremiah as the patron of snakes in the Slavic world is known only to the Balkan Slavs.⁸⁸ In his commentaries on *Alexandride*, Stojan Novaković - an illustrious Serbian historian of 19th century - gives the following interpretation of connections between the cult of snakes and St Jeremiah in the Balkans: "In Chapter 29 of Book 3 Alexander is notified about the death of the prophet Jeremiah, and immediately after that the inhabitants of his city, Alexandria, come to tell him that they cannot live any more in the city he founded. When Alexander asks them why, they reply that many snakes are coming out of the river Nile and biting people to death. To this he says that they should build the bones of the prophet Jeremiah into the city walls, and in such a way that they form a cross, because the saint's prayer heals from snake's venom. 'From that time on in Alexandria,' goes on the story, 'no snake can bite a man.' I have been unable to find this passage either in what K. Muller and Zacher purchased of Pseudo-

⁸⁸ Linguistic-anthropological description of Slavic (especially South-Slavic) conceptions of St Jeremiah, cf. in: СД, s.v. *Иеремия*. In South-Slavic charms against snake's bite St Jeremiah does not figure as an active agent, and in Russian charms *Св. Еремей* is mentioned just once - as an assistant in bird hunt (Юдин 1977, 81-82).

Callisthenes' ancient texts or in our translations of the Modern Greek text. For that reason I point to the popular belief about Jeremiah's Day (...) I do not cite this with the intention, which I have had above in this text, to show that those customs originate from the story of Alexander because, their being so widespread among the people, I hold them to be older than this story among us, but to show that the story of Alexander had been receiving from folk beliefs and accounts (either our, Byzantine, or common to us and Byzantines, which is the most likely) as much as it had been enriching them through the transmission of tales from one people to another" (Новаковић 1978, 31-32, cf. also Филиповић 1986, 297-298). This conclusion is proved right and affirmed by a folk legend from the village of Plužine nearby Svrlijig (Serbia), where the same event is thus described: "In ancient times St Jeremiah controlled snakes, he was their master. No snake dared do anything without asking permission from St Jeremiah. He was strict with them and punished them by cutting their heads off. When St Jeremiah died, a snake heard of his death, went to the lake and told other snakes: 'Now you can do whatever you like, the one who commanded you is not among the living anymore!' The snakes gathered, came out of the lake and went to the king's house. The king got scared and summoned his diviners and counsellors to advise him what to do and how to protect himself from the scourge. One told him to dig out St Jeremiah's head, burn it and sprinkle the ground round the lake with the ashes. The king followed the advice. When he scattered the ashes round the lake, the snakes began to withdraw back into the lake. Never again did they dare come out of the water as they could feel the man in their vicinity" (Раденковић 2000, 116).

The Jeremian magical text for expelling snakes goes even further, because it is threatening snakes by winding the bowels with an iron reel.⁸⁹ It has been ascertained in a comparatively limited area of southern Macedonia and among the Macedonians in northern Greece (area bounded by Debar, Ohrid and Lerin). The active agent in these texts is St Jeremiah, and in addition to the iron reel one version shows the saint armed with a "sabre reaching to the ground". The text structure is very simple: it begins with the expulsion formula with tabooed ("go away, vermin") or inventorial naming ("snakes and adders"), followed by the announcement of the saint's arrival and description of his destructive action. In some versions St Jeremiah comes with St Tanasije (Athanasios).⁹⁰ As the direct naming of snakes is taboo in Slavic tradition, these Macedonian texts name them collectively: *vermin*.⁹¹

Beyond this limited area, the Macedonian magical text (Gevgelija; Greek Macedonia) has the same structure but a somewhat different content. First of all, St Jeremiah is named

⁸⁹ In Bulgarian tradition the reel has magic power: fairies and dragons run away from it (Маринов 1994:210). Cf. also Павлова 1988:333 (the expulsion of snakes with a reel on St Jeremiah's Day is explicated in the text, but does not exist in the action part of the ritual).

⁹⁰ The feast-day of St Tanasije (Athanasios) was associated with vermin in Macedonia. There was a ban on women's work on that day and with it the period of unchristened days ended (cf. СД, s.v. *Афанасий*).

⁹¹ South-Slavic magical texts for expelling snakes are often applied against vermin in general (snakes, lizards, mice, moles, insects) and they use for nomination the derivatives of Proto-Slavic **gadъ*. Such a collective notion of vermin has its basis in facts of language; according to SP s.vv. **gadъ*, **gadina*, the original etymological meaning "something causing disgust" indicates that a syncretism of the meanings of "snake" and "vermin" existed even at the Proto-Slavic level. On this syncretism, see also СД, s.v. *гады*. A syncretistic conception of vermin is also reflected in Romanian magical texts for the purification with smoke, cf. Сикимић 2001, note 31.

in the plural or, in some versions, as an appellative (*aramija*/villain). The action code also varies: Jeremiah (or Jeremiahs) stabs and beats, cuts and roasts, throws into a pond, cuts heads off, pounds at the head with a tile, cuts off ears, ties with straps.⁹² Here too his arrival is announced, but he comes with different tools. Dominant feature here is the listing of pests.

A distinct group of magical texts directed to snakes describes St Jeremiah as an anti-hero armed with a rusty sabre and riding on a scabby horse.⁹³ They begin with a formula for expelling snakes and lizards, followed by the announcement of St Jeremiah's arrival and a description of his special equipment and forthcoming destructive actions. These texts have also been registered in Macedonia.

Magical texts of the Balkan Slavs for expelling the snakes retain the announcement formula for the saint's arrival, but also show desacralized characters as isofunctional agents (marked differently in functional code). Anthropomorphized chrononyms constitute a distinct group of actors, e.g. *Blagovest* (Good news/Annunciation) or *Baba Marta* (Grandma March).⁹⁴

The expulsion aided by the saint and the formula "Go away, vermin, the saint's coming" is also applied on mice. Only exceptionally, the magical texts of the south Balkans use an imperative etymological figure,⁹⁵ which - as a structural feature - also appears in the Greek text of the same type, with Sts Mark and George as active agents.⁹⁶

Magical text: passive saint

The magical texts for expelling snakes show a differentiation between two zones, those of an active and a passive saint (with transferred functions). Moving away from the Balkan centre of irradiation (St Jeremiah and other non-Christianized actors functioning as agents, and snakes as patients), the texts begin to show a transfer of functions from the active to the passive saint: Jeremiah is not an agent, but only a signal. However, through rendering the agent-saint relation passive, the status of the patient-snake is also being modified because the act of destruction now appears as self-directed, i.e. a self-destruction. In the north of the South-Slavic area (Serbia, western Bulgaria), St Jeremiah's textual function is reduced to mere nomination (the saint's role is not active); the mention of St Jeremiah in the text functions according to the equation "a saint" = "a calendar day". Obviously, the saint's function extends to a date and, furthermore, on that date people assume his attributes. Hence, the Jeremian texts reflect three hypostases of St Jeremiah: his mythological image, a chronotope (chrononym in the text), and participants in the rite of *jeremije* (jeremiahs), for example in southern Serbia: *Jeremiah of the Field! / Go away to the fields, snakes! / Tomorrow, say jeremiahs, / we'll cut you, / we'll roast*

⁹² For the typology of punishment in Slavic magical texts, cf. Кляус 1997.

⁹³ The motif of the anti-rider on a "scabby horse" occurs, for instance, in a song from the central Rhodope Mts. The motif of anti-rider in the folklore of Balkan Slavs also occurs in magical texts, e.g. for expelling fog. South-Slavic magical texts usually describe a classically equipped rider as an adversary of impure powers.

⁹⁴ On the expulsion of vermin on 1 March, cf. СД, s.v. *Евдокия*.

⁹⁵ Etymological figure is typical of the versions involving St Lazar, cf. Sikimić 1994:79-82.

⁹⁶ St Mark's Day used to be celebrated against snakes by the Croats of Janjevo (Kosovo), according to the records by Nikola Rodić.

you! / Go away into the sea! Expulsion by means of a chrononym is also characteristic of west-Bulgarian examples. Monolexic naming (*snakes* or *serpents*) characterizes virtually all Jeremian texts in Serbia.

The extensive variants of the Jeremian text have in their structure a formula for locating Jeremiah and dislocating snakes, the formula *only one*⁹⁷ and the passive action of the snake's eyes⁹⁸ being pricked on a thorn. In addition, some versions include the attribution of two opposing loci: *sea – field (deep – broad)*. The roughly delimited area of this text type is central Serbia (Kopaonik, Aleksandrovačka Župa, Leskovačka Morava, Levač and Temnić): *O my dear rajole! / Jeremiahs to the field, / snakes, go away into the sea! / Your deep sea / our broad field / only one stayed behind / unluckily for it / it pricked its eyes / on two hawthorns / on four stakes.*

The common structure is the opposing positioning of Jeremiah and snakes, followed by the formula “only one” and the pricking of the snakes' eyes that occurs without St Jeremiah's active intervention and thus implies the saint's miracle. This text type is also characteristic of central Serbia (Podibar, Užice, Dragačevo, Gruža): *Jeremiah up the field! / Snakes, go away into the sea! / Whichever stays behind, / may it prick its eyes / on two hawthorns / on four stakes.*

The identity between the magical actions (pricking, pricking of the eyes)⁹⁹ suggests that demonic beings and vermin enjoy a similar mythological status; e.g. in Kosovo, the bear's eyes are symbolically pricked on St Basil's Day (Дебелковић 1907, 251); in Macedonia, on St John's Day, muck is set on fire and moles driven out (the agents in the text being *fire* and *I – first person singular*). Considering a calendrical correspondence (the pulling up of thistle on St Jeremiah's Day), weeds also fit in this group of pests.

Simple-structured texts – locating Jeremiah in the field and dislocating snakes into the sea: *Jeremiah into the field, snakes into the sea* – have been registered in the broad area of southern and central Serbia, but also in Herzegovina. The same area also shows versions with an enhancement (temporal or spatial specifications for the occurrence of snakes) following the expulsion formula, e.g.: *Jeremiah into the field, the big serpent into the sea. When I feel like it, then I'll see you.*

The convergent Albanian confirmation of Jeremian texts (e.g. from the village of Žur near Prizren: *Jeremiahs, jeremiahs, snakes and adders have drowned in the Drim, or: go into the Drim*), should be interpreted in the ethno-religiously differentiated context of the Balkans.

⁹⁷ For examples of this folk formula, cf. Sikimic 1999:33.

⁹⁸ For an analysis of the motif of pricking the eyes in Jeremian texts, see Љубинковић 1996. For the motif of blinding cf. also Prop 1990:114-119. On the pricking of the eyes by St Petka cf. the contribution by R. Popov in this volume and Афанасъев 1994(1):233. An active attitude towards the snake's eyes is expressed in the folk saying: *He'd fuck the adder in the eye* (Караџић 1918, s.v. *јебаму*). The eyes as the object of destruction also occur in other magical texts, e.g. in the charm “against an evil spell” in a cause-effect relation *crackle > put out: The evil has three eyes, two fiery, one watery. The two fiery crackled, the watery one put them out.*

⁹⁹ Passive, involuntary pricking is a known magical practice in South-Slavic charms. The snake's bones are often included in a series of thorny objects that the actor “comes across and pricks himself on” (in the area comprising eastern Serbia and western Bulgaria).

The next circle of magical texts for expelling snakes, limited to Bosnia,¹⁰⁰ is associated with Lazarus' Saturday calendrically and with St Lazar textually, but the saint's attributes are transferred to the performer of expulsion: *Lazarica knocks, go away from the house, filth!*

In some examples the link with St Lazar is established only at the level of etymological figure: *Serpents, slither off the house into fields and mounts*. Versions from eastern Bosnia and Srem often name the performer of the magical action (*stopanica*/housewife) as an active agent. If used metonymically, the agent could be reduced to the weapon only (*obramica*/shoulder pole): *Knocks, knocks a lazarica, go away from the house, filth, the shoulder pole will get you!* In some examples this picture is retained at ritual level (the master of the house straddles a shoulder pole), but not in the text. Texts with so simple a structure (expulsion formula by way of announcing the arrival of *lazarice*) are characteristic of the Vojvodina. A somewhat broader version from the diaspora specifies the threat as roasting on hawthorns: *Go away snakes, mice, rats, frogs, bugs, here come the lazarice to burn you, to roast you on hawthorns.*

Narrative context

The same threat of winding the bowels on a long iron reel, uttered by a *karakondzula*, occurs in south-Macedonian versions of a folktale [3.5, Пеев 1988, 285].¹⁰¹ The motif is usually incorporated into a narrative context (which, in terms of genre, is definable as folktale or, sometimes, demonological legend) as the punishment inflicted to a girl in the mill (or the cemetery) by an incontestably demonic being (*karakondzula*, *todorac*, vampire). What connects the two folkloric situations (threat in magical texts and fulfilled threat in narrative contexts) is their Balkan setting. In southern Macedonia the two areas coincide, but the motif occurring in a narrative context covers a much larger area (from Greece, Macedonia, south-eastern Serbia and Bulgaria to Romania).

In an attempt to profile the obviously Balkan "protodemon" winding the bowels, his nominations, numeric characteristic, chronotope, activities, effective or ineffective defence strategies, communication with the demon, modes of the demon's access to an enclosed space and types of demonic punishment will be taken into account. The folkloric sources used for that purpose are the Balkan demonological legends about *todorci* and *karakondzulas*, and the folktales about a stepmother and her stepdaughter, plot AaTh 480. The motif of winding the bowels occurs only in those Balkan versions of the plot where the stepmother sends her stepdaughter at night to the mill/cemetery to grind grain/spin wool or flax. The girl brings helpers with her, or finds them on her way/in the mill (a cat/a cock/a dog), and she feeds them. At night, the demon asks the girl

¹⁰⁰ Among the itinerant Roma of Bosnia, snakes are expelled on Annunciation Day: *Go away snake, here comes the swallow!* (Uhlik & Beljkašić 1958, 211). Although it is not in Romany, the confirmation may be a different reading of an impenetrable text, but also the fixing of an older Slavic situation.

¹⁰¹ All numbers enclosed in square brackets point to the appendices at the end of this paper.

to open up the door/to dance; the animals advise her to get herself a trousseau; in the meantime, the cock begins to crow and the girl returns home richly equipped. The next day, the stepmother sends her own daughter, but the girl finds no assistance and ends up dead. The mother usually finds her cut up, her bowels wound round the mill-wheel/fence. This text type is characterized by a man–woman relation. The folkloric material used for this paper is of Greek, Aromanian,¹⁰² Megleno-Romanian,¹⁰³ Macedonian, Bulgarian,¹⁰⁴ Serbian, Vlach and Romanian origin.

Well-known in the Balkans is yet another version of AaTh 480 characterized by a woman–woman relation. Driven away from home, the stepdaughter becomes an old woman’s maidservant and ends up rewarded. Dissatisfied with the work of the stepmother’s daughter, however, the old lady presents the girl with a chest full of snakes which bring the lazy girl/her mother to death. This paper will, besides the version with two girls serving an old woman, only point to the equivalence of two motifs: the bridal outfit on the one hand, and the “vermin” on the other, which correlates with the physical punishment in the surveyed Balkan area.

The reward for one girl’s poor service is a chest full of snakes (Leskovačka Morava; Ђорђевић 1988, No 56). The girls pick lice from the old woman’s hair; the good one picks up “silver and gold”, and the bad one “big lice, nits”. The lice infest the bad girl; a sack of wool contains a snake which bites her in the tongue, and she dies; the same fate befalls her mother (Ђорђевић 1988, Nos 52, 56).¹⁰⁵ The same plot with minor modifications has been registered in a much broader Balkan zone. For example, in the

¹⁰² The scheme of the Aromanian tale entitled “The Vampire” from the village of Skra (Lumnica) is only given in the commentary: The good stepdaughter Mara encounters animals–assistants (dog, cat, and cock) which help her. The bad daughter, Neda, does not feed the animals, and they do not help her. The locus is a mill, and the demon – a vampire who tears the bad girl to pieces (Παπαγεωργίου b 1984, 432-433).

¹⁰³ Oblak 1893, 477-478 believes that the Megleno-Romanian version was borrowed from Bulgarian folklore: the girl takes with her a cock, a dog, and a cat, and only as a subsequent modification – the vampire eats the stepmother too.

¹⁰⁴ The story is very popular in Bulgaria, 40 versions have been recorded in the Blagoevgrad area alone (Daskalova *et al.* 1985, 428-430).

¹⁰⁵ In a south-Macedonian version the stepdaughter picks up “silver and gold” (and gets three loads of golden clothes and a horse), whereas the true daughter picks lice and nits and is given a scabby horse carrying two chests and the order that she and her mother should be naked while opening the chests; the chests are full of snakes which eat them up (Верковиќ 1997, 336-337, 121). In the Ohrid version the stepdaughter picks up “pearls and gold”, and feeds the old woman’s chicken (snakes, adders, lizards) with bran; the other girl picks up lice and nits, and runs away from the old woman’s snakes and lizards with the curse: “May all of them stay with you!”, and from the chest come “all lizards, snakes, adders and all kinds of pests; they threw themselves at her daughter and ate all of her” (Шапкарев 1976, 235-238, 115). In an Aromanian version (village of Skra/Lumnica, Greece) the mother and her daughter strip naked and open the chest, snakes and lizards fill the room, throw themselves at the two and eat them (Παπαγεωργίου 1984, 156-160). In Bulgarian versions, according to the material from the Archive of the Institute for Folklore in Sofia, ducats come out of the stepdaughter’s mouth, snakes and lizards out of the true daughter’s; the daughter is all covered with male and female genitals/faeces/tails; she farts with every step she makes (and other Bulgarian versions in: Daskalova *et al.* 1985, 12).

village of Sekurič (region of Levač, Serbia), the stepdaughter nit-picks the old woman's hair in a cottage in the woods and says she's picking "silver and gold"; the daughter picks "big lice and nits"; the chest is "full of frogs and snakes; when the girl saw the snakes, she got frightened, screamed and fell down dead" (J. Срећковић, Архив САНУ, Београд, Езб 1–2–15). In Vuk's version the stepdaughter plucks lice from a dragon's hide which "does not stink", and she feeds a variety of animals, whereas the stepmother's daughter spits: "Pooh! What a strange stink!", takes a club and randomly "bats off a leg, a head, a wing and so scatters all [the animals]"; she chooses the heaviest chest "and two snakes pop out of it, one rushes at the mother's eyes, the other at the daughter's, and they suck their eyes out" (Караџић 1897, 36). In the version from Крушеваčka Жупа, the girls comb the old woman's hair in her home, the stepdaughter seeing "gold and silver", and the daughter "all snakes and lizards"; after the old lady is gone, the girls open their chests and find "all snakes and lizards in the beautiful and colourful one, and in the other – a lovely bridal outfit" (К. Божовић, Архив САНУ, Београд, Езб 221–53 246). The version from the Ћуприја area does not contain the motif of nit-picking, and the bad girl and her mother get bitten by the snakes from a chest (Мајзнер 1934, 15). In the Montenegrin version, the stepdaughter is nit-picking the Sun's mother ("fine-smelling head"); the other girl tells the Sun's mother her head "stinks", is given a chest, but "a snake came out of the chest and did her mother in" (Шаулић 1922, 20–21). According to the version from the Djakovo area (Slavonia, Croatia), the stepdaughter feeds wild animals, nit-picks the old woman's hair, whereas the stepmother's daughter drives away the animals – "she grabs a stick and scatters them off, and even breaks the legs of those within reach", she spits at the sight of lice in the old woman's hair, chooses the biggest chest, and "a snake pops out of the chest and bites the stepmother and her daughter, and they both die" (Papratović 1940, 169–170). Furthermore, the motif is widespread in all of Europe.¹⁰⁶ The chest containing snakes instead of a trousseau, a motif known beyond the Balkans, is typologically related to the motif of winding the bowels from the first group of examples.

1. Nominations

Given the different methodologies of recording folk texts, the dialectal and linguistic diversity of the terms for demons that wind their victim's bowels in the Balkans will be only outlined here. In the Slavic south of the Balkan Peninsula the terms are: *караконџа*

¹⁰⁶ In German versions the gift that the lazy girl is given in the hag's cottage is a box containing devils or snakes; stinky sedge and reed grows on the lazy sister's head (a punishment symmetrical to her performance); a grey-haired dwarf kills her; her head is cut off; in Dutch – the good one has pearls popping out of her mouth and the bad one has frogs; the two boxes contain little white angels and little black devils; in French – from the good sister's mouth come pearls and flowers, and frogs and snakes from the bad one's; in the Romanian one – the bad girl gets a box of snakes; in the Czech one – she is given a chest of snakes and scorpions, the good one has golden hair and the bad one horns on her head; in Polish – she gets a chest of snakes, her horses turn into dogs, and a cow into a wolf which devours her; flowers and precious stones fall from the good girl's mouth and snakes from the bad one's; in the Ukrainian one – the bad sister turns ugly; in Latvian – a devastating fire breaks out of the bad girl's box; in the Finnish one – the bad girl is given a chest of hot sulphur and tar. With the Udi (a people between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea) the lazy sister is given a piece of ice which she takes for a silver bar at first; in a version from the Caucasus the bad girl is eaten by a jackal or turned into a donkey. All the examples are cited after Bolte & Polivka 1913 (see also numerous non-European versions).

[3.1; 3.4], *короконцула* [3.5; 3.10], *короконцијуре* [3.6], *каракондџурето* [3.9], *кърџкондџули* (Русакиев 1956а, 436), *караконџалта* (Пеев 1988, 285-286), *каракон'ак* (Тодоров 1936, 443), *кџракондџарету* (Русакиев 1956, 199), *каракондџоре* [3.12], *каракондџа* (Мартинов 1958, 374-375). Both Bulgarians and Greeks have *kalikanzars* [3.11; 4.1] and *lykokanzars* [4.2]. In Serbia, in addition to *karakondzulas*, there occur devils [3.2; 3.3], among Macedonians and Bulgarians also vampires [3.7; 3.8] (Кепов 1936, 201-202; Тодоров 1936, 428, 430), as well as *таласъми* (Джуренов 1980, 22) and giants [3.13] in Bulgarian folklore. According to the material from the Ethnographical Museum in Sofia, active agents are: devils, vampires, *talasons*, *karakondzulas*, “something”, giant, *drakus*, *зъгондер-вампир*, *дързци* (Daskalova *et al.* 1985, 428-430).

The demons winding the bowels in Vlach and Romanian examples are named as follows: *sen togers* [1.1], *Sintoagers* [1.2], *Sintoagers on horses* [1.3], *horses* [1.4; 1.5; 2.2; 2.3], *Simtoader's horses* [2.1], *horses of St Theodore* [2.5; 2.8], *Hala* disguised as St Theodore, Theodore's horses and *Big Taur* [2.4]; *Simtoader* [2.6], *Simtoaders* [2.7] and *strigoi* [2.9]. Romanian demonological descriptions and folktales contain descriptions of the physical appearance of Sintoader/Theodore's horses¹⁰⁷ [2.4; 2.5; 2.6; 2.7; 2.8].

The snake rituals on St Jeremiah's Day are related to the rituals performed in some parts of Serbia on St Theodore Tyron's Day. The cult of snake on Todorice (St Theodore's feast-days) has been registered in a few places in Serbia: in the Djakovica area and in Sredačka Župa, women sew on the eve of St Theodore, thereby pricking the eyes of snakes. In some villages around Belgrade, waste or rags used to be burned against snakes on that day (Толстоя 1995, 238). On the other hand, the celebration of Theodore's Week is associated with the belief in the demonic beings that possess characteristics of a horse – *todorac* (Толстоя 1995, 239-241; Токић 1988). Among the Balkan Slavs the Todorice rite has been registered in a narrow north–south zone from Banat to Macedonia, which includes the easternmost Serbian and westernmost Bulgarian territories, while horizontally stretching along the right bank of the Danube from Belgrade to Dobruja (Толстоя 1995, 243). In Romania, Theodore's horses are especially kept in check in Banat (Marian 1899, 50-51).

2. Numeric characteristic

Demons only attack girls and usually occur in indefinite numbers [1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.4] [2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 2.7; 2.8] [3.2; 3.3] [4.1]. Sometimes the number is nevertheless defined as: nine handsome young men (which correlates with the number of girls at a get-together) [2.5]; two men, which is in correlation with the number of girls in the mill [2.6]; twelve *lykokanzars* [4.2]. What is striking about the group of demons is their uncountability, but

¹⁰⁷ The association of St Theodore (Todor) and *todorci* with the world of the dead is explained in: Агапкина 1999:146-149. In northern Bulgaria, St Theodore is conceived of as being a dead person who turns into a vampire and *karakondzula*. During Theodore's Week he leaves the grave as a *talason*, roams the village in the figure of a *karakondzula* or vampire and returns to the grave at cock crow. An explicit connection between *todorci* and the dead is also observable in northeastern Serbia and the Banat. The strongest proof that St Theodore and *todorci* belong with the dead–demons is a time limit to their presence in “this world”. For St Theodore's status in the Balkans see: Попов 1994, 80-87. For the problem of distribution of mythological beings in the calendar cycle cf. Кабакова 1989.

also and concurrently the singular noun/verb for their communication with a girl: e.g. the demon talks to a girl in the first person singular, as “a handsome lad” [1.5]; the number of *karakondzulas* [3.6; 3.9; 3.11; 3.12; 3.13, Русакиев 1956a, 436; Русакиев 1956, 443] or *talasons* (Джуренов 1980, 220) is indefinite, but they speak to a girl in the first person singular.

Quite the opposite is a special case of Hala turning from single into a group: St Theodore, Theodore’s horses, or Big Taur [2.4].

In a few cases, the demon occurs in the singular: one *strigoi* [2.9]; one *karakondzula* [3.1; 3.4; 3.5; 3.10, Пеев 1988, 285]; one vampire [3.7; 3.8] (Кепов 1936, 201-202; Тодоров 1936, 428, 430).

3. Time

Both demonological legends and folktales specify the time of day for proto-demons’ operation of winding the bowels as night/midnight, and demons always stop their activities at cock crow. In one case, *todorci* come night after night, i.e. each night during St Theodore’s Week [2.8].

The calendar time for the appearance of demons is not always stated, except for the Romanian versions setting the winding of the bowels within the span of Theodore’s Week [1.1]; at Sintoagers [1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.5]; on the eve of St Theodore’s Day [2.4]; on the Wednesday evening before Theodore’s Week [2.5]; on the eve of Lent [2.7; 2.8]. South-Slavic versions usually make no mention of calendar [3.1–3.9], but it is perhaps self-evident in popular consciousness (*karakondzulas* appearing only on the “unchristened days”).

4. Loci

Almost as a rule, the locus for the winding of the bowels is a mill. In Romanian demonological legends involving spinning gatherings the locus may also be a house [2.1], a get-together [2; 2.3, 2.7],¹⁰⁸ or a cottage in the woods [2.8]. When a vampire is designated as demon, the locus naturally moves to a small house at the cemetery [Тодоров 1936, 428].

5. Characteristic activities

A universal feature of proto-demons is dance (they invite a girl to dance [1.2; 1.3]; a handsome lad asks a girl for a dance [2.9]; *kalikanzars* make a girl dance [3.11] or invite a girl to join the chain-dance [4.11]), and in demonological legends they dance girls to

¹⁰⁸ Bulgarian demonological legends from the Lovech and Pleven areas also speak about girls spinning together during Theodore’s Week (the oldest and wittiest recognizes the demon by the teeth, a lame gait or a hole in the nose), a girl wants to leave and St Theodore’s ties her to a thread and only then does he permit her to go fetch some more wool. On her return the girl finds out that all the other girls have been eaten (Попов 1994, 84).

death [2.2], or dance with girls at a get-together [2.7]. Serbian and Macedonian versions lack the motif of dancing [3.1–3.7].

On the other hand, some versions indicate pre-marital preparations: a handsome lad arrives in order to get married [1.5]; a *karakondzula* would have the door opened, he wants to get married [3.9; 3.10]; *karakondzulas* are dressed and equipped as participants in a wedding ceremony, they wear red boots [3.9], the stepmother's daughter takes them for suitors (Тодоров 1936, 443); Big Taur appears at the window in the figure of a handsome lad, calls the girl to come out and become the mistress of the world and his bride [2.4].

In many versions, however, the proto-demon has no demands other than to enter the mill: they shout at the window for someone to open the door [2.8]; *sen togers* ask for nothing, they just avenge a beaten cat [1.1]; *sintoagers* ask for nothing and, instead of a girl, they kill a cat [1.4]; a *karakondzula/vampire* would have the door opened to him [3.1; 3.5; 3.7; 3.8, Русакиев 1956а, 436]; *talasons* would have the door opened (Джуренов 1980, 220).

In demonological legends *todorci* merely come to a get-together [2.5], or enter the mill [2.6]. *Kalikanzars* count the money, they can smell a human being [3.11]. As horses are attribute of St Theodore, *todorci* logically arrive on horses in the folktales containing the winding of the bowels; in which case the sound of hooves can be heard [1.3; 1.4; 1.5].

6. Strategy of defence against demons

Both in demonological legends and in folktales at least one girl escapes from demons. In demonological legends she/her mother is unfailingly familiar with a defence strategy or, as in folktales, the grateful animals come to her aid in return for her kindness.

6.1. Food

The motif of good or bad food occurs only in the cited folktales of AaTh 480 type and cannot be found in the aforementioned demonological legends. For instance, the stepdaughter feeds a cat with bread [1.1]; feeds a cat, a dog, and a cock with cinder bread, whereas the daughter would not share her flour bread [3.1; 3.3; 3.5, Пеев 1988, 285]; the stepdaughter feeds a cock, and a cat with the inner part of a loaf, and the daughter gives them the crust [3.6]; the stepdaughter feeds a dog, a cock, and a cat with bread and fish [3.8], or with bran bread and bones; the daughter does not share her white bread and wine [3.2], or rye bread/wheat bread (Джуренов 1980, 220); the stepdaughter prepares cornmeal porridge and gives the soft part to a cat and a cock, herself eating the crust; the daughter bakes bread [2.8]; the stepdaughter cooks mush [2.9]. And yet, many folktale versions lack any information about food [1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.5] [2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 2.4; 2.5; 2.6] [3.7].

6.2. Assistants¹⁰⁹

The girls from Romanian demonological legends have their female relatives for assistants: they are advised by their granny Mada not to bring their spindles with them to the mill on the eve of St Theodore's Day [2.4]; a girl herself recognizes danger, and her mother turns all the vessels in the house upside down [2.5]; a shy girl figures it all out by herself, plucks her spindle and runs away with her sister, their mother turns all the kitchenware upside down [2.7].

Besides her mother, a girl gets help from other anthropomorphic assistants: she comes across an old woman who advises her not to spin and not to open the door [1.4]; a granny, St Nedelja (Kyriaca), advises a girl how to pack her gifts into a chest [2.8]; a girl is advised by the miller not to open the door before cock crows and to ask for pieces of clothing one by one [1.5]; the miller tells the girl to unload the donkey [4.1].

The folktales develop a system of zoomorphic assistants. Vlach versions show a cat remaining in front of the mill and getting killed instead of the girl [1.4]; a cat showing up in the mill and the girl addressing it in verse: "Cat, little cat, be my friend" [1.1]; a cat called in verse: "Come as a friend to the mill with me, cause I'm going all alone" [1.3]; a cat and a cock live in a cottage, a girl feeds them with soft cornmeal porridge, the cat speaks for the girl [2.8]; the stepdaughter washes and combs a bear, a wolf, a fox, and a hare, and the grateful animals take her back home the next day [2.9].

In South-Slavic examples too the fed animals speak for the girl demanding gifts and the unfed remain silent. In Romanian demonological legend the cat scratches the cock, the cock starts to crow and sinter's horses vanish [2.1]. The function of zoomorphic assistants is sometimes reduced to a mere mention of crowing cocks [2.4]. Animals are often featured in their capacity as "messengers" announcing the girl's return/death.

6.3. Communication with demon

The basic defence strategy against demons in folktale versions is the compression of time¹¹⁰ effected in two basic ways: by consecutive demands for gifts (here functioning as a substitute for the real time needed for a bridal outfit to be manufactured) or by an exhaustive explication of the technology of flax processing [3.10; 3.12]; sometimes the two strategies are combined [3.13]. The girl unacquainted with these strategies, or the one asking for the impossible, gets hurt [4.2]. In some versions the girl is taught the time compression strategy by animals [1.3], or they conduct a dialogue with demons instead of the girl [2.8; 3.1; 3.2]. The girl is taught the strategy by the miller [1.5]. In some versions she already knows the strategy [2.9]. The animals make noise and devils run away,

¹⁰⁹ Bolte & Polivka 1913, 221-226 paid attention to the main motif of the stepdaughter's assistants (cat and cock) but neither to details concerning the locus (mill or a cottage in the woods) nor to the stepdaughter's reward and the lazy daughter's punishment.

¹¹⁰ For the magical compression of time cf. Толстая 1997 and 1997a. In order to be saved from the demon "of the floor" the villagers of Lužice considered it indispensable to talk for an hour about the life of a cultivated plant (usually flax or wheat) from the moment the seed reached the ground to the final product. Serbs in the Leskovac area used to chase off hail clouds by singing songs about the ordeal that wheat, corn or hemp go through (Левкиевская 1997, 171).

leaving a chest in front of the mill [3.3]; animals make noise and karakondzulas leave the chests [3.6].

It is demons that open communication with girls, by asking them to open the door. South-Macedonian confirmations stand apart in that karakondzulas threaten to wind the bowels without ado.

In some Bulgarian versions a dialogue ensues in such a way that the karakondzula's call is answered by the stepdaughter: "Give it a kick, brave, a straw holds it."¹¹¹

Their communication also begins with an invitation to dance – sintoagers call: "Hey, hey, come out girl and let's dance!" [1.2]. Demons present themselves as suitors, and the girl buys time by asking for gifts [3.9].

7. *Modes of ingress*

Most versions contain no information about the ways in which demons manage to enter an enclosed space [1.1] [2.9]: demons simply get in [2.8] [3.3; 3.6; 3.8]; devils pound at the door and break it [3.2]; a karakondza breaks the door and gets in [3.4]. Sometimes, though, a girl's verbal defiance appears to be the mode of ingress – when the girl says: "Find a hole and get in", the vampire gets in. It often turns out that the girl went out [1.2; 1.3] [2.4] or opened the door herself [1.4; 1.5] [3.5].

In Romanian demonological legends *todorci* cannot get into the house in which all things¹¹² [2.3], or all the kitchenware [2.5], are turned upside down; they call the kitchenware to open up, the overturned kitchenware are unable to open the door; a chipped piece sets off, but the mother calls the rasp which falls from the beam and breaks the piece [2.7]. Nevertheless, *todorci* do get into the house where the girls are having a get-together [2.2], either as lads standing at the threshold of the mill [2.6] or as lads knocking on the door of the house where a get-together is being held, and the girls invite them in [2.7]. And yet, the girls seem not to know how the lads have entered [2.5]. In Greek demonological legends the mother opens up the door holding two torches and making a sign of the cross at the door in order to prevent lykokanzars from entering [4.2]. Kalikanzars are only able to enter the house in which there is no incense burning beneath the icon [4.1].

¹¹¹ The text of the girl's reply to demons may be compared with that of the songs sung at a get-together recorded in the same area. It is the motif of "the poorly, improperly closed door": *Wife blocked her husband with a needle, / so that he wouldn't go to parties at night.*

¹¹² In the same line cf. the belief about Tiodor (Theodore) recorded among the Serbs in Novi Kneževac (the northern Banat): boys and girls were dancing on the square during Tiodor's Week, a man with hooves and spurs joined in, everybody ran home and turned all the objects upside down, but a girl failed to turn over a salt-cellar. Tiodor called her to open up the door, the salt-cellar took off, but the girl broke it thereby "evading a kick on the head with a hoof" (Кнежевић 1996, 48). According to a Romanian belief, should Theodore's horses try to get into the house, the only way out is to turn all the things upside down, because the horses ask objects to open up, and then the objects reply that they can't because they have their bottoms on the top (Paucenești district, Marian 1899, 45).

8. Punishment

The winding of the bowels¹¹³ that befalls a girl(s) has been taken in this paper as a constant; and yet, the treatment of the dead body, and sometimes the method of killing, is not always the same in the surveyed Balkan area. In addition to exposing the entrails, the main requirement in some versions is that of dismembering the body, of tearing it to pieces.¹¹⁴ Vlach versions, infallibly in the weaving code, show the bowels wound (“warped”) on the fence or round the mill-wheel axle (“spindle”): a cat jumps on a girl and smothers her, *sen togers* take her bowels out, wind them on the fence round the mill [1.1]; *sintoagers* tear a girl’s body to pieces, take her bowels and wind them on the fence [1.2; 1.3] [2.7]. *Sintoagers* wind the bowels round the mill-wheel axle [1.4; 1.5], horses tear a girl to strips and hang them on the walls of the house, and put her head in the window so that she appears as smiling. The inside walls are covered with bowels, ribs, legs, arms [2.8]; *todorci* kill girls or just find their bowels strewn all over the house [2.2]; young men turn into horses, trample all the girls in the mill to death, throw them onto the mill-wheel and wind their bowels round the axle [2.5; in the example cited by Hedeşan 1998, 147]; *simtoaders* kill a girl, throw her entrails onto the mill’s roof.

The treatment of the viscera in Romanian confirmations is not always explicit: *todorci* dance the girls to death, or tear them to pieces [2.3]; a *strigoi* dances with a girl until she gets torn to pieces [2.9]; *Taur* kills the girls [2.4].

Devils tear a girl to pieces, take out her bowels and wind them round the mill [3.2]; devils eat a girl and put her head on the millstone [3.3]; a *karakondza* strangles a girl, winds her bowels round the mill-wheel, and puts her head in the window [3.4]; a *karakondzula* winds a girl’s bowels from beam to beam [3.5]; *karakondzulas* eat a girl and wind her bowels round the millstones [3.6]; a *karakondzula* eats a girl and winds her bowels round the mill-wheels, from heap to heap (Пеев 1988, 286); *karakondzulas* stretch a girl’s bowels over the mill-wheel [3.9]; a *karakondzula*–lad “puts” the girl beneath the mill-wheel to turn it [3.10]; *karakonyaks* tear a girl to pieces and wind her bowels from one hook to another (Тодоров 1936, 443); a vampire eats up a girl and winds her entrails from one wheel to another [3.7]. The winding of the bowels is announced by the cock [3.7]; a vampire strangles a girl and sucks up her blood [3.8]; *talasons* tear a girl to pieces and eat her, string her bones together and hang them on a beam (Джуренов 1980, 220); a vampire eats a girl up and hangs her bowels on beams (Кепов 1936, 201-202); a vampire takes out a girl’s entrails (Тодоров 1936, 428); *kalikanzars* seize a girl and tear her to pieces, put her entrails on a steep slope and fasten her voice-box to the barn [3.11]; giants cut up a girl, fasten one leg to the wheel, the other

¹¹³ The motif occurs beyond the Balkans as well, cf. Thompson’s motif index: Q 469.7: twisting entrails from body. Correlations at verbal level have survived in threats up to this day, cf. e.g. *çu te ičkembim* (I’ll gut you) or *çu te rasporim* (I’ll rip you open) (Donje Vidovo near Paraćin, Димитријевић – Добросављевић 1997, 198). Раденковић 1996, 64 contends that the winding of the bowels round the mill-wheel/stone reflects the specific movement of *karakondzulas* and other mythical beings (defined by the verb *viti se/to* twist, *okretati se/to* turn). Balkan small folklore forms also refer to “tightening of the bowels” as a kind of physical punishment, cf. Sikimic 1995, 184-186.

¹¹⁴ For the dismemberment of the body in Russian magical texts cf. Шиндин 1993, 61. It is interesting that the examples of evisceration cited by the same author do not mention the bowels (Шиндин 1993, 62). The motif of the division of the body in children’s folklore cf.: Сикимич 1997. For the motif of cutting up the body in folktales cf. also Prop 1990, 145-146.

somewhere else and scatter the other parts about the mill [3.13]; kalikanzars tear a girl to pieces, each gets a piece and eats it, they nail one ear to the wall [4.1]; lykokanzars slaughter a donkey, skin it, wrap the girl in the skin and put its bowels round her neck instead of a gold-coin necklace [4.2].

A karakondzula strangles a girl [3.1]; eats a girl up (Русакиев 1956а, 436; Тодоров 1936, 430); tears a girl to pieces (Русакиев 1956, 199); a karakondzula takes a girl to a cliff edge and throws her down [3.12]; takes her somewhere (Мартинов 1958, 374-375). In the version from Gocedelčevski, a karakondzula rushes into the river where other karakondzulas snatch a girl and slide her on the ice (Daskalova *et al.* 1985, 428-430).¹¹⁵

The internal locating, the positioning of the entrails and other body parts bring out “Balkan” elements by comparison to all other versions of the same plot.¹¹⁶ In the interior space, those are: mill-wheel axle, mill-wheel, walls, roof, door; as well as the very borderline of the mill space: fence, i.e. the points round which the bowels are wound, from one hook to another, from one wheel to another; as the location for the head, there occur: window and millstone.

¹¹⁵ In a story from Kruševac County recorded in 1912: “A girl used to spin on the eve of the saint’s day, although her mother and father warned her against it. Once she worked till a late hour, and a karakondzula shouted at the window: ‘Spin, girl, spin, we’ll sleep together!’ Not knowing what it was, the girl went out to check and the karakondzula straddled her and rode till dawn” (К. Божовић, Архив САНУ, Езб 221–78 302).

¹¹⁶ It is only for the sake of illustration that are cited here (after Bolte & Polivka) the folktale versions of AaTh 480 in which the girl’s encounter with a male demon generally takes place in a cottage in the woods: Czech (a dog and a cat instruct the girl how to behave towards the prince; Death, as advised by a cat and a dog, is supposed to cover the walls and roof with talers; a cat and a dog advise her not to open door, in the morning there’s gold and silver on the table); Polish (a devil in a red jacket, dancing in a cottage in the woods, has to fetch new clothes for the girl; the devil must bring clothes and some water in a sieve; mouse as an assistant); Ukrainian (in a cottage in the woods Jesus and St Peter instruct the girl how to chase off a boy that night; as advised by a mouse, the girl hits the wolf which turns into gold and silver; a girl brings a dog and a cock with her to a cottage in the woods, a mare’s head asks her to wash it and to dance with it, the girl asks for clothes and jewellery, the cock begins to crow and the mare’s head melts into grease, that night her sister gets killed; the girl lays the mare’s head on the bed, passes through its left ear and turns pretty; a mare’s head, a bear and a wolf turn into three gentlemen, the wolf marries the girl; a boy instead of a girl, the daughter dances to death and gets torn to pieces because she tells all wishes at once; a girl cleans up a spring, a peer-tree and a dog, at night, a finely dressed “German” comes to the cottage and invites her to dance with him, the cock crows, the dog leads her out of the woods); Belarusian (a human head instead of the mare’s; a devil from the cemetery until cock crow; a bear in front of the cottage in the woods; a cock, a cat and a mouse as advisors; three sisters look for each other trying to get to the bear’s cottage, only does the youngest stay alive because she has fed a mouse; an iron head; death brings twelve pairs of oxen, horses, pigs, sheep and a heap of gold; a devil picks out poppy seeds from the cinders for the girl, wants to dance with her, brings clothes before cock crow; a girl in the bathroom and a devil); Lithuanian (a girl spins in a dry-salter shed; in the bathroom; the mother and mother-in-law instead of girls); Latvian (a devil in a cottage in the woods, a mouse advises her to choose shoddy clothes, a horse and a cart); Estonian (“the inn-keeper’s daughter and a wise girl warm up bathroom” – before cock crow the girl rides three times round her father’s house with the bridal outfit packed in a chest); Gagauz (a mouse in a cottage in the woods, a bear). In Russian folktales from Afanasyev’s collection, a bear e.g. wants the girl to play hide and seek with him, a mouse helps her, the bones of the other girl are brought in a vessel by her father (98); a girl helps the mare’s head, and the other girl gets eaten by the mare’s head, and her bones are put in a sack and hung (99); in a version from the north of Russia the demon is a large old man, and the girl is assisted by a mouse, the other girl is tortured the whole night by the old man, “he cut her tits and put them in the window and nailed her legs to the door” (Онучков 1998, 100).

In Belarusian folklore too “the bowels” are a metaphor for the warp: in the story about a girl eaten by a witch, the witch introduces herself as an aunt and invites the poor one to come to her house and bring “tow”. On her way to the witch’s place, the girl comes across a human head, eyes, arm, leg, bowels, and skin, a barrel of blood, a white, a grey, and a black horse. The witch explains the girl what it is that she saw on her way: the head is a pot, the eyes are dawns, the arm is a rake, the leg is a poker, the skin is a cottage, the bowels are the warp; the blood in the barrel is kvas, and the horses are day, twilight, and night (Federowski 1897, 84-86).

In Oltenia (Gorj County) St Theodore’s horses are believed to harm women who spin on the first Saturday of Lent, and they tangle their bowels same as a yarn is drawn out from the distaff and wound on the spindle (Marian 1899, 43).¹¹⁷

9.1. Collective offence

The winding of a girl’s bowels results above all from an offence against the communal ban on spinning in a given chronotope. Thus, a girl spins in a mill [2.9]; has the grain milled and spins a pack of yarn [1.1]; spins a bag of wool at night [1.3]; spins all the wool [1.4]. In Romanian demonological legends: girls spin at a get-together [2.2; 2.3; 2.5; 2.7]; a woman spins [2.1]; sisters spin in a mill [2.4]; two girls mill the grain [2.6]. In folktales a girl spins flax in the mill during the *karakondzula’s days* [3.10; 3.12]. Many versions of the tale make no mention of this offence, and so the girl is left alone in the woods [2.8]; sent to the mill [3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 3.5; 3.6; 3.7, Пеев 1988, 283]; or has the grain ground in the mill [3.9].

In Bulgaria, in the area of Razlog, there is a ban on spinning flax during the *karakondzula’s days* because that makes *karakondzulas* angry; the stepmother therefore deliberately orders her stepdaughter to spin flax “да иде караконджеро да я унищожи” (“to let *karakondzero* destroy her” - Daskalova *et al.* 1985, 430).

In the Romanian Banat, when the fasting period begins, no weaving is allowed from noon on, otherwise *Sintoader’s* horses would come and tangle the threads (Hedeşan 1997, 112). The one who lays the warp will get St Theodore’s horses entangled in her yarns (Gorj), and the one who weaves will get her threads on the loom torn for the whole year. If a woman has to spin on those days, she does it with her distaff turned upside down “so that the horses shouldn’t be paired” (Gorj). In the Pauceneşti district it was believed bad to sew or spin during Theodore’s days, especially on Great Theodore’s Day, and get-

¹¹⁷ According to Otilia Hedeşan (1998, 116-117) myth upholds the belief that *sintoader* bans the work with threads, especially the spooling of thread, i.e. the very beginning of weaving, by listing punishments for those who dare violate the ban. On the eve of the festival girls pluck plants with long roots reminiscent of threads in weaving, on St Theodore’s Day women wash their hair (so as to be like horse’s tail rather than that of a cat or hen). The concluding episode in the stories involving St Theodore includes the punishment of the girls who work or amuse themselves at get-togethers as “an emphasis on their femininity by way of stretching their bowels, again in the form of threads – over the field/the roof of the mill/alongside the road”. The author’s contention is that – through imitating threads and weaving, but without any interest in the production of fabric in the literal sense – people count on St Theodore for the regeneration of nature, in other words – for the repeated cosmic laying of the warp of nature. The horses which inflict the punishment are, on the one hand, profoundly solar and stand in opposition to the wolves which ruled the Lenten cycle and, on the other hand, they are the principal guarantee of success being in control both of the ritual and of the symbolic calendar cycles.

togethers were also forbidden – because Theodore’s horses would come and cut off the heads of all those present at a get-together (Marian 1899, 44). According to the belief of the Vlachs Ungurians in Žagubica (Serbia), women can resume spinning and knitting on “Closed Tuesday” at the end of Theodore’s Week “because now only mute, blind and lame Sintoagers have been left, and these can neither see and hear nor catch them up” (information by professor Dragan Stojanjelović from Žagubica).

9.2. Individual offences

The elements of individual guilt are also introduced in folktales (a girl curses and hits a cat [1.1]; hits a cat [1.2; 1.3]; kicks a cat and a cock [2.8]; would not comb the animals [2.9]; would not feed the animals [3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 3.8]; drives away a cat and a dog [3.5]; chases off a dog and a cat, feeds them only with a crust of bread [3.6]). In demonological legends, however, individual offences do not occur because an individual offence is associated with assistants, and in the legends there are none. Obviously, moral categories are secondary and introduced into the folktale subsequently in order to justify what seems to be an excessively severe punishment. In demonological legends the punishment is not seen as too severe and its justness is not questioned, because the ban on spinning is accepted without a moral dilemma.

From the point of view of Balkan studies, the main question is: what in the presented material is Balkan and what is not? Many European versions of the motif of a stepmother and stepdaughter describe the dismemberment of a girl’s dead body following a dance. However, a peculiar treatment of the entrails occurs only in the Balkans.¹¹⁸ European versions also show the true daughter’s negative (verbal, physical) attitude towards animals, but varied communication in verse (girl : girl; girl : assistants; girl : demons) seems to be a Balkan peculiarity. Specialty of the Balkans is the insistence on the weaving code in – concurrently – the mill locus.

An attempt at summing up the presented Balkan material reveals that the versions of AaTh 480 contain still more peculiarities, such as the special status of the mother– as the witness of her daughter’s ordeals.¹¹⁹ On the other hand, demonological legends undoubtedly suggest the mother’s role as an assistant: the youngest girl saves her neck by saying she is going home to fetch a new spindle [2.5]; a girl runs home [2.6]; two sisters run home, lads want to hold one end of roped belts to make sure the girls return [2.7].

¹¹⁸ Connection between the demonic entrails and vermin is documented in East-Slavic ethnographic material containing information that one can drink demons from a glass of wine and that then they turn into all kinds of vermin in the victim’s entrails: into snakes, frogs, mice (Афанасьев 1994 III, 520); there was a belief that snakes, worms and other vermin come out of the entrails of vampires (witches turned into vampires) that are being burned (Афанасьев 1994, III 575).

¹¹⁹ Seeing the bowels, a mother thinks her daughter has been industrious and spun/spooled the yarn [1.1; 1.3]; a mother comes for her daughter and hears a voice from the foundations: “Here comes Mara, all skin and bone! A piece here, a piece there, and an ear on the wall!” [4.1]; a mother wonders why her daughter is smiling [1.4]; their daughter’s head in the window appears to her parents as if smiling [2.8]; a girl’s head is on the millstone, and her mother thinks her daughter is smiling at her [3.3]; a mother finds her daughter with her bowels wound round her [1.5]; a mother comes to collect her daughter and finds she “has got her bridal outfit” [3.9]; a mother comes to the mill and finds her daughter’s bones carding (Джуренов 1980, 22); the daughter “остнала премена” (Тодоров 1936, 428); a girl returns to her foolish mother [4.2].

The versions of AaTh 480 recorded in the South-Slavic West, presented here only as exemplars, in addition to the lack of the motif of winding the bowels show other significant departures. The closest to the surveyed plot is a geographically quite distant version, the one written down by Čajkanović in the Užice area [4.3]. However, the versions from Rasina and Levač show considerable deviations concerning the chronotope: Christmas Eve [4.1], a cottage in the woods [4.2]; concerning the demonic being: God's angel turned into a beggar [4.1]; concerning the reward: marriage to the emperor's son [4.2]; and additionally, there occurs the motif of entertaining a guest [4.1]. Moving away from the specified Balkan centre, versions are increasingly different from the required plot; thus, in a kajkavian version [4.4], the common motifs are the fed assistants, a dance with night-time guests (who form a group), the dismemberment of the girl (the mother finds the dismembered girl in the window; and in another [4.5]: an insult to the cat and the tearing of the girl to pieces).

The extending of the examined motif to include the magical and narrative contexts also leads to some inferences about its distribution; it is, above all, the conclusion that overlaps of the motif at action level occur only in southern Macedonia. And yet, the presence of the motif of "winding the bowels" in the Balkans is very compact: it has been registered in the eastern Balkans and, in terms of language, it encompasses the Greek, Romanian, and eastern South-Slavic areas.

Other issues to ponder on are a coincidence in gender between the patients (snake: girl), a morphological analogy (bowels: snakes), and also a change in a girl's status (man > demon) effected through her dancing with/marrying a demonic being, for which the bowels/dismembered body/smiling head are – physical evidence. Next, the exposure of the entrails being a well-known sacrificial act in the Slavic world (Толсто́я 1995), the winding of the bowels may be considered a sacral act. This sacral act is stable at temporal and contextual levels, while the active agents can vary. The offence by performing women's work (spinning, warping), by working with threads, the morphological characteristics of snakes or snaky movement, may correlate with the punishment. The agents – saints/demons connected in some way with this mythic complex – are dependent primarily on their calendar time and thus are associated with snakes, as St Jeremiah. In the folk calendar they all occur in the first half of the year.

APPENDICES

1. *Vlach versions of AaTh 480*

1.1. *Village of Brestovac (integral text)*

Story has it that a Vlach woman had a daughter and a stepdaughter and, knowing that *sen togers* would be severe those days if any work was done in the evening, she sent her stepdaughter to mill some grain and to spin a pack of tow in the mill. The stepdaughter gets to the mill, pours the grist, puts her bread in her skirt and sets to spinning nibbling at the bread. Suddenly, there's a cat in front of her, and it begins to meow. She gives it a bit of bread and says: "Cat, little cat, be my girlfriend!" So the whole night passes quietly, nothing happens to her, she mills up the grist, spins up the tow and returns home. The stepmother is amazed to see her, so she decides to send her own daughter to the mill the

next evening. She gives her the same she gave to the stepdaughter and takes her to the mill. The true daughter pours the grist, puts the bread in her lap and begins to spin and eat. The same cat appears and starts rubbing against her leg. She hits it and says: “Go to hell, may the saint kill you, don’t hold up my spinning!” The cat throws itself at her and smothers her, and *sen togers* take her bowels out and warp them on the fence round the mill. Her mother waits and waits and, seeing her daughter is not coming back, sets off for the mill. Drawing nearer, she sees the bowels and thinks her daughter warped the yarn, and says: “My girl, my hard-working little one, spun the tow and warped it!” When she enters the mill, there’s something for her to see. (Ђорђевић 1906, 529–530)

1.2. Village of Gradskovo, 26 June 2000

Narrated by Radica Vasiljević (b. 1933)

A stepmother sent her stepdaughter to the mill at Sintoagers. I’ve heard the stepdaughter was sent by her stepmother to the mill and she took a cat with her. She came to the mill, and then the cat taught her what to do. And then that one sent her own daughter, and when the daughter took off, the cat wanted to come with her, but she hit it and wouldn’t take it with her. When she got to the mill, *sentoagers* arrived and: “Hey, hey, little girl, come out to dance with us!” And she went out at once, and sintoagers took her and danced with her, tore her to pieces, took her bowels out and wound them on the fence. (Recorded by the author and translated from Romanian)

1.3. Village of Metovnica, 6 May 2000

Narrated by Zoja Floranović (b. 1934)

There is an old story, that a girl became an orphan, and her stepmother sent her to the mill so that *sintoagers* would take her away. When she was leaving the house, her stepmother gave her a bag of wool to spin it in the mill the whole night, to have it finished by morning. And off she went to sit in the mill. At night, a cat comes in and says: “Meow, meow”, the cat. “What is it, little cat, little cat? Come with me to the mill like a girlfriend, ’cause I’m going to the mill all alone.” And that was her dead mother really and she came to meet her earlier. And she says: “Little cat, little cat, come with me to the mill like a friend.” And she complains: “Stepmother’s sending me to the mill at night.” And the cat comes with her. And the cat stays with her, follows her into the mill, and the latter begins to spin. And then suddenly, “thump-thump-thump”. Sintoagers coming with their horses, that’s what they were like, that’s how old women used to tell. They call her: “Come out to dance with us!” And she says, the cat’s taught her, she says: “I would come out, but I haven’t got the scarf.” And they, “thump-thump”, go away. “I haven’t got the apron, haven’t got the blouse,” and so on, all one by one, the cat’s taught her. And the time comes for the cock to crow and they’ve brought her everything, the sintoagers, and the cat hits the cock, and the cock: “Cock-a-doodle-doo.” And they go away, because it’s day now, no more sintoagers. And she, poor thing, is alive, the girl. And she was spinning, and spinning, and the cat was helping her. When she returned home, to her stepmother, when she got back, that one – how’s that, when she’d said sintoagers would take her away, to die, because she’d gone to the mill. And her, you see, the cat watched over her. The next evening the mother sends her daughter – the other one got her outfit, and her daughter hasn’t. And so she sends her, and the cat shows up again, and “meow” again. And she kicks the cat to drive it away, wouldn’t take her. All the

same, the cat goes ahead of her, and when she gets to the mill and sits down, look, sintoagers come “thump-thump-thump”, come with their horses. “Come out to dance with us,” and she says: “I haven’t got the apron, haven’t got the skirt”, but all of it at once, all at once. And they, “thump-thump”, bring it all. And she has to come out to dance. Out she comes. In the morning, they wait for her to come home, and she’s not coming. And her mother goes over, and sintoagers stretched the bowels all over the fence. They torn everything to pieces, killed her. She wanted that poor girl to be killed, but God sees, and they didn’t do that. And the cat went out to meet the other one too, she would’ve stayed alive, but she drove the cat away. That’s why our grandmother would never let us work at Sintoagers. And this is the story that used to be told, by old women, that’s how it all had been. That her daughter was hard-working, that she warped on the fence, that she spun, and she didn’t spin, she went out, they wound the bowels on the fence. And she said: “My daughter is hard-working, she laid the warp, laid it last night.” (Recorded by the author and translated from Romanian)

1.4. Village of Laznica (by courtesy of professor Dragan Stojanjelović from Žagubica)

A stepmother sent her stepdaughter to the mill to spin. On the girl’s way to the mill, an old woman taught her: “You must not spin. Whoever may come knocking, don’t open the door until cock crow.” On her way the girl found a cat and the cat came with her. The cat stayed outside, before the mill, and the girl had to spin all the wool the stepmother had given her. About the middle of the night she heard the thump of horses. The horses killed the cat instead of the girl. In the morning, the girl went home. The stepmother’s daughter didn’t come upon anyone on her way, she spun in the mill, heard the thump of horses and opened the door. In the morning, her mother found her smiling in the mill. Mother asked: “Why is she smiling?” and she saw her bowels wound round the axle (“spindle”) of the mill-wheel.

1.5. Žagubica (by courtesy of professor Dragan Stojanjelović from Žagubica)

A stepmother sent her stepdaughter to the mill at Sintoagers and gave her quite a lot of wool to spin. The miller asked the girl: “How come your mum has given you wool to spin just now? Do not open the door before cock crow. If someone knocks, first ask for a nice scarf, then a nice skirt, nice shoes, blouse” and so on. The girl heard the thump of horses, someone knocked, she said: “Who is that?” – “A handsome lad, I’ve come here to get married.” – “If you want to get married, bring me a nice scarf.” He was bringing everything the girl asked for, one by one, until cocks began to crow. The stepdaughter dressed up, took the spun wool home. The stepmother gave her daughter a smaller amount of wool to spin and advised her to ask for beautiful clothes. The miller didn’t teach the girl what to do. After the middle of the night she heard the thump of horses, someone knocked and said: “I’m a handsome lad coming to get married.” The girl asked for all the gifts at once, and he brought them. The girl opened the door before cock crow. Those were sintoagers and they seized the girl. The next day, her mother found her with her bowels wound round the axle (“spindle”) of the mill-wheel.

2. Romanian versions – demonological legend

2.1. *The Hunedoara area*

A woman was spinning, a cock and a cat were with her, she heard something at the window, a clang, she saw horses and realized those were sintoader's horses. She asked the cat what to do, the cat scratched the cock, the cock started to crow and they were gone. (Hedeşan 1997, 110)

2.2 *The Banat*

There were seven girls at a get-together, horses came and entered the house, they danced with the girls so much that they killed them all, only their bowels were found strewn about the house (Hedeşan 1997, 110)

2.3. *The Banat*

It so happened that they were working at a get-together, horses came, and the girls turned all the things upside down, then the horses cannot get in. One time they didn't turn them, and they got in, they danced with them so much that they killed them, tore them to pieces. (Hedeşan 1997, 112)

2.4. *The Banat*

Grandma Mada was a well-known sorcerer, she had three granddaughters, and she watched over them well because she knew that Hala, disguised as different characters, sought to catch them. On the eve of St Theodore she sent the granddaughters to the mill, but she told them not to take their distaffs with them because St Theodore was approaching. The girls wouldn't listen, in the empty mill the oldest began to spin, and the earth began to shake because Theodore's horses came and knocked at the door. The youngest said to her sister not to go out because Big Taur was outside, his head like a man's and body like that of a horse. Taur came to the window and peered in, he was handsome with his bright eyes, and he said [in verse]: "Come out to me girl, I'll make you the mistress of a great land!" She went outside and Taur killed her. To the middle sister he said: "Come to me girl, you'll be the mistress of the world, I'll carry you in golden slippers to make you Taur's bride!", and he killed her when she came out. To the youngest he said: "Come out girl and I'll make you the fairy of fairies and the mistress of flowers!" and the youngest replied [in verse]: "I won't come out to you, because St Petka is my mistress, I'll pray and I'll be saved from you!" Then Taur got furious and the earth shook and he cursed the girl. Dawn came, the cock crowed, Theodore's horses took off at once, and Taur was seized and thrown to the bottom of hell, and the youngest girl was left in the care of the holy mother Petka. (Marian 1899, 46-47)

2.5. *The Banat*

Girls, nine of them, went, on a Wednesday evening when they believed the horses of St Theodore had left, to the nearby mill to spin together. They were spinning, amusing themselves and chatting. At midnight, nine handsome and big-toothed young men showed up without any of the girls knowing how they got in. The youngest girl was the purest, so she saw the lads not only had big teeth but also tails between their legs. She was scared but said nothing because God gave her advice to say she should go home to fetch a new spindle and would be right back. Once at home, she told her mother what she'd seen in the mill, the mother immediately turned all the kitchenware upside down.

The lads went furious when they saw the girl was not coming back, they turned into horses and trampled on all the girls in the mill, just like the horses on the threshing floor. Then they threw them onto the mill-wheel and stretched their bowels over the axle (Marian 1899, 47-48)

2.6. The Banat

Two girls went to the mill to grind some grain. When their turn came it was already dark, but they stayed alone in the mill nevertheless. Two men showed at the threshold and stood there watching them, they looked like two village boys, started conversation. One girl stooped down for some reason and saw a tail under the shirt of one of the boys. Then she looked up at his face and saw that he had big teeth like a horse. She realized he was one of simtoaders, who could turn into men if they wanted. She pretended she had some work to do outside, so she went out, ran home, and only came back to the mill the next morning. Simtoaders killed the other girl and threw her entrails onto the roof of the mill. (Marian 1899, 48-49)

2.7. The Banat

On the eve of Lent the village girls gathered and they spun, made jokes, laughed. Someone knocked on the door; those were some lads the girls had never seen before. A shy girl didn't dance with the boys, she saw a tail sticking out of a boy's boot. She got frightened and it occurred to her it was the holiday of Simtoaders, so she told her sister that they should go back home. But the sister was in no hurry, and so the girl said [in verse]: "Yarn into the fire, shirt for the door, come on home, sister!" She kept repeating that and throwing wisps of yarn until almost nothing was left on the spindle. The sisters promised they would return, and the boys wanted to tie their belts together so that they would hold one end and the girls the other. The boys thought they would be able to find them should they not return. The girls told their mother everything; the mother shut the door and ordered the girls to turn all the kitchenware upside down. The sound of simtoaders' chains could be heard, they wanted in, pounded at the door. They called out all the kitchenware, one by one, and the vessels replied they couldn't come because they were turned upside down. Only a chipped piece under the bed wasn't turned over and it took off to open the door, but the mother called the rasp to jump down from the beam and break the chip. So simtoaders couldn't get in. The next day the girls who had stayed in the mill were found dead with their bowels stretched on the fence. (Marian 1899, 49-50)

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2.8. The Banat

The father leaves the girl in the woods, she takes an eastward direction, finds a cottage with a cat and a cock in it, cooks some porridge, gives the soft part to the cat and the cock, and takes just the crust for herself. Lent comes, and before Lent St Theodore's horses come and shout at the window [in verse]: "Pretty girl, let us in!" The cat says: "The girl has no dress"; the next evening the cat asks for slippers, the third evening, for a scarf and earrings. For so long as Todorci lasted, they came every evening bringing her things. While picking flowers, she came across an old woman who advised her to find a chest in the attic, to pack all the clothes in it and to go home. That was St Nedelja

(Kyriaca). She gets home and opens the chest which fills the whole house with robes. The sister didn't eat porridge, she baked bread, kicked the cat and the cock. The time of horses comes again: pretty girl, let us in! The animals keep quiet, the horses get in; those were handsome boys with horse's tails and hooves. The horses tear her to strips and hang them on the walls of the house. And they put her head in the window so that it appears she's laughing. Her father and mother come for her and see her grinning in the window and say she's smiling at them. The walls inside were all covered with hanging bowels, ribs, legs, arms. (Hedeşan 1998, 121-125)

2.9 *Moldavia*

Girls went to a get-together; the stepdaughter spun a basketful of spindles, and the daughter spun only three because she was having fun with the boys. The stepdaughter couldn't cross the stream because of her load of spindles, so the daughter took it and showed it to the mother as her own work. The cat told the truth. The mother drives away the stepdaughter because of her laziness, the latter takes some tow, the cat, the cock and a comb. The father took her to the mill, there she lit a fire, cooked some mush and began to spin. A messy bear comes in and asks her to comb his hairs. The stepdaughter warmed up some water, washed and combed him, the bear left. The same happened with a wolf, a fox and a hare. At midnight a tall, finely dressed boy came in and asked her to dance with him. The stepdaughter wants him to bring her slippers, an apron, a dress, a jacket, a scarf, a chest, a rug, a carriage, earrings, rings. At cock crow, the demon ("strigoi") fell head first, half in the house half on the porch. The next day the animals took the girl home. The cat announced her arrival. The stepmother's daughter lit a fire and began to spin, didn't comb the animals. She asked the lad for all the things at once, and he brought them. Then he took her away, danced with her until she was torn to pieces. (Poveşti 1967, 211-212)

3. *South-Slavic versions of the motif*

3.1. *The Leskovac area*

(In the second part of the story) a stepmother baked cinder bread and sent her stepdaughter to the mill. The latter took a cat, a dog and a cock with her, and fed them all. A *karakondza* came and asked them to open the door, the dog asked for *robes* for Stana, then the cock asked for *ducats*, and then it dawned. On the way back the dog announced Stana's coming with the ducats, and the stepmother to the dog: "May the devil wipe you out, our Stana with her bowels round the pole." The stepmother baked flour bread for her own daughter, but the latter gave nothing of it to the animals in the mill, so her Stana (the girls are namesakes) was smothered by the *karakondzula*. The dog announced: "Our Stana's bowels round the pole." (Ђорђевић 1988, No 53)

3.2. *The Leskovac area*

A stepmother sent her stepdaughter to the mill with a bran loaf and a bone, the girl took with her a cat, a dog and a cock. In the mill the girl fed the animals, the devils came: "Hop, hop, little girl, open up the little door." The cock sent the devils to Skopje to fetch silk and velvet, the cat sent them to Zagreb and Ljubljana to fetch the slippers with golden tufts. When it dawned, the devils ran away and the girl dressed up. The

stepmother prepared white bread and wine for her daughter, the girl didn't feed the animals, the devils came, broke the door open. They tore up the girl, took her bowels out and wound them round the mill. The cock announced to the mother: "The devils torn up our sister and wound her bowels round the mill." (Ђорђевић 1988, No 54)

3.3. *The Leskovac area*

A stepmother sent her stepdaughter to the mill with cinder bread, the latter took with her a cat, a cock and a dog, in the mill the girl fed the animals, around midnight devils came, the cat meowed, the dog barked, the cock crowed, so the devils ran away. They left a chest of gold and silver before the mill. For her own daughter the stepmother baked a white loaf, the girl didn't feed them in the mill, the devils got into the mill and ate her, put her head on the millstone. The mother came for her and thought the daughter was smiling at her. (Ђорђевић 1988, No 55)

3.4. *Village of Radoševac, Lužnica*

A stepmother's daughter didn't want to feed the animals in the mill, so the karakondza broke the door open, got into the mill, smothered the girl, wound her bowels round the mill-wheel, and put her head in the window. (Манић-Форски 1996, 23)

3.5. *Kukuš, Aegean Macedonia*

A stepmother made a cinder and flour bread, let it roll down the mountain, that's how the stepdaughter got to the mill. There she found a dog and a cat, and she fed them. At midnight a karakodzula came: "Hey girl, open up the door so that I should wind your bowels with an iron reel from beam to beam, from wheel to wheel!" The dog and the cat advised her to ask for beautiful clothes, for jewellery and for all other stuff until dawn. When the girl came home, the cock announced: "Cock-a-doodle-doo! Our Mara's coming different, all dressed up!" The stepmother made bread for her daughter too, the girl went to the mill but drove away the dog and cat, they didn't want to give her advice, so the girl opened the door. The karakondzula came in and wound her bowels "from beam to beam, from wheel to wheel". (Шапкарев 1976, 427-428, No 214)

3.6. *Aegean Macedonia*

A stepmother sent her stepdaughter to the mill to grind grain at night so that "karakondzuras" should eat her. The girl baked bread, gave the inner part to the cock and the cat, fondled them, she herself ate the crust. In the middle of the night, karakondzulas pound at the door. The girl pricked the cock with a needle, it began to crow, pricked the cat – it began to meow, the karakondzulas left two chests of bridal outfit. The stepmother's daughter baked bread, kept driving the cock and the cat away, gave them only the crust to eat. The cock didn't crow, karakondzulas came in and ate her and wound her bowels round the millstones. (Верковиќ 1977, 339-340, No 123)

3.7. *Voden, Aegean Macedonia*

Mara-pipilashka [cinder girl] took a cat and a dog with her, poured the grist, a vampire came: The dog and the cat advised her to ask for a chest of bridal gear, and then for jewellery. At cock crow, the vampire ran away into the grave. The cock announced Mara was coming – dressed up and with a chest. The stepmother then says that Mara's bowels

are now being wound round the mill. The stepmother's daughter said to the vampire: "Find a hole and get in!" and he got into the mill, ate her and wound her bowels. The cock's crow announced that her bowels were wound round the mill. (Лъжев 1890, 150-151)

3.8. *Lerin, Aegean Macedonia*

The stepdaughter baked bread, caught some fish and fed the dog, the cock and the cat. A vampire asked her to open up. The stepdaughter asked for the money of the richest man, and to be given the next night all that the richest man had. The stepmother's daughter didn't feed the animals, the vampire came in, smothered the girl and sucked up her blood. (Настев 1891, 142-143)

3.9. *Blagoevgrad County, Bulgaria*

Mara Pepelasha [Cinderella] is sent to the mill where karakondzulas are, a cock and a cat are helping her. Karakondzulas want her to open up because they are suitors. The girl asks for a string of ducats, a new dress, a chest of dowry, a rug and a white horse. The stepmother's daughter says to the karakondzulas that the door is propped with a straw, so they come in and strew her bowels (Daskalova *et al* 1985, 112-113)

3.10. *The Razlog area, Bulgaria*

A stepmother sent her stepdaughter to spin flax in the mill during the karakondzula's days, because karakondzulas come out if someone spins. A karakondzula asks her to open up, and the stepdaughter replies that the door is propped with a straw and describes to the karakondzula the flax processing. The karakondzula wants to get married, brings robes, a woollen blanket, a chest, gold coins, gifts. The cock begins to crow. The stepmother's checking if her stepdaughter was dead. The stepmother's daughter calls the karakondzula "starac-magarac" [old man-ass], a lad comes in and she hits him in the stomach with a log, and he throws the girl under the mill-wheel. (Daskalova *et al.* 1985, 114-116)

3.11. *Gymyurdjinsko, Bulgaria*

In the story about Mara, a cat and a cock: kalikanzars come to count the money; they smelled a human, but the cock began to crow. The cat saw where the money is, and Mara (hidden in the barn) filled her bag. A kalikanzar found the other Mara hidden in the barn and made her dance with him. Then the kalikanzars caught her and tore her to pieces. When her mother came looking for her, the dog announced she had been torn to pieces. (Стаматов 1963, 225-226)

3.12. *The western Rhodope Mts, Bulgaria*

A stepmother sent her stepdaughter to the mill to spin flax, so that karakondzulas (karakondzoras) should eat her; the girl took a cock with her. At night a vampire came, a karakondzula, he brought ducats, the girl was describing the technology of flax processing, the cock began to crow. The stepmother's daughter cursed the karakondzula, who then took her far away to a cliff edge and threw her down, and the girl was all broken and died. (Стойкова 1963, 329)

3.13. *The western Rhodope Mts, Bulgaria*

A stepmother sent her stepdaughter to the mill to be eaten by giants. The girl mills grain. The giants pound at the door, and the girl describes the technology of flax processing, then asks for a dowry, ducats, shoes. The cock begins to crow. The stepmother's daughter offended the demons, and they tore her to pieces. (Стойкова 1963, 329-330)

4. *Modern Greek versions*

4.1. *Thessaly*

A wicked stepmother sent her stepdaughter Mara (during the unchristened days?) to the mill at night to be eaten by kalikanzars. The latter called her: "Come, bride, to dance with us!" Mara asked for a silk skirt, for a golden belt, for jewellery and, in the end, for a pair of embroidered gloves. The kalikanzars could hardly find the gloves because they were only able to enter the houses where incense was not burning beneath the icon. In the meantime the girl packed all the things she had been given and ran away from the mill. The kalikanzars looked for her everywhere, and they hid in the mill in order to find her the next evening. The cock announced the girl: "Here comes Mara with gold and silver." The stepmother sent her daughter, and the latter asked for all gifts at once, then she had to dance a chain-dance with them: "they took her to the sky, and tore her up, each kalikanzar took a piece and ate it. Only an ear was left, and they quarrelled about who would take it, and then the Archkalikanzar told them to nail it to the wall." The next day the mother came for her daughter and heard a voice from the foundations: "Here comes Mara, all skin and bone! A piece here, a piece there, and an ear on the wall." (Πολιτις b 1904, 367-369, No 633)

4.2. *Ermoupolis, island of Syros*

The girls' names are "lead" and "gold". The mother sent her daughter to the mill with a donkey. The miller, uncle Tanassi, told her to unload the donkey. There were 12 wild people in the mill, half a donkey half a man. Lykokanzars brought golden clothes and gold coins to the girl, dressed her up like a bride. By morning the girl rode back home with her treasure while the lykokanzars were quarrelling and she called her mother to open up holding two torches, because lykokanzars are afraid of fire. The mother and daughter made a cross on the door. Later on the mother boasted to her neighbour, and the latter sent her daughter to the mill where lykokanzars found her. The girl asked for the starry sky, the sea and ships and a land with flowers. The lykokanzars "slaughtered her donkey, skinned it, wrapped the skin around her and put its bowels round her neck instead of a string of gold coins". The girl went back to her foolish mother. (Πολιτις b 1904, 367-369, No 634)

5. *South-Slavic versions of 480 beyond the area described and lacking the motif of winding the bowels*

5.1. *Village of Donji Stepoš, Rasina County*

A stepdaughter was sent to the mill on Christmas Eve, there she found a dog, a cock and a cat, and she fed them. Around the middle of the night God's angel, turned into a beggar, came to the mill. The cock crows, the cat meows, the dog barks and they wake up

the girl who entertains the beggar nicely. The angel leaves her a chest of robes. The stepmother thought devils would gather round the mill at night, that's why she sent her there for them to smother her. The daughter didn't feed the animals, the beggar found the fire extinguished. The girl opened the chest at once. "And snakes came out of the chest, they bit the girl and she died instantly." (Мијатовић 1928, 262-263)

5.2. *Village of Sekurič, Levač*

A father takes her daughter to the woods, the stepdaughter feeds a hare, a wolf and a lion, and eventually she marries a prince. The other girl hits the hare with a stick, hits the wolf with a rod, hits the lion with a rod, and the lion gets "angry, jumps at her throat, cuts it and eats her up." (J. Срећковић, Архив САНУ, Београд, Езб 1-2-17, recorded about 1890)

5.3. *Užice County*

The stepdaughter Rita is given a buckwheat cake by her stepmother, is supposed to grind a load of grain in the mill. A bitch, a cat and a cock come with her and the girl feeds them. "Some time at night" something pounds at the door: "Boo, boo! Open up my little house!" The girl asks for: a load of treasure, a golden saddle, golden robes, a winged horse. "The monster" breaks the door open, the dog begins to bark, the cat begins to meow, the cock begins to crow, and the monster disappears. The stepmother pulls her off the horse, strips her and gives the robes to her daughter. Her daughter Kita is given a bread loaf, pita and fried chicken, she doesn't feed the bitch, the cat and the cock, and when the demon comes they say: "You ate by yourself, now reply by yourself!" "The thing breaks open the door, grab hold of the girl, smothers and hangs her, and then tears her to pieces. On the way home, the cock announces: "Cock-a-doodle-doo! Your daughter's hung on a beam!" The cat drags the daughter's arm, and the bitch her leg. (Чажкановић 1927, No 51)

5.4. *Kajkavian folktale from Samobor*

A stepdaughter prepares supper for the animals and they say to her: "Go to bed. Gentlemen will come tonight for you to dance with them, and you tell them you have no shoes, no dress and so on, just don't dance." At half past eleven the gentlemen come with a band, one by one ask the girl for a dance and each has a piece of clothing for her. The girl returns home with a cartful of clothes. On her way, the stepmother's daughter refuses help, begins to dance with the first lad, and they tear her to pieces and disappear. The mother looks for her and finds her torn to pieces in the window. (Lang 1914, 72-73)

5.5. *Kajkavian version with a sequence of AaTh motifs 480+431+510A*

As one of her tasks, the stepdaughter has to fetch fire in a town with 11 guards, on the table in a house she sees a cat which is putting the shoes on. The cat taps a stick on the table. Eleven cats come, give the girl fire and see her off. The daughter offends the cat, and the cat orders that she be torn and dishevelled. (Bošković-Stulli 1963, No 31)

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THE CHRISTIAN AND PRE-CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF THE MASTER OF THE WOLVES

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Abstract: In 1961, Lutz Röhrich published a paper on the Master of the Animals (Herr der Tiere) in the European folk tradition. In the paper he argues that in European folk legends and tales we can find a series of folk beliefs in some kind of a master of the animals. These legends are, according to him, one of the most ancient layers of European legends, and had come to Europe from the Mediterranean basin, more precisely from the Cretan-Minoan cult of Artemis (Röhrich, 1961: 343-347). One of the masters of the animals briefly mentioned in the paper is the Master of the Wolves, known in the Slavic tradition. The majority of Slavic peoples (and some non-Slavic ones as well) are indeed familiar with the folk tradition of a some kind of a ruler, commander, leader, or master of the wolves, sometimes also called the Wolf Herdsman. In this paper I'll try to examine the pre-Christian strata and the mythological background of the tradition connected with this mythical being, especially, but not exclusively, within the Slavic tradition. Parallels with some other European folklore traditions will also be considered.

The tradition of some kind of a Master of the Wolves can be found in various segments of ancient rural folklore, recorded by scholars mostly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries – in legends and beliefs,¹²⁰ and proverbs.

There are many various legends about the Master of the Wolves, but most often one encounters variants of the legend¹²¹ with an identical, characteristic plot: a man sitting in a tree in a forest sees the Master of the Wolves, who is giving out food to the wolves or sending them in all directions to search for food. The last in line is the Lame Wolf. Since there is no more food, the Master of the Wolves says he can eat the man watching from the tree. The wolf – either immediately or after various twists of the plot – actually succeeds in eating the man in the tree.

Among part of the southern Slavs (Serbs, Macedonians, Bulgarians) the legends and beliefs about the Master of the Wolves are also connected with numerous commandments, prohibitions and customs associated into the so-called “wolf holidays”.

¹²⁰ If they are not one and the same genre (cf. Dégh, 1996: 33-46).

¹²¹ I have managed to collect 51 Slavic variants, and one Estonian, one Romanian, one Latvian, one Gagauz and one French variant of this legend. For a brief survey of majority of the mentioned Slavic legends about the Master of the Wolves see Polivka, 1927. The legend is not included in the Aarne – Thompson index, nor is it included in Thompson's motif index. For detailed information on the sources of all of the legends see Mencej, 2001. Due to the limited place I was not able to include all the data into the present article.

Legends about some type of Master of the Wolves can also be found in written form among the majority of southern and eastern Slavs, partially also among the Poles, and among the Estonians, the Gagauz in Moldavia, in Latvia, Romania and in an incomplete form even in France. His function, as can be established from the legends and beliefs, is to lead the wolves and determine what they may and may not eat. The same function (with emphasis on what the wolves may not eat) was obviously ascribed to the person or being to whom the people turned in incantations (prayers and blessings) in the hope that that person would defend their livestock against wolves and other wild beasts,¹²² therefore we can suppose that both genres together reflect the entirety of the same tradition.

The image of the Master of the Wolves, as we shall see, exhibits numerous pagan elements, and the saints, such as St. George, St. Martin, St. Sava, St. Nicholas, St. Michael etc. who most frequently appear in the role of the Master of the Wolves are obviously later Christian substitutes, the *interpretatio Christiana* of some pre-Christian mythical person or being who appeared in the role of the Master of the Wolves. Scholarly opinions are divided as to the identity of this pagan being: the Russian researcher Afanas'ev e.g. suggested that St. George in the role of the Master of the Wolves is the successor to the God of Thunder (cf. Afanas'ev, 1865 (1994), I: 707-712; 1869 (1994), III: 528-532). The Serbian ethnologist Veselin Čajkanović, who focused his discussion on St. Sava, who often appears in the role of the Master of the Wolves, defined the latter as an ancient Serbian nomadic chthonic deity, who supposedly originally appeared in wolf form (as a lame wolf) (Čajkanović, 1994/I: 451-462, 1994/III: 32-36; cf. also Zečević, 1969). In the opinion of Czech J. Polivka, the original mythical being from the pre-Christian era should be the Forest Spirit (Polivka, 1927: 175-176). Lutz Röhrich classified the Master of the Wolves under the general category of “masters of animals” who could appear in anthropomorphic or partially or completely theriomorphic guises, while the legends and beliefs, i.e. legends in connection with him were supposed to have originated in hunting culture (Röhrich, 1961: 347-349).

Widely different persons, beings and animals appear in the role of the Master of the Wolves. We find 35 different saints in this role, although some of them appear extremely rarely (in incantations people often call on a long list of saints whom they ask for help). In a wider geographical area we find, in addition to figures of Christian origin such as God, the Mother of God, Jesus and the Holy Ghost, only the following saints:¹²³ *St. George* (who is found as the Master of the Wolves in legends among Croats, Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgarians and eastern Slavs; he is also turned to in incantations by Prussians in Poland, Latvians, Finns, Germans, the German-speaking

¹²² In my monograph *The Master of the Wolves in Slavic Folklore* (Mencej, 2001) I dedicated a special chapter to demonstrating that the person to whom people turned to in incantations in the hope of protecting their livestock against wolves and other wild beasts has the same function as the Master of the Wolves in the legends and beliefs. Due to space limitations I have not been able to summarize it here, but I shall proceed in the paper with the assumption that all of these levels of folklore refer to the same being, i.e. that all of the pieces which are preserved in the different levels of folklore make up the entire tradition of that being.

¹²³ It is not possible to list all of the saints in the space afforded by this paper, but the saints not listed appear only sporadically, most often in incantations in which people sometimes utter a long list of saints whom they wish to on call to protect people and livestock against wolves (and other wild beasts).

population of Switzerland, the French and Romanians; he is known as a protector against wolves by the Greeks, while Austrians sometimes utter incantations against wolves on his name-day); *St. Martin* (Mrata/Mina/Menas) (known as the Master of the Wolves among Serbs and Macedonians, while according to the opinion of N. Kuret, traces of this belief can also be found in Slovenia (cf. Kuret, 1989, II: 117); known as a protector against wolves by the Greeks, while Austrians, Germans and German-speaking Swiss sometimes turn to him in incantations); the *Archangel Michael* (known by Serbs and eastern Slavs); *St. Nicholas* (who is found especially among Poles and in western Ukraine, and more rarely also among eastern Slavs); *St. Peter* (who usually appears only in Polish incantations and more rarely among eastern Slavs, but also in Austrian and German incantations and incantations of the German-speaking Swiss; in one case he also appears in a legend of the Serbian population, which was written down in Croatia). *St. Paul* appears independently only in one of the Byelorussian legends, but otherwise he appears in a Ukrainian legend and in all incantations together with St. Peter. The cult of *St. Sava* is known only among Serbian populations, where he is known not only in the role of the Master of Wolves in legends, but celebrated during the St. Sava holidays, during which the same activities take place as during St. Martin's day, activities which are in the same way connected with the legend of the Master of the Wolves, except that in this case St. Sava appears in that role. Very seldom *St. Andrew* also appears in this role.

Characteristics of the saints who appear in the role of the Master of the Wolves

If we consider the holidays which are consecrated to various saints, and the characteristics and attributes of these saints, we can conclude that the majority of them, especially the most important among them, St. George, St. Martin and St. Nicholas, as well as St. Michael, are all associated with *livestock, herdsmen, herdsmen's life, and herdsmen's holidays*:

St. George is the saint whose holiday, St. George's day, is considered the most important turning point in the herdsman's year over a very wide area. Livestock are first driven out of the barns and out to pasture on St. George's day practically everywhere in the Slavic world and also among certain other peoples of Europe. (Even where such work is no longer done, customs are still followed which indicate that this day was once considered the day that the livestock was first driven out to pasture). St. George "opens up the barns" as they say in Slovenia. This day is the most important herdsmen's holiday of the year, in which herdsmen play an important role, and St. George is considered in many places to be the guardian of livestock and the patron saint of the herdsmen who have their holiday on this day – they collected presents from the houses, and in the evening they roasted meat, danced, had bonfires and made merry (Orel 1944: 330; Rešek 1979: 117; Orel 1944: 330-332). In Pivka as recently as the time between the two world wars, herdsmen still took their posts mainly from St. George's day to St. George's day – and on that day they switched (Smerdel 1989: 121). In Croatia, herdsmen and their masters adorn their livestock on St. George's day, and in many places the livestock are first driven out to pasture at that time. St. George's day is the herdsmen's holiday, and on that day herdsmen are invited into houses as guests, and especially in northern Croatia, servants and herdsmen are hired, exchanged and fired on that day (Gavazzi 1991: 41-43).

In Croatia on St. George's day, St. George's rounds are especially characteristic, in which, as in the Slovene rounds, the herdsmen take part, and receive gifts from their masters, most often in the form of eggs (Huzjak, 1957).

In the Balkans as well,¹²⁴ St. George's day is considered the livestock (Grbić 1909: 64) and herdsmen's holiday (Drobnjaković 1960: 207). On this day lambs are slaughtered for the first time in the year, and mutton is first eaten. Among Serbs, Macedonians and Bulgarians, if we conclude from the legends and beliefs about him, St. George is considered the patron saint of herdsmen and herds, especially of small livestock (Atanasovska 1992: 109; Vražinovski 1998/II: 167). In Bulgaria livestock are first driven out to pasture on St. George's day, and St. George was considered to be the "first shepherd" (Koleva 1977: 152, 158; B'lgarsko narodno tvorčestvo 1962: 450). In the same way, among eastern Slavs St. George is known as the patron of domestic livestock and herdsmen, and St. George's day is considered the herdsmen's holiday.

Afanas'ev cites a Russian proverb from which in his opinion the herdsmen's nature of the St. George's holiday can be seen: "*Св. Юрій коровъ запасаесть*" (St. George takes care of the cattle), i.e. lets them out to pasture (Afanas'ev 1994 (1865), I: 706). Springtime St. George's day¹²⁵ is a herdsmen's holiday; they are fêted with cakes, eggs and milk and are given gifts of linen and money (Afanas'ev 1994 (1865), I: 708; Maksimov date unknown: 151). Russian peasants believe that St. George is the patron of wild animals and the guardian of domestic livestock. Many legends mention that he protects domestic livestock, helps herdsmen, and punishes them for transgressions or negligence (Sokolova 1979: 155). On his name day the livestock are first led from the barns out to pasture (Zabylin" 1992 (1880): 98; Eleonska 1994: 145). Thus in the Harkov guberniya it was believed that on St. George's day, St. George rode a horse over the fields and took under his protection the livestock which had first been driven from the barns out to pasture on that spring day. If the livestock were not driven out on that day, there could be bad luck. In the village of Kabani the belief has been preserved that if the livestock are driven out before St. George's day, they will frequently become ill and be attacked by wild animals (Ivanov 1907: 137-138; cited in Sokolova 1979: 156). In northern regions and in Siberia, where there was still a great deal of snow on the ground at that time, the driving out to pasture of the livestock on St. George's day had only a symbolic character – livestock were driven out to pasture mainly on St. Nicholas' day (in the spring), however the main rituals were observed on St. George's day. This was also true in the Vologod guberniya (Ustyushki region), the Moscow guberniya and in Ukraine. Byelorussians also had to celebrate herdsmen's holidays on St. George's day, even if the livestock were driven out to pasture before that time (Demidovič" 1896: 95; Sokolova 1979: 156). Herdsmen received gifts on St. George's day throughout almost all of Russia, Byelorussia and Ukraine – on the first day of driving out to pasture the herdsmen's gifts would be eggs, in some places (in Byelorussia almost everywhere) herdsmen would make themselves meals out of eggs (Sokolova 1979: 158; Kirčiv 1989: 103; Ilarion 1995: 284). According to Ukrainian belief St. George is the patron saint of livestock and his name-

¹²⁴ I use the term "Balkan" only when it is used in the source which I am citing, as the borders of "the Balkans" are not clearly defined.

¹²⁵ The Russian folk agrarian calendar includes both springtime and autumn feasts of the saints in the majority of cases (e.g. St. George, St. Nicholas).

day is a herdsmen's holiday, and the herdsmen's year begins on that day (Ilarion 1995: 284). In the Czech lands as well, livestock were first driven out to pasture on St. George's day (Kravcov 1976: 55). St. George's day is also considered a herdsmen's holiday in many places in western Europe, the day on which herdsmen first drive their livestock out to pasture, for instance in Austria, eastern Germany, Switzerland, eastern Finland and in Estonia (Gugitz 1949: 204; Grabner 1968: 22, 37, 41; Schmidt 1955: 21; Rantasalo 1945: 13-15; Weiss 1941: 50), while elsewhere, May 1st is the most frequent day on which livestock are first driven out to pasture.

The second major annual turning point in the lives of herdsmen, besides St. George's day, is (from the border of the area reached by the influence of the Byzantine empire onwards) St. Martin's day (up to that border, St. Dmitri's day is the turning point, while in some places in western and especially northern Europe, this turning point is marked by St. Michael's day or some other, more locally tinged holiday, such as St. Gal's day etc.). This day is seen as the last day on which livestock are driven out to pasture, or the day on which livestock are driven back from the upland pastures into the valleys, or any day on which livestock could begin to graze in all directions. In many places St. Martin's day is a herdsmen's holiday, as St. Martin is the patron saint of herdsmen and livestock. Thus e.g. in Slovenia, St. Martin is the most important protector of herdsmen, and judging from a written legend he also appears as a shepherd (Benigar, 1865: 25-26; Kuret 1989, II: 28-29; Ložar-Podlogar 1972: 72-73; Hudej, Hribernik 1954: 105). In some places on this day feasts were prepared and bills were dealt with in regard to the year's or at least the autumn's pasturing, which was followed by feasting, dancing, and in many places the herdsmen also received gifts (Turnšek 1946: 71-2; Kotnik 1943: 76; Kuret 1989, II: 118-119; Hudej, Hribernik 1954: 110). St. Martinija (Matrona) is considered the patron saint of livestock in Macedonia as well – according to belief he watches the livestock (Vražinovski 1998/II: 166-167). In Greece, the 11th of November, i.e. the same day as St. Martin's day, is celebrated as St. Menas' day, which ranks as an important herdsmen's holiday (Megas 1963: 21). In addition to the fact that St. Martin's day is also celebrated as a herdsmen's holiday in many places in western Europe, St. Martin is sometimes presented as holding a shepherd's crook in his hand (Miles, date unknown: 206). In the majority of western Europe, St. Martin's day is the last day on which livestock may be led out to pasture (Miles, date unknown: 203). In Austria, St. Martin's day was the day on which the pasturing season ended and on which the herdsmen collected their pay (Fehrle 1955: 15; Grabner 1968: 21, 37, 38, 41, 45, 46; Schmidt 1955: 11). Even in Burgerland, where the pasturing season lasted only until St. Michael's day, the herdsmen remained employed until St. Martin's day (Grabner 1968: 8). In Germany as well, St. Martin's day is an important point in the farming year, on which the livestock are driven into the barns and servants are exchanged and paid off (Siuts 1968: 79-81). In Switzerland, the day on which the livestock have to be driven back into the barns is different, but St. Martin's day is considered the last possible day (Weiss 1941: 46, 48-50). Proverbs also attest to this. For example, in Val de Bagnes they say: "A la Saint Martin les vaches au lien" (On St. Martin's day fether the cows) (Weiss 1941: 49) and "Martini, stell ini" (Martin leads the livestock into the barns) (Fehrle 1955: 15).

In Poland, where *St. Nicholas* is considered the patron saint of wild animals, especially wolves, he is also the patron saint of herdsmen and livestock (Klimaszewska

1981: 148; Kotula 1976: 53, 91). It can clearly be seen from a song which is sung by boys from Gnojnyce (near Ropczyce) while they are herding their cattle that they consider St. Nicholas a herdsman:

»Święty Mikołaju, pasterzu dobytku!
Nicoś wczoraj nie jadł,
Nie masz nic w lelitku..« (Kotula 1976: 50)

(Saint Nicholas, herder of livestock!
Yesterday you ate nothing,
You have nothing in your belly...)

B. Uspenski listed a great deal of evidence that St. Nicholas was considered the patron saint of livestock among *western and eastern Slavs*. Among eastern Slavs, St. Nicholas was above all the patron of horses (while St. George was more the patron of cattle and sheep, although in some places also of horses). In Byelorussia for instance, the first driving out of horses occurs on St. Nicholas' day, while the driving out of cattle and sheep occurs on St. George's day (cf. Uspenski 1982: 44-55). A Russian proverb states: "The winter St. Nicholas drives the horses into the courtyard, the summer St. Nicholas fattens them up" (Čičerov 1957: 18).

The holiday of the *Archangel Michael* is also connected with the herding population and their customs: in Slovenia, herdsmen in some places also celebrated their autumn holiday, a turning point in the herdsmen's year, on St. Michael's day (Šašelj 1906/I: 199). St. Michael, they say, closes the pasturing season, and St. George opens it. In the Balkans, livestock were in some places driven to their mountain pastures on St. Michael's day (Kašuba 1979: 15). The Russian researcher Uspenski reports that among *eastern Slavs*, St. Michael also has the function of patron of livestock and is also considered to be a herder of horses (Uspenski 1982: 48-49).

The day on which the old herdsmen were let go and new ones were hired was also celebrated on St. Michael's day in some places in Hungary (Dömötör 1978: 170). In western Europe, especially in the north, in addition to St. Martin's day, St. Michael's day is most often considered the last day of open pasturing of livestock (Rantasalo 1953; Morozova 1978: 104; Weiss 1941: 45). In Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark, as well as northern Germany and Estonia, St. Michael's day, September 29th, is most commonly considered the last day of open pasturing, or the day on which the livestock are driven from the hills to the barns (Rantasalo 1945: 13, 15). St. Michael's day was at least in principle the day on which the livestock already had to be in the barns and pasturing finished – if the livestock were driven in before that, they were not tied up until St. Michael's day. If the weather was still good after that day, the livestock could still graze outside, but they had to be tied up in the barns at least at night, "or otherwise you could expect a lot of damage due to wolves the following summer", and in addition, in some places the animals could not be left alone outside, or the wolves and bears would attack them immediately (Rantasalo 1953: 19, 5, 6, 7). This day was an important holiday

for herdsmen, but also for other members of the farming community. The pasturing season was over, which was shown symbolically by the herdsmen handing their staffs and kit bags to the farmer's wife (Rantasalo 1953: 6). The herdsmen prepared a feast in the fields from the food which they had received as gifts (in Estonia, if this was not done, they expected that the wolves would harm the sheep), and on the farms it was mandatory to slaughter a sheep (and if they had none, then at least a cock or a hen) (Rantasalo 1953: 11, 19).

A herdsmen's nature, i.e. a connection with herdsmen and with the herding calendar is also shown by various more local saints who appear in the role of the Master of the Wolves: *St. Sava*, whose name day is otherwise not connected with any particular herdsmen's celebration, shows a strong connection with herdsmen and herdsmen's life. *St. Sava* appears as a shepherd in many legends. Some legends speak of how *St. Sava* and the Devil worked together: the former watched sheep, the latter goats (Kašiković 1897: 56). In the legend *Sveti Savo i đavo* (*St. Sava and the Devil*), *St. Sava* is the one who watches the sheep (Terzić 1898: 186), and we see the same in the legend *Sveti Savo na Treskavici* (*St. Sava in Treskavica*), where he herds together with herdsmen (Mutić 1901: 279). In Herzegovina they say that *St. Sava* was once a herdsman (Antonić, Zupanc 1988: 43). V. Čajkanović also writes about the folk belief that *St. Sava* watches over abandoned herds and in general over all herds, since "watching over herds is his field" (Čajkanović 1994, III (1941): 39), and he calls him θεος νόμης, "the herding god" (cf. Čajkanović 1994, III (1941): 37-41). In the same way, *St. Flor* and *St. Lavr* (*St. Florian* and *St. Laurence*) are considered by eastern Slavs in some places to be herders of horses (Uspenski 1982: 49), and *St. Blaise* is considered the patron of livestock in Russia (Ivanov, Toporov 1974: 46) – all three of these saints are turned to in incantations with supplications to protect the livestock from wolves. In southern France, where *St. John* appears in the role of the Master of the Wolves in the legends which are told in that area, he is also mainly considered to be the patron saint of sheep, and his name day is a herdsmen's holiday (Sebillot 1968a: 37). In French incantations in which people turn to *St. Genovefa* in the hope that she will protect them against the danger from wolves, it can similarly be seen that she also has experience with herding: "*Saint Genovefa, who was seven years a herder...*" (Eberman 1914: 145).

All of the saints who appear most often in the role of the Master of the Wolves are in one way or another important to the context of husbandry: they are considered patron saints of herdsmen, they appear as herdsmen in the folklore tradition, or their name day is an important herdsmen's holiday. The work of all the most important saints who appear in the role of the Master of the Wolves extends into two areas: they are the patron saints of livestock and herdsmen and at the same time they are the patron saints of wolves. It is almost a rule that in the same place the same saint appears in the functions of both the patron saint of livestock/herdsmen and the Master of the Wolves.¹²⁶ For example, in

¹²⁶ The unusualness of this double function has been pointed out by Polivka, who cites Kirpičnikov, who believes that the reason for this lies in the fact that the role of *St. George* was expanded from patron of the flocks to patron of wolves, which represented the greatest danger to the flocks (Kirpičnikov 1879:

Poland the patron saint of livestock and herdsmen is Saint Nicholas, and he is also considered the Master of the Wolves. Among eastern Slavs both of these functions are most often fulfilled by St. George. Among southern Slavs these functions are most often fulfilled by St. George (Croatia, Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria) and St. Sava (Serbs in Serbia, Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbs in Croatia). The function of the Master of the Wolves and at the same time of the patron saint of livestock is fulfilled by St. Mrata/Martin among the Macedonians, and according to the opinion of Slovene ethnologist N. Kuret, the same holds true for Slovenia.

On the other hand, the majority of saints who appear in the role of the Master of the Wolves are also connected with other spheres of activity: death, dying, the world of the dead. It can be seen from Slovene folk prayers that *St. George* also had the role of an aide in dying (Novak 1983: 136-138, no. 87; from the Uskoks). In addition, researchers involved in reconstructions of Slavic mythology made connections between him and the other world and its god Veles/Volos (cf. Belaj, 1998: 139, 156-157+, where he states that George spent part of the year with Veles/Volos).

The *Archangel Michael*, who also occasionally appears in the role of the Master of the Wolves, has an especially important role in death: his task was to accompany the souls of the deceased to the other world. According to Slovene belief, St. Michael “weighs souls”, and sacrifices are made to the ghosts of the dead on St. Michael’s day (Kuret 1989, II: 14-15, 18). In Serbia there is a belief that God ordered St. Michael to take people’s souls away from them, and therefore in the area of Boljevac they also call him the “soul-taker”, i.e. the one who takes the soul out of the body. In Leskovačka Morava they celebrated his name day so that they would not suffer too much upon death. According to a belief from Gruža he measures the people’s good and evil deeds upon death: he throws evil souls to hell, and hands the good souls to St. Peter, who accompanies them into heaven. They also believed that if the Archangel appeared standing by the feet of a sick patient, the patient would recover, while if he appeared standing near his head, the patient would die (Nedeljković 1990: 5). Medieval iconography also shows St. Michael as the supervisor or performer of the weighing of souls.

Uspenski dedicates an entire chapter in his book to the important role played by *St. Nicholas* at death in the beliefs of the eastern Slavs (Uspenski 1982: 70-80). His role at death is also obvious among southern Slavs. In a Serbian folk song, St. Elijah orders St. Nicholas:

»*Ta ustani, Nikola,
da idemo u goru,
da pravimo korabe,
da vozimo dušice
s ovog sveta na onaj!...*« (Najveći grijesi, Karadžić 1969/1: 101-102, no. 209)

“Get up, Nikola,

148-149), but Polivka disagrees with him. In his opinion the patron saint of livestock and the patron saint of wolves were originally two different persons (Polivka 1927: 176).

so we can go up to the mountain,
 so we can perform our tasks,
 so we can lead the souls
 from this world to the next! ...
 which St. Nicholas then does.

St. Martin played no special role among the eastern Slavs, but among the Serbs and Macedonians he is closely associated especially with the so-called “wolf holidays” (also among Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina; the feast of St. Mrata or the time at which it occurs is also associated in this way among the Bulgarians, the Gagauz and the Romanians). His cult is also widespread in western Europe. In Slovenia a ritual celebration is known on St. Martin’s day which is also attended by the souls of deceased ancestors (Kuret 1989, II: 108, 114-115). Upon the appearance of Christianity, the so-called marches of souls were divided among various holidays: in addition to the fact that they were held on All Saints’ day, All Souls’ day and St. Michael’s day, they were also held on St. Martin’s day and *St. Andrew’s* day, which was the main pre-Christian holiday of souls (Kuret 1989, II: 19).

The same was true of local saints: *St Sava*, according to the statements of Čajkanović, had the role of a chthonic deity among the Serbs (see Čajkanović 1994, III (1941): 33, 36, 41). In the Christian tradition, as is well known, *St. Peter* has the role of receiving souls into heaven, and according to belief and iconographic imagery is the holder of the key to the gates of heaven. We can assume that St. Peter is the successor to the Master of the Wolves due precisely to this: one of the most important elements in incantations is a *key*, in some cases even a “heavenly key” or “key from heaven” etc., with which the saints “close” the muzzles of the wolves and other beasts, and whose owner is St. Peter.¹²⁷ St. Paul joins him mainly as his constant companion. In older incantations (Austrian and German – where St. Peter normally appears in the role of the Master of the Wolves), it is primarily St. Martin who closes the mouths of the wolves or orders others to do so. In addition these incantations are called the “blessings of St. Martin” and usually begin with the words “St. Martin is coming...”, and are uttered most frequently on St. Martin’s day. In Poland these incantations are called “Our Father St. Nicholas”, although it is St. Peter (and St. Paul) who “closes the mouths of wolves” in them, from which we can conclude that in the incantations they primarily turned (only) to St. Nicholas, and not to St. Peter or St. Peter and St. Paul.

St. Blaise, who otherwise rarely appears in the function of the Master of the Wolves, displays both aspects: it is said that St. Blasios was a shepherd from Capodoccia (Váňa 1990: 77). The legend tells that he was loved even by wild beasts (the Bishop Basileos lived long in impenetrable forests, and the wild animals became his friends). On the other hand he is turned to even in times of illness, and the people of Vipava (Slovenia) call on him at the hour of death (Kuret 1989, II: 538-540).

On the basis of this data we can conclude that the common denominator of all the saints who appear in the folkloric tradition as the Master of the Wolves is on the one hand

¹²⁷ Uspenski also calls attention to the shared features of St. George and St. Peter (Uspenski 1982: 125-127).

his role in the context of husbandry and on the other his more or less close connection with representations of death.

The pre-Christian aspect of the figure of the Master of the Wolves

In addition to saints and other Christian figures, other beings, animals and persons who are not of Christian origin appear in the tradition of the Master of the Wolves. In the Slavic *legends* about the Master of the Wolves we find the following beings in that role: In Croatian legends he can be a white wolf who alternates with St. George; a sagging wolf who becomes an old grandfather; a wolf who is old, sagging and grey with age; a lame wolf who changes into a lame man; and a white wolf. When the Master of the Wolves does not have a special name or title, he is referred to as: the old one; the old, feeble Master of the Wolves; every tenth son; the poor or old extremely hairy grandfather. In Bulgarian legends we find a white wolf, in Russian ones a forest spirit (Lesovoj).¹²⁸ In Ukrainian legends this role is fulfilled by a forest spirit (Lisun), a forest spirit (Polisun)/St. George (in alternation); an old man; a wolf. Byelorussian proverbs speak of a grey old man; an old man who appears in the role of the Master of the Wolves is also mentioned in legends from Latvia and Moldavia.

In addition to saints, this role is therefore also taken by: a *wolf* (in five examples from Croatia and one from Bulgaria and one from Ukraine), who in one case changes into an old man; an *old man* (in five examples, which are found in Croatia, Byelorussia and Ukraine); a *pitiabale man* (in one Croatian legend the Master of the Wolves is spoken of as a pitiabale man, in another this description appears alongside others) and a *forest spirit* (three examples among eastern Slavs). In only one example we also find a *tenth son*¹²⁹ among the Croats, and among the Estonians we find a child who was abandoned by his mother, although he appears as a grown man riding a horse.

In records of *beliefs* we also find the following beings who are not of saintly or Christian origin: In Bulgaria, in connection with the November wolf holidays, they say that the wolves are ordered by the *Wolf-Mother of God*. In Russia and Ukraine it is believed that a *forest spirit* commands the wolves (this is also true in northern Europe), while in Russia and Byelorussia we find evidence that this is a *wolf*. The Setu in Estonia believe that the Master of the Wolves is a *small boy in red clothing*.

In *incantations or prayers*, in Russia and Byelorussia they turn also to a forest spirit, and in Russia also to a wolf.

Among the Croatians, Bulgarians and all eastern Slavs we therefore find a *wolf* in the role of the Master of the Wolves (when it is not a figure of Christian origin), among the Bulgarians also the *Wolf-Mother of God*; an *old man* is found among the Croatians, Ukrainians and Byelorussians, and a *forest spirit* among the Russians, Byelorussians and Ukrainians. The Estonians also have an abandoned child and a small boy in red clothing in this role, while in Croatia a tenth brother and a pitiabale man appear in one case each, which indicates more his characteristics and properties rather than the “type” of being he is.

¹²⁸ Lesovoj, Lisun, Polisun, Leši etc. are names which are derived from the Russian word *les* (forest).

¹²⁹ It is questionable whether we can identify him with St. George, as Katičić believes (Katičić 1987: 35-36); Šmitek disputes this (cf. Šmitek 1998: 107-108).

Therefore two beings most frequently appear in the role of the Master of the Wolves which we find among eastern and southern Slavs (among western Slavs we find only the Christian interpretation in the role of the Master of the Wolves – St. Nicholas): a *wolf* and an *old man*. Descriptions of the Master of the Wolves in legends (when referring to saints) give additional information about the fact that the wolf saint was pictured as an old man: the fact that the saint who appeared in the role of the Master of the Wolves was old can be seen in the Croatian, Byelorussian, Ukrainian and Latvian traditions. In one Croatian legend the wolf is described as grey with age. Various other descriptions of the Master of the Wolves could eventually confirm this characteristic: he is feeble (Croatia), has a long/grey beard (Serbia, Ukraine).

However, it appears in some Russian ritual songs that the old man/wolf duality has disappeared. In these songs, Ivanov and Toporov claim that we can recognize the wolf as an old man: *“In the comparison of the described rituals with the image of George/Jegory – as the protector against wolves (...) the motif of fear of old men (...) who appear as anthropomorphic substitutes for the wolf, is especially characteristic. An old man (grandfather) and wolves are frequently mentioned together in the same ritual song:*

»Тольки баюся
 Старого дъзиеда,-
 У старого дъзиеда
 Сива барада,
 Ён мяне набъе,
 Ён мяне ўдарыць

 Як скочыць ваўчуок,
 За казу хапчуок..« (Ivanov, Toporov 1974: 192)

(I am afraid only
 of the old man -
 the old man has a grey beard.
 He will thrash me,
 He will beat me

...
 When the little wolf leaps
 Jump for the goat.)

We can also see that the old man and the wolf are one and the same from the following carol:

»Побойся, козачка,
 Стараго дзеда
 С сивой бородой,
 Ён табе згубя,
 Шкуру облупя
 Дуду пошыя...« (Ivanov, Toporov 1974: 192)

(Beware, goatling,
of the old man
with the grey beard,
he will finish you,
skin you,
and sew himself a set of bagpipes.)

We also find parallels between the wolf and the old man in Romania (where belief in the Master of the Wolves is known); from Romanian riddles we can conclude that the wolf and the old man are equated (Svešnikova 1994; 250). In the same way we can clarify the duality in the Croatian legend where the Master of the Wolves first appears as a wolf, and then mysteriously turns into an old man. The information from a Croatian legend that the Master of the Wolves has a human head and four legs, and can walk on either two or four legs (and is therefore simultaneously man and wolf) also becomes understandable in this light, as does a Ukrainian legend in which the wolf becomes an old man and eats the person who was allotted to him.

If one of the guises of the Master of the Wolves is a wolf, we can also make sense of the ambivalence of the metamorphosis of humans in legends from Croatia and Vojvodina, where in some legends they change into wolves and in some into the Master of the Wolves.¹³⁰ The most obvious of these is the presentation of the Master of the Wolves in the form of a wolf in a Croatian legend, where the Master of the Wolves gives a hunter the choice of becoming Master of the Wolves for seven years or being eaten by wolves. The hunter decides that he would rather become the Master of the Wolves, and tumbles through a ring – and when he does this, he actually turns into a wolf (!) (Valjavec 1890: 93, no. 3). We can see the same duality in another legend recorded by Valjavec: a brother notices a wolf among the swine, but as the story continues: “*this was his brother, because he became a wolf in order to be the Master of the Wolves*” (Valjavec 1890: 95, no. 6). Also, two foresters who shoot at a “sagging” old wolf, after the wolf waves his leg at them, realize “... *listen, that’s not a real wolf, that must be the Wolf Herdsman*” (Valjavec 1890: 96, no. 7). From some legends it is obvious that the storytellers actually did not sense a difference between the two figures: the man becomes a wolf and/or the Master of the Wolves (Bosić 1996: 179, both variants). A faded trace of the belief that the Master of the Wolves is a wolf can perhaps be seen in two Russian legends in which this role is fulfilled by St. George, who is however surrounded by a “corps of wolves” – the white wolves (Remizov 1923: 312-316; Vasil’ev” 1911: 126-128).

The figure of the forest spirit or tsar of the forest (Leši, Lisun, Polisun etc.) who appears in the role of the Master of the Wolves among eastern Slavs is occasionally intertwined with the figure of the wolf: as reported by Dobrovol’ski (see above), the Lord of the Forest (Čestnoj Lesa), i.e. the leader of the Lešis - forest spirits/masters of the forest sometimes changes into a white wolf, and sometimes the master of the forest is simply considered to be a white or grey wolf (Dobrovol’ski 1908: 10; Ridley 1976: 329). On the other hand this conception reiterates the emphasis on the age of the Master of the Wolves, as the people, for instance in the Smolensk guberniya in Russia conceive of a Leši as a grey-haired old man in white clothing, or describe him as a “grey old man with

¹³⁰ It is possible that this also reflects an intertwining with beliefs in werewolves.

a too-long beard, who herds the wolves” (Dobrovol’ski 1908: 4, 10). Also, the “abandoned child” from the Estonian legend, characteristically, rides a wolf.

As F. Marolt has already established (Marolt 1936: 6, 16), we can also partially discern the wolf nature of the Master of the Wolves from the threats of Slovene herdsmen, so-called “jurjaši” (“St. George’s”) which they utter during their rounds on St. George’s day, when they visit a house and receive no presents:

»..*dajte mu jajce, da vam ne pokolje jagnjet*...«

“... give him (St. George – op. M.M.) an egg, *so that he won’t slaughter the lambs*...” (Vinica)(Tomšič, 1854: 180)

The same can be seen from Croatian carols on St. George’s day:

»*Dajte Juri jaje, da ne kolje janje.*«

“Give St. George an egg, *so that he won’t slaughter the lamb.*” (Viduševac) (Huzjak 1957: 17)

»(...) *Dajte Jurju jajac, da ne kolje janjac* (...)«

“(...) Give St. George an egg, *so that he won’t slaughter the lamb* (...)” (Žakanje, in the vicinity of Karlovac) (Heffler 1931: 279; Huzjak 1957: 33).

On the “mratinci” holidays, the wolf holidays around the feast of St. Mrata (Martin), in Serbia and Bulgaria, when they slaughter a hen or a cock on the threshold, they incant: “*It is not I who slaughters you, Mrata/Mratinjak slaughters you!*” (see Nikolić 1910: 142; Stanojević 1913: 41; Dimitrijević 1926: 84; Marinov 1994 (1914): 700). St. Mrata (Martin), who is considered the Master of the Wolves in this area, is supposed to be the one who slaughters – this fact most probably indicates, more than the Christian conception of St. Martin as a friendly and compassionate saint, an older layer, which lies hidden underneath the image of the Christian saint – his wolf nature.

If the common denominator of the majority of saints who appear in the role of the Master of Wolves was their role in the life of herdsmen, caring for livestock and on the other hand upon death, it therefore seems that the shared feature of the various conceptualizations of the Master of the Wolves which are not of Christian origin indicate especially his “wolf” and “old man” features, which overlap each other.

But also the forest spirit Leši in eastern Slavic belief displays a connection with herdsmen and pasturing, like the saints who appear in the role of the Master of the Wolves: in the Kazanski Povolžje, Leši are referred to as “herdsmen”, since they are thought to drive livestock which never returned to the herd from place to place (Maksimov date unknown: 5). “The Herdsman” is also an affectionate nickname for the forest spirit Leši (Uspenski 1982: 94-95).

The mythical origin of the Master of the Wolves

With regard to the fact that the folklore tradition of the Master of the Wolves is closely related to customs which are essentially not of Christian character, but which obviously display pagan elements;¹³¹ that in addition to figures of Christian nature, various mythological beings of pagan character appear in the role of the Master of the Wolves; and that this tradition is known among all branches of Slavs as well as among other non-Slavic people, we can surmise that this tradition was known among the Slavs before the Slavic diaspora, either as a collective heritage or as a result of the diffusion of these legends to the Slavic peoples before the rise of Christianity. We can therefore hypothesize that the saints who appear in the role of the Master of the Wolves are merely the *interpretatio Christiana* of a pagan entity, and that various saints were selected to substitute for this being who were appropriate to this substitution due to their own characteristics.

What being can therefore lie hidden in the basis of this tradition? As we have seen, we find a multitude of different beings in the role of the Master of the Wolves, even if we do not take the Christian layer into consideration. In truth, we cannot state with certainty that only one single being originally held this position. The essential characteristic of folklore is its variability – in the course of the transmission of legends it changes, acquires different features and different elements. Therefore it seems quite likely that in the very earliest phase of the dissemination of these legends, various persons and beings were found in the role of the Master of the Wolves. However, we can also expect that behind all these various emanations we will find some common features and characteristics.

The old man, the wolf and the forest spirit were the beings and persons whom, in addition to saints and God, we most often encountered in the role of the Master of the Wolves in the Slavic tradition. In the remainder of this paper I will focus primarily on the Slavic tradition, since a deeper study of the pre-Christian layer of this tradition in a broader framework requires a longer and broader discussion. Despite this, I will whenever possible also indicate parallels with non-Slavic traditions.

In all likelihood the very fact that the Masters of the Wolves were substituted to a great degree by some of the most important Christian saints (St. Martin, St. Michael, St. Nicholas etc.) indicates that these were not trivial persons, beings or animals. Frequently, God himself appears in this role – e.g. in Russian and Ukrainian legends, in Macedonian and Bulgarian legends, and among the Gagauz. Below Prokletije it is believed that God closes the mouths of the wolves, in the area of Kosanica it is believed that God empowers St. Sava to command the wolves. God is also turned to in Russian and Byelorussian incantations (and even German incantations in Poland and the Czech Republic), and the Mother of God is turned to in Russian incantations and German incantations in the Czech Republic. According to belief in Serbia, the Mother of God protects against wolves. Similarly we also find Jesus in this role – e.g. in Russian, Ukrainian and Polish legends

¹³¹ During the times these customs were being observed a number of prohibitions obtained: people could not lend anything from their houses, they could not walk in the forest, they could not chop, cut or do anything with sharp objects, they could not sew, weave, spin etc. – all in order that wolves would not slaughter their livestock that year (cf. Mencej 2001).

(Afanas'ev 1914a: 194-195; 1914: 219-221, no. 32; 1957: 86-87, no. 56; A. P. 1887: 453; Zbiór wiadomości 1892: 33-34, no. 17; Kolberg 1881: pp. 318-319, no. 86), and he is turned to in incantations against wolves by Russians and German inhabitants of the Czech Republic. All of this allows the possibility that this mythical being was included in the pagan religious framework before the rise of Christianity. The question is therefore whether the characteristics which indicate a common origin of the various emanations of the Master of the Wolves can be connected with the characteristics of any of the Slavic gods.

In truth, we do not know a great deal about Slavic mythology, but Ivanov and Toporov convincingly show in their book that the ancient Slavs once worshipped a deity whom they called the Wild Beast (Ljut' zver') and who had the appearance of a beast. This deity was actually the Slavic god of livestock (and perhaps also of possessions in general, cf. Belaj 1998: 47) and of the land of the dead Veles/Volos (see Ivanov, Toporov 1974: 57-60). The fact that "Ljut' zver'" was at the same time the master of wild beasts in Russian literary folklore was shown earlier by Miller (1877: 11), which signifies a direct connection with the Master of the Wolves, the subject of the present study (who at the same time in the folkloric tradition very often has authority over other wild beasts and protects livestock from them).

The basic common denominator of the beings of pagan origin who appear in the role of Master of the Wolves is their animal, wolf-like nature. It seems that Ivanov and Toporov are leaning towards the opinion that the Wild Beast had the appearance of a bear, but at the same time they also provide examples which indicate that this deity had the appearance of a wolf (or even a lion) (see Ivanov, Toporov 1974: 57-60; cf. also Miller 1877). In this they partially take the same sources into account as I have – for example eastern Slavic incantations against the danger of wolves and bears, although they primarily selected the original incantations which emphasize the danger of bears. They did not take into account the legends, beliefs and customs connected with the Master of the Wolves. The fact is that in some places in the incantations, bears appear as a danger which must be protected against; this is also true of one of the legends. However, in taking into consideration the entire body of materials about the Master of the Wolves, it seems that we must give the advantage to the image of the wolf. Miller for example emphasizes that the adjective "ljut" (wild) in Russian is ascribed to all wild animals, *especially wolves* (Miller 1877: 11-12; emphasis mine). In the same way, he states that the phrase "Ljut' zver'" in old Russian literature is a name for the wolf (Miller 1877 : 12; Zelenin 1930: 37). The designation "zver" (beast) is also used to indicate the wolf in Serbia, Lithuania and Poland (Zelenin 1930: 37), and in some Romanian riddles the term "zver" is a synonym for wolf (Svešnikova 1994: 248). It is perhaps possible that in certain areas, contamination from underlying cults or cults from neighboring areas occurred and thus an intertwining of different conceptions – e.g. in Russia and Byelorussia an alternate word for wolf is "birjuk", a word which was taken from the northern Turkish language, in which it means "bear" (Zelenin 1930: 37). The possibility of the wolf and the bear appearing as allotropic beings can also be seen from examples given by Ivanov and Toporov (1974: 57-60). In the same way, the Lithuanian god of death, magic and the underworld and the protector of herds Velinas/Velnias, who is probably the Baltic god who corresponds to Veles/Volos, can take the appearance of a wolf (Ridley 1976: 327-328). The forest spirit (Leši, Lisun, Polisun, the Lord of the

Forest etc.), who often appears as the Master of the Wolves in the eastern Slavic tradition, similarly displays a parallel with the proto-Slavic god Veles/Volos: as shown by Uspenski, Leši is actually one of his successors. In some places Leši is called Volod'ka, i.e. by a name which in Uspenski's opinion is derived from the name Volos (see Uspenski 1982: 86-87).

It is difficult to find a direct connection for the Old Man, the other person who appears in role of the Master of the Wolves, or the age of the Master of the Wolves, which would be reflected in the image of Veles/Volos, although it seems unbelievable that the god of death would be a young god. Perhaps this is implicitly shown in the tradition which is connected with him: Slavs in some places have the custom of "curling Veles' beard", which could imply that he is an old god. A harvest custom in which some chaffs of oats (or the upper part of a bundle, armload, fibers, threads) are left unharvested and are turned to with forms of incantation such as "*A little beard for the prophet Ilija(Elijah)!*" or "*May his beard curl: strength to the plowman, (...) a beard for Mikula (Nicholas)!*" and similar is sometimes called "curling Volos' beard" and other variants such as "curling Ilija's beard" or "curling the grain grandfather's beard") (Ivanov, Toporov 1974: 62-63).

The areas in which Veles/Volos, who was the god of the land of the dead and of livestock, had authority are also made clear by the basic characteristics of the majority of the saints who took the role of the Master of the Wolves – their role of patron saints of livestock and herdsmen and at the same time the role which they have upon death. This direct connection shows that the common core of the tradition of the Master of the Wolves even in the Christian layer actually corresponds to the core of the proto-Slavic belief in Veles/Volos. Moreover, other researchers have shown that some of these saints are the successors to the role of the pagan god of death and/or livestock. The fact that St. Nicholas appears as a Christian substitute for the god of death Veles/Volos in the eastern Slavic tradition in his functions in connection with death and the otherworld was demonstrated thoroughly by Uspenski in his book *Filologiĉeskie raziskanija v oblasti slavjanskih drevnostej* (Philological Research in the field of Slavic Antiquities) (Uspenski 1982; for various parallels in the south Slavic tradition see Mencej 1996: 17-20). Uspenski also showed that many of his functions were taken over by Sts. Florian and Laurence (Uspenski 1982). St. Vlasi (Blaise), who is occasionally turned to in Russian incantations (Sts. Florian, Laurence and Blaise appear only in lists of many saints, never independently), is, as demonstrated by Ivanov and Toporov, the Christian successor to Veles/Volos – the similarity is even noticeable in their names (see Ivanov, Toporov 1974: 46, 62, 65 etc.; Mikhailov 1995: 177; Váňa 1990: 77). Researchers of western European mythology have in their attempts at identification tried to identify St. Martin (who has a very important role especially in western Christianity) with the Germanic god Wodan/Wotan/Odin (Miles date unknown: 208), but how well-founded these parallels are is difficult to say. Slavic scholars have interpreted St. George in various ways: Ivanov and Toporov wrote that he is related to both of the characters in the basic myth – Perun and Veles/Volos (Ivanov, Toporov 1974: 207), while Ridley has him as the successor to Veles/Volos (Ridley 1976). In Christianity, the pagan god of death Veles/Volos is often equated with the Devil (Ivanov, Toporov 1974: 57, 66). In this light we can today understand the Serbian legend which is the same in its basic content as typical legends

about the Master of the Wolves (see Šaulić 1931: 37-38; no. 18), except that devils appear in place of wolves and the Master of the Wolves.

To summarize, it seems that the fundamental shared features of the pagan beings and the saints who appear in the role of the Master of the Wolves are his role on the one hand in herding and husbandry, and on the other hand in death and dying. With regard to how archaic the legends are and with reference to modern research and reconstructions of Slavic mythology, these features could perhaps be connected with the features which judging from this modern research are shown by Veles/Volos, the proto-Slavic god of death, livestock and the land of the dead. It appears to be possible to assume that the legends about the Master of the Wolves were included in the mythological context,¹³² and in that case the role of the Master of the Wolves would most probably have been played by Veles/Volos.

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¹³² This legend and the tradition of the Master of the Wolves probably played a role in the changing of the two halves of the year – winter, the half which in this mythological context would belong to Veles/Volos (the time during which the wolves would be set free and the livestock shut in), and summer (when the livestock were out and the wolves shut in), which would belong to his adversary, Perun (for more on the basic myth which tells of the battle between the two see Ivanov, Toporov 1974).

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TWO CASE STUDIES OF THE SAINTS IN THE *TWILIGHT ZONE*
OF ORAL LITERATURE: PETKA AND SISIN

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According to the general theory of literary genres, stories about saints are defined as legends,¹³³ which in this case means narratives created ‘on the basis of apocryphal texts and medieval hagiographies’ (*RKT* 1985, s.v.). As such, they are easily folklorised because, *inter alia*, they are meant to be related orally. On the other hand, the main theoretical point of difference between the oral and the written literature is the question of separateness of individual genres and their existence in a fixed form. The very division in genres is imported to oral literature by force and is still felt as an intruder, so it is safe to say that a mixture of genres is what the oral poetics could prefer and even welcome.

This means that – once they are folklorised – the saints could appear not only in folk legends, but in any oral genre, and mostly in the actional code, i.e. as the acting characters. Actually, the opposite is also possible (passive encoding where the saint either does not participate in action, or appears as an object instead of a subject of an action), but it is relatively rare. Only in short literary forms, as proverbs for example, both ways can be found equally. Therefore, though texts such as ‘Jelisije proso sije, ide Vide da obide’ (‘St Elisha sews the millet, St Vitus goes to inspect it’) (Karadzic 1965, no. 1868) and ‘Alise proso sej, ide Vida da ga vidi’ (‘St Elisha, sew the millet, St Vitus will come to inspect it’) (Djordjevic 1958, 388) seem completely identical, in the first case the saints are the actual working agents (who sew and supervise – therefore, who act), while in the second the saints’ days are merely a mnemotechnic facility in organising the field work.

In the longer forms, such as stories and epic poems, combination of codes is possible only if within the same text saints figure both as the active, anthropomorphic characters and as the objects of the religious veneration (in the form of relics and feast days).¹³⁴ Why?

The profile of the ‘literary distribution’ of the saints grossly overlaps with the way in which traditional culture as a system responded to the challenge of the Christianity, to the novelties it brought along, and to the influences spread through it. Within that context some saints and angels were accepted better than others, but with far less enthusiasm than autochthonous or local saints. In direct proportion with dissemination of their cults within the traditional culture, the best received saints – on the regional Serbian level these are St Petka¹³⁵ and St Sava – were also infiltrating the literary genres, and can be easily detected

¹³³ *Legenda* (lat.) – what should be read, for reading: ‘Originally, legends were stories about lives of the saints. They were meant for reading in monasteries either in church or in refectory, so they belonged to hagiographies’ (Cuddon 1991, s.v. *Legend*).

¹³⁴ Cf. ‘Sveci blago dijele’ [‘The Saints devide the world treasures’, an epic poem] (Karadžić 1988a, 1-2).

¹³⁵ In several Slavonic versions (Serbian and Bulgarian *Petka*, Russian *Pyatnica*), the name of this saint can be translated as Friday, as is the case with the Greek form of her name, *Paraskeva*. In the Balkans, two other days of the week are anthropomorphised as saints’ names: Sreda (Wednesday) and Nedelja (Sunday).

both in the long (epic ballads and stories) and short literary forms (ritual songs, fabulata, proverbs, riddles, charms). Nevertheless, their journey through oral literary genres was neither simple nor uniform, just as the genre affinities towards the saints were not always uniform.

The basic formative principles of the oral literary genres are very firm and only a few, but more often than not this strictness is caused by non-literary reasons.¹³⁶ Anyway, the control thus gained is not of the vast range, so by the ‘edges’ the transferability of each genre shows the tendency of getting larger and almost total. Technically, some ‘gray fields’ are formed that way, in which the longest is the life of those texts that – from the point of view of the genre – offer the best mixture. The saints are most often found in this ‘twilight zone’ of the oral literature because together with them to this new (oral) environment there also came some fragments of their original ‘habitus’ (ecclesiastic and apocryphal hagiographies, prayers and alike). The influence of this ‘carried’ information is the most effective there where the already existing form and the new one can easily be recognised as near of kin (e.g. a hagiography and a story or a fabulata), and the least effect can be expected there where the text itself is devoid of literary purpose (e.g. calendar proverbs, prognostics, riddles, and so on). Between these two opposites there is a whole series of mutual relationships and influences different in kind, intensity, and coherence.

Actional encoding can also be regarded as a result of the mutual influence of the new and old genre information. In the original, hagiographic model, the saint is defined both as a fighter and the victim for the faith, but always on the basis of *action* by which he/she is remembered (*acta sanctorum/martyrium*). Through contact with the traditional culture, this initial impulse gets modified (usually under the influence of the apocryphal texts) to meet the already existing model of the protector and helper whose sacred role is, logically, active. What are the affinities, mutually recognizable, by which the new (saintly) characters are distributed over the ancient *numina* (divine and mythic beings) and instead of them – that is the most interesting question, but not the subject of this paper. It can only be said, with some amount of certainty, that the process in question has not been completed yet, and that its motivation is neither simple nor transparent. What can be discussed here are the side effects of this process, i.e. texts whose form is stabile enough to be reviewed from the standpoint of the genre, but also volatile enough to even question their generic origin.

In that sense, the aforementioned ‘twilight zone’ is not *sine qua non* of oral literary theory, but it seems a very good way for loosely defined or unqualified texts to acquire a position of minimal orderliness when it comes to oral poetics and terminology.

I - St Petka

All the Balkan, and almost all Slavonic peoples recognise St Petka by her connection with spinners, yarn, and spinning (see Popov and Ristecki, this volume). As nothing in

On the connection between St Petka and the day Friday, see Detelić 1998, and in this volume Popov and Ristecki.

¹³⁶ Cf. ritual texts and, especially, small forms in general, which are largely predestined by their cultural or religious functions.

her hagiography, either official or apocryphal, confirm this relationship, it is generally considered that St Petka, after she was introduced into traditional culture, occupied the place which once belonged to some great ancient goddess whose duty, among others, was to protect and control women's works.¹³⁷ This overlapping made two imprints on the iconic model of St Petka in folklore: 1) it finally defined her attribution (distaff and spindle) and 2) it divided the appearance of the saint in two – the black and the gold one. The first has to be taken as it is, but the second can be discussed further.

Although the black and the gold are natural opposites, on the myth level they are not mutually excluded, and their connection is not paradoxical, for it points at the existence of the both solar and chthonic hypostasis of one and the same mythical being. Such is, for example, the character of Milosh Voyinovich who, in the epic ballad 'Tsar Dushan's Wedding',¹³⁸ over his gallant golden clothes puts on the black shepherd's coat and thus – on the iconic level – confirms the magic and mythic nature of the shepherd-mediator in the wedding ritual.¹³⁹ In the texts about St Petka such a combination has not yet been completed, maybe because the influence of ecclesiastic iconography (which depicts this saint always in the long, black robe) is still alive and strong enough to muffle anything else away. Furthermore, the traditional culture cannot abolish chthonic connotations of the black colour even under conditions stronger than these, which made the black St Petka, independently of her Christian background, appear with the looks and the actions of a demon: tall woman dressed in black, with teeth so big that they hang from the mouth down to her knees (in Greece - Ikonmidis 1958), black old woman who – with a spindle or a staff in her hand (in Romania - Svešnikova and Civyan 1973) – punishes disobedience by digging the corpses out and making the sinning spinners eat them (both in Greece and Romania), or she cooks their children in the pot for boiling and colouring of wool¹⁴⁰ (Romania), or she deprives them of eyesight, legs and arms (everywhere), kills by the pricking of a finger with the spindle (in Greece), and so on. Such a figure is easily recognised as 'Gvozdenzuba' ('The Iron-teeth'), a demon by which children are frightened in Srem,¹⁴¹ especially 'little spinners, by telling them that she [the Iron-teeth] is taking live coals in the pot and is going to burn the fingers of those who do not spin well'.¹⁴²

Also in accordance with the colour symbolism of the traditional culture, red and white are isosemic with black, which is especially confirmed within the context of St Petka: she herself, alone (in Russia – ED 1898) or together with St Nedelja ('Sunday') (in Bosnia - Šajnović 1928), walks in the other world 'all red and bloody in face, because whatever sins people make and whenever they curse the God, she takes it all on her, and

¹³⁷ One guess is that it was Mokosh, the only female member of the old Slavonic pantheon whose name is still remembered. Cf. Ivanov and Toporov 1965; Uspensky 1996; Svešnikova and Civyan 1973; Detelić 1998; also Popov, this volume.

¹³⁸ All quotations of epic ballads are taken – wherever possible – from Locke 2002.

¹³⁹ Of course, it stands only for the folklore wedding. Cf. Detelić 1992 (s.v. *Sujet and Motif*).

¹⁴⁰ In Serbian tradition, the sinning spinner is cooked – together with the yarn – by Wednesday (Čajkanović 1927, no. 205).

¹⁴¹ Northern part of Serbia, district of Vojvodina.

¹⁴² Karadžić 1969, s.v. *Gvozdenzuba*. In Boka Kotorska (Montenegro) with the same functions there is 'baba korizma' (old woman Korizma – *ibidem*), and in Slavonia (Republic of Croatia), where the population is mostly Catholic, a similar belief is connected with St Lucia (Čolić 1916, 147).

she suffers herself,¹⁴³ or she goes through the other world pricked by spindles of the lazy spinners (Yudin 1997, 88).¹⁴⁴ In the shape of a white apparition or a woman in white dress, St Petka is in Greece depicted as a warrior against cholera (which is represented as a woman in black), and against a dragon (Ikonomidis 1958, 75ff).¹⁴⁵ In the Slavonic traditions, on the other hand, white clothes are the characteristic of the impure power in general (in contrast to the devil who is always and only black) (*SD* 1995, s.v. *Belyi cvet*). In Serbia, for example, the demon of plague is imagined in the shape of a woman with white scarf (Karadžić 1969, s.v. *Kuga*), while in Slovenia a death demon is represented as a white apparition, that is as a 'white girl' (Radenković 1996, 285).

Controversial qualities of such a wide range could be joined together only within a genre which is unstable by itself, and which – for that reason – belongs to a twilight zone of oral literature. The genre in question consists of the 'beliefs and fabulata' which can be differentiated only arbitrarily. By the function they have in the traditional culture, and which is by all means more important than any sort of literary rules and needs, beliefs and fabulata belong to that narrow group of particularly archaic texts which are directly connected with the sacral and magical sphere of spiritual life. From the standpoint of the theory of oral literature, they lack any firm and obligatory structure which could make them recognizable and different from the others in each and every single case. Nevertheless, this condition is not satisfied even by much more stabile oral genres as epic ballad and fairy-tale for example, which means that in this case as a measure of diverging towards a twilight zone only a simple numerical evaluation can be used: number of texts diverging from the theoretical model¹⁴⁶ for fabulata and beliefs will *always* be much bigger than the number of such texts in the genres whose stability is out of question.

So, that which in beliefs and fabulata is the oldest and the most important, belongs to the vast non-literary area and must not be changed for any literary or other similar purpose. For that reason, each new element, once it enters the process of modeling based on the 'belief/fabulata' pattern, has to get rid of any carried information if it is contradictory to the basic code signal of the pattern. Whichever the elements of the official, church cult of St Petka might be, and in the Orthodox Balkans this cult is very big indeed, *none* of them passed this test. Of course, it does not mean that in the traditional culture of the Balkan peoples St Petka is identified with the 'Iron-teeth', plague, cholera, and impure forces in general. On the contrary, all characteristics which are mutual to this saint and these demons became 'impure' only under the influence of Christianity and, together with the opposite group of 'pure' characteristics and beings, got alienated from the older and general naming of numina as the 'higher' force (*vis maior*). In the very core of fabulata and beliefs, the nature and attribution of numen (divine or mythic being) can still be defined by the term *sacer*, which is transcendental to the Christian *sanctus*. Taking over its functions from this older and stronger domain, a new

¹⁴³ Ibidem, 378-79 (the place called Kola in Bosnia).

¹⁴⁴ In that sense, St Petka is in Russia alternated with St Barbara and the Holy Mother of God (see: *Slavyanskije drevnosti*, s.v. *Vereteno*). Another variant of the taboo of handywork on St Petka's day especially and on every Friday during the year is the danger of cutting the eyes of dead ancestors with the sharp blades of scissors etc. St Petka Paraskeva appears both in Russia and in the Balkans as a protector of the eyes and healer of eyesight.

¹⁴⁵ She also fights demons known as 'ala' and 'azdaja' (from Persian *azdahaka*).

¹⁴⁶ On theoretical model for the traditions see Milošević-Djordjević 1988, 592-98.

agent – as a weaker one – had to be re-encoded in congruence with the environment it had to adjust to.

In the relatively stable genres, as in popular tales for example, black-red-and-white profile of St Petka withdraws in front of golden colouring which, by the way, does not cover her entirely, but only her attributions. Even partly, like this, colouring in gold in fact is a genre intervention on the image of St Petka, and further in this text it should be discussed how and why.

When she appears in a folk-tale, St Petka is always in the role of the hero's helper (in the same way as it happens in the fairy-tale), which means that the action expected from her is supernatural or miraculous: St Petka makes the staves of a barrel disappear and the children closed in the barrel liberated ('Deca andjeli' / 'Children angels') (Čajkanović 1927, no 28); she breast-feeds the hero who then fulfills the Devil's asking to spit his mother's milk ('Sveta petka i djavo' / 'St Petka and the Devil') (*Ibidem*, no.167); she dries out a tsar's arm when he starts at his brother in order to kill him ('Car, njegov brat i Sveta Petka' / 'Tsar, his Brother, and St Petka') (*Ibidem*, no.79); she helps and gives a gift to the noble stepdaughter and at the same time punishes the evil real daughter (in Greece),¹⁴⁷ and so on. The way this function is being activated can be of two sorts: either the saint is called to help by her full name and with clear conscience of her Christian context (children in the barrel), or the hero meets her on the road when he needs help (spit milk and dried arm), with the variant in which he finds her house in the hills (stepdaughter and the real daughter) not searching for it and not knowing who the helper is. In both models the appearance of St Petka could be alternated with the Holy Mother of God, even in cross-reference:

A. Within one and the same genre

1. *Motif of the mother's milk spit out – 'St Petka and the Devil' (occasional encounter)*

'Krstivoj¹⁴⁸ ties him [the devil] to the post, and then goes along the seashore and weeps. St Petka meets him: "What is it, Krstivoje, why are you crying?" "The devil took my sister's children and won't give them back, unless I spit my mother's milk on the palm of his hand." She brought out her right breast: "Suck Krstivoje," she says, "three times the milk from this breast, and then spit it on [his] palm and take the children." He sucked the milk three times from her breast and then went to the devil: "Give me, he says, my sister's children!" "When you spit your mother's milk," he says, "then I'll give you the children." He spit twice and there was the milk on the palm.'

2. *The same motif – 'St Sisulj'¹⁴⁹ (invocation by prayer)*

'St Sisulj realised that he was in trouble, so he went down on his knees and prayed to the Holy Mother of God, to let him spit his mother's milk, which he sucked. And the Mother of God did it, so St Sisulj spit his mother's milk...'

¹⁴⁷ Ikonomidis, 88. Both in Greece and in Serbia St Petka is alternated in this sujet with 'ala' (in Greece also with *dragon* and *azdaja*), and in Russia with Baba-Yaga. Cf. Radenković 1996a, 15.

¹⁴⁸ Name of the hero, literally 'Of the Cross'.

¹⁴⁹ ZNŽOJS X/1 (1905): 137-38.

B. In two different genres

1. *An encounter on the road – ‘Tsar, his Brother, and St Petka’*

‘He went by the road and wept. St Petka met him, spinning on the gold distaff: “What is it, tsar?” she says, “why do you weep? The empire will stay with you.” “My brother won’t let me have it, but he asks me who can buy his castle.” She says: “Don’t weep for it, it is the easiest part!”

2. *The same motif – charm against poganac (a kind of disease)*

There came the big poganac

through the wide field.

God's mother met him

and she asked him:

- Why are you crying,

the big poganac?

- I must weep,

how could I not!

Saint Petka's son is getting married,

Saint Sreda's [Wednesday's] daughter too;

they asked all diseases to the wedding,

only I was not asked.

- It is easy, poganac, don't worry ... (Radenković 1982, no 214).

Even more in congruence with this sujet, charms in Bulgaria give the following context: a man goes on the road weeping. The Holy Mother of God (or St Nedelja/Sunday, or St Petka/Friday) carry a jar of water and a pen. They help him and wash his wounds with the pen.¹⁵⁰

Alternation with the Mother of God,¹⁵¹ as represented here, illustrates two things: first, that motifs with St Petka can easily pass from one genre to another, and second, that text and motif distribution in genres cannot be dependent on nomination only. Besides, the magical origin of the charm text (with typical dialog form, a traveler in tears, and a helper uncalled for) must seriously be taken into account in defining genre characteristics of both tales about St Petka. The parallel with ‘St Sisulj’, though, draws the first one (with the spit milk) largely on the side of legend. Even in the *twilight zone* of oral literature the mixture of a charm, a fairy-tale, and a legend – even if possible – would not

¹⁵⁰ SbNU, Gorno Džumatsko: p. 120, no 3: for the wound. Cf. also Klyaus 1997, p. 74, motif 1/IX.1.2/A3.

¹⁵¹ In a paper about curses and obscene speech, Uspenski gives the following conclusion: in the Slavonic paganism, the cult of the Mother the Black Earth is directly connected with the cult of the Thunder God at the first place, and with the cult of the female deity Mokosh as a female hypostasis in contraposition to the Thunder God. With the arrival of Christianity, veneration of Mokosh was transferred both to St Petka Paraskeva (‘water and earth mother’), and to the Mother of God. That is also the reason why the God's Mother is being connected with the Mother the Black Earth. In Russian spiritual verses cursing of St Petka is forbidden in the same way as the cursing of the god's Mother. But, in the Serbian language, cursing the mother can be connected directly to St Petka (f.k St Petka), and such a curse is considered very strong. God's Mother and St Petka pose, in fact, as an alternation for Mokosh (Uspenski 1996, II, 93). See also Račko Popov in this book.

survive long enough to be written down.¹⁵² This means that some of the elements engaged in these texts, which have not been mentioned up till now, prevailed over all others.

In the story 'St Petka and the Devil' such elements are more than one and they are connected with the text structure and will be discussed further in this paper. In the story about a tsar, his brother, and St Petka such an element is the saint's 'gold distaff'. It connects St Petka with all those distaffs, spindles, looms made of gold – and also of gold hens, chickens, and eggs – which are all, without exceptions, gifts of the Sun's or Moon's¹⁵³ mother in the fairy-tales about the search for the lost groom. In those texts, to put it in another wording, where the magical helper is the protector of the bride, of her progeny, and of her right to have a family.¹⁵⁴

No informant, however unskilled, cannot but recognise these women's gifts as a firm fairy-tale motif with double efficiency: the magic gold objects, such as they are, belong to the celestial world where mothers gift-givers dwell, together with their sons (sun, moon, even winds); whoever is allowed to own such an object (without previously searching for it), is *ipso facto* positioned in the level *over* the horizon, which means in heaven.¹⁵⁵ This is one possibility, and it easily fits the general presumption on the situation of the saints in the space (they stay *up* at heavens, and go *down* to the earth). Against it, partly stands the fact that the saint with the gold distaff appears in the sujet which is not about a woman and her progeny. The problem is, in fact, secondary and it opens the old question about evaluation of field work and work with the published collections. Both stories are obviously got from one and the same informant (probably on the same occasion too), which means that under somewhat changed conditions it could easily happen that the 'gold distaff' would appear either in both occasions or in none. This which is undoubtedly at disposition, and independent of the changes of conditions of speech, is the formula of the encounter which is repeated not only in both stories ('*He went by the road and wept. St Petka met him*', or '*he goes along the seashore and weeps. St Petka meets him*'), but almost regularly within the same or other genres. In that context – and that is the other possibility – interpolation of the attributive action (spinning) and the attribution (distaff) in the ready-made formula¹⁵⁶ could be a standard procedure with

¹⁵² Which means till the end of the nineteenth century, when the major part of oral tradition was written down in context of romantic urge towards the 'noble primitives' and their art. These particular texts were collected at the beginning of the the twentieth century in Western Serbia and Dalmatia.

¹⁵³ In the Serbian language the Moon is masculine.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Čajkanović 1927, no. 35. This fairy-tale type could also be defined in respect of the groom's inhuman metamorphosis, as fairy-tales of: a boar, a hedgehog, a falcon, a snake, a lizard, an ox/bull, a lamb bridegroom (see also comments in Čajkanović 1927, 512).

¹⁵⁵ In folklore, gold is anyway connected with the symbolism of the wealth, beauty, and long life as the basic characteristics of the 'upper', 'other', celestial world which belongs to the deities. Because of that, its value is much higher than the value of this world. But, such a connection drives also at the world of the dead, and also at the impure force in general and its dwelling place. Cf. *Slavyanskije drevnosti*, s.v. *Zoloto*.

¹⁵⁶ For the poetics of formula it is important that in other genres, for example in the charms, the same combination (The Holy Mother of God / God's Mother / St Petka) with a gold spindle does not appear. The gold in charms has a completely different function (Cf. Radenković 1982, nos. 369, 491, 579, 581). If the combination *saints* + *gold* appears there, then – within the Slavonic material – it looks different: St George locks the cattle with gold latches and keys, God's Mother covers people with gold robe, there is a gold monastery in the mountain where on the gold throne Archangel Michael is sitting (or the God's Mother), St Nicholas blows the golden trumpet, an angel scratches diseases with a golden rake, and so on (cf. *Slavyanskije drevnosti* 1995, s.v. *Zoloto*).

beings that at least *have* the attributions (fairy's wings, dappled horse of Prince Marko, *pedum episcopi* or – in folklore – gold crutch of St Sava, and so on). Thus the addition to St Petka: 'she spins on the gold distaff' would be a normal move within the same standard. Then the gold, otherwise an imperial and kingly privilege, from the standpoint of the genre would be an intervention as necessary in fairy-tale, as demonic looks and actions are inevitable in beliefs and fabulata.

Does all that was mentioned here present a condition plausible enough to define the story 'Tsar, His Brother, and St Petka' as a fairy-tale? The basic structure of the text seems to be affirmative: 1) hero (tsar's brother); 2) his opponent (tsar); 3) hero's helper; 4) difficult tasks; 5) the end – happy for the hero, unhappy for his enemy.¹⁵⁷ But, in addition to this semantic grill, there comes somewhat eccentric narration, which then makes the story diverge towards the *twilight zone* more than to the real fairy-tale: I) the initial clash between brothers is solved outside the story, i.e. before the very narration even began ('A tsar had a brother, *and he saw that the empire will remain to this brother*, so he said ...); II) difficult tasks, although in the expected number, and asking for anticipated actions (measuring and evaluation are distributed eccentrically – two are done by the hero, and the third and the last by his opponent (when the roles are artificially changed); III) finally, at the very end of the story, the idiom is changed and becomes more like the epic ballad than any other genre ('He ran and sat in the imperial throne, and tsar came and said: 'Stand up!' He says: 'No, *by God it was given to me!*' *He waved his sabre to cut his head off, but his arm became dry in the upper part.* 'Stand up, brother, from my throne *if you know what God is!*').

Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that the mentioned intervention on St Petka as a magic helper comes from the frame of relational abilities of the grill whose genre stability is out of question. This means that it does *not depend* on variable values as conditions of speech and qualities of the informant.

It is small wonder that the opposites in the conception of the image of St Petka (black and gold) overlap with opposite conceptions of oral genres (fabulata\belief and fairy-tale). They are both only liminal markers of the vast area which was, probably even in pre-religious times, covered by a mighty, for us still mysterious numen. Even this which could be grasped by combined ethnolinguistic and poetological analysis (myth about Thunder god and his rejected wife, reconstruction of the old Slavonic goddess Mokosh and so on), is too recent to be accepted as an explanation for many questions posed by such an analysis.¹⁵⁸

Anyway, this in the Serbian folklore image of St Petka which is recognised as strong and significant enough to push out or completely replace the Holy Mother of God, is imported into popular tradition from the Christianity, better even - from the cult of the saint's relics. They reposed in Belgrade for almost two hundred years, till they were

¹⁵⁷ According to the international classification, and defined by the sort of tasks, this story would belong to the type AaTh 823 (Cf. Karadžić 1988b, no 43). This, in fact, is not a real fairy-tale but more or less a legend.

¹⁵⁸ One question of the kind is, for example, connected with formula in the riddles about the sun/snow, where an old woman with the distaf and a girl with spindle are alternated with God: 'An ox fell in the deep valley, / nobody could pull it out / but God, our Lord' (sun going west); 'An ox fell in the deep valley, / a woman waved with distaf / and a girl with the spindle / and they could not bring it out / till it did it itself' (sunset at the sea); 'An ox fell in the deep field, / nobody could bring it out but God, our Lord (snow). Cf. also: 'An ox fell over a steep hill, / nobody could stop it / but an old woman with distaf' (water mill).

translated to the Romanian town Yashi where they have been from the sixteenth century on. It is also more than probable that the itinerary of her relics (Epibata in Greece – Trnovo in Bulgaria – Belgrade in Serbia – Constantinople in Turkey – Yashi in Romania), along with the accompanying contamination with hagiographies of yet three other saints with the same name,¹⁵⁹ influenced the spread of her cult across the Balkans. It entered the traditional cultures of the Balkan peoples and even spread to Poland and Russia. Wherever it went and was received, the image of St Petka was re-encoded so it could adjust as much as possible to the characteristics of a numen whose functions it overtook.

II - St Sisin

Equally widespread, but inclining to the opposite side of the medieval Christian world, the history of the apocryphal prayers of St Sisinnius - for children's and parents' protection – covered not only the Balkan peninsula, but also the complete territory of the Byzantine Empire. It is generally assumed that all recorded editions of these apocryphal texts (Greek, Armenian, Arabian, Abyssinian, Romanian, Russian, Bulgarian, Serbian, and Croat) had in fact the same, Aramaic original¹⁶⁰ connected with the hagiography of St Sisinnius – a soldier born in Armenia during the reign of emperor Licinius (320 B.C.E.). His day is March 10.¹⁶¹

It is possible to recognise two basic types among many versions of sujet connected with the image of St Sisinnius. First, and probably the older one, comes from tradition of a special kind of Christian holy men, so called stylita or 'stolpnik', the most famous of whom was St Simeon.¹⁶² There, St Sisinnius is shown as ever standing on a marble column in the sea or on the seashore, watching and waiting for 7, 12, or 77 fevers to come out of water, spread the sickness over the world and strike people, especially children.¹⁶³ St Sisinnius catches them all and forces them to disclose their true and secret names to him. Thus he gains power over them and sends them back to sea, preventing their mischievous work. This sujet-type is in correspondence especially with charms and

¹⁵⁹ *Paraskeva, prepodobna mučenica*, supposedly martyred in the second century during the reign of the emperor Antoninus; *Paraskeva, megalomartyr*, martyred under Diocletian (c. 303); *St Paraskeva, Polish princess*, daughter of Rogvold-Vasilius (eighth century); and *St Petka of Trnovo* from the eleventh century (celebrated on October 27). She is often identified with the third/fourth century St Paraskeva, although their hagiographies are different, as also their celebration days. Cf. *Polnyij* 1971, vol. II, s.v. *Pyatnica*.

¹⁶⁰ Pantelić 1973; opposed by Veselovsky who pleads for a Greek origin.

¹⁶¹ There are eight more saints with this name (Cf. Mansvetov 1881, Sokolov 1888, Hasdeu 1984).

¹⁶² As a stylite who lives on a stone column, St Sisinnius appears also in a Bogomil prototype. There is a possibility that he overlaps with St Simeon, perhaps because the latter was born in place called Sisan (Cf. Hasdeu 1984, 210-212).

¹⁶³ In church tradition about St Sisinnius his ability to exorcise sickness is not even mentioned. Popular tradition, though, connects his name with fever healing. It is generally assumed that St Sisinnius in charms was contaminated by Sisinnius from Laodicaia (beginning of the fourth century – Diocletian's time) and Sisinnius from Kizik. Cf. Byzantine legend about Gilo the child-killer, defeated by brothers Sisinnius and Sisinodor (Mansvetov 1881, Sokolov 1888). 'False prayers' against fever, where St Sisinnius is mentioned, appear on the old lists of prohibited books (Yudin 1997, 110).

other similar, magic texts mainly used as exorcisms (Yudin 1997, 110).¹⁶⁴ The second one, also very ancient type of sujet, represents St Sisinnius as an ‘authorised’ warrior against the witch/devil who kidnaps the newborn.¹⁶⁵ Iconically, in these texts the saint is represented as a holy horseman, by many details similar to St George, St Demetrius, or Archangel Michael. Texts of this kind came to us in form of apocryphal prayers which were in circulation long enough to merge with oral narrative tradition. They will be in focus of this paper.

Among all approachable prayers of St Sisinnius, for this occasion the seventeenth-century Bulgarian apocryphal text was chosen as the basic sacral text, although in its close vicinity there exist even its older versions (Serbian and Romanian, both from the sixteenth century). This choice was motivated by characteristics of the oral narratives (texts 2 and 3) which manifest more points of similarity with the Bulgarian version than with the other editions of the basic paleoslavonic manuscript – including the Serbian. Text no. 4, a relatively new, by the end of 19th century printed version, is taken here as a sort of control or check point for evaluation of reversible influence which the process of desacralisation, initialised by traditional culture, had on the text itself.

For the purpose of the analysis, as well as for a more comfortable review of its subject (i.e. sujet-structure), all four texts are schematically presented as a narrative model with 15 (I-XV) constructively important points. Some of them are invariants and keepers of ‘relational’ information about characteristics of pertaining structure, and others – more or less variable – are relating the information about genre interventions on the sujet. The presented texts are presented as follows: *The Prayer of St Sisinnius, Isidor, Simeon and Theodore*,¹⁶⁶ text no. 1; *Saint Sisulj*,¹⁶⁷ text no. 2; *Saint Paraskeva and the Devil*,¹⁶⁸ text no. 3; *The Miracles of Saint Sisoe*,¹⁶⁹ text no. 4. If occasionally the item ‘variants’ is attached to text no. 1, that means that information is given about differences between Bulgarian and other versions of apocryphal texts¹⁷⁰ with the same sujet (i.e. where the enemy is devil instead of witch etc.).

I. *hero*

text 1: St Sisin (variants: together with brothers)

text 2: St Sisulj

text 3: Krstivoje

text 4: St Sisoe

II. *hero's whereabouts before the action starts*

¹⁶⁴There are also versions with a witch (instead of a fever), where the witch is asked her true and secret names. Further procedure is identical (Cf. Pantelić 1973).

¹⁶⁵ Originally, the enemy of the saint was a witch, i.e. female demon whose function was to steal and kill the newborn (Cf. Pantelić 1973).

¹⁶⁶ ‘Molitva na sveti Sisin, Isidor, Simeon i Teodor’, *Apokrifi*, 313-14 – apocryphal text.

¹⁶⁷ *Sveti Sisulj*, ZNŽOJS, X/1(1905), 137-38 – folktale.

¹⁶⁸ ‘Sveta Petka i đavo’, Čajkanović 1927, no. 167 – folktale.

¹⁶⁹ ‘Minunile sfintului Sisoe’, Hasdeu 1984, 217-22) – apocryphal text. This recent Romanian edition from the nineteenth century (1860-70) was first printed in Jashi, and after 1870 many times reprinted in Bucharest. The Bucharest edition from 1888 is cited here. The author is grateful to Dr Biljana Sikimic for her friendly help with Romanian translations.

¹⁷⁰ Editions printed in Dujčev 1967, 247-50 and Pantelić 1973, 161-205.

text 1: Arabian country (variants: Mount Sion, Sion Mountain, Mount Sinai, Tabor Mountain)

text 2: he dwells in a desert mountain and is continually riding on horseback

text 3: none

text 4: none

III. *additional protagonists*

text 1: hero's sister Melentija and her children (5 sons + 1 child) [in original Aramaic text: Melitena]

text 2: hero's sister Mileva (two children+one)

text 3: hero's sister Krstina (three sons)

text 4: hero's sister Meletia (five children + one)

IV. *action initialiser* (the way hero gets informed that his sister needs him)

text 1: Sisin is hunting in the woods and there comes an angel who informs him that his sister's last child is in danger

text 2: an angel presents himself to St Sisin in the woods

text 3: the sister 'prati aber' (sends the message)

text 4: no specific information: Sisoe is in the big woods, hunting with the emperor; a storm occurs, the company splits apart, and Sisoe – with God's help – comes to his sister's 'kelia' by the sea-side

V. *place the action begins from* (his sister's home)

text 1: the stone tower smitten with iron, strengthened with lead and bronze; in it the 6 years lasting food is piled up and there are two girl-servants

text 2: Mileva lives in Mount Salimska; she arranged everything to last her for one year and closed herself in

text 3: no description

text 4: Meletia's 'kelia' on the sea-side; Meletia lives there alone, without any help ('with one arm she cooks, and in the other she holds the child')

VI. *spatial obstacles* (at the entrance of the sister's home)

text 1: a strong and cold wind suddenly occurs; the sister dares not let the hero in until she recognises his voice and finds out he is a devil hunter

text 2: the sister dares not let the hero in until she recognises his voice

text 3: the sister dares not let the hero in until she recognises his voice

text 4: sudden tempest; the sister dares not let the hero in until he informs her that God has made him a devil hunter

VII. *hero's adversary*

text 1: devil (kidnaps the last child)

text 2: enemy¹⁷¹ (kidnaps the last child)

text 3: devil (kidnaps the last child)

text 4: devil (kidnaps the last child)

VIII. *the adversary forces the obstacles in front of the sister's home*

text 1: turns in a grain of barley and sticks to a horse hoof (variant: becomes a fly)

¹⁷¹ The 'enemy' is usual folklore hypocoristic for devil, same as: *nekrštenik, naletnik, nečastivi, kusi, reponja, rogonja, matori, prokletnik* etc.

text 2: no description, only statement: 'uvuče se neprijatelj' (the enemy sneaked in)

text 3: no description

text 4: turns in a grain of barley and sticks to a horse hoof

IX. *hero's task*

text 1: to bring the children back home (not only the last, but all of them)

text 2: same

text 3: same

text 4: same

X. *assistants on the journey* (informants)

text 1: willow (cursed), blackberry (cursed), maple (blessed), olive (blessed) (variants: cypress and fir tree)

text 2: shepherds, willow (cursed) and olive (blessed)

text 3: willow (cursed) and olive (blessed)

text 4: willow (cursed), blackberry (cursed), maple (blessed) and olive (blessed)

XI. *place the adversary dwells in*

text 1: in the sea, with the sea-fish

text 2: 'u pučinu morsku i u dubljinu', 'u morskije dubljina' (in high seas and sea depths, in the sea deep)

text 3: 'na obalu na brodu ge izlazi galia' (at the sea-side where galleons go off)

text 4: 'he dipped in the Sea, he is playing with sea-fish and with the child'

XII. *the adversary is bitten*

text 1: a hook is thrown into the sea and he bites it (variants: 7 hooks; 77 hooks)

text 2: he finds him in sea depths and by chains he ties him up hardly, and with pliers he pulls him by the nose to a lawn, and he starts beating him with an iron stick

text 3: Krstivoje finds a dead child, he puts him on the hook and throws it into sea, under a galleon. Krstivoje starts pulling and pulls the devil out of water

text 4: 'Than St Sisoe dismounted at the Sea-side and he fell on his knees and prayed to God to put the devil in his hand. And saint, praying in fiery tears to God, threw the hook into Sea, and he caught the devil instantly, and pulling him by the neck, he got him out of the Sea, and he started beating him by strikes that burn and with a burning stick along the spine'

XIII. *hero passes a hard exam*

text 1: to throw up his mother's milk

text 2: same

text 3: same

text 4: to spit his mother's milk

XIV. *magic assistant*

text 1: prayer to Jesus Christ (variants: assistant does not show at all)

text 2: the holy Mother of God: St Sisulj, being in trouble, fell to his bare knees and prayed to the holy Mother of God to let him spit his mother's milk that he sucked. The holy Mother of God did so

text 3: St Paraskeva: Krstivoj went along the shore crying. St Paraskeva meets him there

text 4: prayer to God: ‘So the saint prayed in tears to God and instantly threw up the milk he sucked from his mother’

XV. *final outcome and destiny of children*

text 1: ‘Ashamed, devil doubled his strenght and threw up Melentija’s six sons’; nothing more is said about the children

text 2: Than the bitten enemy threw up the two children. St Sisulj beats him again to have him throw up the third child too. The enemy cannot endure, so he throws up the third. By then the holly Mother of God appears, seises the children, washes them and wraps them in her own gowns, and takes them in heaven, and St Sisulj takes the enemy, cuts him in four slices and throws him into sea, to prevent him from abducting people any more. St Sisulj then mounts his horse and rides to his sister to tell her not to weep after her children, for the holly Mother of God took them in her lap

text 3: Devil, seeing himself in trouble, cried three times and threw up both children, so Krstivoj took them and brought them to his sister, and he let devil be. And devil took an oath never to bother him any more

text 4: ‘And then the saint beat him even more and put him to pains and threw him around, put him on the hook by the neck and took him by the hair with his hand, and he stroke him and beat him saying: ‘Submit to everlasting pains and go to the desert where you belong’; and he cut his head off, he ripped his chest from waist to throat. And then he threw him in the Sea and cursed him not ever to come back again. Then St Sisoe took his sister’s children all and everyone and brought them to the cell /kelia/ where Meletia was. And so said the saint: ‘Take, my sister Meletia, the children devil stole from you’; and she took them with great love and joy and she praised God for it.’

What strikes the eye in this review of texts is small – or, better, insufficient – number of mutual, invariant points (marked with raster): only three (VII, IX and XIII). They cover for dramatic turns needed to start the action and significant for telling a story about it: the hero’s main task (to bring the children back), the enemy who took the children, and the final test hero has to pass to accomplish his goal. Thanks to the last one, they are all easily, almost automatically connected with fairy-tale, although they are present in any genre with dramatic plot – either rudimentary or advanced: in charm, epic poem, some rite texts and many narrative genres as novellas, comic stories and so on. The nature of information thus transferred is relational (information that the text structure relates about itself) but incomplete, for it lacks two frame notions: on main protagonist – i.e. hero (point I), and – complementary to it – on hero’s return to the spot from which the action has begun (point XV). Without that frame, and it means without both the beginning and the ending, structure remains unfinished. But here neither beginning nor the ending are marked with raster and so they figure as main differences between the texts. That means they are excluded from the basic structure, for information they relate is not only relational but also of generic – i.e. literary – importance. Within the boundary of oral literature, this case is completely atypical.

Generally, if the line of research is connected with *sujet*, the hero and his adversary form a pair element of basic structure which is in no way influenced by nomination (to start with point I). For example: in epical *sujet* 'wedding with obstacles' nothing is changed if Grbljicic Zane (a Montenegrin knight) takes place of 'srpski car Stjepan' (Serbian emperor Stephan), and if in the role of adversary 'gospoda kotorska' (gentlemen from the city of Kotor) replace the 'gospoda ledjanska' (gentlemen from city of Ledjan). The difference between these two poems lies in presence/absence of a mediator in form of groom's nephew, which is a distinctive element of *sujet* that can *by no means* be found in its basic structure. In a different, narrative genre – e.g. in novella, the *sujet* becomes even less formal about nomination: whether the hero would be king Solomon or an emperor's brother, and whether his adversary becomes hero's mother or the emperor himself – does not effect the *sujet* in any way. Here, too, the distinctive element of *sujet* is presence/absence of an assistant in performing a task and, again, this element can *by no means* be found within its basic structure because this structure – as was said before – offers only a relational information about its own self. How eagerly the narration tries to keep its nucleus intact, becomes obvious with the first glance at fairy-tale where an indifferent and even hostile attitude towards protagonist's nomination poses as one of its few distinctive genre characteristics. The protagonists of fairy-tale are either nameless (third/the youngest/the only son, prince, step-daughter, brother and sister...) or nick-named (John the apple seed, Cinderella ...), or their names are fully folklorised (Hansel and Gretel, Ivanushka, Snow-white and so on).

On the other hand, whatever comes from the broadest area of hagiography (lives of saints, prayers, legends), apocryphal or not, shows a completely opposite reaction to protagonists' nomination. Those *sujets*, although typical in great measure, have as their main purpose the protection and preservation of memory of saints and holy martyrs, and - above all - of their deeds (*acta martyrum/sanctorum*). Therefore this opposite attitude towards nomination is not only understandable but also inescapable. Differently from majority of oral texts pertaining to the same genre (where the main thing is to protect the *sujet* as far as possible), legends are meant to protect the protagonist and his name because, as sacral texts, they plead for a special kind of plausibility (witness *ad visum*). Even if they merge in oral tradition, these texts keep their basic structure unchanged. There, the position of hero is not empty but, on the contrary, it is always known in advance to which nomination it is consecrated: that means that interchangeability is strictly limited and motivated by non-textual reasons. In case of our St Sisinnius, for example, only one alternation is possible (Archangel Michael) and no one more. The reason, probably, is the written origin of matrix and, of course, the underlined Christian surroundings at the moment of its transfer to new (oral) environment. There where Christianisation went on differently and was less controlled, interchangeability of hagionyms was of bigger size but showed no principal differences of any kind. In this context, our problem clearly presents itself as a special case of intersection between two literary genres with opposite attitudes towards the protagonists' nomination, but with the mutual *sujet*.

Nevertheless, the folktales do not react identically to the contact with texts of different genres. Text no. 2 ('St Sisulj') keeps both the hagionym and the iconic image of holy horseman in the desert mountain which, necessarily, disables it to use an initial formula as it should be in oral narrative genres, and urges text to make a beginning most

closely to the origin.¹⁷² On the contrary, text no. 3 ('St Paraskeva and the devil') replaces hagionyms with folklorised names Krstivoj and Krstina,¹⁷³ respects the initial formula ('Imala Krstina tri sina...') and introduces the hero only after it. The first example is characteristic for legend, the second one for fairy-tale.

If the same attitude of narrative texts towards the original could prevail through the rest 14 points, it would be easy to put a genre-label on them and they themselves would not formally belong to twilight zone of oral literature. But the things are not that simple: inter-genre transferability is huge and mutual influences, although tiny, are nevertheless more numerous than it could be expected. How and where they are inactivated will be shown through the analysis of represented scheme.

Besides the aforementioned nomination of hero (point I), the full chain of points witness the difference in acceptance and interpretation of basic text's details. For example, points III, X and XI mark the places of difference both between folktales themselves, and between folktales and apocrypha. In case of additional protagonists (point III), folktales show smaller number of children (three) than apocrypha (four and six). This number is not only smaller, but in both cases it is also caused by the fairy-tale poetics: besides three, children might also be seven in number (6+1) or ninety-nine (100-1), but never six (5+1) because such an element is not known to fairy-tale's numerical code. The same goes for journey assistants (point X) – of whom in apocrypha there are four and in folktales two or three – where the 'St Sisulj' text submits to larger interventions than St Paraskeva and the devil' text does: number 3 in folktale represents the right numerical encoding, and for that reason added to two plants (blessed and cursed) are shepherds-informants. If their purpose were something else, the role given to them would have been defined better, and the answer to hero would have not gone without any comment. (In 'St Paraskeva and the devil' the lack of such an intervention, although it does not ruin its structure, lessens its literary value from the standpoint of genre and remains one of less important reasons it belongs to the twilight zone.)

Finally, as for the place the hero's adversary dwells in (point XI), the difference between folktales and apocrypha is small but significant. In 'St Sisulj' the enemy goes in sea depths but he *does not* dwell there 'with fish'; this nuance makes big difference between devil's dwelling place (apocrypha) and the hiding place of its escape (Sisulj). Text no. 3 (St Paraskeva), probably because the narrator himself does not have a clear concept of sea which he might have never seen, stresses the border line between the water and the land: 'na obalu *na brodu* ge izlazi galia' (to the coast and to *shallow water* where galleon goes off), where 'shallow water' as a liminal locus gains strong magical connotations. As the consequence, at point XII (adversary is bitten) folktales show more similarity to the apocrypha than to each other.

All this shows that the text no. 2 (St Sisulj) is not simply and carelessly transferred (as a legend) from one tradition to the other and that, leaving the written and entering the oral idiom, it had to make many small but multilevel adaptations. Strong

¹⁷² In this context, it is possible to suppose that the source was one of manuscript's variants where the 'Sion mountain' is determined as St Sisinnius' dwelling place (Sreckovic's collection of priest Dragolj – the beginning of the fourteenth century), 'Cion mountain' (Rumanian prayer to St Sisoe – 16th century), or 'Sinai mountain' (priest Jeremiah variant, Bogomil original). In Russian incantations 'Tabor mountain' appears too. For all this variants see Sokolov 1888 and Hasdeu 1984.

¹⁷³ In this sense, the story could begin with: 'There was a woman who had three sons...', and nothing would be fundamentally changed.

reaction to numerical narrative code (three children, three informants), along with the hero's return to the place from which the action started (point XV), are only the most outstanding phases of this process. Along with them, less obvious, there are also recognising the hero by his voice (point III) and negative reaction to the offered motif of devil's transformation (point VIII), mutual to both folktales. In this last – VIII – point, declination from the apocrypha is at its most and it fully shows the real meaning of inter-genre transferability and the way it operates.

It is well known that narrative matrix of oral story-telling is does not approve of unofficial solutions. Seeing that the sujets are typical, it is also very well known which one of them could deal with the transformation motif (not only of the devil, but also of the hero, his assistant or his adversary in general) and in what length (starting from the folktale in extenso – e.g. 'Devil's apprentice', to the isolated sequences of dragon fighting, of extra corporal strength, of grateful dead and so on). If the sujet is not of proper type, the narrative matrix does not recognise such a motif as logical one and rejects it.¹⁷⁴ Both our folktales react accordingly, although the devil's metamorphosis motif exist *in every single one* edition of original manuscript. The prayer, though, as a sacral text of written origin, is not bound to pay attention to the same things because its matrix is differently structured and so it cannot be ruined by the borrowings from the oral narrative model. The points of its vulnerability are differently arranged, as we have seen before (discussion on hero's nomination – point I), and there where its function is not at stake, borrowing from another genre – even from another type of literature – is almost free. This theoretical notion is general and applicable to both our cases (apocrypha/legend and oral folktale/fairy-tale), and therefore the reactions it causes are contradictory.

Then, again, the points where flexibility did not take place, although very scarce, are strong enough as to definitely exclude 'St Sisulj' from the twilight zone of fairy-tale and transfer it to the genre of legendary folktales. On the contrary, by an opposite reaction to exactly the same challenge, the folktale of St Paraskeva and the devil moves toward fairy-tale and definitely stays out of legend.

Besides the hero's nomination, first important difference between our folktales appears at point IV, i.e. in the way the hero gets informed his action is needed: in 'St Sisulj' – as well as in the Bulgarian apocryphal text – an angel approaches the saint, and in 'St Paraskeva...' – seeing the text is free from any hagiography burden – the sister simply 'sends a message'. The same connection with elements of hagiography urges St Sisulj in point V (the sister's dwelling) to – more or less genuinely – relate the apocryphal data, while in the other case (St Paraskeva) the absence of such a bond enables it to simply skip the point V.

Final discrepancy between 'St Sisulj' and 'St Paraskeva...' begins at the point where – in terms of fairy-tale – emerges the need for magic assistant (point XIV). In this sequence, text no. 3 stays for the best genre tradition: 'Krstivoj [...] went by the sea-side shedding tears. St Paraskeva meets him: 'what's the matter with you, Krstivoje, why are

¹⁷⁴ Fairy tales usually do not explain the way demon enters the man's space for committing evil that initiates the story: 'Once upon a time there was a king that had three sons, and in front of the castle a golden apple that in one night flourishes, ripe, and somebody strips it off, but there was no way to understand who' ('The golden apple and nine pea-hens', Karadzic 1988b, 59). The absence of the rational explanation until the turning point of the story is one of the constants in fairy-tale as genre.

you crying?’ ‘The devil took my sister’s children and won’t turn them back’...’, and even more so, seeing that nomination of St Paraskeva in this context is equal to nomination of hero and his sister at the beginning of the folktale.¹⁷⁵ St Sisulj, then, does quite the opposite: he falls to his bare knees and he prays to the holy Mother of God for help, which duly happens. Because she comes unrecognised and uncalled for, but expected from the genre point of view, St Paraskeva really is magic assistant despite her hagionym; the holy Mother of God is not.

The difference in the way the helpers appear (called and uncalled for) has a far-reaching effect. Because he neither rationally participates in his ‘good fortune’ nor consciously counts on it,¹⁷⁶ and this is nothing less than showing respect for the genre constant, Krstivoj becomes real fairy-tale hero. His actions are consistently motivated and realised in horizontal plane of his world (steps ‘up’ or ‘down’ are motivated by an alien initiative), and because of this such a hero is free to make his own choices and independent in making decisions which inactivate and direct the plot. The choices are scarce and illusory and decisions predictable, but it has no effects on narration. On the contrary, St Sisulj – whose insight covers both for what is above and what is under his world – acts as an agent of powers stronger than he could ever be and so he is deprived of any choice: he is told where to go and what to do (angel), and – when in trouble – he knows exactly to whom to appeal. The helper thus called for (the holy Mother of God) assists, in fact, not the hero but ‘the rightful Christian cause’ and, by so doing, expropriates the hero and makes him unnecessary for further narration. So it happens that he, different from Krstivoje, is not able to fulfill his main task and bring the children back. Krstivoje, the true fairy-tale hero, is able to do both remaining in congruence with the original even more than St Sisulj: Krstivoje does not kill the devil (although in fairy-tale it would be more likely, and what St Sisulj in fact does), but makes a deal with him (conf. the ending of the Bulgarian apocryphal text).

Repeating, then, what is for an apocryphal saint of the greatest importance (nomination, prayer, killing the devil, loss of children), ‘St Sisulj’ – in spite of multiform and significant influence of fairy-tale narrative model – in terms of genre is most adequately defined as an oral legend or a folktale with religious plot. Giving negative response to offered solutions (folklorised name, initial formula, magic assistant, return of children), the folktale ‘St Paraskeva and the devil’ withdraws equally from both the original and ‘St Sisulj’, which might logically qualify it as a fairy-tale. In that case, its genre imperfections could be explained by incompetence of narrator as well as by the influence of the original which is still very strong.

¹⁷⁵ What the hero sees during this meeting for him is not the saint (because he did not call for her help and he cannot know who is the woman he met) but the helper, and this is different. Such, anthropomorphic helper is frequent in fairy-tales (‘thankful corps’, fairy girl, old woman, old man with the white beard, etc.). In another text of the same narrator, St Paraskeva is given the same function under the same circumstances, but with elements of her description: ‘He set off on the road and cried. St Petka met him, *she was spinning the golden hemp*: ‘What’s the matter, king, she says, why are you crying...’ etc. (Čajkanović 1927, No. 79). In this case, also, the hero does not know that he is talking to Saint Petka.

¹⁷⁶ Special attention was not paid to that fact (cf. the motif of noble step-daughter and evil daughter, or the motif of noble attitude towards the animal in trouble). In the story ‘St Petka and devil’ this story segment (gaining help episode) is completely lacking, this is one of important reasons for its positioning in the ‘twilight zone’.

The point at which that influence diminishes completely and gives its important place to the oral narrative matrix is, in fact, the missing – fifth (V) – point of the aforementioned basic structure, i.e. fulfillment of task and return to place the action started from. Independently from the original manuscript, this point is restored by both folktales and, still more important, by the recent (Romanian) edition of the apocrypha which was naturally exposed to reversible influence of traditional, oral story-telling. Keeping in view whatever might be important for a sacral text, even overdoing the saint's icon to flamboyancy (fiery tears, fiery stick, burning wounds on the devil), the Romanian apocryphal text compromises with oral understanding of genre in two points: it sends the hero in action without invitation (angel left out) and brings him back to the sister's 'kelia' together with the saved children. It is by no means a frivolous and hazardous coincidence that those compromises are offered both at the beginning and at the end of the text, i.e. on his borders. Especially there, at the strong points where one open colloquial succession is put into clearly defined frame and thus appropriated as text, the iron logic of oral narrative demands the full correspondence and, if given a chance, attains its purpose.

APENDICES – TEXTS

Text 1: *A prayer of Ss Sisin, Isidor, Simeon, and Theodore* (Bulgarian Apocrypha, [Апокрифи, София 1981] pp. 313-314)

In the name of the Father and the Holy Spirit. Once upon a time there were soldiers like Ss Sisin and Simeon and Isidor, who were victorious over everyone, first the Assyrians, and then Ishmaelite. During their twentieth [exploit] in the Arabian lands, Sisin went for hunt. Then an angel of the Lord came to the saint and said to him: "Go to your sister Melentia, who gave birth to five sons, and the devil took them everyone. Today, she gave birth to another child and the devil intends to take away even this one; you must stop him, chase him and together with him [ban] all the devils out."

Then St Sisin started to his sister Melentia. She made a marble tower and shackled it well with the iron nails, and she reinforced it with the lead and copper shackles. She stored the food to last her six years and took two girls to serve her. When St Sisin came near the tower, suddenly a great wind started to blow and it got very cold. St Sisin said: "Oh, my sister, Melentia, open the door and let me in, for this great wind is killing me." Melentia answered: "I must not open, oh my brother, for I have a suckling with me and I fear the devil." St Sisin said: "Do not fear him, I am the devil hunter and devil's pursuer."

Melentia, when she heard his voice, opened the tower. Then the devil turned himself into a grain of millet, stuck under the horse's hoof, and thus entered the tower. In the middle of the night Melentia touched her child and said: "Oh, my brother, it is dead" – and she cried with a harsh voice: "Oh, my brother, Sisin, as I told you, so it was!"

Then St Sisin jumped on his horse whose mouth breathed fire, and while he was after the devil, he met the God's willow tree and asked it: "Did you see the devil running with a child?" It did see him, but it said: "I did not". Then Sisin cursed it: "You will bloom, but bare no fruit!" After that he met a blackberry bush and asked it: "Did you see a devil flying with a child?" It did see, but said: "I did not!" Then St Sisin cursed it too: "Blackberry, for a man you will be an obstacle, and by yourself you'll be cursed! Where your root is, there your top will be too!" Then he came to a maple, a tree of God, and asked of it: "Maple, did you see a devil running with a child?" It did see and said: "I did." So St Sisin said: "Bless you, maple, in church you be a sounding pestle which summons the righteous do be saved, and the sinners to repent". And when he came to the olive tree, a tree of God, he said: "Olive tree, did you see a devil running with a child?" It did and it said: "I did, he dived in the sea, together with the sea fish". Then St Sisin said: "Olive tree, bless you be by the church, and be a remedy for the people!" Then St Sisin prayed to God and threw an angle in the sea. He brought the devil to dry land and started to hit and torture him, crying: "Give me the children of my sister Melentia, which you took!" And this said Sisin too: "Alive is my Lord and God in the heaven and on earth, I will not let you go, devil, you will not get off my hands before you give me Melentia's children back." Then Devil said: "I ate them. If you can spit your mother's milk, which you fed on as little, I will spit out the children" – repeated the devil stubbornly.

Then St Sisin prayed to God with these words: "Oh, my Lord, Jesus Christ, listen to your slave, today you will be glorified by me, your slave, and the devil will be put to shame." And he spat his mother's milk. The devil was ashamed, he doubled his strength and spat six sons of Melentia. St Sisin said: "Alive is my Lord and God in the heaven and on earth, I will not let you go, devil, nor will I let you out off my hands, unless you swear to me: There, where my prayer is said and where my name is mentioned, there neither nightmare, nor witch, nor devil can come. In the name of the Almighty and the celestial powers, and 40 monks who incessantly chant in heaven. There, where my name is mentioned and my prayer is said, in home of the God's slave [name], there either demon, or witch, or evil spirit will not come till the end of time". Amen.

Text 2: *Sv. Sisulj* (ZNŽOJS 1905, X, 1, str. 137-138)

Sv. Sisulj bio u gori pustinji i ja' na konju vavijek i imao jedinu sestru Milevu, udatu u Salimsku goru. Ona je imala sa svojim drugom dvoje djece; došao neprijatelj i odnio obadvoje. Kad je bilo treće na rođenju dijete, onda otiša anđel Boži sv. Sisulju u gori kazati: "O sv. Sisulju, eno ti se porađa sestra Mileva, ajde joj budi na pomoći, obrani je od neprijatelja, jer joj je odnio prvu djecu, pa će i ovo sad što ima roditi." Mileva je bila pripremila sve za godinu dana za svoj rođaj i zatvorila se, da nema njoj niko dolaziti, jerse bojala jako neprijatelja. Kad se bila porodila danom u podne, a sv. Sisulj k njoj dođe pred počivanje u zavojke sunca, kad ona sve oko sebe zatvorila, da ne bi neprijatelj uša. Tada rupi njezin brat sv. Sisulj i zove: "Otvori vrata, sestro Mileva!" Ona njemu kaže: "Ja sam se zatekla, da nikom vrata otvoriti ne smijem." Govori on: "Ja sam ti brat sv. Sisulj, otvori mi!" Otvori ona vrata pa mu se poče tužiti, kako joj je neprijatelj djecu odnio, pa čuva, da ne bi i ovo sade, i da joj on nije brat, da mu ne bi nikako otvorila. Čim sv. Sisulj

uđe u avliju, odma tvrdo zatvoriše vrata sa sviju strana pa stadoše čuvati dijete. Prevari nji san te zaspaše oboje. Uvuče se neprijatelj pa im ukrade iz kolijevke dijete. Kad se prene sestra Mileva, onda stade je plač i cika; prenu se i sv. Sisulj pa govori: “Što ti je, sestro Mileva?” Ona njemu kaže, da je doša neprijatelj ida je ukra dijete; on nju tješi: “Muči, sestro Mileva, ja idem potražiti neprijatelja.” Sv. Sisulj uzjaiva na konja i uzimlje zgođe, kako će ga uvatiti: sindžire i kliješta, i uzimlje gvozdenu šibicu, s kojom će ga biti. Tako je otiša dvije tri milje puta i tuka dvoje troje čobančadi. Pita nji, da nijesu u zoru trevili neprijatelja, da nosi dijete moje sestre Mileve? Njemu oni kažu: “E sv. Sisulju, da smoga videli oli trevili, mi bi ti kazali.” Ide dalje sv. Sisulj od nji i tuka kraj puta vrbu pa joj reče: “Dobro jutro, vrbo!” Reče ona: “Bog da dobro!” - “A da ti nijesi vidla ovda, da je u zoru neprijatelj pronio dijete moje sestre Mileve?” Ona njemu veli, da nije vidla ništa. Ode on dalje od nje i prokle je, da od nje ne bilo nigda roda ni sjemena. Tako je iša dalje i tuka je maslinu te joj reče: “Dobro jutro, maslino moja!” - “Bog da dobro, sv. Sisulju!” - “A jesi li ti vidla ovda u zoru, da je neprijatelj pronio dijete moje sestre Mileve?” Maslina njemu kaže, da jest proša u zoru i da je pronio nekakvo dijete. Pita je sv. Sisulj, što bi on od njega sad uradio i đe bi se on sakrio? Maslina mu kaže: “O sv. Sisulju, on je otiša u pučinu morsku i sakrio se od tebe u dubljinu.” Sv. Sisulj pozdravlja maslinu: “O moja maslino sveta, od tebe bolja mast bila nego od ikakve stoke i blagoslovljena bila!” Pa ode u pučine morske tražiti neprijatelja i nalazi ga u morskije dubljina te ga sindžirima tvrdo veže a kliještima ga za nos vata pa ga iz mora izvukao na jednu ledinu, i poče ga biti gvozdenom šibicom. Pita njega neprijatelj: “Zašto me biješ?” Reče sv. Sisulj: “Za djecu moje sestre Mileve, I odma mi ij vraćaj!” On mu govori: “Kako ću ti ij vratiti, kad sam ij poždro.” Bije njega sv. Sisulj opet što ikad more gvozdenom šibicom, da mu vraća djecu, ali mu reče neprijatelj: “Ajde ti povrati svoje matere mlijeko, što si posao, ja ću tebi djecu.” Sv. Sisulj nađe se na mucu te kleknu na gola koljena i zamoli majku Božiju, da mu dade da izbljuje svoje matere mlijeko, što ga poso. Učini to majka Božija, te bljunu sv. Sisulj mlijekom svoje matere pa onda bolje kliještima vata neprijatelja za nos i bije gvozdenom šipkom pa mu govori: “Evo ja sam izbljuva materino mlijeko, ala ti meni bljui djecu moje sestre Mileve!” Onda isprebijat neprijatelj izbljuva dvoje djece. Opet ga bije sv. Sisulj, da mu i treće izbljuvava. Već ne more dalje neprijatelj, neg izbljuva i treće. U ta doba dopade majka Božija pa ij okupa i pra i zamota u svoje aljine te ij odnese u nebesa, a sv. Sisulj uzimlje neprijatelja te ga presiječe na četiri pole pa ga baci u more, da više ne nosi naroda. Sv. Sisulj onda uzja na konja pa odja sestri kaz’ti, da ne žali djece svoje, da ij je majka Božija odnijela u svoje krilo.

(Đevrske u Dalmaciji)

Text 3: *Sveta Petka i đavo* (Čajkanović, br. 167)

Imala Krstana tri sina. Došo đavo te ju izeo jedno dete, jednu noć odno. Došao drugu noć te odno drugo dete. Prati ona aber za brata Krstivoja: “friško neka mi dođe brat, odnese mi đavo decu!” Dođe brat Krstivoje na vrata, sestra ne sme da mu otvori vrata, misli da je došo đavo da ju uzne i treće dete. Pa ga pozna po glasu da ju je brat rođeni. Kad videla da ju je brat rođeni ona pisnula pa brata zagrlila. Brat je upitao: “Šta ti je sestro, te pištiš?” “Dođe đavo, odnese mi, brale, decu, samo mi jedno ostalo; pa sad me stra oće mi uzne i njega jedno”. “Ne boj se, sestro, prostri da spavamo.” Prostre mu sestra da spavau. “Turi dete ovdje među nas dvoicu, ništa ne može đavo da čini.” Kad se trgla sestra u polak noć,

ona pislula, a dete nema. “Dig se, brate Krstivoje, dete mi nema!” On skoči i usede konja svoga, pa pođe dole pokraj mora pa dođe do vrbe. “Vrbo, jesi videla da pronese đavo dete u zubima?” Vrba kaže: “nisam videla.” Sakrila đavola, nije tela da kaže. Onda je Krstivoj proklo: “ploda da imaš a roda da nemaš!” Pa udari niz more na drvo maslenku: “drvo maslenko, vide li đavola da odnese dete u zubima?” “Vido, kaže; otide i drži dete u zubima.” “Da Bog da da roda rodiš i da bes tvoga roda niko ne može živeti! A šta reče, kaže, kod tebe kad prođe ge boravi?” “Ja ga upita ge ćeš; kaže, oću da ga nosim, ja imam više decu kod moe kuće. A ge boraviš? Na obalu na brodu ge izlazi galia.” Krstivoje otidne na obalu ge izlazi galia, pa nađe mrtvo dete, pa ga naniže na udicu, pa ga baci pod galiu. Đavo ga progune, i udicu i njega. Krstivoje vuče te izvuču đavola iz vode, pa g uvati štrangom za jezik.

Đavo progovori: “Nemo, Krstivoje, da me tako grdno mučiš!” “Da daš moe sestre decu pa da te puštim!” “Kad izbljueš materino mleko na dlan, onda ću ti dam decu.” Krstivoj ga veže za koc, pa pođe uz obalu pa plače. Sretne ga sveta Petka: “šta ti je, Krstivoje pa plačeš?” “Uzo mi đavo sestrinu decu pa ne da, pa mi traži da izbljuem materino mleko, pa da mi da decu.” Ona izvadila desnu sisu: “Trgni, kaže, Krstivoje triput is te sise mleko, pa idi te izbljuj na dlan kod njega nek ti da decu.” On trže tripu iz njojzine sise mleko pa otide kod đavola: “daj mi, kaže, sestrinu decu!” “Kad izbljueš materino mleko, kaže, onda ću ti dat decu.” On roknu dvaput pa izbljuva mleko na dlanu. Kad se vide đavo u nevolji, riknu triput pa izbljuva oba deteta, te ji Krstivoj uze, te odnese svoe sestre, a đavola puštio ge je i bio. A đavo se zareče da ga više dirat neće.

(Resava, selo Strmosten)

Text 4: *Čuda svetog Sisoja*¹⁷⁷ (Hasdeu, str. 217-222) *The Miracles of St. Siso*¹⁶ (*Minunile Sfintului Siso*)

Onda, u vreme sv. Sisoja, krenuo je sa jednim carem u lov, i zajedno sa mnogom braćom, a kada je bio u velikoj šumi, uz volju božju, zadesi se veliko nevreme i svi se raspriše po zemlji, niko ne znajući kuda je krenuo. A sveti Sisoje, uz božju volju, naiđe upravo na keliju svoje sestre Meletije na obali Mora i, stojeći pred vratima, vikao je jakim glasom da mu otvori vrata. A Meletija ga upita: “Ko si ti, kad te ja ne znam?” A on opet reče: “Otvori mi vrata, sestro moja Meletija, nemam gde da pobegnem od nevremena Mora; a njegova sestra Meletija odgovori mu govoreći: “Neću ti otvoriti vrata jer se bojim da mi đavo ne uzme i ovo dete jer još nije navršilo 40 dana”. A svetac joj reče: “Otvori vrata jer je mene Bog postavio za lovca na đavole.” Čuvši to, njegova sestra odmah mu otvori vrata, a svetac, ušavši na konju u kuću, a đavo se pretvori u zrnice prosa i zalepi se ispod kopita konja i uđe i on sa svecem u kuću. A Meletija, njegova sestra, pošto je bila sama bez pomoći, jednom rukom je kuvala, a u drugoj ruci je držala dete; a zatim su večerali i legli u postelju; a kad je bila ponoć, ustao je đavo i ukrao dete iz kolenke i pobegao sa njim. A pošto je dete jako vriskalo, Meletija ga je čula kroz san i probudila se i stavila

¹⁷⁷ In the text commentary, Hasdeu states that Sisoie is a substitute for the original Sisinnius, and adds: “The Christian calendar knows two Sisoie, born as Egyptians, both celebrated in the month of July. About the one celebrated on 6 July, called Sisoie the Big, it is said that ‘his prayer was strong in exorcizing devils’. This, together with the similarity of names and the association of ideas, was the reason why Saint Sisoie ‘devil exorciser’ in the new redaction easily replaced Saint Sisinnius, the devil exorciser in the older redaction. In both redactions there are other, secondary differences: ‘disappearance’ of the marble post, maple-tree in addition to willow, blackberry and olive” (pp. 210-212, articles 8 and 9).

ruku u kolevku i našla praznu kolevku i počela glasno da plače i, uz mnogo žalosti, da viče: “Ustani, brate moj Sisoje, jer mi je i ovo dete ukrao đavo!” A svetac se probudio i rekao: “Šta je to?” A sestra mu je rekla razlog. Onda je on odmah ustao i uzjahao konja i uzeo paloš u ruku i krenuo za đavolom da ga nađe. Išavši putem, našao je na obali Mora vrbu, stao, sjahao s konja, pomolio se Bogu sa suzama da mu progovori vrba i počeo da je pita: “Sveta vrbo Božija, da nisi videla đavola kako beži sa detetom u rukama?” A vrba je videla i rekla mu je da nije videla; onda svetac, znajući njenu pokvarenost, reče joj: “Budi prokleta od Boga, cvetaćeš a da ne rađaš” i tako bi. A svetac je i dalje jurio za đavolom i, videvši na putu kupinu, reče joj: “Kupino Božija, da nisi videla đavola kako beži sa detetom u rukama?” A kupina je videla i reče da nije videla; a onda i nju, kao i vrbu, prokune govoreći: “Gde ti je koren, da ti bude i vrh i budi prepreka ljudima”; i tako bi. A svetac je i dalje jurio za đavolom i vide na obali Mora javor i reče: “Sveti javore Božiji, da nisi video đavola kako beži sa detetom na rukama?” I on reče pravo, da ga je video, i da je čak čuo dete kako vrišti putem; a svetac mu reče: “Budi blagosloven od Boga i stoj ispred crkava pokajnicima na pokajanje, a pravednima na spasenje”, i tako bi. A svetac je i dalje jurio za đavolom i vide na obali Mora maslinu i reče: “Sveta maslino Božija, da nisi videla đavola kako beži sa detetom na rukama?” a maslina mu reče pravo: “Videla sam ga, zagnjurio se u More, igra se sa morskim ribama i detetom zajedno”; a svetac reče: “Budi blagoslovena od Boga, od tebe neka bude miro i bez tebe da se ne krštava čovek” i tako bi. Onda sveti Sisoje sjaha s konja na obali Mora i kleknu licem na zemlju i pomoli se Bogu da mu da đavola u ruku. I svetac, moleći se sa plamenim suzama Bogu, zabaci udicu u More, i odmah uhvati đavola i, vukući ga za vrat, izvadi ga iz Mora, poče da ga udara udarcima koji peku i plamenim palošem duž tela. I progovori đavo svecu: “Šta imaš sa mnom, sveti Sisoje, pa me tučeš?” A svetac mu reče: “Daj, đavole, decu sestre moje Meletije koju si uzeo”; a on reče: “Nemam odakle da ti ih dam kad sam ih progutao”; a svetac reče: “Ako si ih progutao, ispljuj ih”; a đavo reče svecu: “Ispljuj ti mleko koje si sisao od svoje majke”. A svetac se pomoli Bogu sa suzama i odmah povрати mleko koje je sisao od svoje majke. Onda se đavo veoma uplaši, i od straha i on ispljuva sve šestoro dece njegove setre, netaknute. A tada đavo zamoli svetog Sisoja da ga pusti, a svetac mu reče: “Đavole, dok se ti ne zakuneš da nećeš više imati moći nad hrišćanima da im činiš ikakvo zlo”. A onda đavo, ne mogavši da pobegne iz svečevih ruku, dade mu zapis u ruku da gde god se nađu ti listovi ili u kojoj kući bilo kog čoveka ili na bilo kom mestu, da se đavo ne približava na 7 milja. A onda ga je svetac još udarao i mučio i bacao, zakačio ga je udicom za vrat i držao rukom za kosu, udarao ga je i tukao i govorio je svetac: “Idi na večne muke i u pustinju gde ti je dato”; i isekao mu je glavu, i rasporio mu je grudi od grla do stomaka. I onda ga je bacio u More i prokleo da odande više ne izlazi. Onda je sveti Sisoje uzeo decu svoje sestre svih šestoro i odveo ih do ćelije gde je sedela Meletija. I reče svetac: “Uzmi, sestro moja Meletijo, decu koju ti je đavo ukrao”; a ona ih je sa velikom radošću i velikom ljubavlju primila i Boga hvalila.

Gde god se nađe ova knjiga, braćo, neka đavo nema moći i dušmani nikakvu snagu na ove hrišćane; kod kojih se nađe ova knjiga, da ne priđe niti da se približi toj kući, niti ženi tog čoveka, niti njegovoj deci, neka se uopšte ne približava tim hrišćanima; i neka milost Božija bude sa vama za vek i vjekova, amin.

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