Monika Kropej

SUPERNATURAL BEINGS

FROM SLOVENIAN MYTH AND FOLKTALES

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MONIKA KROPEJ

SUPERNATURAL BEINGS FROM SLOVENIAN MYTH AND FOLKTALES

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH CENTRE OF THE SLOVENIAN
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PREFACE

As old as humankind, myths are rooted in the human subconscious and in the depths of the sensual perception of people in all societies and civilizations. Subject to constant change and adaptations, myths are born through word of mouth and live their second lives through the words of narrators. They also remain alive by means of artistic creations and cultural events organized by individuals and communities. Although myths are thus transformed and acquire new images and forms, the same cultural dynamics simultaneously preserve them from oblivion. Living in our midst, and with our past, the old myths have acquired a new life in art, culture, social institutions, and in other forms of social communication. Since myths are based on archetypal concepts, they have survived to the present day and live alongside newly-created ones.

The word myth – from the Greek *mythos* meaning word, speech, or story – has various meanings today. "Myth" originally denoted a tale about gods and ideology in narrative form. It had an allegorical effect and could convey messages that a simple narrative could not. William Bascom stated that "myths are prose narratives which, in the society in which they are told, are considered to be truthful accounts of what happened in the remote past. They are accepted on faith; they are taught to be believed, and they can be cited as authority in answer to ignorance, doubt, disbelief. Myths are the embodiment of dogma; they are usually sacred, and they are often associated with theology and ritual. Their main characters are not usually human beings, but they often have human attributes; they are animals, deities, or culture heroes, whose actions are set in an earlier world, when the earth was different from what it is today, or in another world such as the sky or underworld." (Bascom 1965, 4).

In ancient times, when myths still had an central place in the spiritual life of society, they represented primordial truth, a set of exceptionally old symbols, and the scope of human perception of the world. It was not until later that they began to be associated with fabrications, falsehoods, outdated views of the world, fairy tales, belief tales, and divination. The word *bajka*, which is the Slovenian version of the word *myth*, has gradually acquired the meaning of the belief tale. The preserved Slovenian belief tales tell of the origin of the world, humankind, the nation, creation and the end of the world, what happens in the afterworld, and of numerous mythical beings that accompany the human conceptual world.

Bajeslovje, or mythology, denotes the scholarly study of mythological material, particularly historical sources and literature, as well as iconographically or verbally conveyed stories about the religious and conceptual world of humanity from the earliest times. Moreover, it represents a set of myths in a particular society or culture.

The oldest mythology encompassed not only rudimentary religions and philosophical perceptions but also art. Myths were interpreted in different ways. While the Sophists perceived them as allegories, Plato explained them from the aspects of philosophy and symbolism. Aristotle spoke of myths as a fable; the Stoics saw their gods as the personification of their functions, and the Epicureans were convinced that myths were based on natural factors. Euhemerus perceived myths as history translated into poetry.

In the Renaissance, interest in ancient myths increased significantly, and was further augmented by Enlightenment authors and Romantic writers such as Giovanni Batista Vico, Jean Jacques Rousseau, James Macpherson, Friedrich Wilhelm Schelling, August and Friedrich Schlegel, and Johann Gottfried Herder. The most famous of them were Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, who based their research on the understanding of the common Indo-European origin of most European nations. Jacob Grimm also made the first attempt to integrate Germanic mythology into a uniform system (*Deutsche Mythologie*, 1835). Max Müller (1823–1900), Adalbert Kuhn (1812–1881), and Wilhelm Schwartz (1821–1899) saw myths as an attempt to explain natural phenomena according to people's beliefs. Agreeing with this concept, Alexander Nikolaevich Afanasyev was convinced that Slavic myths could be largely attributed to their connection with nature. With his theory about elements of animism and natural magic in folk customs and traditions, Wilhelm Mannhardt searched not for gods but mostly for lower mythology and demonology. The mythological school of the Romantic period, which recognized in the narrative and poetic traditions pre-Christian images of gods and their connection with nature, was later followed by evolutionism, diffusionism, the ritual-mythological school of James George Frazer, and Bronislaw Malinowski's functionalism, which was based on the idea that myth and social reality are connected through function. Sigmund Freud and Carl Gustav Jung approached myth through analytical psychology. The development of mythological studies was significantly influenced by the French sociological school of Emile Durkheim, the structuralism of Claude Lévi Strauss and Roland Barthes, the symbolic theories of Ernst Cassirer, and the semiotic theories of Mikhail Bakhtin, Vladimir Toporov, and Vjačeslav Ivanov. The semiological studies and orientations of Paul Ricoeur and Mircea Eliade are currently prevalent. Some contemporary scholars have adopted postmodernism, and in particular the methods of comparative and cognitive mythology.

The study of mythology in the present is not an easy task. On the one hand, it still bears the label that was created by the Romantic mythological school from the beginning of the 19th century. On the other hand – and although the radical positivism is already a concept of the past – it seems that in a time of electronic media, when urban legends and modern stories have replaced classic fairy tales, it is entirely superfluous

to evoke the memory of something so outdated as mythology. The Western world has generally forgotten folktales that are recounted spontaneously, from memory, for social purposes, and for shortening the long evening hours by the hearth. Slovenia, which is a part of Central Europe, has managed to retain some survivals of folk mythology, primarily due to the increased awareness that tradition is valuable and not only has a spiritual dimension but can be used for practical purposes. People are becoming increasingly aware of the positive effects that are the result of the telling and reading of fairy tales, and interest in them is growing along with interest in the cultural identity of the Slovenian people.

People living in the Slovenian ethnic territory thus still come into contact with narrators of myths and folktales, although usually in more remote and inaccessible places. Interest in the spiritual tradition of one's local environment, however, is on the rise almost everywhere, which can be seen in cultural events and in its application for entertainment and commercial purposes.

This book attempts to present a comprehensive overview of Slovenian supernatural beings and the related beings who are either connected with certain religious beliefs or were created in people's imagination for different reasons and purposes. Folk heroes, antiheroes, and historical figures who have been mythicized are generally not included in this book. As this study focuses solely on mythical beings, folk heroes and historical figures shall have to be examined in other studies.

Supernatural beings are presented here according to the role that they occupy within spiritual tradition. They have been classified according to their characteristics, typology, and the role they play in various motifs and subject matter. Since the principal source for the research is the folk narrative or folktale, this book includes stories and their textual, contextual, morphological, and semiotic analysis. The aim of this text is to present a comprehensive review of Slovene mythology and the supernatural beings that appear in it. The study includes areas across Slovenian borders that have a large numbers of Slovenians, and where the Slovenian minority still speaks Slovene. Whenever possible, the material has been examined within the European, and partly non-European, mythological concept. Due to the scale and diversity of the topic, it was not possible to problematize the topic or substantiate new methodological interpretations and theories; after all, there have been quite a few, and most of them are mentioned in this text. The book concludes with a dictionary of mythical beings with a brief summary of their main characteristics. Although the dictionary recapitulates the essential characteristics of the Slovenian folk tradition, it is necessary for the purpose of clarity and applicability.

I would like to thank everyone who guided me through this text and donated their knowledge and expertise. I am particularly grateful to Milko Matičetov, for

his valuable suggestions and advice. My thanks also go to Andrej Pleterski, and Robert Dapit, whose contribution to this book was crucial and invaluable. I also wish to extend my sincere thanks to all my friends and colleagues that had provided help in clarifying certain problems and issues, particularly to Nikolai Mikhailov, Vlado Nartnik, Helena Ložar Podlogar, Zmago Šmitek, Mirjam Mencej, Ljubinko Radenković and Emily Lyle. I am indebted also to Marko Terseglav for his tireless reading of the text, corrections, and suggestions, and to Vanja Huzjan who assisted me in the preparation of the bibliography, and Stanka Drnovšek for her technical expertise and preparation of illustrations. I am also deeply dedicated to the former secretary Albina Štrubelj, for improving the Archives of the Institute of Slovenian Ethnology. My final and foremost thanks go to the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, which enables me to conduct and publish my research.

COSMOLOGY

Mythology in Slovenia, such as has been retained to the present, is the result of centuries of transformation and modification. Numerous migrations of various peoples, and many different social and historic occurrences as well as political changes are preserved in the memory of Slovenian myths, which are reflected today through the narrative and mythopoetic tradition.

It is possible to discern in folk tradition not only the memory of "lower" supernatural beings but also of some old gods – mostly Slavic, Celtic, and Roman – and the related cosmological ideas of older beliefs. Although sometimes difficult to identify, various old religious concepts have been retained to the present day. By employing comparative, semiotic, and cognitive mythologies, they can be at least partially reconstructed, and certain elements of ancient religions may be discerned within them.

The first part of this text explores the tradition about deities and cosmological notions of Slovenia's ancestors. Presented are the Old Slavic and indigenous deities that have been preserved as supernatural beings to this very day, so to speak. This study does not include those that, although historically documented, have not been preserved in Slovenian folk tradition in the form of records or memories. Therefore, it deals neither with certain Old Slavic gods such as *Dažbog*, *Živa*, and *Hors*, for example, nor with the majority of Roman and Celtic deities such as *Ekvorna*, *Epona*, *Carna*, *Laburnus*, *Savus* and *Adsaluta*. The starting point of this study is thus the Slovenian narrative and song tradition that speaks about supernatural beings and religious beliefs. In part, it also contains a comparison with the related customs and

The fight between the Good and the Bad, Jože Karlovšek, 1955, Archive ISN ZRC SAZU

rituals preserved in the Slovenian ethnic territory. The analysis takes into account certain available historical sources, which bear witness to the history and culture in Slovenia.

The names of supernatural beings, and hence the titles of individual chapters, have been preserved in popular form and variants. Even in cases in which a different name would be more suitable, such as "the master of wolves" instead of "the wolf shepherd", for example, the text uses the more prevalent popular name.

CREATION OF THE WORLD

In Slovenian folk tradition, the creation of the world has been explained in different ways. The narratives that have been preserved to this day describe many cosmogonical concepts, but the credibility of these, largely literary, sources is problematic. However, since Slovene sources contain a number of motifs that may be compared with cosmological narrative motifs of other nations, some of the latter have been included in this study.

Upon closer examination of cosmological myths, it becomes evident that water has a primary role in many of them. Water symbolizes the primordial matter that is necessary for the creation of a new world. Hindu texts state that "All was water, and the vast expanse of water had no banks." The Bible declares: "The spirit of God was spread above the waters." According to ancient Greek myths, Gaia the Earth (the firstborn child of Chaos) was the mother of the sky and the sea, namely of Uranus and Pontos.

The concept of primordial waters at the beginning of the world is almost universal. It is often in conjunction with the myth of the diving animal or deity that brings a grain of sand – the future world – to the surface of the waters. In American and Asian traditions, this animal is generally a bird or a turtle (Count 1952, 55–62), whereas in Hindu mythology, it is a boar or the god Vishnu (Šmitek 2004, 11–12).

Ivan Grafenauer closely studied cosmological tales in Slovenia. He compared the Slovenian material with related traditions of a number of peoples, not only in Europe but also in other continents (Grafenauer 1942, 2–43; Grafenauer 1944, 77–80). He drew extensively from the cultural-historical studies of Wilhelm Schmidt, author of the comprehensive *Der Ursprung der Gottesidee* (Schmidt 1926–1940). Upon comparing Trdina's tales with a large number of international sources, Grafenauer discovered a surprising similarity of such cosmological myths on different continents.

Many years later, Zmago Šmitek (2004, 12–14) continued Grafenauer's research and compared these myths with the Indo-European tradition. According to his studies, different ways of the creation of the world, which can be found in cosmogonic myths, may be classified in several groups: 1) The formation of the world without divine influence. In these tales, the world may rise from the sea in the form of an island, or else may appear after the waters of the Flood have drained. 2) Creation by divine intervention. God may create the world with his gaze; from chaos or from "nothing", just by uttering certain words; or else God, or a waterfowl, an amphibian, etc. may lift the world from the seabed. In some cases, God commands Satan to dive into the water and bring to the surface a handful of soil.

The notion of the creation of the world from a grain of sand was also preserved in Slovene folk tradition. When God felt hot and jumped into the water to cool down, he brought with him a grain of sand from the seabed. Published as a folktale, this story had been recorded in Šiška near Ljubljana and published by Janez Trdina in *Neven* in 1858.

God Creates the World from a Grain of Sand from the Seabed
There was nothing but God, the sun, and the sea. The sun was scorching hot, so God dived into the sea. When he rose to the surface, a grain of sand was stuck under one of his nails. Having fallen out, the grain remained on the rocks because at the very beginning, everything remained where it had fallen. This grain is now our world, and the seabed its homeland.[1]

In addition to the tale about the creation of the world from a grain of sand from the bottom of the sea, Slovenian tradition has retained other etiological legends of creation, including the creation by means of a gaze or words. Let us examine an example of God's creation of the world by a look that was recorded by Janez Trdina in Mengeš near Ljubljana:

God Created the World with His Eyes
At the beginning, there was nothing but God, and God slept. His repose lasted for all eternity. But he was destined to wake up. When he woke from sleep he looked around, and every look produced a star. Surprised, God set on a journey to see what his eyes had created.[2]

Trdina published this motif of creation of the world by a divine glance, although somewhat altered, in *Ljubljanski Zvon* in 1881:

Back when people were still the heathen, they did not know how God had created them, so they told of it as they had been taught by heresy. They thought that God slept from the beginning. When the time came for him to wake up and look around, his first look created our beautiful world, his second look our dear sun, his third look our dear moon, and each subsequent look a glittering star. God was amazed by the strange things created by his eyes, and wanted to take a closer look. But the further he went, the more stars there were, for every moment produced an additional star (Trdina, 1881: 164).

[1] Trdina 1858: 60–61; Kelemina 1930: no. 206/III.

[2] Trdina 1858: 60; Kelemina 1930: no. 206/I; Trdina 1904: 1, no 1; Trdina 1954: 9.

The narrative continues with an etiological legend about the creation of human beings that were allegedly created from a droplet of God's sweat, which is also found in the tradition of other peoples.

Whence the Man?
He travels and travels, but there is no end. So traveling, he comes to our land. He becomes tired, with sweat dripping from his brow. A drop of it falls to the ground, becomes alive – and here's the first man! His family comes from God, yet he was not born from the lust but from sweat, he was predestined to toil and perspire.[3]

Trdina published the same narrative in the journal Ljubljanski Zvon:

God grew tired of travelling and returned to our land. A drop of sweat fell from his brow to the ground, and the first man was born of this drop. He was created from divine perspiration, as a constant reminder that he has to earn a living by the sweat of his brow (Trdina 1881, 164).

All other related records of these tales were created under the influence of Trdina's tales, or in connection with his collecting and publication of cosmogonical and etiological tales. One such example was recorded by Vinko Stubelj, one of Trdina's students at a high school in Rijeka. The record remained in manuscript form, but was later published by Janez Logar in his comments to the collected works of Janez Trdina (1952: 736). Trdina gave lectures on these tales, possibly also encouraging his students to collect similar tales. The following is Vinko Stubelj's record of the tale about the creation of the world:

Creation of the World and Humanity
Like all ethnic groups, Slovenians' ancestors worshipped natural forces. But there was a difference, since they personified these natural forces. Their notions were so beautiful and exalted that we cannot but admire them. Contrary to them, Germans were truly barbarians in this respect. The first and foremost was the belief in the Creator. According to stories, God had been sleeping for ever, but he was destined to wake up. Awake, he started to look around, and his every glance transformed into a star. According to a tale, this is how our world came to be as well. (Another tale says that God was bathing. When he came from the sea, a grain of sand remained under his nail. Later it fell out, and since everything remained where it had fallen, that grain landed on the sea, and this

[3] Trdina 1858: 60; Kelemina 1930: 206/I; Trdina 1904: 1, no. 1; Trdina 1954: 9 – the legend is from Mengeš, near Ljubljana.

is how our world came to be). The longer God looked about, the more stars, and other creatures, there were. Astonished, he set out to see all the things he had created. Thus traveling, he reached our land. Exhausted, he took a rest. A droplet of sweat fell from his brow, and – oh, exalted thoughts! – This is how the first Man was created. Humanity was thus created from divine sweat, and its time on Earth is spent trying to earn a living. Now there is a thought similar to Christian teachings! (Manuscript, MS 393, 153–155; Trdina 1952: 736).

Another tale about creation, recorded by Trdina and published as a belief tale in Dolenjsko in 1881, explains the creation of fertile land.

Fertile Soil from God's Body

The heathen also recounted that the world was totally barren, nothing but rocks. It bore no fruit, but there was no need for food anyway. Among the people lived God himself, with spirit and body, and he fed people with manna from heavens. Yet people were unhappy, for they feared God's greatness and splendour. Constantly trembling, they could neither enjoy their food and drink nor make merry. God felt pity for them. He separated from his body and moved to heaven. His body decomposed and turned into fertile soil. In God's soil, people cultivated their own food and no longer needed the manna from heaven. It was only then that they started to enjoy their life and were happy.[4]

Legends about the creation of fertile soil are known also in other parts of Europe, especially among Germanic and Scandinavian nations. (For more on this see the chapter on Kurent).

Trdina's published tales did not go unnoticed abroad. Slovene tales about the creation of the world were published in the works of Karel Jaromir Erben (1865: 257; 1866: 39), and Oskar Dänhardt (1929: 131–132) included them in the corresponding types of cosmogonic tales. However, quite soon afterwards some researchers started to doubt the authenticity of Trdina's tales; one of them was Czech philologist Jiři Polivka.[5] Later, Milko Matičetov also expressed doubts about the authenticity of these tales and ascribed them a fair amount of artistic freedom (Matičetov 1985: 28).

Since Ivan Grafenauer had found parallels in the tales of other nations, he was less critical of Trdina's records of cosmogonic tales. A number of similar motifs from other parts of the world also influenced the findings of Mircea Eliade, the noted Romanian ethnologist, who identified in these tales a common archetypal pattern (Eliade 1967, 173).

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4 Trdina 1881: 165; Trdina 1954: 9, no. 2; Kelemina 1930: no. 206/II.

5 Bolte, Polivka 1932: 101.

In cosmogonic myths, as well as in the Bible, water symbolizes the original matter from which a new world was created. Hindu texts, for instance, state: *Everything was water, ample waters had no banks*. The Bible says: *The spirit of God blew over the waters*.

Faronika the Fish, relief from Čedad/Cividale (Museum), Italy, 8th century

The notion of primeval waters at the onset of the world is almost universal. The earth thus floated on the surface of the cosmic ocean. Folktales from Prekmurje in the north-eastern part of Slovenia recount that two fish circle around the floating earth:

The earth floats on water, and two big fish swim around it. When one of them snubs the earth or hits it with its tail, this causes an earthquake[6]

According to some folktales, the earth did not just remain floating on water, but was stuck on a fish or a water snake. Slovenes still have a tradition that says that a huge fish carries the earth on its back. When the fish moves, an earthquake occurs. When it dives into the water, this will cause the end of the world. The same happens in the folk song about Faronika the fish in which Jesus asks the fish not to swing its tail or turn onto its back lest the world be sunk or doomed:

A fish swims in the sea,
A fish named Faronika.
Jesus swims after it
From the great sea depths.
"Wait for me,
Faronika the fish!
We want to ask you
What goes on around the world."

If I wag my tail
The whole world will be sunk.
If I turn onto my back
The whole world will be doomed.
"Oh do not do this,
Faronika the fish.
For the sake of innocent babes
And women in labour"[7]

[6] Kühar 1911: 59, no 52.

[7] Š I: 500, no. 493; SNP I: 123, no. 20/2

An unruly snake – or a fish – lives in the sea, dozing and resting. According to proto-Indo-European religion, it rides on the back of Varuna, the Vedic god who created the world from original chaos. According to Phoenician mythology and the Bible, the sea lion Leviathan, when irritated, could cause the end of the world. The same is true of the German mythological Midgard snake, of the Greek Hydra, the Babylonian Tiamat, the Swabian Zelebrant, etc. Slavs also had similar explanations.[8]

Faronika the fish from Slovene folk traditions is a parallel to these mythical creatures. Her name originates from the folk belief that when they were devoured by the Red Sea, the pharaoh's warriors turned into fish and in certain situations may assume human form.

The tradition about Faronika the fish became interwoven with the folktale about Veronika from Mali Grad by Kamnik, and the tale about mermaid *Melusina*. The tale states that because of her avarice Veronika had been turned into a half girl-half snake, a woman with the lower body of a snake, and is so depicted on a twelfth-century relief in Mali Grad. The oldest one among the still-preserved tales about Veronika from Kamnik is from the year 1684. Somewhat shortened, it was preserved by Valvasor (1689, XI: 543) and later conveyed in oral or in literary form in numerous variants. Emilijan Cevc alone noted ten variants of this motif. Cevc was of the opinion that the tale had originated from the Kamnik coat-of-arms that, according to him, depicted St. Margaret and the dragon or the snake. The picture was mistakenly interpreted as Veronika – who was a half woman-half snake according to the legend. He suggested that the snake became part of the tale because people thus explained the long necks or tails of dragons or snakes in this coat-of-arms; these tails visually merged with the image of St. Margaret. The depiction of Veronika, half snake or half fish, therefore originated because of the contamination of the tale about the mermaid Melusina with the tale of Faronika the fish, and hence the name "Veronika" was born. In Slovenian art history, "Faronika" became the technical term for a mermaid.

THE WORLD IS SUPPORTED BY A BULL

In addition to concepts about the world supported by the fish, the Slovene tradition preserved a record about the world standing on the bull. It was first written down and then published in *Slovenski Glasnik* in 1860 by Davorin Trstenjak, a recorder of folk tradition and a representative of the mythological school of the 19th century.

[8] For more on this see: Šmitek 1998a: 118–119.

The World Stands on the Bull

There is a Slovenian folk saying that the world stands on the bull. This notion contains residuals of Old Slavic cosmogony. Since I cannot in this place talk about different cosmogonies of Indo-European nations, I will just mention that ancient Persians also believed that the bull was involved in the creation of the world.

The beginning of all living creatures is in the Zoroastrian system that can be found in Bundehešt, in the myth about the bull (Urstier) "Goshorun", who was killed by the Ahriman.[9] *From the right side of the bull came the first man – Kajomoris, from its tail trees and plants, from its blood the cane, and from its semen various animals (see Zend-Avesta I. P. II. pg. 164). The Serbs have also preserved this vestige of Old Slavic cosmogony. On page 22 of Vuk Karadžić's "Dictionary", I read the following: Some people say in joke that the world stands on the bull, and when the bull twitches its ear the entire world shakes"* (Trstenjak: 1860: 89; Kelemina 1930: 397, no. 206/III).

It is unclear where Trstenjak found the terms *Gošorun* – the primordial bull from the Persian genesis narrative Bundehishn, and the name *Kajomoris* that denoted the first human being. Such slight alterations, together with small errors and incomplete citations, are typical for his *Mythologične Drobtine* (Mythological Crumbs). Nevertheless, they do provide fragments of folk traditions that are frequently confirmed by other sources and may thus be considered as stories recounted by people.

In his *Serbian Dictionary* from 1852, Vuk Stefanović Karadžić published alongside the term *zmajegorčev oganj* (the fire of *the fire-dragon*) a short tale about the world that is supported by the bull:

The World Stands on Dragon Fire or on the Bull

Some folks say that the world stands on water, the water stands on fire, and the fire stands on the fire of the fire-dragon But others jokingly say that the world stands on the bull, and when the bull twitches its ear the world shakes" (Karadžić 1852: 212).

Having a parallel in the Slovene tradition about the world standing on the bull, this Serbian tradition confirms the assumption that such beliefs were practiced among the South Slavs.

Although the beliefs of people in other parts of the world include snakes, sea animals, and amphibians as the cosmogonic bearers of the world, Grafenauer

[9] Ahura Mazda has – according to the Zaroastrian system – an enemy in the primordial evil named Ahriman.

mentions that the fish from Californian tales, which appears in initiation rites, has been superseded by the moose or deer (Grafenauer 1942: 35–36). In this case, the role of the snake, the fish, the whale, and the turtle has thus been assumed by an animal that is also found in the cosmogeneses of Indo-European nations, generally the horse, the bull, and the cow. These were the animals that were crucial for economic existence and survival. Cattle had a significant role also in the economy of some Slavic peoples.

This is an interesting parallel to the tradition of the bull in which he transforms himself the *Kresnik*, as well as his opponent, the *false Kresnik*, who is a magician from a neighbouring village. The enemies fight, transformed in a black and a red bull. Naturally, the bulls represent two polar opposites, good and evil, or the populations of two opposing villages or tribes. (For more on this see the chapters "Kresnik" and "Witches and Wizards").

KURENT

In cosmogonic myths, the Flood often destroys a civilization, and although waters flood the world one human being remains on the surface and subsequently becomes the ancestor of a new human race, which elevates him to the level of the gods.

The tradition of the sinking of the world is widespread among many peoples, not only in Europe but also in Asia and America. The Flood was depicted in the Sumerian Epic of Gilgamesh from approximately 2400 B.C. In it, Utnapishtim saves humans and animals against rising waters, thus obtaining immortality. In the Bible, Noah saves his family and a pair of each animal species by bringing them on his Ark. After the waters recede, the boat lands on Mount Ararat, where Noah begets a new human race.

The concept of the Flood, which is described in many mythologies and religions throughout the world, naturally produces relevant civilizatory heroes; among the most famous, in addition to Noah and Utnapishtim, are the Mesopotamian king Ziusudra and the Indian Manu (Šmitek 1998: 24–25; Šmitek 2004: 25). Greek myths tell how Zeus punished corrupted humankind, and kept alive only an old couple, Philemon and Baucis. In the narrative tradition, the Flood is frequently used as punishment for the unscrupulous ways of the world's population, and it is not unusual that etiological tales often explain the origin of lakes by the Flood.[10]

[10] This is how the lake Rabeljsko jezero/Lago del Predil (Kelemina 1930, no. 209) and the lake Vrbsko jezero/Wörthersee by Klagenfurt (Šašel 1951: 4; Kropej, Šmitek, Dapit 2010: 38–41) originated.

In Slovenia, the tale about the Flood was published by Janez Trdina (Trdina 1858, 153–156: *Povijest o Kurentu*). He recounted the tale to his pupils at the high school in Rijeka, and two of them, Janez Bilc and Vinko Stubelj (Trdina 1952: 376 –7) also transcribed it. Milko Matičetov questioned the claim that these stories were a part of popular tradition. However, while the sequels about Kurent, published in *Neven* after the fourth story, truly seem a product of the author's imagination and are, according to Jakob Kelemina, highly instructive in nature (Kelemina 1930, 397, ref. 208), the first four stories nevertheless contain elements of folk tradition that had inspired the author to write them. After all, it is highly unlikely that Trdina simply invented that the stories had been recounted to him in Dolenjsko or in Mengeš, while in the following stories such references had been omitted.

THE FORMATION OF FERTILE SOIL

Indo-European myths often interpret the fertility of soil in two ways. Fertility is either the result of the disintegration of the body of God or a giant, or fertility is determined by the egg from which rivers start to flow.

The first interpretation of the "creation of fertile soil from the **body of God**" was published by Janez Trdina in *Ljubljanski Zvon* in 1881 as a "religious fable from Dolenjsko" (described in the chapter on the creation of the world). According to the story, the world was initially rocky. Fertile soil was then formed from the body of God, which God had left on the Earth when his soul had soared to heavenly heights.

A similar tradition can be found, for example, in a Germanic myth in which giant Yimir is sacrificed in order to induce fertility of the soil; in the Iranian tradition, it is the enormous deity Gayomarta; and in the Indian, Purusha. The flesh of the victim's body produces fertile soil, the blood the sea and lakes, the blood vessels rivers, the hair trees, the bones mountains, and the brain clouds. All of this is reminiscent of the Vedic ritual of sacrificing a horse, which repeats the sacrificial cosmogenic event. A similar motif is found in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in which Atlas, a giant from Greek mythology, supports the world.

Even before he published the tale about the creation of fertile land, Janez Trdina published in *Neven* a tale titled "The Tale of God's Rooster", which he had allegedly heard in Mengeš. Judging by this tale, the memory of the Flood has been preserved also in Slovenia.

Regardless of whether Trdina's record of the tale of the Flood is based on tradition or not, the motif of the **cosmic egg** and the sinking of the world is an echo of the old archetypal notions of many peoples. The egg is frequently associated with the genesis of the world and its gradual formation. The archetypal cosmic egg is allegedly hatched

on the surface of the primordial waters. According to Hindu texts, "Brahmanda, the world egg, is rolling on the surface of the waters." The cosmic egg has been preserved in Chinese mythology, where the giant Panku, which lay dormant in the egg, cut it in half, thus creating the Sky and the Earth. In the ancient Orphic cosmogony, the night gives birth to an egg that produces love. The other part of the shell transforms into the Earth and the Sky. The people of Tahiti believed that Ta'arora, creator of the world, was initially asleep in the cosmic egg.

Trdina's tale contains all the essential elements of myths about the cosmic egg, the rivers flowing from it and irrigating the land, and the Flood that destroys the unworthy people of the world, with the exception of the civilizatory primordial father – the primogenitor who manages to escape the Flood:

The Tale of God's Rooster from Mengeš

The Earth was barren, nothing but rocks. Feeling sorry for it, God sent forth his rooster to impregnate, any way it could, the Earth. The rooster descended to a cliff and laid an egg with a curious might and aim. The egg cracked, and seven rivers flew from it. They watered the landscape, and soon everything turned green. Flowers and fruit were everywhere. Without human toil, the fields filled with wheat, and the trees grew not only apples and figs but also the whitest and the tastiest of bread. People lived in this Paradise with no worry, doing everything not because they had to but just to amuse themselves and be merry. This Paradise was surrounded by high mountains, so there was no fear of violence or storm. Even more, in order to prevent the people from coming to harm due to their ignorance, God's rooster floated high in the sky, crowing to people when to rise, when to eat, when to do something, and what to do. The folks were happy, and the only thing that irritated them was the rooster with its incessant crowing. They started to murmur and pray to God to deliver them from this annoying animal. "We are perfectly capable", they said, "of figuring out when to eat, when to work, and when to rise." God heard their prayers. He removed the rooster from the sky, but just before he vanished the rooster crowed one more time: "Woe is me, beware of the lake!"

The people were overjoyed, even more than before, for their freedom was no longer marred. Just like before, they ate, worked, and rose, just as the rooster had taught them. But little by little they began to feel that it was not right for free folks to follow the rooster's instructions so faithfully. They started to live their lives in their own way, abandoning any order. This brought forth sickness and all sorts of afflictions. Once again the people started to look at the sky eagerly, but in vain, for God's rooster had vanished for ever. So they

paid attention at least to the rooster's final words. But they could not see any sense in them. The rooster warned them against the lake, but they could not understand why since there was no lake in the valley. There were only the seven rivers, welling forth from the egg and peacefully flowing in their old river beds. People concluded that there was surely a dangerous lake beyond the mountain range. Every day they posted a lookout on the top of the mountains. But there was no peril, and every day the man went to his lookout in vain.

The people relaxed. Their haughtiness grew stronger and stronger. Grandmas made brooms from wheat stalks, and men were so lazy that they no longer wanted to climb trees to pick bread. They preferred to set a tree on fire, and when it fell on the ground they could pick the bread growing on its branches effortlessly. Once full, they would lie by the rivers, gossip, and cause mischief. One of them stared at the water, nodded, and blurted, "Hey, fellows, isn't it weird? I would really like to know why there is precisely so much water, and not more or less. "That," answered another one, "was another one of rooster's whims. What a shame that we still obey it, searching for the lake that never was and never will be. If it was up to me, the sentinel would be posted there today for the last time. As far as rivers are concerned, I think it would be better if there was more water."

His neighbour agreed with the proposal yet felt that there was an abundance of water, even too much. A pot-bellied man added that in fact, both were right. It would be best to break the egg and to have precisely as much water as was needed. There was really no need for the lookout. As soon as the word spread, a cry arose through the valley. Everybody stormed to the egg to break it. All of them wanted the sentinel to set off to his post for the very last time so that the following day, this shameful watch could be terminated. The people surrounded the egg, and the pot-bellied man picked up a stone and rapped on the egg. With a mighty thunder, the egg broke. Water gushed from it in such quantity that soon the entire human race perished. Filled with water, Paradise turned into a large lake. This was what the rooster warned them against, but in vain because the depraved people did not heed its warning. The flood rose to the highest mountain tops, and the sentinel was the only surviving member of the human race. As he beheld the rising waters, he started to flee. His destiny will be recounted in the following story.[11]

What followed is a subject of another story, also published by Trdina in *Neven* in 1858 (Trdina 1858, 153–156). He added a note saying that while there were many tales of *Kurent* in Kranjska (Carniola) he had heard this particular one in Mengeš,

[11] Trdina 1858: 61–62; Trdina 1952: 162–164; Kelemina 1930, no. 207.

where Kurent is called the "holy Korant" and considered a saint. Trdina claimed that Kurent very likely represented to the Old Slavs the same kind of god as *Bacchus*, god of wine and joy, was to the Romans.

The Tale of Kurent

All people died in the flood with the exception of one, and he was from Kranjska. He fled higher and higher, but finally the water covered the mountain as well. The poor soul saw how the fir trees and the oaks were covered by water, and the only thing that remained dry was a grapevine. He ran to it and gripped it tightly, although not in hope but in utter terror. How could the grapevine, so thin and weak, help him? Kurent saw the man, for he used the grapevine as a stick whenever he was wandering around the world. He was glad to see that the man sought help from him. To tell the truth, Kurent was a jester but he also had a mild temperament. He was willing to rescue anybody who was in trouble. Upon hearing the man's wails, Kurent smoothed his grapevine stick, extending it higher and higher, until it reached beyond the clouds. After nine years, the waters receded and the land dried once again.[12]

The man saved himself by hanging on the grapevine and living on its grapes and wine. When everything was dry again, he climbed down, highly praising Kurent the rescuer. Yet this was not to Kurent's liking. "It was the grapevine that rescued you," he said to the man. "Praise the grapevine instead. Make a contract with it and swear by yourself and by your descendants that you will celebrate it and love its wine more than any food or drink." The grateful man immediately swore by himself and by his descendants. To this day, his grandchildren have kept his faith, as the story goes, and love wine more than anything else, merrily remembering Kurent, their old benefactor.

An interesting connection between folktales about the end of a civilization and God's rooster can also be found in a tale from Gailtail (Rož) in Kärnten, Austria (Eng. *Carinthia*; Slo. *Koroška*). Recorded by Josip Šašel, the tale speaks about the Tower of Babel. People built the Tower of Babel so high that they could hear God's rooster from the top. When God asked them who their master was, they pointed at each other instead of replying that God was their master. In order to punish them, God confounded their speech and they could not continue with the construction (Šašel 1936–1937, 25, No. 27).

Vinko Stubelj, one of Trdina's students from the high school in Rijeka, also wrote down the story about the Flood and Kurent in the continuation of his manuscript records on the creation of the world and mankind, although rather more briefly.

[12] Trdina 1858: 153-156.

Wanton People Break the Egg and Cause the Flood

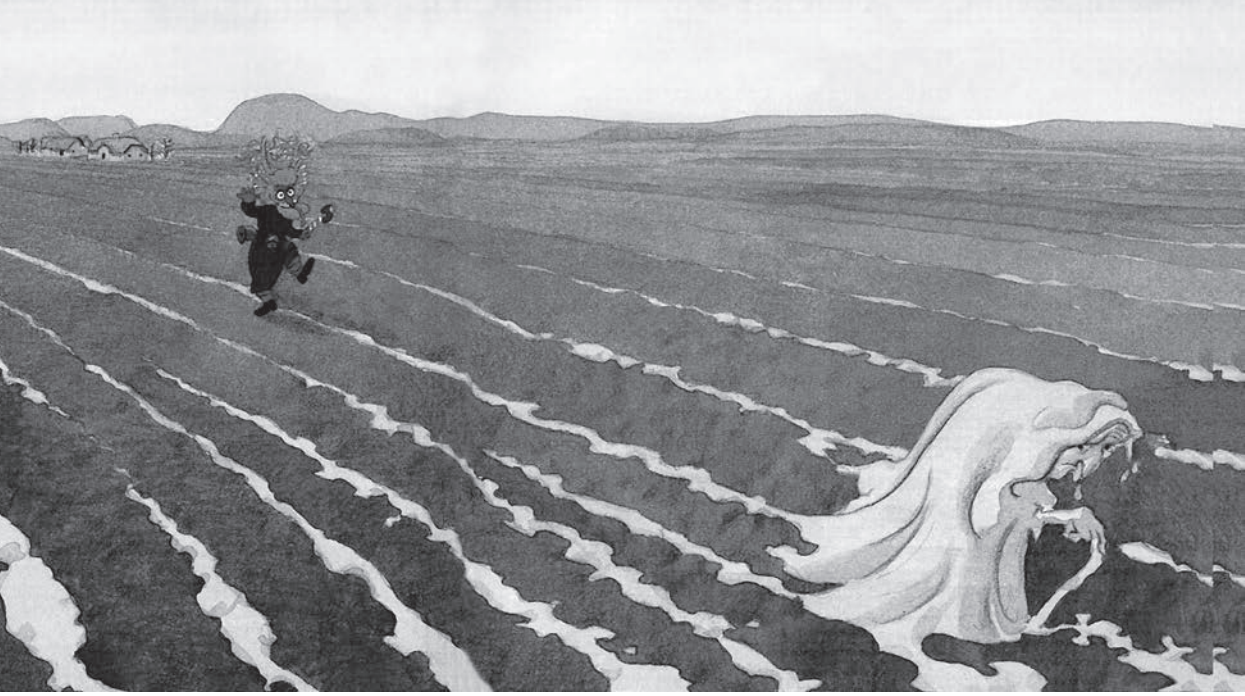
Let us now examine another tale, which contains Christian (Jewish) elements. People lived happily in a valley surrounded by high mountains, but they knew that one day, a flood will come, and they will all die. They repeatedly sent a sentinel on a mountain to watch for the flood. He never saw anything for they caused the flood themselves. In the middle of the valley sat an egg from which flowed several streams. The streams watered the ground, making it fertile, and the people did not need to work at all. There was no winter or summer, and everything ripened without any toil and pains. This is why people became wanton, and wanted to see what was inside that egg since all the happiness came from it. Arrogant, they gathered around the egg although old books had warned that nobody was allowed to go near the egg. A fat man broke the egg. God punished them, and the valley was quickly filled with water.

Only the guard on the mountain survived. He climbed a high tree, appealing to the gods for help. Showing mercy, the god Kurent leaned a grapevine against the tree. For nine years, the man lived on grapes. The waters receded, and he was saved, all thanks to that vine. So, he had to promise Kurent that he would continue to drink and love wine. And this is how folks interpret this to this day (Trdina 1952: 376–7).

While Stubelj's story about the Flood and Kurent is quite similar to the one published by Trdina, in 1857 Janez Bilc, another student of his, published in a tale *Novice* that strongly deviates from the ones above. God's rooster and the egg are never mentioned. Four people managed to save themselves from the Flood, and one of them climbed a high grapevine that reached the sky. When Korant (a variant in spelling) beheld this, the waters started to recede. Thus rescued, the man had to promise Korant that he and his descendants would always worship the grapevine and buckwheat, the two plants dedicated to Korant:

The Tale of Korant

Back when the old Slovenes still worshiped pagan gods, they believed that the beginning of the world was a golden age, that bread grew on trees and ears of wheat measured a half fathom. These fortunate people were good at first, but soon they became corrupt and evil. The gods then decided to destroy the world. The rain started to pour heavily. The land was completely flooded, and all people died except four who were saved and did not perish in the terrible flood. The story says nothing about three of these people, but it is well-known how the fourth one got away. A grapevine was growing on a high hill, with its top touching the sky. The man grabbed the vine and started to climb. Kurent,



Kurent Drives out the Winter, Matjaž Schmidt, 2001, Slovenska knjiga

a much respected god of the old Slavs, beheld this and was overjoyed to see that the man was seeking for help from a tree that was dedicated to him. He showed mercy on the poor man. The waters started to recede, and the soil was rapidly becoming dry. The rescued man had to promise Kurent (his rescuer) that he and his progeny would always love the two plants dedicated to Kurent and would enjoy their fruit; these plants were the grapevine and buckwheat. Taking the grapevine in one hand and the buckwheat stalk in the other, the rescued man set off into the wide world, looking for a home. He stopped on the banks of the Adriatic, cut off a switch from the grapevine in his hand and stuck it into the soil with all his might. And indeed, the wine in Prosek is still excellent. The man also sowed the buckwheat. His sons dispersed all over Kranjska, and even today the people there live mostly from buckwheat and still appreciate wine, remembering Kurent, their old benefactor, with gratitude. Kurent was devoutly worshipped by the old Slavs, and our Carnival on Shrove Tuesday is the day dedicated to the memory of the old Kurent.[13]

This tale has been reprinted many times, first by the Czech Jaromir Erben, later by Jakob Kelemina and Franček Bohanec, as well as many others.

In contrast with the normal birth from a mother's womb, and according to a number of mythological explanations, the restoration of the world and humanity is the task of men. American folklorist Alan Dundes pointed out, that the only survivor

[13] Bilc, Novice, 28. 2. 1857; Kelemina 1930, no. 208; Krek 1885: 63–64.

after the flood was a male deity. He found a number of parallels in various traditions from all continents (Dundes 1988: 167–182).

The Kurent of the above-mentioned Slovene tale rescues the man from Kranjska from the Flood. According to Ivan Grafenauer, Kurent is a malevolent lunar deity representing the Slavic deity of wine and pleasure. He is the lunar primogenitor and an evil demi-god akin to the *Keremet* of the Votyak people, with origins in the pre-Slavic nomadic pastoral culture. According to a Votyak belief legend, Keremet taught the first human in Paradise how to make kumiss, an intoxicating drink made from mare's milk. He also seduced the first man and woman to disregard the command of *Inmar* the Creator not to drink it. In addition, the Votyaks also claimed that Keremet was the "younger brother" and opponent of Inmar (*Juma*), the Supreme Being. Mordvian tales mention a similar mythical being named *Šajtan*, who seduces the first human. Ivan Grafenauer also compared Kurent with the demi-god *Erlik* known to the Altaic Tartars. Schnapps, which is called *Erlik's drink*, was named after Erlik, who is depicted as a rosy-cheeked god of joy (Grafenauer 1942: 38; Grafenauer 1944: 81–87).

Kurent was originally interpreted as a god of unleashed joy, a Slavic version of Dionysus in Greece and Bacchus in Rome. Anton Tomaž Linhart called him the god of pleasure (*Gott der Schwelgerei*), Davorin Trstenjak compared Kurent to the Indian *Shiva* and Matevž Ravnikar-Poženčan with the ancient *Priapus* and with Bacchus, Trdina and Navratil also compared Kurent with Bacchus, and perceived him as the god of debauchery and merrymaking.

According to France Bezlaj's etymological explanation, the name "Kurent" was derived from a root word (*kur*) meaning creating, devising (Bezlaj 1950–1951). If we connect this tale with the one about the creature in the moon, spread practically all over the world, and knowing that the moon in Slovene tales is often personified by Kurent, it seems that Kurent was viewed as a primogenitor, a being who helped the human race to multiply and the fields to regenerate and bear food. The root (*kur*) could also be connected with the chicken (*kura* in Slovene) or to the rooster, and to hatching an egg, which is the attribute of the heavenly God the Creator.

Let us also consider a Slovene folk Carnival custom in which the *kurenti*, accompanied by a procession of the *piceki* (chicks) jump up and down and "plough" around houses to make their owner's turnips grow thick and plump. The latest archaeological discoveries revealed the connection between the *kurenti* and the ancient cult of Cybele, according to which the mythical companions of Cybele were called the *kurenti* and the *koribanti* (Ciglenečki 1999). They were dressed in the masks of a rooster. In view of all this, we can safely say that in all probability Kurent was a deity or a demon connected to fertility and licentiousness, even though Milko Matičetov (1985) as well as Leopold Kretzenbacher (1941) denied Kurent his mythical origin.

FOLKTALES ABOUT KURENT

Kurent has also acquired a role in folktales and fairy tales that are spread throughout the world.

"The Blacksmith and the Devil" (ATU 330)

Janez Bilc wrote that in the valley of Ilirska Bistrica people tell a story about Kurent not being able to gain admittance to heaven. He immediately threw his coat behind the door, sat upon it, and said: "I'm sitting in my own spot now, so nobody can meddle with me." Kurent is now sitting in the moon, constantly operating a bellows.[14] A similar legend was published by Fran Podkrajšek in *Bčela*.[15] These motifs are often an integral part of the fairy tale "The Blacksmith and the Devil" (ATU 330). In its Slovenian variants, the main character is frequently Kurent, who tricks the devil, or death, by fastening them onto a magical tree or a chair in order to stay alive. When he gets tired of life, Kurent goes to heaven or to the moon. In its own way, this fairy tale tradition confirms the premise that Kurent is associated also with the moon, and therefore a lunar deity.

The dark spots on the lunar surface were often perceived as the primordial father, someone who has helped to restore the human race (as he did after the Flood) and is responsible for its crops. Some people perceived in the moon the blacksmith, the shoemaker, the musician, the plowman, the manure spreader, the logger (Šmitek 2000: 11–12, no. 4). The manure spreader, for example, was transplanted to the moon because he was carting manure on the night of Quarter Day (Ember Day) Friday (ATU 751 E*). When he came to his field, the cart overturned, and the man started to swear profusely. The moon immediately pulled the man, together with the cart, to its surface.

In addition to the ones already mentioned, there were also other characters inhabiting the moon, for example spinners, St. George, St. Martin, and St. Florian. There were also animals such as the rabbit, the fox, the frog or the toad, and even objects, for instance the beehive stump. Such characters explained, according to people's imagination, the dark spots on the lunar surface.

"Dance in the Thorns" (ATU 592)

Kurent was soon associated with jokes and pranks. As such, he was mentioned by Jožef Hašnik, a poet from the vicinity of Vuzenica, who published the following story in *Novice* in 1848:

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[14] Bilc, Novice, 5. 8. 1857: 247.

[15] Merovčkov Prostoslav (Fran Podkrajšek), Kurent in človek. Bčela 1874: 9.

Kurent Has a Magical Fiddle

Ancient Slovenes believed that Kurent was the father of many jokes, and told numerous funny stories about him. The most noteworthy fable is the one about his fiddle. Whenever Kurent played his strange fiddle everyone had to dance. Nobody heard anything else, but the tune that Kurent played, and all had to swirl around as long as he played.

Matevž Ravnikar-Poženčan, who collected folktales in Gorenjska in the mid-19th century, also wrote down the tale about the crafty Kurent the musician. As often occurs in variants, this tale differs slightly from the previous one, and Kurent lands in heaven and not on the moon. On the basis of this tale, Ravnikar-Poženčan carried out a comparison with the Roman god Bacchus and the etymology of the term *korent*. He interprets the term in the sense of the Greek *kora*, which denotes a girl, a whore, and lists similar terms, namely *kuriz*, *kuriza*, and *kuza*. It is clear that this hypothesis is no longer valid.

Korent

Korent, Kurent, the god Bacchus. People say that he had a fiddle to which, when played by Korent, everyone, regardless of where they might be, had to dance. When Korent tried to go to heaven, he was dismissed from the gates, so he went to hell instead. As soon as Lucifer saw him, he locked hell and held the iron gates so firmly that his claws appeared through them. So Korent riveted the gates, and Lucifer was unable to move away. Korent then headed back to heaven and was dismissed again. He asked for the gates to open at least a little bit so that he could peek inside. When his wish was granted he immediately threw his bag through the door, and asked permission to retrieve it. When that was granted as well he entered and sat down on the bag. Having thus acquired his own seat, he could no longer be banished from heaven.[16]

As we can see, the tale about "Kurent in the Moon" is frequently associated with the fairy tale "Dance in the Thorns" (ATU 592). It tells about the hero who receives magical gifts, for example a magical gun that hits every target; a bag into which each person has to jump even if they do not wish to do so; and a magical fiddle to whose tune everybody has to dance as soon as its owner starts playing, and can stop only when the music stops. With the aid of these gifts, Kurent fools Lucifer. He also tricks the devils, and even manages to thrash them when they are trapped in a bag placed upon the anvil so that they no longer dare to show themselves, let alone take him to hell. His magic fiddle forces a man that had gone to retrieve a bird from a thorny bush to dance; the fiddle also saves Kurent from the gallows. Kurent also uses a trick

[16] Matevž Ravnikar-Poženčan, Manuscript in the Archive NUK: MS 483, XI.

to get into heaven. He furtively tosses his coat or his hat inside, and St. Peter can no longer prevent him from claiming his seat on his own property. In some variants of this tale, Kurent prefers to obtain a place in the moon.

"The Man in the Moon" (ATU 751 E*)

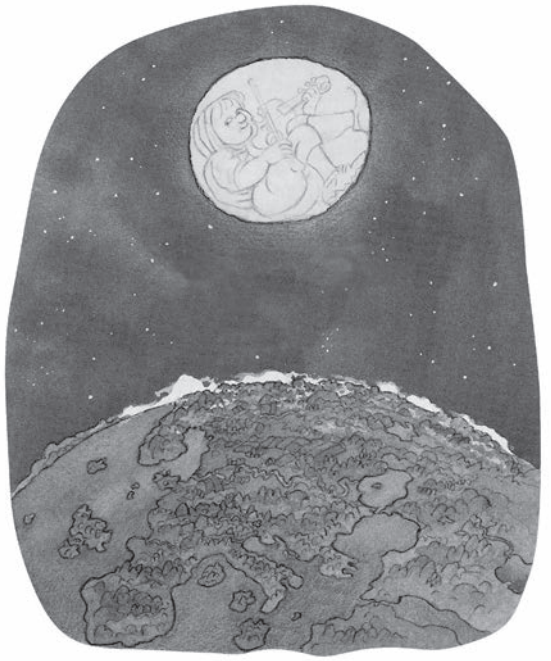
In Slovenian folktale *Voznik gnoja v luni* (The Man Carting Manure on the Moon) that was recorded by Števan Kühar, the person is banished to the moon for his wrongdoings, for example due to theft, avarice, hardheartedness, or because such a person had violated a commandment, for instance the one that prohibits work on a Sunday.

Kurent appears, for example, in the tale about Kurent the scoundrel. In order to punish him, Christ and St. Peter transform him into a bullock, take him to a village, and leave him there for a few years to serve people. Kurent does an excellent job, and brings great abundance to the villagers. After serving his sentence, he is collected by the two holy men and restored to his human form. From then on, each year at the same time Kurent returns to the village, bringing a copious harvest; in return, the villagers celebrate him every year around the same time.

Kurent Transformed into a Bullock

The Lord and St. Peter once travelled around the world. They arrived at a village, and the Lord told Peter to buy a rope. "Why are we going to need a rope?" asked Peter. "You will see", answered the Lord. So Peter bought a rope and they proceed to the woods. There lived a terrible brigand by the name of Kurent or Kurat. He had the figure of the giant. He seized every person who was passing through the woods, robbed them, and beat them, to boot. The Lord and St. Peter entered the woods. As soon as Kurent beheld them from afar he went to meet them. He started yelling at them so loudly that it was like a storm rushing to the wood, and all the trees were ashiver. "Give me all you've got!" Kurent screamed. The Lord said to Peter: Throw the rope on him!" Peter swiftly obeyed, and the brigand transformed into a bullock. Peter drove it with them. Upon arriving at another village, they went to one of the villagers, and the Lord offered him the bullock completely for free. The man happily accepted the animal. The Lord said: "In seven years we shall return to collect it. During this period, you are not to give it away nor strike or slaughter it. If you keep this promise for seven years, you will have bountiful crops, but on the seventh year the crops will be so abundant that not one of you have ever seen anything like it. On Shrovetide, we will collect the bullock."

It all came to be just as the Lord promised. Every year was fertile. There was so much produce that there were no more poor people. There was no money either, for people gave everything away for free. The entire village knew the



Kurent in the moon, Matjaž Schmidt, 2001, Slovenska knjiga

story of the bullock that was responsible for these fecund years. On the seventh year, the villagers gathered, all dressed in their Sunday best. They drove the bullock around the village, cavorting and making merry. The Lord and St. Peter indeed returned on that day. To everybody gathered around the bullock, the Lord said: "Such years shall never return. Remember them, especially on this day." They left the village, leading the bullock away. When they were outside the village, the Lord bade St. Peter: "Take his rope off!" As soon as St. Peter did this, the bullock changed back into a man. He knelt down in front of the Lord, meekly asking for forgiveness. The Lord absolved him of his wrongdoings. Kurent then set off to an unknown place far across the sea, where he lived humbly until his death.
And the people started to observe that day with merrymaking, which has been preserved to this day.[17]

Since Kurent celebrates his name day on Earth on Shrove Tuesday in some places he is perceived as a saint: St. Kurent.[18] During this time, people dress up as the *kurenti*, plow around their houses, and jump up and down to induce bountiful crops.

[17] Freuensfeld 1884: 299; Kelemina 1930: 64–66, no. 14.

[18] Kuret 1965: 18–20.

PERUN AND VELES

Many religious beliefs contain the motif of a cosmic snake, the opponent of the sun as the source of life. In Ancient Egypt, for instance, the sun god Ra is repeatedly attacked by the snake Apofis, but Ra always wins the duel. In Vedic mythology, Vritra endangers Indra. For the ancient Greeks, Zeus managed to defeat Tifon, the hundred-headed monster, only after a hard fight, and the Hittite weather god Taru had to fight the dragon Ilujankas; the heavenly deity Perkunas battled the chthonic god Velnias from Baltic mythology. Like the Germanic Thor, the Scandinavian *Odin*, and the Baltic Perkunas, *Perun* was the Slavic god of the heavens, and therefore *Veles's* opponent.

A fight with a dragon or a snake is the basic myth and a repetition of creation, the counterpoint between two opposing forces representing the central act of cosmogonic and fertility myth.[19] This is why numerous mythological heroes – and later the heroes in fairy-tales – fight a dragon in the course of their lives.[20] In Slavic mythology, Veles was said to assume various images, and was – akin to the Baltic Velnias – able to transform himself into a dragon or a snake.[21]

Perun, in Slovenia also called *Gromovnik* (the Thunder God), St. Elias or *Trot*, was the Slavic god of thunder and lightning, the supreme god and the creator. Slovenian folk tradition contains the memory of the fight between Perun and Veles – the fight between the heavenly deity and the chthonic god. Like Thor with his *mjolnir* (hammer), Perun uses his golden axe or his hammer – a symbol of thunder – to strike at the hostile snake.

Veles or *Volos* was a Slavic god of the underworld, of cattle and war, and was the opponent to Perkunas. Since he represented the underground world, people built him temples in valleys. Temples dedicated to Perun, in contrast, were erected on hills because Perun was the god of the heavens. The remnants of cult altars in Macedonia still evoke the memory of Perkun and Veles (Čausidis 1994: 428–434). In folk tradition, Veles was also called *Trdoglav*, *Črt*, *Potoglav* or *Velikan Vouvel* (Vouvel the Giant). Wishing to increase his wealth by kidnapping the bride or a flock of sheep from his opponent Perun, Veles hides them in his barren castle made of

[19] V. V. Ivanov and V. N. Toporov wrote exhaustive studies on this subject; see: Ivanov & Toporov 1974 and: Ivanov 1992. See also: Katičić 1987; Belaj 1998; Šmitek 1998: 93–118.

[20] A fight with a dragon has been ritually connected also with boys' initiation. For more on this see: Propp 1949,. 358–362.

[21] For more on Veles see: Jakobson 1969.

rocks, sometimes also called the golden castle. According to folktales, Vouvel hides treasures in a mountain. The only way of obtaining these treasures is by picking the *vouvelica*, the grass that (like the fern) blooms only on Midsummer Eve from midnight to one a.m.:

> *In a deep mountain, Vouvel keeps a large herd of cattle. A blacksmith notices that Vouvel has left his home. He goes and strikes his hammer against Vouvel's door. A white lady answers from within: "Whoever you may be, you cannot open this door. You must find the vouvelica grass and say: 'Whoa, cow, return to Krsnik, the earth needs rain!' The door shall open quickly then." As soon as the man hears this, he leaves to look for the vouvelica grass. But his long search is not successful. Then he sees a black cloud in the midst of which Vouvel the Giant is riding home. Frightened, the blacksmith runs away so that the giant cannot catch him.*[22]

Even though Veles endangered cattle or the riches of the land, or sometimes herded cattle into his underwater domain, he watched over cattle herds in the wintertime. People worshipped him as the protector of cattle. This role of the protector of sheep and cattle, as well as Veles's healing abilities, are reflected in the supernatural being the *wolf shepherd*. (For more on this, see the chapter "Jarnik, the Wolf Shepherd").

KRESNIK

The summer solstice – in Slovenia: *kresni dan* – is connected with a number of customs and beliefs that are similar throughout Europe. In Slovenia, a characteristic supernatural being that makes an appearance during this period is Kresnik (*Krsnik*, *Krstnik, Šentjanževec*). Kresnik's attributes are the sun and fire (in Slovene, *kresati* denotes to kindle fire by striking). Judging by these attributes and narrative tradition, Jakob Kelemina connected Perun and Kresnik (Kelemina 1930: 10). Later, Russian philologist Naikolai Mikhailov linked Kresnik with fire, lightning, with golden colour, thus with atmospheric phenomena that belong to Perun (Mikhailov 1998: 117–235). Like Perun, Kresnik had defeated the dragon, or Veles, god of the Underworld and of earthly riches.

[22] Published by Davorin Terstenjak (under the psevdonym Fr. Pohorski) 1858; see also: Kelemina 1930, no. 179.

Kresnik fighting the dragon, Jože Karlovšek, 1955, Archive ISN ZRC SAZU

The structure of tales about Kresnik can be classified into seven principal episodes:

- Kresnik was born and lived in the castle (on the glass mountain, in the ninth kingdom, in the Bear's castle). His mother carried him for nine years, and the child had to be baptized ten or nine times. He was recognized as a *kresnik* by his horse hooves or other marks on his body (Pajek 1882: 579–580; Slekovec 1895: 24–25; Šašelj 1906: 215–216).
- Kresnik rode with his brother Trot in the golden carriage through the sky, and was attacked by the Snake, whom he conquered in one-on-one combat (Pohorski 1858).
- Kresnik owned many cows and other riches. One day, a dragon stole his wealth and locked it in a crag. Kresnik found his cattle with the help of his four-eyed dog or a magic plant that could open cliffs; then he conquered the dragon, and reclaimed his wealth (Pohorski 1858).
- Kresnik was greatly tempted to acquire the Snake Queen's beautiful crown. The crown would bring plenty of money to the person who owned it. Kresnik gets hold of some strong horses and makes the corridor from his to the snake's castle. He plays cards with the Snake Queen for her crown. When the Queen notices

the theft of her crown she raises such a hue and cry that a multitude of gigantic snakes rush from everywhere. Kresnik escapes with the help of his horses through the corridor to his castle (Mulec 1858: 253–254).

- Kresnik fell in love with the beautiful daughter of the Snake Queen. Since he could not otherwise enter the Queen's palace, he turned himself into a dwarf. As he reached the courtyard, everybody started to laugh and mock him. At night, he turned into a handsome prince and took the princess with him (Pohorski 1859; Pajek 1884: 57; Kelemina 1930: 1/III).
- Consequently, the Snake King dispatched a dragon to Kresnik's castle. In the castle, a beautiful princess named Vesina was living. The dragon spent six months watching over her. On St. George's Day, the handsome Count Kresnik appeared with a bright sword and positioned himself over the snake. After he had conquered the snake, golden wheat started to fall onto the ground. Kresnik took Vesina for his wife, and his country was wealthy (Trstenjak 1870).
- Kresnik's wife noticed one day that Kresnik was away during the night. When she finally saw him on the roof, she called him by his name, and Kresnik fell down and killed himself. (Pajek 1882: 581).

One well-known legend describing Kresnik's adventures is the legend of Kresnik of Vurberg castle. Documented as early as in the 1840s, it was first published in its entirety by Matej Slekovec in 1895. This legend contains most of the cited episodes, except the second and the third episode. Under the pseudonym "Fr. Pohorski", Davorin Trstenjak published a folktale from Pohorje in Novice in 1858.

> *Kresnik had a brother named Trot. One day, the brothers were flying in a golden carriage to a feast given by the Babylonian Snake Queen. During the ride, it started to thunder fiercely. Although the Snake Queen had always fawned over Kresnik, in reality she couldn't stand him. So she dispatched a snake that had mighty wings like an eagle. The snake appeared from the fog, attacked Kresnik, and tried to slaughter him. But Trot cut its head off with a golden axe. As the snake flickered its tail into the clouds, the clouds produced an immense downpour of rain, almost drowning Kresnik and Trot. But the swift hooves of Kresnik's horses, fast as lightning, managed to save their master from the flood* (Pohorski 1858: 347; Kelemina 1930: no. 202).

The image of Kresnik or Perun driving through the sky in a golden carriage has connected Perun in the time of Christianization with St. Elias.

Davorin Trstenjak also published a folktale in which Kresnik rescues the cows from the cave in the mountain:

St. Eliah, beehive painting, 19th century, Archive SEM

People from Pohorje say that Kresnik owned many cows and was milking them. Their milk was so fragrant that the white snake repeatedly hid in the stable and sucked it from their udders. Kresnik was grazing his cows by himself, usually in the mountains. When he once fell asleep a brigand stole all his cows. Try as he might, Kresnik could not find them. But he owned a four-eyed dog, which he dispatched to look for the cows around the mountain range. The dog quickly smelled the cows hidden in the cave of a mighty mountain. He ran home to Kresnik, who was sitting in a large castle, and told his master that he had found the cows. Flying as a bird, Kresnik soared across the mountains and knocked on the door. But the giant, who was half human and half dragon, did not release the cows until Kresnik slaughtered him with a bolt of lightning (Pohorski 1858: 374).

The rescuing of the princess and killing the large snake is the key episode in the cycle of Kresnik's legends and at the same time this is also the principal Slavic myth, reconstructed by Ivanov and Toporov (1974). One of the legends about Kresnik killing the snake and rescuing the princess was recorded in Steiermark, Austria (Eng: *Styria*, Slo. *Štajerska*) in 1870:

[…] A snake was crossing the River Drava. It was so large that it stemmed the river's flow as it was creeping across. Folks say that the Drava flooded the entire Ptujsko Field and ran among hills planted with vines; one can still see the dry, winding riverbed. The snake crawled toward a mighty castle where its enormous body, its tail in its mouth, coiled around it. In this castle was imprisoned a beautiful princess by the name of Vesina. For six months, Vesina had been kept imprisoned in the castle by the snake. Then, on St. George's Day, the handsome Count Krsnik came along. He positioned himself over the

snake, but since it had wings it lifted into the air. But Krsnik, who was also a sorcerer, grew wings. A fierce battle took place in the air. Krsnik defeated the snake, threw it into the deep castle well and chained it to a rock with a strong chain; it has been lying there to this day. After the fight, golden wheat started to fall from the sky. Krsnik took Vesina for his wife, and they lived happily ever after (Trstenjak 1970: 21).

While this legend contains the elements of the principal myth of the Slavic cosmology; the third episode (about Kresnik the owner of many cows stolen by the dragon and locked in a crag) contains the elements of the ancient Indo-European stockbreeding and agricultural myth reconstructed by Bruce Lincoln. This myth presents the fight between the hero and the three-headed snake, because the sneak took away the hero's cattle. The hero, strengthened by the inebriating drink and sometimes with the help of the god of war, defeats the monster and takes the prey away (Lincoln 1983: 103–124). Lincoln connected this myth with the socioeconomic circumstances of the cattle-breeding societies, where the greed for the cattle became the synonym for the conflicts.

Kresnik defeats his enemy Vouvel the giant, or Babylon the snake king (Kelemina 1930: no. 1/I, no. 179) who threatens the world. In Slovene folktales and songs, he is the winner of the fight with a dragon who abducts Kresnik's sister and hides her in a rocky cave. The young prince saves his sister, an act which is followed by the sacred marriage – *hierosgamos* (Kropej 1998: 153–167). Some folk songs, sung around St. John's fire on Midsummer Eve, for instance *Brat in sestra* (Brother and Sister, SNP III, 5014) and *Device tri kresujejo* (Three Maidens Celebrate Midsummer Eve, SNP I, 297) still contain the memory of the sacred marriage:

Three maidens, celebrating St. John's Eve,
Light a bonfire in their village midst:
"May God grant you good health, young prince!"

Their song is beautiful and fair
The beauty of it is heard far,
Far off away in the wonderland.

The young prince speaks:
"Is this the sound of blessed bells?

Is this the sound of tiny birds,
Is this the sound of maidens pure?

Saddle a fresh horse for me,
So I may ride with him away,

To hear this sound all by myself,
To see to whom it does belong!"

The young prince to the village comes
To find the three young maidens there.

They sing with such a wondrous voice
That they entice the prince's heart.

He asks the oldest of them there:
"What may the sound of your voice be?"

The girl then gives him this reply:
"My voice, it sounds like church bells wide."

He asks the middle maiden there:
"What may the sound of your voice be?"

The girl then gives him this reply:
"My voice, it is like jingling bells."

He asks the youngest of them there:
"What may the sound of your voice be?"

The maiden gives him this reply:
"I sing the way I know to sing."

He asks the oldest of them there:
"What does your father do in life?"

The maiden gives him this reply:
"My father, he does naught
But measure corn throughout the day."

He asks the middle maiden there:
"What does your father do in life?"

The middle one answers him thus:
"My father, he does naught
But count the shiny coins of his."

He asks the youngest of them all:
"What does your father do in life?"

The youngest gives him this reply:
"I have no mother nor a father,
I am but a poor orphan girl."

The prince then takes the youngest one,
And off they go to wonderland.

The prince then tells the maiden young:
"Yours was the voice I heard
So far away in the wonderland."[23]

Since the maiden that Kresnik has chosen for his wife did not know of her parents, it is not impossible that Kresnik, the young prince, married his sister. According to Kuret the custom of the midsummer marriage, or the Pentecost couple from West European traditions, is similar to the tale about the marriage of the Sun with the Moon (Kuret 1989: 433). As the sun sets for some time, Kresnik rests and dies as well, but always returns to this world. While Perun remains the indisputable supreme God of the Heavens, Zeleni Jurij and Kresnik are susceptible to death, constantly traveling between this world and the other, but always returning.

While the fight between Perun and Veles took place in the sky, the fight between Kresnik and Vedomec, who endangers fertility and threatens to take away the harvest, occurred on the ground. There are numerous folktales about this fight. Even today some people say that when there is lightning on beautiful fall evenings, on Christmas or on Midsummer Day, the *vedavci* (*vedomci*) fight the *šentjanževci* (the *kresniki*). They may assume the image of two bulls, a red and a black one, or two dogs, one white and the other black. The *vedomci* are creatures who could – transformed into an animal or a half-animal – cause as eclipse of the sun, and could uproot old trees. In groups, or one by one, the vedomci fought others on crossroads or underneath trees.

Kresnik, also called *Šentjanževec*, *Vedogonja*, *Bergant*, has to fight with his adversary the False Kresnik or *Vedomec* for the benefit of his country. As Leopold

[23] Recorded by Matija Majar in Podgorjane in Rosental in Karinthia. Printed in: Slovenska Bčela II. 1, Celovec/Klagenfurt 1851: 187.

Kretzenbacher assumed, the Kresnik and his opposition the False Kresnik were supposedly two poles of one and the same figure (Kretzenbacher 1941: 21–22). According to the narrative tradition, it seems that Kresnik had his double or his twin brother, who represented his opposite pole.

Kresnik gradually lost his mythical character. While he was initially in the function of a god, he later became Prince Kresnik, or a kind of wizard, fighting the False Kresnik to ensure good crops for his lands; he thus assumed the role of clan protector, shaman, or sorcerer, the "ecstatic Kresnik", as Zmago Šmitek named him (Šmitek 2004: 145). The lore about the so-called ecstatic Kresnik shares its roots with the Hungarian *taltos*, Italian *benandant*, Greek *kallikantzaros* and South Slavic *mogut*. All of them acquired the characteristics of sorcerers or shamans. The "ecstatic Kresnik" differs from the "mythological Kresnik" in that he appears in the role of a "village shaman" fighting for the benefit of his local community.

It was believed that the person who was to become kresnik was born with a mark upon his body, either still wrapped in the placenta or with eyebrows grown together, with teeth, a small tail, extra fingers or toes. Johann Weichard Freiherr von Valvasor wrote about Kresniks and their adventures, mentioning that the *vedavces* fight the *šentjanževces* (Valvasor 1689, vol. XI: 282). It was also believed that Kresnik fought disguised as animals, for instance as a red ox fighting a black one, as a bull battling with an ox (Pajek 1882: 578; Pajek 1884: 77), as a white and a black dog, or as a pig with horse hooves (Pajek 1884: 82). For their weapons, he used horns (which are associated with lightning), axes, sheaves, and beanpole ends (which remain in the field after harvest) as in the tale from Primorska:

> *Slovenes living near Gorica believe that on St. John's Eve witches fight with the Kresniki. They also believe that Kresnik is the twelfth brother, which means that if a family has twelve sons begot by one father, the twelfth brother is a kerstnik. On Midsummer Day, the kerstniki find themselves in grave danger. They are attacked by witches using beanpoles and stakes. Actually, they use what has been left of those beanpoles and stakes, which are the parts that break off and remain in the soil after beanpoles have been collected and taken home in the fall. So in order to prevent witches from seizing such weapons, farmers carefully uproot all such pieces* (Kociančić 1854: 157; Kropej, Dapit 2006: 26, no. 13).

Kresnik can be helped by his servant, or by people watching the fight:

> *The Kresnik of Vurberg once said: "A terrible storm and downpour with wind shall come to pass today. Two wild boars shall try to kill each other in the field. One of them will be slender and scrawny, the other fat. You are not to help the*

fat one since he is already stronger." And this came to pass, just as Kresnik had said. People saw the two boars fight and bite at one another. A farmer in a field thrice struck the thin one with a switch, and right away the fat one started to win the fight. When the scales were tipped to the disadvantage of the slim boar, another farmer jumped near, thrusting a pitchfork from behind in the portly boar's testicles. Immediately an abundance of wheat started to rain on the field, and the farmers had ample quantities of it. The slender boar turned out to be the Kresnik of Vurberg. Later, he showed the first farmer his back marked by the three strikes of the switch, saying sulkily: "See how strongly you have hit me?" (Pajek 1882: 581).

At night, Kresniks or *balavantars* were believed to meet at crossroads, under trees, particularly walnut trees, like in the recently recorded legend from Slavia Veneta:

The Balavantarji were such people who, when it was that time of night, assembled together. They themselves had no idea where they were going. They just went to a crossroads. None of them later knew that they had met, neither the first one nor the second nor the third… There were so many. For it is said that on the way to St Martin there are four paths that make a real crossroads. Once they started to fight there. One of them had a wooden leg. It happened that they could not find his leg, so they made him one from an elder tree.[24]

Descriptions of such fights suggest that the Kresnik's soul left his body to travel through the world. These belief legends about the human soul in the form of an insect such as a hornet, that leaves its human body during sleep, and later returns, are known throughout Europe and also in a part of Asia. The earliest reference can be found in a book written at the end of the 8th century by the historian Paul the Deacon.[25] The text refers to border areas between Slovenia and Italy, which is the territory where the lore about the so-called *zduhači* (people with escaping souls), for example the Vedomci, the Banandanti, and the Kresniki, had been preserved almost to the present (Šmitek 2003, p. 5).

Souls in the shape of butterflies or mice are mentioned in Inquisition records from 16th and 17th century Europe. In Slavia Veneta in Italy, such records contain interesting data on the *banandanti* who were accused of witchcraft, stating that during sleep they were leaving their body and setting off to fight witches or wizards; there are also notes on the *banandanti* whose souls had climbed from the mouth of a person fast asleep in the form of a mouse.

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[24] Recorded by: Roberto Dapit, 1996; published: Kropej, Dapit 2008: 22, no 12.

[25] Historia Langobardorum, vol. 3, chap. 34.

Carlo Ginzburg questioned a close connection between the "older" Kresnik, the ruler of the earthly world, and the "later" one, the protector of territory. Along with some other scholars, he found parallels in Italian, particularly Friulian, and Hungarian traditions about the *benandanti* only with the "ecstatic Kresnik". According to Ginzburg, this lore preserves the memory of ecstatic cults that are somehow connected with ancient Eurasian shamanism (Ginzburg 1989: 130–160).

Maja Bošković-Stulli has researched the lore on the Kresnik in Croatia, which has been preserved particularly in Istria and Dalmatia. She has ascertained that the Croatian kresnik has principally the role of protector. Believing that the *kresniks* were mainly adversaries of the *štrigoni* (sorcerers), Bošković-Stulli drew a parallel between them and the South Slavic *moguti* or *zduhači*, beings whose soul at times escapes to roam other worlds (Bošković-Stulli 1960: 292).

In Istria people believe still today that while the person who is kresnik is sleeping, his "consciousness", "his breath" or his "other body" – that is, his metaphysical body that cannot be seen – travels around. If his physical body is turned around, his metaphysical body cannot return, and the person dies (Lipovec Čebron 2008: 133). They still tell tales about kresniki fighting the sorcerers in the form of a black and a white dog, such as this:

> *One day my uncle went with his donkey to a mill beneath Črnica. They were grinding grain until night fell. It was summer, and there was little water. So when he was returning it was already late at night. As he was nearing Dvor, the donkey started to strain its ears. When uncle reached his field he saw two dogs, one black and the other white, running toward him. He thought there were hunters with them; he thought it was already dawn. So he took a stone and hurried behind the white dog. The dog bared its white teeth, growled, and ran away. When uncle reached his home it was still night, but it seemed to him that it was already morning. It was about two or three hours after midnight. People had no watches in those days, not like today when we constantly carry a watch. They say the white dog is a kresnik; he would help and protect and defend you. The black dog is a sorcerer who, if it weren't for the white one, would slaughter you.*[26]

Today, the *kresniki* have become firmly embedded in people's belief especially in western Slovenia. Strongly convinced that they possess certain abilities, people in Istria even today believe that the kresnik (a certain person) assumes the role of witch doctor or village healer (Lipovec Čebron 2008: 132–136).

[26] Recorded by Mojca Ravnik, recounted by Ernest Kmet, 1989, Kluni in Istria, Archives ISN ZRC SAZU.

ZELENI JURIJ (GREEN GEORGE)

In Slovenian folklore, there is another supernatural being who fights with the chthonic demon – his name is the *Zeleni Jurij* (Green George), sometimes called also *Jurij*, *Jarilo* or *Vesnik*. Slovenian folk customs reveal a folk belief that on St. George's Day (April 23 or 24) Zeleni Jurij awakens the spring. Among eastern Slavs he is known as *Jarylo*, but in Slovenia it is his twin brother or the opponent who is named *Jarnik*. Zeleni Jurij conquers his enemy *Rabolj* in a duel; Slovenian folk customs have preserved the memory of this fight.[27] Furthermore, Slovenian folk songs also recount a hero who saves the girl Marjetica. In the song "Trdoglav and Marjetica" (SLP I, no. 21) a prince saves a girl kept captive in Trdoglav's desolate castle; Trdoglav here personifies the devil. In these songs or narratives, the hero defeats his opponent in a duel, or escapes with the girl on his horse, managing to elude his pursuers by using magic objects or by demanding something impossible from the girl's abductor.

The Russian philologists Ivanov and Toporov found (mainly on the tradition about Zeleni Jurij) traces of the principal myth of Perun and Veles, linking Jurij/Jarylo with the Balto-Slavic *Jarovit*, a deity of fertility, who was initially worshipped on April 15 (Ivanov, Toporov 1974: 184). Furthermore, Radoslav Katičić wrote extensively on Jurij's myth among the Slavs and on the duel between the Thunder God with a dragon (1987).

Both Radoslav Katičić (1987) and Vitomir Belaj (1998) share the opinion that Jurij/Jarylo is the son of Perun and thus central to the pre-Slavic vegetation and fertility myth. Jurij was taken by envoys of Veles to the land of the dead from which he returned to the world of the living in spring. As a harbinger of spring, Zeleni Jurij is also connected with the circular flow of time and with renewal. According to Katičić's reconstruction of the myth of Zeleni Jurij, the mythic story recounts how young Jurij rides his horse from afar, from the land of eternal spring and the land of the dead – from Veles' land – across a blood-stained sea, through a mountain to a green field. In Nestor's *Chronicle* from the 12th century, the word *irьj, *vyrьjь – "Vyrej" – denotes a paradise beyond the waters, a place to which birds of heaven migrate in winter; the name Jurij, whose etymological origin is the word *irej*, links him with swampland. At the end of his journey, Jurij arrives at the door of Perun's court to marry Perun's daughter, (his own sister) Mara. Together with the sacrifice of the horse, the *hieros gamos* ensures the growth and fertility of plants (Katičić 1989). Some Slovene folktales and songs also mention an incestuous relationship between a brother and a sister (*Tvrdoglav and Marjetica*, SLP I, no. 21; The girl saved from the dragon, no. 22/1-4), which is the reminiscence of the sacred marriage already mentioned in the myth of Kresnik. The sacred marriage is therefore also connected with Zeleni Jurij.

[27] More about this see: Kuret 1989: 254–255.

It can be gathered from the tale that Jarnik is the counterpart, or the twin brother, of Jurij. In some tales, Zeleni Jurij, or St. George, has the role of the Wolf Shepherd or the Master of the Wolves. People living in the vicinity of Karlovac used to tell that on St. George's Day all wolves gathered in one place, waiting for St. George, who then arrived riding a fiery billy goat. Around Karlovac, people even believed that he appeared in the shape of a white wolf to allocate each wolf its own hunting ground (Kelemina 1930, no. 21/II). *Jurij with a gun* is mentioned in a folk song that has been preserved in a manuscript written by Anton Martin Slomšek and published by Ivan Grafenauer. The final, fifth verse goes like this:

> *[…] Again a fearsome beast appeared,*
> *And there came Jurij with his gun.*
> *He shot the mosquito in the small hole:*
> *George got the mosquito; the mosquito got the lion,*
> *The lion got the wolf, the wolf got the fox, the fox got the rabbit,*
> *The rabbit got the cat, the cat got the mouse, and the mouse got the yellow wheat.*
> *When, oh when, you peasant poor, when will you get rich?*[28]

In this song, which has been classified as a children's song about animals, Jurij with a gun plays the role of a hunter hunting animals that in turn hunt one another. Anton Martin Slomšek added a handwritten note that this was one of the oldest songs in Kranjska. As frequently happens in folklore, a mythological character has been transplanted from an abandoned ritual, or from a ritual song, to children's folklore.

In Ledenice in Gailtal, Kärnten, Austria, a folk custom was performed on St. George's Day, which was described by Franz Koschier (1957, 862–880):

> *After building a bonfire on a nearby hill, local lads also dug a grave for St. George next to it. Wrapped in straw, St. George lay in the grave covered with green pine branches. After a prayer, the lads tore down the hill, making a tremendous racket, with St. George in pursuit* (Kuret 1989:262–265).

Researchers believe that this custom exhibits characteristics of a buried and newly-awoken vegetation deity (Šmitek 2004: 132). In contrast Šmitek has also made a comparison between the myth about Zeleni Jurij and the constellation of Orion and with Early Medieval Slavic reliefs depicting Orion (2001). This similarity has also been pointed out by Vlado Nartnik (1995).

However, if we regard the folk custom and the narrative tradition about Zeleni Jurij as a common source, we can see that he is the young god – the son of Perun, and

[28] Š I: no. 966; Grafenauer 1956: 197–202.

Zeleni Jurij/Green George in Bela Krajina, Maksim Gaspari

that Marjetica (*Vesna*, *Deva*, in Croatia: *Mare*) is the young goddess – the daughter of Mokoš, and that the three figures: Zeleni Jurij, the dragon and Marjetica form another triangular form, repeating the principal Slavic myth.

Nowadays, the customs and processions connected with Zeleni Jurij are being revived mostly by folklore groups that enact them, particularly in Bela Krajina (Eng. White Carniola), where the customs of celebrating St. George's Day have been preserved longest.

MOTHER GODDESS, MOKOŠ

Almost all, even the oldest world religions,[29] are based on the idea of the Great Mother, who may be either good or fearful, for example, the Phrygian *Cybele*, *Atargis* from Syria, *Astarta* from Phoenicia, the Sumerian *Anana*, the Babylonian *Ishtar*, the Balto-Polabian *Živa*, the Germanic *Frigga* and many others. Slavs worshipped *Mokoš*, a female deity of fertility, who was also the patron of female chores and craft,

[29] For more on this see: Gimbutas 1989.

especially spinning, weaving and also of music. Mokoš was the only female deity in Vladimir's pantheon in Kiev. While the Old Church Slavonic root *mok-* denotes wet, damp, the root *mot-* denotes to coil, to spin; *mótok*, for instance, denotes a spinning wheel. Water and spinning held a central position in the cult of this deity whom the Russians also called *Mat syra*, denoting Damp Mother Earth. This female deity, who was connected with water and spinning, also had its more terrifying side that made her similar to *Hekate* from antiquity, the Greek *Artemis*, the Roman *Diana*, the Russian *Jaga Baba*, the German *Frau Bercht*, or the Slovene *Pehtra Baba*. Similar is also the tradition of *Belestis* or *Belena*, a Celtic deity from Noricum, a companion of *Belin* or *Belenus*.[30] Belestis was the goddess of light bringing health and taking care of birth and development in the animal and human world.

The Slavs widely worshipped Mokoš, also called *Mokóška*, *Mátoha*, or *Mátoga*. Mokoš was (together with Perun and Veles) a female deity who played an prominent role in the principal Slavic myth (Ivanov, Toporov 1983). She was also a Slavic deity of cyclical circulation and renewal, fertility, protector of female chores, particularly of spinning, weaving, doing laundry and of music.

Despite the fact that the great Mother Goddess evoked terror and fear, she was a brilliant goddess, often the companion or mother of the sun god, much like Isis in Ancient Egypt. Like Isis, Mokoš also practiced sorcery and taught people how to bake bread, spin, weave and heal others. In Slovenian folktales, these skills were the domain of female supernatural beings the *sredozimke,* i.e. midwinter deities: *Zlata Baba* (Golden Woman), called also *Baba*, and *Pehtra Baba* (Frau Percht); the latter is still very much alive in folk customs. The *pehtre* roam around in the period between Christmas and Epiphany; therefore, in the period of twelve nights at *pernahti*, accompanied by the *divja jaga* (wild hunt). According to folk beliefs, they bring brightness, light and fertility, which is also evident from their name. The name *Pehtra* has been derived from Old German *perachtum*, meaning that which glitters.[31] In the 1858, Peter Hicinger wrote the following about Pehtra Baba:

> *Pehtra Baba roams around on the Karavanke Mountains, strolls around the mountain tops above the Kamnik Alps with a golden bucket in her hand.*

Maks Pleteršnik published in his dictionary the following narrative about *Matoha*, who is akin to *Mokoš* or *Mokoška*:

> *Slovenes are familiar with a scarecrow called Matoha or Matoga. The name denotes the great, or the old, mother. That is all I know of that* (Kelemina 1930: no. 191).

[30] More on Belin or on Belbog see: Mikhailov 1994 and Šašel Kos 2001: 9–16.

[31] Kuret1969: 209–239; Kuret 1994: 241–248.

In this statement, *Matoha* is identical to the Great, or the Old Mother. She is also mentioned by Hanuš Machal in his *Nakres slovanskeho bajeslovja.* In this work, she has been classified as "the forest woman", therefore already in her transformed role.

According to popular belief, Mokoš or Mokoška was later connected with the Great Witch (*Lamia*). Davorin Trstenjak wrote down the story about Mokoška – Lama Baba (*Lamwaberl*) – living in a castle in a marshy place that he had heard about from Rudolf Puff in Štajerska:

> *Lamwaberl used to live in Grünau, a marshy place not far away from Šent Florjan Square, near the Ložnica that often overflowed its banks. Archaeological artefacts confirm that in the olden times the place had been cultivated. A lone farming estate is situated there now, but once upon a time there stood the castle of Mokoška, a heathen princess who lived in it. The castle was surrounded by gardens that were always green. She occasionally helped people but sometimes also harmed them; she was especially wont to taking children with her. At long last, God punished her. On a stormy night, the castle and all its gardens sank into the ground. But Mokoška was not doomed. She continued to appear, disguised in different female forms. She still carries off children, especially those who have been neglected by their parents* (Trstenjak 1855: 206).

The heritage that has been preserved about Baba depicts her as a frightening female figure who barred the road to anybody who was taking cattle to pasture for the first time, or was about to undertake a commercial trip, or went to school for the first time, etc. Anybody who chanced upon her had to donate something.

In Županje Njive under the Kamnik Alps, a legend recounting of such a baba living on Pasja Peč has been preserved to the present. Written down by Tone Cevc in 1970, the legend is connected with a folk custom bidding that every shepherd who took cattle to a mountain pasture for the very first time had to present Baba with a loaf of bread, a coin, or some other offering (Cevc 1999: 93–94).

The oldest flute in the world, which is 45,000 years old and dates from the end of the mid-Palaeolithic period, was found in Divje Babe Cave near Šebrelj above the Idrijca. The locals still tell stories about *divje babe* (wild women) who often helped the people with sewing, harvest, and other chores, provided that they are given food in return. The *babe* would descend their steep mountain slopes and collect food that had been left for them in the fields. If they received gifts, they drove away hail; if no gifts were forthcoming, they would summon hail instead (Turk 1997).

Many Slovenian female supernatural beings adopted the role of the *Zlata Baba* or *Pehtra* and were connection with spinning, thread or yarn, and female chores such as

doing laundry or baking bread. As a sacrificial offering, people would leave for them a flock of wool, sheaves of flax or napkins. Since it was forbidden to spin or weave on certain days, midwinter deities were called *torka* (Tuesday), *četrtka* (Thursday), *kvatra* (Ember Day), and also *rojenice* or *sojenice* (the Fates) are connected with this mighty female deity who had power over life and death.[32]

Kvatrna Baba (Quarter Day woman, Ember Day woman) oversaw that quarter weeks, or the pagan *feriae*, were observed in March, June, September, and December; these commence with the first Wednesday after Ash Wednesday, Whitsuntide, Triumph of the Cross (September 14), and St. Lucia's Day (December 13). During this time, people were forbidden to go courting, do female chores, bake bread, and leave their house on Saturday nights. They were required to observe a fast. Those who failed to obey these rules but roamed through the dark instead would suddenly behold the Quarter Day women disguised as shrieking, scowling monsters or as terrifying animal shapes with tousled hair. On quarter week nights, every vicious monster, witch, and ghost were believed to haunt people; this was also the time when treasures burst in flames. A Quarter Day woman would visit the women who did not stop steaming raw wool, doing laundry, or spinning, and punish them by boiling or scalding them, or by tearing them to tiny pieces.

Kvatemberca (Ember Day woman), Damijan Stepančič (Kropej, Dapit 2008)

Spinners who were caught dancing or merrymaking after midnight were punished. Described as a white woman who was able to extend her body up to the ceiling, *torka* would enter the house and turn off the light. Spinning wheels started to spin by themselves, and did not stop until morning. When *torka* left the house the yarn was bitten to pieces, the thread filled with knots, and the spinning wheels broken. If the spinner was quick enough to climb to bed and her husband placed his right hand around her waist she was spared. Every night, the yarn had to be removed from the spinning wheel and the spinner had to make the sign of the cross above it. If she failed to do so, *torka* might appear at night, spin the spinning wheel with a dog's paw, and frighten people. Equally dangerous was to fetch yarn from the attic late at night. A woman who did so might be gnawed to the bone

[32] More about this see: Kropej 2008a: 182–186.

and her bones scattered among other spinners. In Goriško, people used to recount how *torka* appeared at night and asked a homemaker: "Shall we garden tonight?" She was referring to the bleaching of the skein. If the house maker agreed, she was thrown into a cauldron instead of the skein, boiled, and eaten.

With the arrival of Christianity, Pehtra was replaced by St. Lucia, who brings light, and St. Gertrude (Jedrt) who spins flax and yarn, and whose attributes are the mouse and the spindle. On St. Gertrude's nameday, the mouse bites through the yarn, signifying that spinning is no longer allowed. Pehtra's magical and healing powers have been adopted by St. Walpurgis, whose nameday is on May 1, "when witches have the strongest power". Some parts of Slovenia still know of the tradition about Mokoška the witch and Pehtra the witch; in Gailtall in Austria, for instance, people talked about Pehtra Baba's crime, committed by the women who practised sorcery.

According to folk narrative tradition, Pehtra Baba was also the leader of the "wild hunt". People imagined it as a night-time procession of rushing and raging demons and departed souls during twelve nights around Christmas and New Year. The popular tradition of the wild hunt is based on the concept of the ghosts of the dead storming around at a certain time of the year. This tradition seems to derive from the belief, known in antiquity, in which the leader of the souls of the dead was Cybele. In the Norse saga, *Snorra Edda* (the wild hunt), which takes place on battlefields of the fallen warriors, is led by the Valkyries who are bringing slain heroes to Valhalla, the kingdom of Odin.

Wild hunt, Gvidon Birolla (Birolla 1979)

The tradition of *Perta* was particularly popular in Alpine regions, like in this tale from Bovec:

> *A man refused to believe that the Pêrte existed. So on Epiphany he set out to await them. In order to see them pass he hid near the bridge across the Koritnica (by Bovec). But although he was hidden, the Pêrte knew where he was. As they were passing one of them hacked at his leg with a broad axe, crippling him. A year later, he waited for them again. The same Pêrta said: "I've forgotten something here last year; I have to take it back." And he was well again* (P-ov 1884: 303–304).

It was believed that if the wild hunt encountered a man it would tear him apart, or would fling an axe into him. A year later, at the same time and in the same place, the wild hunt would remove the axe and relieve the victim from pain. If they heard the wild hunt, people were advised to swiftly throw themselves into the left-hand side wheel track on their path or to cross themselves, step aside, and remain motionless; this was the only way to avoid grave injuries that could be inflicted upon passers-by by the wild hunt. Those who mimicked the howling of the wild hunt would be thrown a human shoulder or a leg, as if to say, "You hunted with us, so also feast with us!" or "Since you helped with the chasing you will also help with the gnawing!" In Koroška, people still recount hunters who chanced upon the wild hunt during their nocturnal hunts.

The wild hunt could be connected also with the wild man, as in the folktale from Koroška where the wild man has cannibalistic features, throwing a woman's leg in front of a man who dared to talk back at him.[33]

In Resia, the tradition about the wild hunt is still known in the form of variants about fallen warriors rushing, either on horseback or on foot, by those who happen to be in that place at that moment. In Val Canale, people tell stories about the wild hunt burning the clothes on the back of those unfortunates who happen to pass by, even if they swiftly throw themselves on the ground (Kropej, Dapit 2008: 36, no. 28).

The wild hunt, connected with this character, brings fertility and renewal to nature. Similar in character were the *vesne*, who strolled around in February, bringing fertility. February, once also called *vesnar* in Slovene, had acquired its old name from this deity.

The notion that the wild hunt is joined by witches (the *fárce* and the *vesle*) has been preserved in the tales from Trenta and Goriško. In 1868, Anton Pegan recorded the following tale about the *vesle*:

> *People living in the vicinity of Gorica tell of things they call the vesle. They think that the vesle are mares that drag a harrow in the hour between eleven and midnight. They move just as fast, or even faster, than the wind; since their harrow produces sparks they are visible from afar. It is impossible to escape them. Whoever is run over by them is badly damaged and unfit for anything till the end of their days* (Pegan, Černigoj 2007: 153).

In Goriško, people also said that witches (*fárce*) and devils rode in the wild hunt. Having horse hooves, the witches from Bovec produced the sound of galloping horses wherever they rushed – but were not visible to the naked eye.

Although closer to fairylike being, the *vesna* is related to the *pehtra*. These beings were believed to gather once, or several times a year, dance, sing, or stroll around.

[33] "The Wild Man and the Wild Hunt" (Mödernforfer 1946: 24–30; Kelemina 1930: 221).

They congregated in the month of February, which was once called *vesnar*, usually around the name day of St. Matthias on February 24th. According to old traditions from Krn (Erjavec 1883: 334–335; Kelemina 1930: No. 45/I) and the Karst region (Pegan, Černigoj 2007: 151), groups of them rush around at that time, awaken spring, and bring fertility. But peril awaits those who have been overtaken by them or noticed to be following them.

There is another female mythical being connected with female chores; her name is *periča* (washerwoman), also called *nóčna bába*, *nóčna gospá*, or *bóžja déklica*. People imagined her as a beautiful female mythological being with white hair, clad in white, and wearing a white headdress. At night, these women quietly did their washing in ponds, water holes, and springs. Woe to those who observe, disturb, or even mock them! They would chase the offender and, like Pehtra, hit his or her face with an iron hand. As the protector of female chores, and especially of washing, Periča would punish any girl who had left her laundry outside during the night (Kretzenbacher 1941: 95). Sometimes, she tore the thread women had left on the spinning wheel during the night (Pajek 1884: 33). Studying the characteristics shared by Slovene and German lore about Periča, Leopold Kretzenbacher explained her as a Germanic influence of Slovene heritage (Kretzenbacher 1941: 94–95).

According to some folk beliefs from Bela Krajina, these women are similar to fairies, have extraordinarily beautiful children, and at night wash their dishes (Šašelj 1906: 218).

In some places, especially in Slavia Veneta, *periča* acquired similar characteristics as water fairies and mermaids. People recounted how she would drag children who had carelessly come too near the water's edge beneath its surface. The term "Fal Pulicic" that denotes a brook has been preserved in Friuli (Ciceri 1992: 435–236).

Pehta has become a popular supernatural being in Upper Kranjska and in the Western Alps. Peter Jakelj-Smerinjekov, a folk storyteller – who inspired Slovenian writer Josip Vandot – also told stories about Pehta, Bedanec and Kosobrin in the late 1950s and '60s to Milko Matičetov. These supernatural beings are today part of children's folklore and tourist events.

JARNIK, THE WOLF-SHEPHERD

In folktales, the *Volčji pastir* (Wolf-Shepherd), also called *Šent* (Devil), *Šentjurij*, *Jurij s pušo* (George with a gun), *Jarnik* or *Volčko*,[34] had the role of the Master of the Wolves[35] and simultaneously the protector of the cattle. It can be said that the Master

[34] See: Trstenjak 1859: 50; Kelemina 1930, no. 29.

[35] More on the Master of the Wolves see: Mencej 2001.

of the Wolves is a counterpart of St. George: while the pasturing season commences on St. George's name day (April 23/24), the Master of the wolves announces its end on St. Martin's name day (November 11).

In Slovenian folk heritage, the wolf-shepherd is either a mythological chthonic being or a human transformed into the wolf. His distinctive characteristics are often foretold by the manner of his birth or by certain distinctions with which he is born. In folktales, the Wolf-Shepherd may ride a wolf or a goat; he may appear as a horseman, or as an old man, often lame, with a limp, sometimes blind in one eye. He may even be half human and half wolf, or an eternal wanderer; some people depicted him as the devil. He usually appeared during the twelve nights (also known as "wolf nights") around Christmas, which are called the *kalikanđeri* in the Balkans. He may also appear during the time of wolf holidays called the *martinci* (around the name day of St. Martin on November 11), including November 1 (All Saints' Day) and 2 (All Souls' Day), when, as they say, the dead return to this world.

The Wolf-Shepherd or Master of the Wolves and *Jurij s pušo* are supernatural beings who, each in his own way, adopted the role of Veles. People living on the southern slopes of Pohorje say that the Wolf-Shepherd can do the most harm on Christmas Eve. That evening he quietly limps to his homestead and chases away his servants. After forcing them to swim across the waters, he transforms them into wolves. A similar tradition was described by Pajek who depicted Šent as a "mean ghost with an axe" (Pajek 1884: 226). In Štajerska, the leader of carollers is called *volčko*; the name is obviously derived from the Slovene word *volk*, the wolf.

Christianity has replaced Master of the Wolves with the saints. In the role of the protector of herds and medicine, he was identified as St. Blas.[36] Other saints may also appear in the role of the Wolf-Shepherd. In her treatise on the Wolf-Shepherd, Mirjam Mencej listed as many as twelve saints who may assume the function of the Master of the Wolves within the yearly cycle of pasturing. They are as follows: St. Martin (or St. Mrata, November 11); the autumnal St. George (November 26); St. Andrew (November 30); St. Nicholas (December 6); St. Danilo (December 17); St. Ignatius (December 20); St. Sava (January 14); St. Trifun (February 1–5); St. Ilija (July 20); St. Dimitrij (October 26); St. Michael (September 9), and St. Basilius. In Bavaria, St. Wolfgang (October 31) (Mencej 2001: 125). According to Mencej, one of the principal functions of the Master of the Wolves is to *summon* the wolves and to *dismiss* them, thus announcing the first and the last day of pasture, respectively. In this sense, the Master of the Wolves exchanges the winter with the summer (Mencej 2001, p. 185–196).

[36] Comp.: Gregor Krek, Beiträge zur slavischen Mythologie I. Veles, Volos, Blasius, in: Archiv für slavische Philologie1, Berlin 1875.

The Devil Shepherd (Valvasor 1689, III: 438)

The Wolf-Shepherd is the successor of the mythical protector of herds, cattle, and sheep who could also cure sick animals. As is the case with the Wild Hunter, the Wolf Shepherd's chthonic character and lameness makes him similar to the Germanic Odin, the Norse *Wodan*, the Greek *Hephaestus*, the Celtic *Dis Pater*, and the Slavic *Dažbog*. Rather than perceiving him as the protector of cattle and pasture, Jiři Polívka, who has written an extensive treatise on the subject, links him primarily to a forest spirit such as *Lisun*, *Polisun*, and *Lešij* (Polívka 1927: 175). In his essay on the Wolf Shepherd, Veselin Čajkanović focused on his original character and role, but did not study him within the broader context of Slavic shepherd rites and beliefs. Originally the lame, or the limping last wolf, the Master of the Wolves, suggests certain parallels with the South-Slavic god of cattle and the world beyond *Dabog* or the lame *Daba* (Čajkanović 1994: 118–122). Mencej established that in the Slavic heritage the Master of the Wolves has the same characteristics as Veles/Volos, the pre-Slavic god of death and of the after world (Mencej 2001: 248).

Radoslav Katičić has placed the act of closing, or the locking, of wolves' muzzles on St. George's Day in the very centre of the pre-Slavic vegetation and fertility myth (Katičić 1987: 27–28). According to him, *Zeleni Jurij* (Green George) was the

son of Perun. He was born on New Year's Day; carollers (representing Veles) took him to Veles' world of the dead; in the spring, he once again returned to the world of the living. Building on the hypothesis that St. George replaced the Master of the Wolves at the onset of Christianity, Mencej has pointed out the shepherd aspect of this fertility myth connected with the yearly cycle. She suggests that Jurij the shepherd and a victim of the Master of the Wolves, who is often depicted as a shepherd himself, are the same character, and that the son of Perun was truly taken to the world of Veles on the last day of outdoor pasture in the fall. *Zeleni Jurij* was a fertility deity combining both the farming and the shepherd aspects (Mencej 2001: 196–204). However, the written sources prove that this *Zeleni Jurij*, who appears in late autumn, is the opposite twin – the Wolf-Shepherd or Jarnik – of Zeleni Jurij who appears in spring time.

The popular tradition of the *wild hunt* is based on the concept, known in the antiquity, of the ghosts of the dead storming through the night. In the Norse saga, Snorra Edda, the wild hunt is led by warriors who had lost their lives in battlefields. In Slovene tradition, a poacher (a demonic creature that had either violated the ban on hunting on the Sunday after the new moon or during the quarter weeks, or had been firing his gun at a crucifix) was consequently condemned to eternal hunting. During a period of twelve nights, the hunter, accompanied by a large pack of dogs, horses, and unusual animals, is believed to run through the air, making a deafening din. In Gorenjska, the wild hunt is depicted as a man carrying an axe and limping behind a large pack of dogs. In southeast Pohorje, the poacher was simply dubbed *šent*, the devil. Upon reaching his servants' farmsteads, he led them away with him; after they had swum across a large body of water, he turned them into wolves.

Lameness, which indicated that the lame creature was returning from the underworld, was also a characteristic of the wolf shepherd, master of wolves, and guardian of sheep and cattle. His other name was also *Jurij s pušo* (George with a Gun).

As can be seen from the above, certain motifs from the narratives about Pehtra have been contaminated with the tradition of the Wild Hunter and the Master of the Wolves. The wild hunt is therefore connected with both mythical characters, that of Pehtra Baba, the primal mother and the leader of souls, and with the god of the underworld Veles.

* * *

As can be seen from the **Central Slavic Myth**, the supernatural beings that play the role in it and accompany the yearly cycle are intertwined and related. For example, both Kresnik and Zeleni Jurij (Green George) appear in the same role of the dragon slayer in the principal Slavic myth. Both of them are the sons of Perun,

the God of Heavens, and some sources even indicate that they might be the tenth, or the twelfth, brothers. Both are said to have their opposite counterpart, or a twin brother. The counterpart of Zeleni Jurij is Jarnik, or the Wolf-Shepherd (the Master of the Wolves), appearing in autumn from the world beyond, from across the waters, he unties the wolves and thus announces the arrival of winter. The counterpart of Kresnik is the false Kresnik, named Vedomec, whom Kresnik has to fight in order to ensure a good harvest in his land.

The old Slavic deity Mokoš and her daughter, the young goddess Živa, whose name in Slovene folklore is often Vesna or Marjetica (Margaret) or Deva (Virgin), are Slavic parallels of the Indo-European old and young goddesses examined by Emily Lyle (2007, 67–68). Together with Perun and Veles, Mokoš has been classified as one of the principal Old Slavic deities (Ivanov, Toporov 1983). Therefore, Mokoš was the predecessor and the mother of young deities such as Deva, which has been confirmed by the toponyms (Šmitek 2006). It follows from the Slovene folk narrative and song tradition that the parents of both Kresnik and Zeleni Jurij were Perun and Mokoš; at the same time they were also the parents of Vesna and Marjetica, who were the sisters and simultaneously the brides, of Zeleni Jurij and of Kresnik.

Slovene narrative tradition thus confirms the conclusion of August Wünsche that ancient cultures regarded the calendar year and its segments as related in kinship (Wünsche 1986). In Slovene narrative tradition, the cosmogonic deities appear as married couples, brothers, sisters, and children. It also confirms the conclusion that this kin connection is based on kinship ties among gods who had created the year and its course.

Over the course of many years, people's attitude toward these myths has changed. Mythological stories gradually transformed into unrelated legends or belief tales, which in turn became increasingly fragmented. Their content changed more than the narrative genres themselves. Today, the supernatural beings from old cosmogonic narratives have acquired a mostly demythicized image. Stories help us preserve the memory of mythological characters that accompany the year and its cycle.

The changing images of these folk belief narratives result from continuously changing cultural and social contexts, whereby supernatural figures acquire a demythizised image in contemporary belief tales, narratives, and urban legends. This contemporary image may approximate spirits and witches, and it may acquire commercial and humorous features. However, surprisingly enough, these ancient supernatural beings are extraordinarily persistent in the Slovenian narrative tradition even today. At the same time, they also appear in folklore events, contemporary customs as well as in literature and art.

ZLATOROG – GOLDENHORN

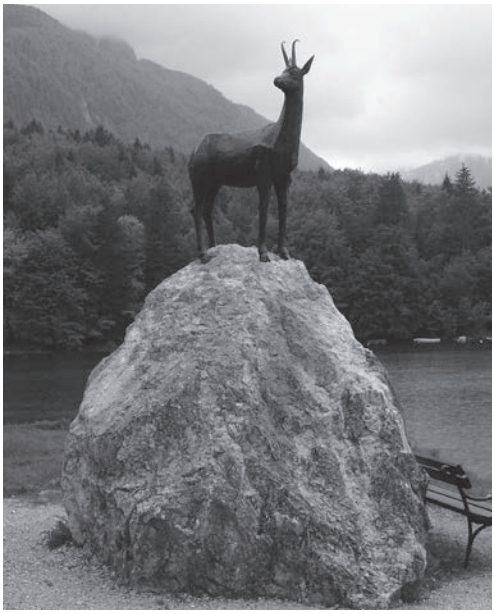
According to popular tradition from the Alpine regions in Slovenia, *Zlatorog* (Goldenhorn) is a white chamois with golden horns, the leader of white goats, which grazed in the magical gardens on the mountain tops on Mt. Triglav, the highest mountain in the Julian Alps. The mountain garden and the people living underneath were protected by the white ladies who were local fairies or Fates. Zlatorog was immortal: even if he is struck in his heart, from a drop of his blood blooms the miraculous healing flower of Triglav (*Triglavska roža*). As soon as the wounded Zlatorog eats the flower, he is cured. Zlatorog is the owner of all the treasures guarded by a snake with several heads, and people believed that whoever could manage to get hold of his golden horn could take the treasures (Kropej 2003: 134).

The folk legend about Zlatorog from the Julian Alps was first published by Karel Dežman in 1868. Since that time, more popular tales of this kind have been traced, attracting the attention of many researchers and artists. Concerning a hunter and a magical animal, this legend has survived in Slovenian folk tradition for centuries. It reflects the deep connection between man and nature, and their interdependency. Zlatorog in myth personifies the deity of the heavens, holds the key to treasures on earth, and has the power of healing. It also reflects the constellation of the stars from the time of its origin. (Kropej 2012: 31).

The folktale from Bovec (a village near Mt. Triglav), written in the style of late Romanticism and published by Karel Dežman in *Laibacher Zeitung* in 1868, is the first preserved Slovenian folk legend about Zlatorog.

The Legend of Goldenhorn

The Jezéra (mountain pasture by the Triglav Lakes) mountain pasture near the Triglav Lakes and rocky Mt. Komna were once part of the Alpine paradise where the White Ladies lived. These were creatures with gentle and compassionate hearts. They would often appear in the valley in order to help poor people in need. They stood by the women in labour, and the boys these women gave birth to were under the special protection of the White Ladies throughout their lives. They taught the shepherds about the medicinal powers of herbs. Thanks to them, strong grass grew on the naked rocky brinks, and the poor people's goats found their pasture there. The White Ladies didn't like people thanking them and, if anyone came close to their high valley, they didn't let them go any further by making threatening gestures. If anyone did come close to their dwellings by accident or by being presumptuous, huge stone



Zlatorog/Goldenhorn in Bohinj, Stojan Batič, 1978 (Photo: M. Kropej, 2009)

avalanches, pounding rain, and storms made them go back where they came from.

Their snow-white chamois grazed and stood guard on the mountain ridge whose walls fall steeply down into the Soča Valley. If an intruder approached, the White Ladies made rocks roll down the slopes. The chamois were led by a strong chamois with golden horns called Zlatorog. The White Ladies made him invulnerable. Even if a hunter's bullet hit him, a plant with magnificent medicinal power would spring up from a single drop of his blood regardless of where it fell, be it a bare rock or icy snow-covered ground. This plant, the rose cinquefoil, was called the "miraculous balm" or the "rose of Triglav." If Zlatorog ate a leaf of this plant, he instantly recovered, even if the bullet hit him in the heart. Even greater was the power of his horns. If someone managed to get close to Zlatorog and take one of his golden horns, he would have the key to all the silver and gold treasures that the Many-Headed Snake kept in Mt. Bogatin (literally, "Rich Man's Mountain").

A seeker of gold from Venice waited at the entrance to Mt. Bogatin and saw how Zlatorog touched the snake with his horn, and the snake became gentle as a lamb and let him dip his horns in the golden stream that ran through the cave. The gold seeker later found a piece of the golden horn that Zlatorog scraped off on a rock. This is how he was able to get all the treasures of the world with it. His entire life he carried bags of gold out of Mt. Bogatin and they were all sent to Italy.

A hunter from the Trenta Valley was not so lucky. People's ingratitude and thoughtlessness turned the high valley of the White Ladies into a rocky wasteland. It happened like this:

At that time there were no roads in the Bovec Region, there was just a trail from Kobarid through Bovec to Tarvisio. Italian merchants used it to carry rich

Venetian goods to Germany on their mules. At the confluence of the Koritnica and Soča rivers, there was a very popular inn where these merchants gathered. Its excellent landlady was well known far and wide because she knew how to sweeten up their rest with good food and red wine. Even more pleasing was her daughter, who was virtuous and the most beautiful girl in the valley. She had many suitors, but she gave her heart to a boy from the Trenta Valley. He was said to be the best hunter far and wide and was called "the hunter of the Trenta Valley." He was the son of a blind widow, and when she became old he took care of her with all the faithful love of a child. They also say that he was protected by the White Ladies. He knew all the trails in the mountains and he was permitted to climb the highest mountains without having to fear the landslides. He would bring many fat chamois, capercaillies, and bunches of beautiful flowers down to the inn, and in this way he won the girl's love.

Because gold and finery are bound to turn people's heads, along with all the coaxing and flattery of the Italian merchants, the girl became arrogant. One Sunday, when the winter was nearly over, some Italian merchants came to the inn carrying rich goods from Venice. One of them, a rich young gentleman, tried to seduce the girl with gold and promises. He put golden rings on her fingers and tied a pearl necklace around her neck. He treated the other guests to strong Italian wine and ordered the musicians to play, so that people could dance.

Then the hunter of the Trenta Valley approached. When he asked his girlfriend for a dance, she frowned at him and, when he reproached her for wearing the Italian's golden finery, the beauty told him with a sneer that "the Italians are polite gentlemen, much more well-mannered than my lover, who despite knowing all the treasures of the mountains, has never even brought me the rose of Triglav."

Because mockery goes directly from the mouth to the heart, the boy felt the harshness of these words in his heart and replied in the same arrogant manner: "I know where to find the key to the treasures of Mt. Bogatin and when I do find it I'll be a king compared to your Italian peddlers, and you are free to stay their barmaid".

He was deeply offended and left the inn. On the way, he met a wicked man called the Green Hunter, who was said to have murdered many upright boys. The Green Hunter told the boy many things about the treasures of Mt. Bogatin and the beautiful girls in Italy that are visited by many treasure seekers. That same night they both set out for the mountains to stalk Zlatorog because the hunter of the Trenta Valley knew all his favourite resting places. They spotted him in the morning, and the hunter's bullet hit Zlatorog. Badly wounded,

he found shelter on a narrow ledge in an inaccessible wall. "Come with me," shouted the Green Hunter, "the keys to the treasures of Mt. Bogatin are ours!" Suddenly, on the dangerous path amidst the snow and ice, the boy saw the most beautiful flowers he had ever seen, and among them also the edelweiss, which in past years he had often picked in order to brew medicine for his mother's eyes. The memory of his mother and his guardian angel warned him: "Stop, don't go any further, and be happy with the roses of Triglav. Your beloved will be ashamed and will ask for your forgiveness because she laughed at you." Then the Green Hunter shouted: "There is still time to subdue Zlatorog before he eats the miraculous balm. Take courage and you'll be richer than all the peddlers that made your girlfriend unfaithful."

The voice of evil won, and they followed the tracks of the bleeding goat marked with flowers along the path between life and death. But Zlatorog regained his strength by eating the miraculous balm and, newly revived, he came galloping down the narrow path towards his pursuers with his horns shining in the sun more beautiful than ever. The hunter was blinded and looked into the endless depths. Zlatorog made one more jump and the hunter lost his footing and fell into the abyss. The Green Hunter laughed maliciously and shouted after him: "Have a nice trip to Italy!"

In the meantime, the girl regretted bitterly what she had done to her hunter and waited sadly for him to show up again. It was only after the swallows began returning home and the waters of the Soča began rising because of the snow melting in the mountains that the river brought down his dead body holding a bouquet of the roses of Triglav.

In the late summer, when the shepherds came near the valley of Zajezeram, they found a desolate rocky country. The White Ladies had left the land forever, and with them the white chamois were also gone. There was no trace left of the former Alpine paradise. In his rage, Zlatorog had laid waste all the most beautiful pastures and even today the traces of his golden horns can be seen on the rocky ground (Dežman 1868: 325–7).[37]

[37] Dežman's text attracted the attention of Viljem Urbas, a professor at the German high school in Trieste. He conveyed it to the German poet Rudolf Baumbach, his friend in Trieste, who widely popularized the story by creating an epic poem titled *Zlatorog* (1877). Written in the style of a romantic epic poem, it praises the glory of the mountains, and in this setting focuses on the love story between a young hunter and Jerica, the daughter of a tavern owner. The love between Jerica and the hunter rouses the jealousy of pretty Špela. In comparison with Dežman's record of the folktale, this epic poem is decidedly more romantic. Unlike Dežman's folktale, it contains a number of additional motifs and characters. At the end, the poem contains the motif of the saviour in the crib (Ranke 1911), which is relatively frequent in this type of folktale. Rudolf Baumach's epic poem *Zlatorog* has been published in 1877 and translated into Slovenian by Anton Funtek in 1886. Later, Zlatorog inspired many poems, operas (Victor Gluth 1910, Viktor Parma 1919), ballets and symphonies.

This old legend, which probably has roots in ancient beliefs of the former prehistoric inhabitants of Alpine and subalpine regions, is connected with the exceptionally good knowledge of the natural phenomena, and with close observation of the stars and the sky. The orbits of planets, stars, galaxies, the earth, the sun and the moon were often connected to the stories people created about mythical animals, their movements and their actions. They were imagined to represent fantastic images of dragons, multi-headed snakes, enormous fish, birds, lizards, dogs, centaurs, horses, unicorns and also chamois like Zlatorog.

Although Zlatorog has roots similar to that of the unicorn, the tradition of the unicorn is older and more widespread. The unicorn is a mythical animal, with first a bull-like and later a horse- or a goat-like body, which acquired its name from the long straight horn on its forehead. The first representations of a bull with one horn originate from four thousand years before Christ on the seal of the ancient towns of the Indus, Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa, where it represents one of the dominant revered icons. Preserved to this day is a 4,500-year-old Indus script on a tablet from Harappa, and depictions of a unicorn in Mohenjo-Daro.

The symbol of a unicorn was later a key element in heraldry, and was used on dynastic as well as on state coats-of-arms. In Slovenian tradition, it is mentioned in folk songs and in some sermons.

The unicorn is frequently mentioned in European medieval mystical texts and depicted in medieval fine art. The motif of "The Maiden and the Unicorn" (*Hortus Conclusius*) was also depicted on frescoes, in miniatures and in ornate initials of medieval manuscripts.

Numerous classical authors, for example Apollodorus and Pindar, mentioned the stag with golden antlers (Wildhaber 1975: 99). Moreover, the Greek historian Polybius also wrote about the unusual cloven-hoofed animal in the Julian Alps as if it was a real animal whose description most resembled a moose. In the 34th book of his *History*, he also mentions the gold mines of the Taurisci. Although only fragments of this book have survived, these were preserved by historian and geographer Strabo in the Augustan Age (Strabo IV 6.12 C 208) who included them in his books (Šašel Kos 1998: 170). It is evident that reports about a moose-like animal and about gold mines in the Julian Alps are extremely old, which is why the origin of folktales about rich Venetian gold merchants and Zlatorog is partly rooted in the historic and geographic circumstances in the period of the Celtic Taurisci.

Tales about the stag with golden antlers can be found in Ireland, in the mountains of Albania, in Greece (Wildhaber 1975: 97), in regions of the South Slavs, West Slavs (Bohemia and Slovakia) and East Slavs (Russia). These legends were particularly popular in the South-Eastern Alps, where they have survived until today.

Somewhat adapted, abbreviated, and without the love story, Dežman's folktale

about Zlatorog was included among the legends from Friuli and the Julian Alps by Anton von Mailly (1922: 55–6, No. 61). In 1965, Milko Matičetov made an audio recording of a legend about a chamois with golden horns from Kanin; the story was recorded in Osojane in Resia.

The Chamois in Kanin Had Golden Horns

Well, a hunter once went hunting. In fact, there were two of them, and they beheld a chamois up there on Mount Kanin. One of them shot it, and the chamois fell amidst some rocks. When they found it, the animal was dead, and at the sight of its horns they were astonished. You know, its horns were entirely golden, real golden horns. They brought it down to Korito. These were hunters from Korito. And there, the locals were just as surprised at the animal's golden horns, you know, real golden ones. But do you know what that gold was? The chamois rubbed against a rock, and that rock was made of gold. The gold remained on its horns. It was rubbing them constantly, so the gold rubbed off.

They brought the chamois down, I know this much. My granny, who had lived in Korito, told this story. But people didn't know where the chamois had rubbed its horns; they only saw that they were golden. (Collected by Milko Matičetov;[38] published in: Dapit, Kropej 2004: 17, no. 2).

Numerous folktales about Mount Bogatin and the treasures hidden in the limestone walls and precipices of the Julian Alps have also been mentioned by Jože Abram. He states the following:

There is a large cave in Bogatin, and possibly it was even the Romans who were once digging for ore there. […] The people of Bohinj claim that it is the roža mogota that opens up the door to Bogatin's treasures (Abram 1927; comp. Kugy 1938 [1979]: 245–58).

Patterned after Dežman's folktale and Baumbach's epic poem, the legend of Zlatorog from the period of late Romanticism was published by Drago Gornik in the *Obisk* newspaper in 1942. In his introduction, Gornik mentions that the tale had been recounted to him by a deceased hunter named Luka. The story does not mention the location of the homestead. Gornik added many details, such as naming the hunter Andrej and the tavern owner's daughter Ančka. He concluded his text with a short poem that was written on the cross erected on the grave of the fatally injured hunter:

[38] Archives of the Institute of Slovenian Ethnology of the Scientific Research Centre of Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Milko Matičetov T 21 A, No. 5.

I set off
To kill some chamois.
But God has told me
It's me who has to die.
I'm Andre Komac.
Pray to God for my
Pious soul. Amen
(Gornik 1942: 189–91).

The lore about Zlatorog, the treasures in Mount Bogatin, and the yellow flower with healing properties that grows from the golden dust from the animal's horns (Cvetek 1993: 43, No. 22) has been preserved in Bohinj to this day.

THE WILD HUNTER

A comparison between Zlatorog, a stag with a cross on its brow, and the unicorn was made by Jože Glonar (1910: 41), who also mentioned in this connection an Old Church Slavonic song titled *Jager na lovu šraja* (The Hunter Hollers on the Hunt). Glonar analysed in detail paragraphs from both older and more recent literature and showed how elements that were the result of the fusion of ancient texts and Christian symbolism (Archangel Gabriel hunting a unicorn) seeped into the original motif of the wild or eternal hunter.

Particularly widespread in the Alpine region is the motif of the Green Hunter persuading a young man to shoot at the animal with golden horns. In the legend, the Green Hunter personifies the devil. He is also similar to the nocturnal hunter who was punished with death because he had violated a taboo: he was hunting on Sunday or on Ember Days. If his transgressions were extremely grave he was even sentenced to eternal hunting. A shot at the golden-horned animal denotes a violation of a taboo. The young hunter had forgotten that Zlatorog was a sacred animal. His shot had the same consequences as if he had shot at the Sun, the crucifix, or at Jesus Christ.

The hunter in the tales about Zlatorog is a parallel to the mythical poacher Jarnik, who was an ambivalent character. Jakob Kelemina established that Jarnik (*jar* = wrathful, angry) is the half-brother of *Zeleni Jurij* (Green George) who is his opponent (Kelemina 1930: 13–14). His act of shooting at the celestial animal characterizes him as a lunar, nocturnal, and winter demon that plays an prominent role in the restoration of the cycle of life. In Slovenia, it was believed that the poacher led the *Divja Jaga* (Wild Hunt) during the twelve days of Christmas in which mysterious horses thundered beneath the firmament (Kropej 1998: 165).

The motif of shooting at a sacred animal is pronounced in the Slovene folk song *Nesrečni lovec* (The Unfortunate Hunter). The poem has preserved the memory of belief in the ban on hunting on certain days, only in this case on Ember Days and Sundays. It also tells of the punishment for those who violate this taboo:

The Unfortunate Hunter

"Arise, arise, you hunter young!
Today is Ember Sunday.
We all are going off to mass,
So off you go as well."
The hunter, though, is fast asleep
Upon his bed of white.

Once again his mother calls:
'Arise, arise, you hunter young!
Today is Ember Sunday.
We all are going off to mass,
So off you go as well.'
The hunter, though, is fast asleep
Upon his bed of white.

His mother calls him for the third time:
'Arise, arise, you hunter young!
Today is Ember Sunday.
We all are going off to mass,
So off you go as well.'

But when his mother went away
He quickly donned his suit of green.
Now off he'll go to mountains high
To shoot at the wild deer.

So he arose and off he went,
And when he came too far
A frightful deer was standing there,
With priest's robes upon its back,
A golden chalice on its brow.

The hunter swiftly turned back
And quickly reached his home.
He said then to his mother:
'Fetch me a confessor fast,
Go fetch a priest for me,
A priest to bless me now.'

So she hurried to fetch a priest.
Yet when she returned
She found him dead already.
Upon him were two dogs of black
They ripped him in the middle
And took him to the foot of hell.[39]

The poem and the legend share a common core. Both tell of a young hunter who sets out to a mountain to shoot deer on Ember Sunday. By doing so, he breaks the prohibition and beholds a terrifying stag wearing a priest's robes on its back and a golden chalice on its forehead. In addition to violating the taboo of hunting on Ember Sunday, the young hunter also took a shot at Jesus Christ. The lore of the Wild Hunter is therefore closely connected with the heritage of Zlatorog, which is also evident from the symbolism that contains elements of Christianity. According to an old German saga, recorded in the 17th century, King Odin hunts a stag with golden rings, which lures him into Hulda's kingdom.

Another version of this folk song *The Unfortunate Hunter* confirms its connection with the legend of Zlatorog:

The Unfortunate Hunter and the Girl

The beau was setting on a trip
And he packed his travel bundle.
His sweetheart rose up early and
Urged him to go to mass.

He did not listen to her words
Nor cared too much for mass.
He took his gun, set off to mounts,
To shoot wild animals.

He goes to shoot some does
And stags, and also bear.
Beneath the mount his sweetheart waits
And washes skeins of yarn.

As she is washing the first skein
A hat comes floating by.

[39] This song is from the manuscript of Matija Valjavec, and was sent to Fran Miklošič in Vienna. Š I: 293–4, no. 239

It is in tatters, drenched in blood,
Belonging to her sweetheart.

The second skein she starts to wash.
A coat comes floating by.
It is in tatters, drenched in blood,
Belonging to her sweetheart.

The third skein she starts to wash.
Along the river Sava,
Her sweetheart's body is floating by.
All torn apart, and drenched in blood.

She drops the wool,
Wades in the river.
She rolls him on her shoulder.
A grave she digs in the garden.

"Over him I'll plant some flowers,
And always will I weep
When I shall weed the flowers;
My love will come no more.".[40]

This song refers to the part of the folktale about Zlatorog that tells of the love between a hunter and his sweetheart. Instead of his mother, in this case it is the girl who tries to persuade the hunter to go to Sunday mass. But grabbing his gun, he sets out to hunt for deer and bear. While the hunter shoots at the deer, his sweetheart washes the skeins of yarn she had spun. Yarn and the act of washing possess the symbolism of female chores that are connected with a female deity, and as such with the creation and with giving birth. This aspect of Zlatorog legend is enhanced by the image of White Ladies (or Fates) who watch over a herd of white chamois and a magic mountain garden, and help women give birth to their sons (Dežman 1868: 326). The Fates are mythical beings who, according to folktales, predict a new-born's fate. The first one sets the yarn of life, the second spins it, and the third cuts it at the time of death, which is why their attributes are the yarn and the distaff (Mencej 2011: 55–84). In the legend about Zlatorog, they are favourably disposed to the young man. They take him under their wing, thus helping his poor widowed mother, and show him healing plants that restore her eyesight.

[40] The song is from Gorenjska and was collected by Valentin Vodnik at the beginning of the 19th century. Š I: 295–6, No. 240

THE MIRACULOUS FLOWER

The Fates and Zlatorog in Dežman's legend (1868) are closely linked with medicinal plants, the magic garden, and the magical healing flower.

In the 19th century, the magical healing plant/miraculous flower – such as the flower of Triglav that heals Zlatorog was compared to *somovica/haoma* which has origins in Indo-Iranian religion and is a cognate of the Vedic *soma*. It grows in bushes on mountain ridges and slopes, but only during the waxing moon. The stag eats it and stays healthy. Picked in bright moonlight, the flower is made into a sacred beverage that in Persian lore is called the *haoma*, that which drives away death. This tradition was preserved in Slovenia by Davorin Trstenjak, who wrote about the grass *kounertnica* in Pohorje.[41] It is evident that speculations of this kind, suggested by representatives of 19th-century mythology, may be highly questionable. However, a common core might possibly be found in Indo-European beliefs that were partly preserved also in the Old Slavic heritage.

The flower of Triglav, or the *roža mogota* (miraculous flower), which springs from drops of blood seeping from the wounded Zlatorog and heals it, thus originated in ancient times. At the beginning of the 20th century, it was compared to an Alpine flower called the Donnenrose, Alpenkraut, rhododendron (Anton von Mailly 1916), or edelweiss. While Jože Glonar linked the flower of Triglav with dittany (*Dictamnum*), a herb from Crete (Glonar 1910: 94), Milko Matičetov explained it as a flower named *Potentilla nitida* (Matičetov 1986: 133). Rather than in its botanical roots, Jože Mahnič was interested in the origin of the flower's name in literature *Rosa mythica* or *Roža mogota* (Mahnič 1950; 1956/1957: 333). The name *roža mogota* was given to the flower of Triglav by Simon Rutar who acknowledged the authenticity of this lore in the Julian Alps:

> *Concerning the spiritual treasure of the common folk it has to be mentioned that people in the northernmost area, around Mount Triglav, recount one of the most beautiful fairy tales; it has been recorded on paper by poet Rudolf Baumbach. It is the tale about the "Zlatorog," a snow-white buck with golden horns. Coveted by every hunter, these horns are believed to open up the way to hidden treasures. If Zlatorog is shot by a lead bullet, its sweat, upon falling to the ground, produces a magnificent, fragrant flower. This so-called roža mogota, or the flower of Triglav, heals Zlatorog and its protective powers*

[41] This tradition was preserved in Slovenia by Davorin Trstenjak (F.Pohorski) in *Novice*, dated 31 March 1857: *Narodne pravljice o mesecu* (Folktale as about the Moon) and in Novice, 12 March 1859 – where he writes about grass *kounertnica* in Pohorje; and also by Matija Valjavec in Novice, 18 July 1857: *Od žune* (about the Woodpecker), reprint: *Trava, ki ima tako moč, da odpre vsak zapor* (The Herb Which Has Such a Strength That It Opens Every Lock) (Valjavec, Popit 2002: 227).

destroy the impertinent hunter. While the tale was widespread on both sides of the Julian Alps, in the northeast of Kranjska as well as in Goriza on the opposite side, its true location is by the source of the Soča (Rutar 1892–3 [1997]: 109–10).

[Simon Rutar further explains the origin of this tale]:

The tale of Zlatorog and the treasure beneath Mount Bogatin originates in mythology but has a more recent historical framework as well. Certainly, it must have developed among our people during a lengthy period of time. Its mythological core with the Fates and Zlatorog, the treasure, and the flower of Triglav dates from the era prior to the Christianization of Slovenes. The imagination of the common people created out of natural phenomena in the mountains, which seemed very mysterious, a number of deities and spirits (the meadows beneath Mount Triglav became a magic garden, white mists above its top the Fates, and the lightning was interpreted as the reflection of the enraged Zlatorog's horns). […] The belief in natural forces and ancient deities must have been particularly vivid among the Slovenes living along the upper part of the Soča, for even at the beginning of the 14th century in Kobarid the Inquisition persecuted the worshippers of the sacred tree and the stream beneath it. It is certain that the core of this belief is not entirely original but must have roots in many aspects in the Eurasian mythological primeval community (Rutar 1892–3 [1997]: 130).

The motif of the stag (the "monoceros" or the unicorn) curing its wounds with a healing plant was often used as a parable by church speakers during religious and moral teachings. In the region of Slovenia, such speakers in the Catholic Baroque era were Janez Svetokriški (Rupel 1991), Peter Pavel Glavar (Demšar 1991: 97), and father Rogerij. (He was strongly influenced by Filip Picinelli and his *Mundus simbolicus* 1694–1730 (Glonar 1910: 48–9.) Rogerij writes the following:

When a stag is shot it hastens to find a herb called "dittany". The dittany makes the bullet fall from the wound. […] Although shot and wounded, the stag rises and goes to the mountains and hills, looking for this Dictamnum herb. After it eats the herb, its blows are cured and its wounds healed (Mahnič 1950: 126).

The healing herb *Dictamnum* was known in ancient Greece and in the Roman world, and is presented as a healing plant by Dioscurides, Teophrastus and later also

in *Fiziologus* (Glonar 1910: 58–63). The connection of this herb in ancient texts and the flower of Triglav in the legend of Zlatorog has been pointed out by Jože Glonar (1910: 62). The connection of the stag and the Dictamnum herb in such older sources proves the long history of this legend.

THE MOUNTAIN TREASURES AND THE MYSTERIOUS HOOFED ANIMALS

The oral tradition about Zlatorog is predominantly connected with treasures and with the symbolism of the sun and the celestial realm. In other Slovenian narratives, Zlatorog can be replaced by the stags with a golden cross or golden rings; with white horses; with white stags; and with the chamois with golden hooves. According to an old German saga, written down in the 17th century, King Odin hunts a stag with golden rings that lures him to Hulda's kingdom. A similar motif can be traced in the legends about St. Hubertus, St. Eustace, St. Felix of Wales, and St. Julian Hospitalit tracking a stag. As the stag turns a cross forms between its antlers, and from the cross Jesus Christ speaks (Glonar 1910: 92; Kretzenbacher 1968: 139). A similar motif has been preserved in Slovene lore in a legend about the foundation of the monastery in Žiče (Dapit and Kropej 2004: 20).

The lore of these gold-decorated animals and of mines and streams of gold has been preserved on both sides of the Julian Alps (in Posočje and in Bohinj), in Koroška, Štajerska/Steiermark, the Kamnik Alps, and the Savinja Alps. The following folktale about a white stag in Štajerska was written by Johann Krainz in 1880:

The White Stag

Three men from the village of Kallwang, which is situated to the west of Leoben in Steiermark [Štajerska], Austria, went hunting in the mountains. Since this took place on St. Hubertus' Day, on which hunters traditionally shoot an exceptional quarry, they were certain that they too would be fortunate. When they reached a boundary stone they suddenly beheld a white stag coming from a thicket in the forest. With a golden crucifix shining between its antlers, the apparition was surrounded by an unusual silver radiance. The three men watched the unusual animal with surprise, then placed their rifles behind some dense shrubbery and followed the white stag that slowly withdrew to the dense forest. It often disappeared from view, but its bright glow appeared among the dark firs time and again. As they finally reached the edge of the forest they saw the white stag high above them, at the edge of a hill, with its golden cross glittering to a great distance. The apparition vanished after that. It was then that the men perceived the chief forester, along with half a dozen

helpers, right in front of them. Believing that they were poachers, the forester gave a nod to his men and the hunters were surrounded. But since they had no guns, for they had been left behind the bush before they started to follow the stag, they were set free again. This is how the white stag brought good fortune to our hunters as well (Krainz 1880: 81, No. 47; Dapit, Kropej 2004: 21, No. 6).

A legend about a white horse from Vršac, which has been preserved in Gorenjska, was published by Matej Tonejc-Samostal in *Dunajski zvon* in 1879:

The White Horse on Vršac

There is a valley between Triglav and Mount Vršac that is full of gravel and rocks and extends all the way to Šmarjetna Glava. Riches are hidden in this valley – a treasure covered with a large square slab. Everything around is bare, just gravel and rocks, with high cliffs to the right and to the left. Neither grass nor any kind of herb grows here. Swift-footed goats roam in these parts and use them as a refuge from hunters. Shepherds have already tried to find the slab and dig out the gold, but so far nobody has been able to move it.

On a Sunday in August, two men set out from Dolina up to Šmarjetna Glava. One of them was an old hunter, the other a shepherd. When they had almost reached their destination they decided to rest for a while on the scree before they start to work. Suddenly, they heard a strange rumbling along the rocks, making a hissing sound. It felt like a strong wind chafing against the rock. The earth shook beneath them, rocks started to roll from the heights, and sand escaped from beneath their feet.

Suddenly they froze in fear.

On the very spot where they had planned to dig stood a white horse. Where did it come from, and how did it turn up in this terrible place? A dense fog abruptly enveloped the two seekers. They started to walk without knowing where to go. Wherever they turned, the horse remained in front of them. To their left and to their right was nothing but cliffs and deep precipices. After a while, the two found themselves on the top of a rocky hill from which one could see Velepolje. The horse had vanished. How and where, they did not know. Nor could they retrace their steps or find the path that had led them to the top of the hill. They were just happy to have left the unknown place.

But someday the one shall come who will be lucky enough to manage to pry the treasure from beneath the rocky slab. This hero will be a marvellous shot and will have no fear or concern. He will have to shoot from Šmarjetna Glava at the white horse guarding the treasure. Even before the sunrise he will have

to wait in his spot. When the first ray of sun shines upon the white mane of the magic animal he will have to fire his gun and hit the animal with the first bullet. The marksman will have to see the horse before the horse sees him. Even when mortally wounded, the white horse will try to confound the hero's mind. But the horse will remain on the ground. Flowers, akin to edelweiss, shall spring from its blood. They will appear from the snow and bloom before the snow melts. If the livestock grazing in the pasture eat these flowers they shall be stout and healthy. People will pick the flowers and keep them by their side, for good luck shall remain with anybody who looks for and picks the kindly blooming blossoms (Cited after Kelemina 1930: 127–8, no. 76; Dapit, Kropej 2004: 22).

Unlike the tales about Zlatorog, this legend allows for the death of the white horse. The treasure beneath the stone slab will be dug out by the hero who will shoot from Šmarjetna Glava at the white horse and hit it with the first bullet, provided that the shooter will see the horse before the horse sees him.

The tale about the chamois with a cross on its brow has also been preserved in the region of Bovško. As late as 1998, Barbara Ivančič Kutin recorded a variant of this folktale.

The Mountain Chamois with a Cross on Its Brow

Since they worked during the week, hunters usually hunted on Sundays. Well, there was a hunter who worked in Rabelj during the week and hunted on Sundays. He hunted on every Sunday, that is.

His mother always tried to prevent him from going.

"Do not go hunting, do not go!"

But he would not listen. He went to Izgora (a mountain above the Bovščica Valley by Bovec). On the way there, he met a hunter all clad in green who invited our hunter to hunt with him. When they reached Izgora, they beheld that goat with a cross; it had a cross on its brow. The hunter followed it, but the goat led him to the edge of a precipice. At that moment the green hunter vanished. Our hunter stood above the precipice. With the goat with the cross on its forehead standing on the edge, he could go neither forwards nor backwards. It was then that the hunter remembered that his mother had told him to go to mass instead of hunting or else he might encounter misfortune. But it was too late now. He asked for help, he started shouting. People who had come from Bavšica started to gather beneath the edge. They yelled up to him that they could not help him. Up there, he prayed. He prayed desperately.

People said that he should throw his gun down so that they could see whether they could help him off the edge of the precipice.
They said: "If the gun breaks in pieces so shall you."
He threw down his gun that split in two. So there was nothing left for him but to throw himself into the precipice.
But people say that he was not damned. Christ came to help him. First, he misled him but then forgave him after his death.
"It was then," people said, "that a rock wall cracked to reveal a fissure in the shape of a cross." You can still see it today (Ivančič Kutin 1998: 32–4; Dapit, Kropej 2004: 19, No. 4).

The chamois with golden hooves were mentioned by Karel Dežman in his comment on the folktale about Zlatorog (1868). More material on this animal has been collected by Albina Hintner in the area of the Kamnik Alps. In 1901, she wrote about the chamois with golden hooves in the *Laibacher Schulzeitung*. Should a person inadvertently or intentionally come too near their dwellings a downpour of rain and thunderstorms awaited them, or else thick avalanches of rocks from the top of the mountain forced them to turn around and leave.

The Chamois with the Golden Hooves at Zijalka Cave
Zijalka, a cave on the northern slope of Mount Mokrica in the Kamnik Alps, was used by shepherds as a sheepfold when the weather was bad. It contained the bones of a cave bear. If they went astray at night, shepherds sometimes beheld a chamois with golden hooves by the cave. It would go in and out of the cave. If they came too close, torrents of rain erupted, or they were showered by densely falling rocks from the mountain range and had to back away quickly in order to escape the avalanches. The chamois refreshed itself in a mysterious gold-bearing spring. Many went looking for this spring, but nobody has found it yet (Hintner 1901: 93; Dapit, Kropej 2004: 18, No. 3).

At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, other collectors of folk heritage also wrote about the goat with golden hooves appearing in the Kamnik and in the Savinja Alps. A folktale named *Zlati vir v kamniških planinah* (A Golden Spring in the Kamnik Alps), which was published by Fran Kocbek in a book on the lore of the Savinja Alps, tells of a goat with golden hooves that soaks them in a golden spring:

A goat with golden hooves is frequently seen in the mountains around Kamnik. The hooves are golden because the animal goes to drink from a golden spring that has been searched for many times.
Each year at the same time, an Italian came for this gold. After his death, nobody else found the golden stream (Kocbek 1926: 263–4, no. 73; Kelemina 1930: 321, no. 234).

In the Kamnik Alps, Tone Cevc managed to collect an abundant lore about the chamois with golden hooves (Cevc 1973). In 1973, the eighty-five-year old Katarina Jerin, nicknamed "Bernardova mama," told him the following legend:

The Chamois with Golden Hooves at the Cave above Bistrica, and the Hunter from Luče
There was a fellow from Luče who told this story. "The chamois and deer ran by here. And they had golden hooves."
He said: "What have we got here?"
It was a cave. So he went in. There were large nuggets [of gold], that's right! They were heavy, those nuggets!"
So he said: "Should I take them?" It was really pouring. "Okay, I will not take them today but will return tomorrow!"
So he came the following day, and nothing was there any more. Naturally, since the cave had closed again.
That fellow from Luče was a poacher, and he was poaching then. So, he told this story to hunters and to my father, and to Dr. Šmidinger from Vienna. There was a hunting lodge here in Bistrica, and tourists hunted deer, the chamois, and everything. At home he recounted this many times over.
My father asked: "Why did you leave them?"
"Well," he said, "I didn't know it was going to be closed the following day." So there was nothing. "And later," he said, "there was nothing." So he left empty-handed. People have already been searching there; they have, yeah, but could not find that cave. "Oh, if only I would've taken the gold right then, for the cave was later closed." It was here above Bistrica, some eight meters high, that the cave was (Cevc 1973: 82–3).

A common characteristic of these narratives is human greed. The lore about the chamois and the deer with golden hooves has been preserved largely in the area around Kamnik. According to the local lore, these animals appear near caves with hidden gold. Similarly, the narrative about the gold in Farjev Plaz and under Mount Mokrica (Cevc 1973: 83–6) also refers to gold and to a golden stream in the Kamnik

Alps. Interestingly enough, almost no similar traditions have been preserved in other parts of Europe. This lore was thoroughly researched by Tone Cevc, who found oral tradition about the Venetians and Italians searching for the gold, and about white animals, all over Europe (Cevc 1973: 87–90). In contrast to this, he discovered a reference to a white goat with golden hooves only in the description of traditional Christmas carol-singing in Galicia; this tradition was practised until recent years. A boy was traditionally disguised as a goat with golden hooves, and another one as an old man with a white beard. Cavorting around the village, the boisterous boys performed various pranks. Then they sang a carol at each village house, with the goat promising a bountiful harvest anywhere its golden hooves might tread; where it will not walk, the crops shall be poor (Cevc 1973: 90).

Demonstrating the deep connection between humans and nature, and their fateful co-dependence, the tale of Zlatorog, which speaks about the hunter and the miraculous animal, has been preserved through centuries. The magic animal personifies a celestial, chthonic deity that brings life and possesses the key to earthly treasures.

There were many theories about the meaning and the origin of the Zlatorog legend. Comparing Zlatorog with the unicorn, Jože Glonar (1910) discovered a connection between the motif of the Wild and the Eternal Hunter and the shared cultural heritage of European peoples.

Josip Abram deemed that this legend was brought to Alpine territory by Slovenes from their old Indo-European homeland, and has origins of more than 1500 years ago (Abram 1927).

Jakob Kelemina believed that in the form of a stag with golden horns living in the miraculous garden, Zlatorog represented the elder brother of the poacher Jarnik. Zlatorog's original adversary was the Green Hunter (Jarnik) who was later supplanted by the *Hunter of Trenta* (Kelemina 1930: 72–74, No. 22). Kelemina also compares the hunter with the constellation of Orion and with Sirius (1930: 14).

According to Milko Matičetov, the legend recorded by Karel Dežman is constructed "mystification" from the period of late Romanticism and has hardly any roots in oral tradition, even though Dežman, born in the hills surrounding Idrija, wrote that he had heard the story from old shepherds from the Bovško region (Matičetov 1986). Tone Cevc, in turn, considered the categorically negative position of Matičetov on the authenticity of the lore of Zlatorog somewhat questionable, particularly since he found a great deal of similar narrative tradition in the Kamnik Alps (Cevc 1973).

Leopold Kretzenbacher and Leander Petzoldt connected the beliefs that can be traced in the legend of Zlatorog with the old religions where the white animals have been worshipped as sacred and in a way as personifications of God (Kretzenbacher 1968; Petzoldt 1995: 197).

Vlado Nartnik, in his astro-ethnological analysis, came to the conclusion that this legend was brought to Alpine territory by Slovenes from their old Indo-European homeland, and has its origins in that period (1987: 95). In addition to this, he presumed that this legend reflects the sequence of three constellations of that time: the constellation of Capricorn, the constellation of Sagittarius and the constellation of Scorpio (Nartnik 1987: 106).

Considering all the material that was collected during these years, it can be said that the legend about Zlatorog in Slovenia has old roots, and that the tradition about the unicorn, a white chamois with golden horns or with golden hooves, or about a deer (a stag) bearing a golden cross on its head, is of Indo-European origin, known in Europe from Ireland to Albania. The traces of Zlatorog were preserved by Greek historian Polybius who wrote about the unusual cloven-hoofed animal in the Julian Alps and the golden mines of the Celtic Taurisci living there (Polybius, 34th book, 144–129 B.C.). Later, the geographer Strabo included this source in his books (Strabo IV 6.12 C 208), as Marjeta Šašel Kos exhaustively discussed and proved that it is evident that reports about a moose-like animal and about gold mines in the Julian Alps are extremely old, which is why the origin of folktales about rich Venetian gold merchants and Zlatorog is partly rooted in the historic and geographic circumstances of that time (Šašel Kos 1998).

In Slovene legends, Zlatorog has an adversary: the Green Hunter. The Wild Hunter *Jarnik* has also been known among the Slavs under the name *Jernej* (Bartholomew), or sometimes *Jurij s pušo*. He is the opponent of *Zeleni Jurij* (Green George). Zlatorog in myth personifies the deity of the heavens, holds the key to treasures on earth, and has a power of healing. Reflecting also the constellation of the stars at the time of its origin, this myth was brought to Alpine territory by Slovenes from their old Indo-European homeland.

In Slovenian mythopoetic traditions, Zeleni Jurij as a rider on a white horse, Kresnik with horse hooves, Zlatorog or the white horse, and the white foal born as a foal at Christmastime, represent a teriomorphic image of the deity that has the decisive role in the process of renewal. Zeleni Jurij, Kresnik, Zlatorog and the Christmas foal mark the four turning points in the yearly cycle and represent an earthly incarnation of Perun (Kropej 1998).

Svarog, *Svarožič*, *Božič* (Slovenian *božič* means Christmas), the god of fire and the sun, is mentioned in the Slavic translation of Joann Malal's chronicle from the 12th century as a deity similar to the ancient Hephaestus in Greece.

In his *History of Kranjska*, Anton Linhart (1788) described the Slavic god *Božič* (Boshizh) as a young god who was called *Badnjak* by the Uskoki in Dalmatia (Linhart 1981: 261). Badnjak is also South Slavic Christmas and the oak block or branch burning on the Orthodox Christmas fire. Like Linhart, Ivan Navratil noted that the term *božič* denotes a young or small god (Navratil 1848: 203–204). Niko Kuret suggested that the origin of Božič may be in the period of the Old Slavs, when he represented a young (small) god by the name Svarog, Svarožič. Like the Greek Dionysus, god of agriculture, Svarog was allegedly born, each year anew, on the winter solstice. Shortened into the name "Božič", the name of the young god Svarožič was allegedly transferred to the new-born Christian saviour when the population living in the territory of present day Slovenia embraced Christianity, which in that period was spread by Irish missionaries (Kuret 1970/IV: 116).

In his review of Peisker's article (Peisker 1926) about Tvarog and the Deva, Jakob Kelemina stressed the likelihood that Tvarog is but another form of Svarog, Svarožič, or the equivalent of *Sventovid* later *St. Vid* (Kelemina 1926/27). He also expressed the opinion that rather than keeping alive the memory of dualistic religious concept, which was claimed by Peisker, such toponyms refer to the tripartite system of gods, i.e. Svarog (Sventovid, Perun), Črt (Šent, Trdoglav), and Deva (Marjetica).

Kelemina believed that among the Old Slavs, Svarožič was the supreme god, the primogenitor of heaven and earth, the sun and light, and that his other name was Sventovid. Both Svarožič and Sventovid corresponded to the Greek Uranus, or Chronos. Since this deity also caused thunder, some Slavic nations referred to him as Perun (Kelemina 1930, 25).

Despite certain similarities between the three Slavic deities, i.e. Svarog, Sventevid, and Perun, it is unlikely that they represented the same god. It seems that they played an important role as celestial, or solar, deities and as deities of light. Since the etymological source of the word comes from the word *svaro-* meaning the sky firmament. Svarog certainly is a celestial deity. Roman Jakobsen substantiated the premise that the old Slavic term *svaro* denoted the moving sky (Jakobsen 1971).

Baltic and Labian Slavs worshipped Sventevid as the supreme god. In his *Chronica Slavorum* (The Chronicle of the Slavs) from the 12th century, Helmold writes that Sventevid was the mightiest deity in their pantheon, worshipped as the god who wins the most glorious of battles and makes the most successful prophesies; other deities

were but demigods. Sventevid's most famous sanctuary was situated in Arkona on the island of Rügen, Germany. Sventevid had four heads with which he was able to see all in all directions, thus symbolizing his omniscience. His attributes were the sword, the ensign, spears, and the battle flag with an eagle. However, with the possible exception of some customs and narratives associated with St. Vid, his memory has not been preserved in the Slovene tradition.

People believed that during the period around the winter solstice, when the days are the shortest and nights the longest, the young sun is born. It is born on a wintry night when, according to an Iranian myth, there was a fight between Indra and Vitra. Indra kills Vitra and releases the sun. A Slavic parallel describes the battle between Perun and Veles. Once Perun defeats Veles, Božič is released, or born. In folk songs, Božič is referred to as the Christmas foal (Pleterski 1989).

Old carols from Bela Krajina[42] mention a black horse. Upon stopping at a village house, carol singers sang a song in which they set the young son of the master of the house on horseback. The child wore a hat and a silver belt. The song conveyed good wishes for male offspring and for a bountiful harvest, particularly of wheat and wine. In 1893, Janko Barle wrote that the "Žumberčani" – people from Žumberak in Bela Krajina – came to perform magic, which means to celebrate Christmas with the song:

Good day, master,
May God give you good visitors!
In the courtyard there is a green pine,
With a black horse tied to it.
The horse is saddled,
And your small son is seated there,
Wearing a silver belt.
Your good repute is worth more
Than that silver belt.
May your wheat be prolific,
And your grapevine as well![43]

Just as the black horse in Russian folk songs does not foretell death but is a symbol of youth and vitality, the black horse in this song is not associated with death (Keber 1996: 167).

The memory of the Christmas foal has also been preserved in some customs. The most obvious traces of this belief can be found in the traditions from the hills of Šavrin in Istra/Istria, which mention the Christmas "foal" that will come in the evening to eat

[42] Folk songs Š III/1904: no. 4743–4747, collected by Ivan Šašelj and Janko Barle in 1839 and 1893.

[43] Š III/1904: no. 4746.

hay under the table. In Gažon and its vicinity, children had to fast all day on Christmas "vigils", for those who abstained from all food would behold the "foal" in the evening. On Christmas Eve, the villagers of Divača watched the reflections of shadows cast by the Christmas log burning in the fireplace, saying that Božič jumps around the fireplace. On the same evening, the inhabitants of Brkini prepared a basket filled with hay for the Christmas foal (Kuret 1989/II: 333–334). Like the Scandinavian *julbock*, such customs are based on ancient beliefs that the foal is a personification of the deity that is closely linked with the yearly cycle and the renewal of nature. These notions were probably rooted in the Indo-European tradition. In Atharvaveda, the time is personified by Kala, who runs like a horse with many bridles (Cassirer 1965, 115).

TRIGLAV

Triglav (Three-head), also known as *Troglav*, *Triglaous*, and *Trigelawus*, was a three-headed Balto-Slavic god who was, according to archaeological finds, worshipped in Szczecin, Wolin, Silberberg, and Brandenburg. Sources from the 12th century report that Triglav had a black horse with a saddle decorated with gold and silver. The horse's head was covered with a golden bandage intended to prevent him from gazing upon human sins.

Triglav has three heads because he directs three worlds, the heaven, the earth, and the underworld. He is mentioned by some medieval authors such as Ebbo (12th cent.), Helmold (12th cent.), and Herbord, who was one of the biographers of Otto von Bamberg in the 12th century. Adam of Bremen assumed that the name comes from the triangular shape of Wolin Island (Ovsec 1991: 147).

Ebbo reported on the cult of Triglav in Szczecin, writing that the middle, and the largest, of the three hills that guarded the entrance to the city was dedicated to Triglav. On the hill stood a statue of a higher deity with three silver heads adorned with a golden tiara.

An early medieval stone sculpture representing a head with three faces was found in the church of St. Martin near Silberberg, not far from St. Veit an der Glan in Austria. The right cheek and the neck of the stone head each have a carving of two more faces, which could be a remainder of the three-headed deity of the Alpine Slavs (Kahl 2005: 9–55).

Another stone with three heads from Kärnten/Koroška in Austria was found on Magdalensberg/Štalenska Gora near Klagenfurt/Celovec. It seems that the statue was of Pre-Roman origin.[44]

[44] More about this see: Schnabl 2012: 237–242.

An early medieval stone sculpture of a head with three faces, St. Martin near Silberberg

Due to the similarity of names, a transfer of the emperor's name to the three-headed deity occurred after the death of Roman emperor Trajan in A.D. 117. South Slavs called the deity Trajan or Trojan. In Serbian folk songs, Trojan was referred to as an old deity and god of war (Čajkanović 1973). The Trojan of Serbian folktales has three heads, one of which devours humans, another cattle, and the third fish, all of which represent victims of three empires. Since Trajan set off into the world at night he has been classified as a supernatural being of lunar, or chthonic, character.

Some researchers were of the opinion that, apart from the name, the god Triglav is allegedly not related to Mt. Triglav, the highest mountain in Slovenia, and has nothing in common with it. Although this view was also expressed by Milko Matičetov (1986: 130), current research indicates otherwise. As early as in the 18th century, Anton Tomaž Linhart in his *Attempt at the History of Kranjska* (1788) wrote that Mt. Triglav was named after a three-headed deity. His view was shared by Anton von Mailly, who wrote in a note on the tale about it that Triglav (*Terglov*, *Tricorno*, *Dreikopf*) was a mountain dedicated to the Slavic god Triglav. The image with three heads was depicted in the temple in Brandenburg and in Szczecin (Mailly 1922).

Triglav stone (*lapis Terglev*) is mentioned in the Salzburg land register of 1322 in relation with an estate in Ptuj where the Triglav stone is situated. However, Andrej Pleterski (2001) believes that the stone in question is most likely the Orpheus stone.

Jakob Kelemina drew a parallel between folk songs about Trdoglav and Marjetica (SLP I, no. 21) and the related narrative tradition, asserting that the Trdoglav of the songs was indeed Triglav (Kelemina 1930: 274, no. 202/IV). Lubor Niederle believed that Triglav was the god of war and not a Pan-Slavic god as some scholars claimed. Damjan Ovsec, in contrast, is of the opinion that Triglav, with his black horse and silver heads, is definitely not a solar deity but a supernatural being of the lunar world. He compared Triglav with the three-headed Celtic deity or horned god *Cernunosos* (Ovsec 1991: 148). Likewise, believing that three heads are typical for gods of the underworld, Veselin Čajkanović compared Triglav with polycephalous German and Celtic deities. He also states, that the chthonic nature of Triglav is allegedly reflected in his similarity with Hermes Trismegist, Wotan, and the Gaelic Mercury (Čajkanović 1973).

Oral tradition has preserved the memory of the cursed thieving knight whose castle was built in one of the three peaks of Mt. Triglav. This tale "Die Kraft der Mistel" was collected in Alpine regions, and its Slovenian adaptation, titled "The Treasure of the Cursed Knight in Triglav", was published by Jakob Kelemina in his collection of Slovene folktales (Kelemina 1930: 129–130, no. 77). According to this tale, a thieving knight once had a castle in one of the peaks of Mt. Triglav. Together with his squires he terrorized his serfs and waylaid traveling merchants. But the knight received his punishment when he was attacked by a much stronger foe that destroyed his castle and killed him. The brigand was punished for his sins by having to restlessly wander in human form for three hundred years. When his punishment ended, he found an elderly destitute couple living beneath Mt. Triglav and set out to help them to wealth. With the help of a magical mistletoe twig, which grows only on the trunk of a gnarled oak, the couple managed to dig out the looted treasure buried in the cellar of the knight's castle in Triglav. The elderly couple was rewarded with unimagined wealth, and the cursed knight was finally able to lie down to eternal rest.

Much of the narrative material on Mt. Triglav was collected by Jože Abram in his article "The Mythological World of Triglav" (1927) and by Julius Kugy in his book *Five Centuries of Triglav* (1927, Slovene edition 1979). Children's author Mirko Kunčič published a collection of tales based on folk tradition, entitled *Folktales of Triglav*, which celebrate the area immediately beneath Mt. Triglav, particularly Dovje and Mojstrana. This mountain also inspired author France Bevk to write in 1930 his book *Umirajoči bog Triglav* (The Dying God Triglav).

BELENUS AND BELESTIS

Belenus, also named *Belin* or *Belinus* was an important deity venerated by the people of Noricum and Carnia. This principal god in Noricum was the god of light, the sun, and the healing powers, and, according to Tertullian (beg. of 3rd cent.), protector against hostile attacks. His companion *Belestis* (*Belena*, *Belestis Augusta*, *Belestris*) has been documented only in Noricum (Šašel Kos 2001: 10–11).

The cult of Belinus was widespread in Iberia, Gaul, and the Eastern Alps. It spread from Noricum to Carnia and Aquileia, where it became so strong that Belenus became the patron saint of Aquileia. From there, the cult expanded to Celeia. Shrines dedicated to Belenus were erected mainly on Magdalensberg/Štalenska Gora and by Ziguln castle near Klagenfurt/Celovec; in Hochosterwitz/Ostrovica by Sankt Veit/Šentvid an der Glan; two of them were also discovered in Villach/Beljak. Two shrines,

dedicated to his companion Belestis, were found in Podljubelj in Karavanken. Belestis was worshipped as a health-bringing goddess of light responsible for the birth and the development of living beings, and as such was the patron of nature and fertility. One of the altars in Podljubelj features a tree, a panther, and an unidentified wild animal. Since shrines dedicated to Belestis were typically erected on mountain passes, worshippers who visited them were generally travellers.

Recent etymological findings and toponyms suggest that Belenus and Belestis were also associated with water, and as such undoubtedly possessed healing powers (Šašel Kos 2001: 13). Since Belenus was primarily considered the god of light and the sun, he was frequently equated with the ancient Greek god Apollo. As such, Belestis might be closest to the Roman goddess Diana and to the Illyrian goddess Silvana, the companion to Silvan.

As a Slavic deity, Belenus was reconstructed after the mythological tradition of the western Slavs who had settled along the Baltic Sea, in north-eastern Poland, and in northeastern Germany. Helmold's *Cronica Sclavorum* from the second half of the 12th century mentions an evil god named Zcerneboch (*Černobog*); *črn* means black in Slavic languages. Many scholars therefore concluded that the Slavs also worshipped *Belbog* (*bel-* means white), god of light, although his name is not mentioned in the Chronicle of the Slavs. Moreover, his existence is confirmed by numerous toponyms, for example *Belye Bogi* near Moscow and the names for mountains *Beli Bog* and *Černi Bog* among the Lusatian Serbs. The first is perceived as a positive location, while the last denotes a negative one. *Belbog* is also known among the South Slavs, as *Beli Bog* among the Serbs and as *Bel Bog* among the Bulgarians. Since *Belibog*, or *Belinez* (*Flinz*), is also mentioned by Anton Tomaž Linhart in his History of Kranjska (1788), this deity was obviously also known to Slovenes.

It seems that the Slavs who had settled the territory of present-day Slovenia had brought the cult of Belbog, or Belinus, with them. When they found the existing lore about Belenus in their new homeland, they recognized in him a god that was at least partly similar to their own god. Gradually merging into one, the two traditions have been preserved to this day.

Trstenjak's presentations of Belinus as a goblin and the master of ore and gold seem unlikely. He recorded that people in Prekmurje told stories of the *beliči*, who were purported to be fairy beings that accompanied water nymphs, or rusalkas/undines.

Beliči and the Water Nymphs

[…] At night, water nymphs ride white birds into the green mountains where the beliči are. They are their lovers who guard pure gold. The nymphs stay there throughout the night. In the morning, when Dagana drives golden lambs

to mountain pastures, the nymphs return on their white birds to their water kingdom (Trstenjak 1859: 6; Kelemina 1930:nno. 146/II).

Just as inconclusive is Trstenjak's article that claims that the people of Medžimurje imagined Belič as a white, light demon for whom they set food in order to learn the whereabouts of hidden treasures of gold and ore. Calling him *Laber*, the inhabitants of Pohorje imagined Belič as a small guardian spirit of the household (Kelemina 1930: no 117/III).

Slovenian oral tradition, particularly from Gorizia and Tolmin, has preserved the memory of St. Belinus (*Belič*) who is a mythical creature with healing powers. The locals believed that Belin was a powerful healer whose key, as reported by Simon Rutar, could cure blindness:

St. Belinus Cures Blindness
Believing that Belinus is a great healer, the folks in Tolmin have started to add the adjective "saint" to his name. His key allegedly cures blindness (Rutar 1882: 21; Kelemina 1930: no. 12).

It could be that Belinus' healing "key" a magical plant is akin to the *kounertnica* herb from the lore on Kresnik or Zlatorog, which unlocks treasures hidden in mountain rocks. Belinus and Kresnik definitely have much in common. It is interesting that Rutar does not interpret Belinus as a god of Celtic origin but as a Thraco-Illyrian deity. Contrary to this, Marjeta Šašelj Kos established that Belinus was an important deity in Iberia, Gaul, and in the eastern Alps (Šašel Kos 2001)

A folktale with the motif of a healing herb that belongs to the *Beli možiček* (White Little Man) and grows on Mt. Krn has been preserved to this day, and might be one of the very few remnants of the old belief in god Belinus. The tale, which was narrated in Livške Ravne, a village near Mt. Matajur in Slavia Veneta, has been preserved from oblivion by Pavel Medvešček.

The Herb of the White Man
There behind Mt. Krn, on a pointed rock, grows the herb of the White Man that has been growing for ever. It only blooms every seventh year on the seventh day of the seventh month. Once it stops flowering, it only produces one seed. The one who gets it and eats it does not have to fear either the plague or the cholera, or any other disease. If already sick, he will be well in a moment. But how to find this seed? Only old Voghrink knows how, and he already has one foot in the grave. What's even worse is that so many have been waiting for this seed for years and years.

Who knows why old Voghrink decided to help the beautiful young Jula, who suffers from consumption and grows lighter and smaller day-by-day. When the seventh month came, Voghrink prepared for his journey up the mountain as is necessary. He didn't forget a rope and a pulley, either. So on that day, before sunrise, he left his home. Since he was far too old for such a difficult journey he was well aware that he would have to walk for quite a few days. As he reached the flower, he suddenly became exhausted. When he recovered after a while, a White Man stood before him on high legs, with a tiny child's head and a flowing white beard. The man said outright that the flower belonged to him, and that he knew why Voghrink had come up the mountain. But since he saw that Voghrink could not get the seed by himself, he would bring it for him. To repay this, Voghrink has to remain on the mountain as a white vapour. Without hesitation, Voghrink agreed to this. He only asked the man to let him descend the mountain to bring the seed to Jula.
Once Jula's cheeks turned red again she went to see Voghrink to thank him for everything, but she only found an empty house. Since then, nobody has ever seen old Voghrink again. Nor have they ever beheld the white man's flower (Medveščček 1990: 71).

This story was recounted in 1953 by Antonija Faletič. She described the White Man as a man with long legs, a small child's head, and a long white beard. His magic herb seems similar to the magic flower of Zlatorog. The herb of Belinus grows behind Mt. Krn, on top of jagged rocks. It blooms every seventh year, on the seventh day of the seventh month. Once it stops flowering, it produces but one tiny seed that has magic powers. The White Man helps old Voghrink to obtain the seed, but in return he demands that Vogrink remain with him for ever. The White Man, who in this tale is even described in some detail, can heal with his herb not only blindness or bad eyesight but every disease.

It seems that under the influence of Celtic cults of Aquileia, and also later Slavic influences, the lore about Belinus has been retained particularly in the wider area of Tolmin and in the vicinity of Kobarid. In Kobarid, the pagan worship of the sacred tree and the sacred spring were documented as early as 1331, when the church of Cividale organized a fight against heretics in the area of Slavia Veneta and Friuli, cutting down the sacred tree and filling the sacred spring with rocks (Juvančič 1984: 49–55).

Helmold's mention of *Zcerneboch* (*Černobog*) initiated discussions at the beginning of the 20th century.[45] According to modern research, especially that by Nikolai Mikhailov (1994), and with respect to numerous Slavic proverbs and toponyms

[45] Nehring 1903; Štrekelj 1904; Brückner 1929–30.

that feature Belbog, he is not only the reputed opposite pole of the god Černobog, but – an epithet of the deity that represents the opposite side of Černobog – a true Slavic deity rather than a mere product of cabinet mythology, as postulated by Nikita Tolstoy (1995: 151). The good spirit named Belun has been documented in Belorussian mythology in the 19th and the 20th centuries as a benevolent being that brings people wealth, helps those who got lost in the woods, and helps in the field (Levkievskaja 1995: 150–151).

Belinus has also inspired composer Jakob Frančišek Zupan to compose in 1780 (or 1782) an opera by the same name, and Janez Damascen Dev (1732-1786) who wrote opera libretto *Belin*.

THE TENTH CHILD

The tenth male (*Desetnik*) or female (*Desetnica*) child, and also the ninth, the twelfth or the thirteenth child of the same gender, have special status in folk heritage of the Slavic, the Irish, the Baltic and other European cultures. They are predestined for higher goals. People believed that the seventh child of the same sex is supposed to be a deity, a demonic creature, or a clairvoyant.[46]

With the exception of Ireland and Slovenia, the motif of the tenth child remained fairly unnoticed elsewhere in Europe. In Slovenia, however, it evoked interest as early as in the 19th century. Josip Pajek wrote the following:

> *If a mother bears ten sons in a row, with no daughter in between, the tenth brother is of no sane mind, and runs away from home. Even if he had been served hand and foot elsewhere, he would have been compelled to continue roaming. Should a person fail to give alms to a tenth brother, this would be considered a mortal sin. I remember well that such a tenth brother used to visit our house, bending his fingers in a funny manner. The index fingers of both hands would bend the middle finger on each hand backwards, on both hands at the same time. He never walked slowly, always ran. Such a tenth brother, called "Juzek", that is Jožek, still roams in Slovenske Gorice and Mursko Polje. If addressed as a swine shepherd, he promptly answers: "How could I tend swine? Don't you see that I am a priest?"* (Pajek 1884: 17–18).

[46] More about this see: Kropej 2000.

Pajek also published a folk song about Margetica (Margaret), the tenth daughter:

There is a field
Sown with tiny wheat.
There were ten reapers in the field.
Ten reapers, ten sisters,
The eleventh was their mother.
Maria passed by,
Greeting them in God's name:
"Praise be our Lord Jesus Christ
And his name!"
Not even one responded
But Margetica, the youngest.
"Amen, amen for ever and ever!"
Maria put her hand in her silken pocket,
Taking out her golden ring.
"Here you are, Margetica!
You shall roam with me."
The mother speaks:
"Let the oldest daughter go
For she is wiser yet."
But Maria speaks:
"Everything that is the tenth
to the tithe must go."
The mother baked some bread,
Putting the golden ring inside.
She broke off pieces on all sides,
Saving the middle one for Margetica.
"Here you are, Margetica,
For when you leave from me.
I shall not eat or drink no more,
Or sleep beneath our roof;
You will not hear about my death,
But I'll be there for yours!"[47]

The tenth daughter, who is the only one among the harvesters who greeted Virgin Mary, is therefore the only one who notices and recognizes her. The Virgin Mary therefore presents her with a golden ring which symbolizes the allegiance to

[47] Pajek 1884: 17–18; Š I, no. 310–315.

the giver of the ring. It is obvious that the tenth sister is destined to be with Virgin Mary, or at least closely connected with her. Who the supernatural being is that has been replaced by the Virgin Mary doubtlessly remains a question without an answer. Thus far, the answer can only be a matter of conjecture.

The tenth daughter, Maksim Gaspari, 1911

In his material Pajek thus listed all the key factors in the phenomenon of the tenth child:

- Regardless of the sex, each tenth child represents the tithe and has to leave home.
- The tenth child is connected with the sacred.
- The tenth child is clairvoyant.
- The tenth child is compelled to roam the world.
- One must present such a person with a donation, and give him or her a warm welcome; otherwise, one commits a mortal sin and is punished by thunder, lightning, and death.

Songs about the tenth daughter often contain a continuation, such as in the variant by Jožef Rudež from Dolenjsko, written before 1819:

In the woods she (the tenth daughter) is surprised by night.
She comes to the first tree:
"I will be your guest tonight."
But the tree answers:
"Leave my crown, tenth daughter!
There will be a storm tonight
And the first lightning
to strike will strike my trunk!"
She comes to the second tree:
"I will be your guest tonight."
But the tree answers:
"Leave my crown, tenth daughter!
There will be a storm tonight
And the second lightning
to strike will strike my trunk!"

She comes to the third tree:
"I will be your guest tonight."
And the tree answers:
"Go to sleep, tenth daughter,
And fear no evil tonight!"
After seven years
She returns to
The large, white castle:
"I ask of you, milady,
to be your guest tonight!"
"I cannot let you stay,
I shall dine with my nine daughters.
Off you go in God's name,
I cannot let you stay!"
"Oh please, please have me, mother dear,
So I can see them dine."
"Off you go in God's name,
I cannot let you stay!"
"May God protect you, mother dear,
May God protect you, my nine sisters!
May God protect you, oh castle white!
Outcast am I,
an orphan poor in tattered clothes!"
"Return, return, Marjetica!"
"I shall never return again!"
The mother falls down in a deadly faint,
Drawing her last breath at once.[48]

The tenth son (*Desetnik*) and the tenth daughter (*Desetnica*) are even contained in the dictionary by Josip Pajek in the entry *brat* (brother) he mentions the tenth brother, listing a citation from the book *Deseti brat* (The Tenth Brother) by Josip Jurčič (1864). Jurčič aptly managed to capture the very essence of this figure:

> *We have not heard about the tenth brother for a long while! Yet in the olden times, it could happen that a tenth son was born to a mother, endowed with wondrous properties and abilities, ousted by the will of God, roaming the wide world from door to door, predicting good fortune, disclosing treasures, singing songs and telling tales like none before him* (Pajek 1884: 17–18).

[48] SLP I, no. 51/2

It is interesting that Maks Pleteršnik mentions that *Desetnica*, the tenth sister, can also denote one of the Fates. In Gorenjska (Upper Carniola), the *Desetnica* was actually called **Rojenica** (the Fate) and the *Desetnik* **Rojenjak** (Pleteršnik 1894: 435). Despite her gift of prophecy and clairvoyance, it is somewhat questionable to identify the tenth daughter with the mythological Fate (Rojenica); however, the connection between them (not an identification with Fate) cannot be ruled out completely.

Jakob Kelemina summarized his quotations taking in regard Pajek and the collection of folk songs, which were published by Karel Štrekelj (Š I: no. 310–315; SLP I: no 51). In a note, Kelemina even cites Pleteršnik, saying:

> *The Tenth Brother or Sister is a character of fairy tales; our story is a truncated fairy tale. According to this fairy tale style, in the second part of the story the girl should reach a place where she would find redemption and happiness!* (Kelemina 1930: no. 239).

If we include in our analysis the Irish narrative tradition, it can be said that Kelemina was right; Irish fairy tales of this kind usually end in marriage.

> *There was a king who saw a wild duck with 12 ducklings. He approaches the lake. The duck chases one of the ducklings away. The druid says that the 12th should be given to Deachme. The king becomes scared because he himself has 12 sons, and chases the 12th away. At the same time, the Greek king sends away his 12th daughter. The young ones meet and get married.*[49]

In one of the Slovene fairy tales, a young musician meets the twelfth daughter and marries her (Albreht 1931: 3–19). But this happy end – at least in this Slovene, artificially concluded story – is an addition, or a fairy tale derivation of a legend.

France Marolt, who published the song about the tenth daughter in the journal *Kočevski zbornik*, was of the opinion that the beliefs about the tenth child were formed in the late Middle Ages in the vicinity of the castles in Gorenjska (Marolt 1939).

In his study *Germanische Mythen in der epischen Volksdichtung der Slowenen*. Leopold Kretzenbacher concludes that the tenth child represents kind of a *ver sacrum*, someone who must leave the native village and look for his or her niche in life elsewhere (Kretzenbacher 1941: 99–101).

Ivan Grafenauer tried to explain the phenomenon of the tenth daughter by mentioning the characteristics of the patriarchal family, which did not grant its female descendants the same status as it did its male children. He limited his treatise to the phenomenon of the tenth female child, eliminating the tenth brother as a much

[49] William Larminiene, *West Irish Folk-Tales and Romances*, London 1893; *New Edition*: 1972: 196–210.

later occurrence. It is because of this that Grafenauer's explanation is partial and questionable.[50] He states:

> *The greatest misfortune for a patriarchal family is to have no children; it is almost equally disastrous to have only daughters. The tenth daughter, the first one after the sacred number of nine, has to leave home to appease the gods. If there is no one else, the ninth daughter goes to war in order to replace her ageing father*[51] (Grafenauer 1952: 34; Id 1943: 152).

Nine sons also appear in the song *Krvno maščevanje* (Blood Feud, SLP I, No. 9) in which the ninth son takes revenge for the death of his brothers and his father.

When the German translation of Irish fairy tales was published in 1956,[52] Niko Kuret was the first to draw attention to the Irish heritage about the tenth child. Kuret concludes that these similarities can be explained only by oral or literary connection. He explains the name **Deachma(dh)** as an ordinal number: *the tenth; as a noun denotes a tithe. If we talk about* ***Daechma,*** *however, to whom should be sacrificed a tithe, this denotes a person, probably a (female) deity* (Kuret 1956: 14).

In 1958, when P. Schlosser published a tale about the tenth daughter titled *Das zehnte Kind* Milko Matičetov commented the tenth daughter from Pohorje:

> *In an over half-a-century-old note from Fram made by Caf (Štrekelj I, 314), the previously mysterious end can now be easily explained. In it, the tenth daughter predicts to her mother: "You shall not see my death, but I will be standing by you when you die!" In the new variant from Radvanje, from 1910, this is possible since "they say that the youngest of the ten sisters is Death." In other words: the tenth sister is no ordinary victim of the Death, but in the hereafter even helps the white lady. It is this mysterious creature (and not "Maia" as in Caf's two notes from Fram, Štrekelj I, 314 and 315) who, during her travelling around this world, hands a ring to the tenth daughter as a recognizable sign for when she comes to take her* (Matičetov and Bošković-Stulli 1956: 189).

Dušan Ludvik, who (like Kuret) connects the phenomenon of the tenth child in Slovenian heritage with the Irish narrative tradition, explains the Irish **daechma**, **daechmadh** as an ordinal number deriving from the Old Irish *deich-* (Old Cymric

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[50] Ljubljana 1952, p. 34. I. Grafenauer mentions the tenth child also in the collection "Peli so jih mati moja" (ed. by S. Šali), Ljubljana 1943, p. 152.

[51] *Deklica vojak maščuje bratovo smrt* (Girl Soldier revenges her Brother's Death) (SLP I: no. 7); *Deklica vojak na preskušnji* (Girl Soldier Put to Trial) (SLP I: no. 8).

[52] *Diarmuid mit dem roten Bart*, Eisenach-Kassel 1956.

dec), meaning "ten"; as a feminine noun it corresponds to the Slovene word *desetina* (tithe). The explanation of the *daechma*, *daechmadh* as wandering around the world, in fact being in exile, seems to be the final phase in the development of this noun's meaning. Dušan Ludvik strongly emphasizes the moment of offering the tithe, stressing the fact that a long time ago the tithe consisted of humans. This is further corroborated by the fact that Leinster, a county in Ireland, gave one third of its children to St. Patrick; there is even a hill named **Daechmadhe**, which is explained by Ludvik as "the tithe hill". He interprets the connection between the Irish and the Slovene traditions about the tithe as the influence of Irish missionaries in the territory of present-day Slovenia. In Irish folk tradition, the human tithe was linked with St. Patrick and the Leinster County. This county was the home of Columban, an Irish missionary who towards the end of the 6th century preached the Christian doctrine in Burgundy, and after 610 among the Alemanni living around Lake Constance in present-day Germany. Gal (Gallus), one of his disciples, who stayed on among the Alemanns after Columban's departure, was likewise Irish.

Erich Seemann drew attention to ballads from the Kočevje region which sang about the tenth daughter. He tried to place these songs within a given historic and cultural context, concluding that the phenomenon of the tenth child could have a counterpart in European tradition about the seventh child of the same sex who, according to folk beliefs, was a demonic creature, an incubus, a werewolf, a soothsayer or a healer (Seeman 1960).

Comparing folk songs about the tenth daughter (*Deseta hči*, SLP I: 298) and St. Matija (Matthew) (*Rojenice in svetnik*, SLP I: 288, 289), both of whom go into the world because of the destiny which had been foretold, Vlado Nartnik (1990/1991) emphasizes the connection between the tenth daughter and the epic tradition on hunters. He concludes that St. Matthew's destiny was predicted by the three Fates which were successors of the tenth daughter and the White Lady. Nartnik also compares a ballad about the tenth brother, based on a folktale from Dobrepolje in Dolenjsko, written by Anton Hribar,[53] with a folk song about St. Bartholomew. Both heroes roam the world and at the end punish inhospitality by fire (Nartnik 1996).

Irish researchers, who saw the etymological development of the name of the deity to which the tenth brother was fated in the word *fate*, had a similar explanation. As early as 1890 Jeremiah Curtin writes: *Diachbha, "divinity", or the working of a power outside of us in shaping the careers of men, fate.*[54]

Later, they emphasized the etymological origin of the word in the expression of "tithe". William Larminie, for instance, writes in his note to the story *The King who had Twelve Sons* the following:

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[53] Anton Hribar, *Slovenske balade in romance*, Celovec 1912: 92.

[54] J. Curtin, *Myths and Folk-Lore of Ireland*, Boston 1890: 243.

Djachwi –, I am not sure that this word is anything more than daechmhadh, a tithe, which has been turned into a person, the meaning being forgotten. After the briefly told Andromeda episode, the story takes a quite novel turn. Its resemblance in structure as is the case with some of the other stories, to many a modern novel is very apparent (Larminie 1893: 196–201).

Sean O' Súilleábhain (1942) summarizes the contents of these stories*:*

A king, seeing a duck drive away the twelfth of her young ones, banishes his twelfth son for the "deachú". The youth sets off in quest of a girl about whom he has heard or dreamed, is aided by his three uncles whom he visits in turn, and finally reaches her dwelling only to find that she has mysteriously disappeared. After many adventures he finally marries her, having proved superior in a contest (Mac Rían Daechaoin).

With regard to this name Angela Bourke of University College in Dublin made the following comment: "Storytellers are often unable to explain the meaning of Deachaoin, other than to say it is something to which sacrifice must be made. It seems, however, to be a form of the word 'daechú', tithe."[55]

According to Irish sources, the tenth, the twelfth or the thirteenth child of the same sex belonged to the deity named Deachaoin, perhaps the deity of birth and death, the goddess of fate. This corresponds to the fact that in Gorenjska the tenth brother was called *rojenjak* and the tenth daughter *rojenica* (the Fate) and stresses this connection as well.

It is widespread in the European tradition that the seventh child of the same sex could heal certain sicknesses especially during certain periods, for instance during Ember Days, on Good Friday and on Thursdays. In France, such miraculous healers were called *marcou* (after St. Marcolf who was able to cure scrofula), and were said to wear a sign of the lily on one part of their bodies. In Sweden such a person was called *tordagsdoktor*, escpecially if born on a Thursday. Danes believed that the seventh brother, if born on July 7 at seven o'clock, was wiser than Solomon.[56]

The question which arises in connection with the above is this: Did the tradition about the tenth child succeed the myth? And does it represent an allegorically described offering of a child who is destined to be ordained – a human sacrifice, a refugee which a society has banished into exile, which usually denoted Death?

According to the material mentioned above, people believed that the ninth, tenth, twelfth, thirteenth, but also the seventh child of the same sex was a deity,

[55] In a letter dated April 9, 1999. I would like to thank Dr. A. Bourke for the material in Irish tradition.

[56] See also: Seemann 1960; Leopold Kretzenbacher 1941: 99-101.

a demonic creature, a clairvoyant or a wizard, yet simultaneously also a victim, a tithe destined for a certain deity. As an ordained person the tenth child is the one who sacrifices everything to attain the wisdom of a model initiate. In Slavic, especially Slovene, folksongs, the tenth daughter (the tenth brother appears only in one recent song[57]) has to roam the world. In certain variants she is fetched by the White Lady, the Virgin Mary or in the case of a Serbian song, a fairy on horseback (Karadžić 1932: no. 732), in short, a supernatural being who decides upon birth and death.

The tenth or the twelfth brother was named *kresnik* in the Primorska region of Slovenia[58]. The twelfth student of the magic school, who at the end of schooling remains without his copy of the book (the teacher distributes only eleven books among his students) leaves to roam the world and to "chase the dragons" (Kelemina 1930: 43–44, no. 4/IV). His destiny is thus similar to the destiny of Kresnik or Jurij. Of later origin are probably the tales in which the tenth child appears only in the role of a clairvoyant or a soothsayer, a human with supernatural powers who can also advise people in distress, which was usually expected of a priest. It is therefore understandable that the tenth brother in Pajek's note calls himself *mešnik* (a priest). Since the tenth children were roaming the world, people compared them to travelling bards with a great talent for story-telling and singing.

Radoslav Katičić (1989: 57–97), and afterwards also Vitomir Belaj (1998), defined *Zeleni Jurij* (Green George) as the tenth child or the ninth brother in the Slavic and Baltic fertility rituals, and in the pre-Slavic myth about the duel between the thunder god and the dragon. Both have ascertained that this motif appeared in the Slavic as well as the Baltic tradition. A Russian ballad, for instance, speaks about the incestuous relation between a sister and her ninth brother. The brother leaves home, meets a girl and invites her to join him on horseback. After their union they find out that they are brother and sister.[59] A similar fate awaits Jagoda in a Croatian song: Jagoda has nine brothers and Radojica, the tenth brother. She marries him, and on their wedding day rain starts to pour and thunder rumbles (HNP 1914: 45–46, no 20). In another Croatian song, Mare (a girl with nine brothers who are hunters and goldsmiths) meets Ivo on a horseback. Ivo is the tenth brother who has returned home, and Mare is his sister.[60]

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[57] Recorded by V. Vodušek in Jastroblje, Tuhinjska dolina, March 25, 1957, GNI; No. 20675, tape 15-1, 50. The song, originally a ballad, was written by A. Hribar and published in: *Slovenske balade in romance*, Celovec 1912, no. 92 – later it became a folk song.

[58] Stepan Kocijančić in: Arkiv III, Zagreb 1854: 281; published by: Navratil 1887: 106.

[59] P. V. Šejn, *Velikoruss v svoih pesnjah, obrjadah, običajih, verovanjah, skazkah i legendah I*, Sankt Peterburg 1898: 551, no. 1824.

[60] Olinko Delorko, Narodne lirske pjesme. *Pet stoljeća hrvatske književnosti* 23, Zagreb 1963: 188, no. 211.

There are interesting similarities between these songs and the Irish poem about Owen Burke, also called Eoghan Búrcach.[61] In one of its variants, Owen Burke is a shepherd who finds a wild girl living in the woods. He manages to civilize her, and with her family's permission marries her. It turns out that the girl is the daughter of his employer who had been banished from her home, in order to comply with the custom of sacrificing a child from a large family to *Deoch Bhui* (*deachú*, *deachaoin*). After a time, her family regret their permission for this wedding, and the girl's brothers kill Owen Burke.

The nine sons of Perkun are mentioned also in a Latvian daina – a Latvian short song starts like this:

Gray daddy Perkons
Has nine sons.
Each of them knows his trade well:
One strikes, another thunders,
The third casts white lightning,
The fourth draws rain
From thick fog[62]

Perkun's children therefore appear as celestial bodies in this song.

Katičić and Belaj have established that the tenth brother has not been imported from Ireland. Slavic traditions, Baltic and Irish parallells, as well as the broader European tradition, all testify to the Indo-European origin, and the great age of the myth about the tenth brother who leaves home to roam the world, returns to his father's (Perun's) home, and marries his sister. The motif of the tenth brother who leaves to roam the world and the motif of sacred marriage (hierogamy) are thus closely connected in this myth. The tenth brother, Jurij, is a son of Perun, he marries his sister, and this hierogamy enables another cycle of renewal. In Perun's (Jurij's) myth the same story (as later in a shortened and profaned folk heritage) takes place in the realm of the gods.

The tenth daughter is destined to belong to the deity who is connected to destiny, and takes care of birth and death, like Hecate, Diana and Artemis in Antiquity, or the Slavic goddess Mokoš (Kuret 1997: 66–79). The tradition of the tenth daughter partly reminds us of the Greek myth about Iphigenia who was destined for the goddess Artemis. In order to take revenge upon Agamemnon for his insults, Artemis demanded Iphigenia's death, but replaced her with a hind when Iphigenia was placed on the altar, and took her to Tauris as her priestess.

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[61] Lorcán O Muireadhaigh, *Amhráin Chúige Uladh* (The Songs of Ulster). Dublin 1927 (reprint 1977).

[62] Biezais 1972: 115

As mentioned before, Katičić and Belaj see in *Zeleni Jurij* the tenth brother, who had to roam the world. One of essential characteristics of *Kresnik* as well as *Zeleni Jurij* is the fact that he travels around the world. However, the tenth brother is personified as a sacrifice or an offering. *Marjetica* (or *Mare*), who was abducted by the dragon, was equally destined to live in exclusion. Yet the songs which mention the sacred marriage do not mention a fight with the monster; this fight is mentioned only in Irish fairy tales (see above) in which this heritage is connected with the myth of Andromeda and Perseus. The tenth brother in reality personifies the tithe, an offering; in a symbolic manner. Folk songs about the tenth brother, Zeleni Jurij, a child of Perun, who roams the world, and meets his sister (who, in some variants, is also the tenth child) are the fragments of a cosmological myth or song sung at a certain time of the year in order to invoke fertility in nature. There is, therefore, a close connection between the tenth brother and the tenth sister with Perun and Mokoš. They are the tithe, and are sacrificed to these deities, or else they themselves personify them.

MYTHICAL ANIMALS

Among the mythical animals that occur throughout Slovenian folklore are several who personify some natural or supernatural forces and maintain the balance of the universe. Thus, for instance, the mythical unicorns, white horses, and the aforementioned Zlatorog (Goldenhorn) often embody celestial deities with their golden or white appearance. The horse also has a strong symbolic meaning and is often the attribute or personification of a god. In Slovenian mythology, it even personifies the incarnations of the supreme god Perun.[63]

The magical garden, Jože Karlovšek, 1955, Archive ISN ZRC SAZU

[63] More about this see the chapter "The Central Slavic Myth". Further reading: Kropej 1998.

THE UNICORN

The unicorn is a mythical animal with first a bull-like and later a horse- or goat-like body, which acquired its name from the long straight horn emerging from its forehead. The first representations of a bull with one horn originate from three thousand years BC on the seal of the ancient towns of the Indus, Mohenjo-daro and Harappa, where it represents one of the dominant revered icons. Hildegard of Bingen's "Physica" did much to spread this myth and the belief in the healing power of the unicorn in the 12th century. The symbol of a unicorn was also a key element in heraldry, and was used on dynastic as well as on state coats-of-arms. In Slovenian tradition, it is mentioned only in folk songs and in some sermons but not in folktales.

The unicorn is frequently mentioned in European medieval mystical texts and depicted in medieval fine art. The motif of "The Maiden and the Unicorn" (*Hortus Conclusius*) was also depicted on frescoes, in miniatures and in ornate initials of medieval manuscripts.

Hortus conclusus: Virgin Mary and the Unicorn. Depicted by Ivan Ranger, 1739–40, Church of Assumption of Virgin Mary in Olimje

THE WHITE HIND

The legend of the origin of the Monastery of the Chartusians in Žiče describes Duke Ottokar chasing a white hind of remarkable size that he cannot catch.

The Monastery in Žiče and the White Hind
Once upon a time, Duke Ottokar of Štajerska was on riding on the hunt in the forests when he saw a white hind of remarkable size. He chased it for a long time but without success. Tired, he fell asleep under a tree. St. John the Baptist appeared in his dreams and ordered him to build a monastery at the exact place where the hind had disappeared. While he was sleeping, a frightened rabbit, which was being chased by the hunters, jumped into the lap of the Duke and woke him up. This event inspired the Duke Ottokar to name the monastery "Zajec" (Rabbit). Elderly people still refer to the Žiče Charterhouse as "Zajcklošter" (Rabbit Monastery) (Stegenšek 1909: 184; Dapit, Kropej 2004: no. 5).

SEA HORSE AND CENTAUR (*POLKONJ*)

Slovenian folklore does not often speak about sea horse (*morski konj*). Izidor Modic mentions them in the early 20th century after hearing people talking about them in the vicinity of Velike Lašče in Dolenjska (Lower Carniola).

Sea Horses
There is the church of St. Achatius on the mountain Gora above Turjak. The mountain has a hole in it and is hollow and filled with water, which reaches its peak at 11 o'clock. Somebody once shouted in that hole and something replied from far away:
"Ha-ha-ha!"
Allegedly there were sea horses in that hole.[64]

It is interesting that the stories about sea horses have not been kept in Istria and Primorska, while the Gorizia region kept only the memory of the water sprites called *salmsonarji.* They were said to live in the water and to drown people.

[64] Manuscript of Izidor Modic, Archive ISN ZRC SAZU: ŠZ 7/269, 1. Published: Dapit, Kropej 2004, no. 9.

Also in Scotland, a supernatural being who drowns people is a water horse called *Kelpie*, in the Czech Republic it is named *Utoplec*, while in Silesia people call it *Utopilec* or *Topilec*. Supernatural beings which drown people often look like a horse or have horse hooves.

A part of Slovenian folklore which also preserved the memory about *polkonji* (centaurs, half-horses) is from Štajerska, Gorenjska and Slavia Veneta/Venetian Slovenia.

Matevž Ravnikar-Poženčan, who recorded old folktales in Gorenjska in 1950s, recorded this description of a centaur in his manuscript:

Polkonj (half-horse, centaur)
People say it is a half man and a half horse. They also talk about many Half-horses, so-called people who have a human figure joined at the waist to the horse's withers*, where the horse's neck would be* (Grošelj 1952: 196–196).

Half-horses are mentioned also in a folk song *Kaj se po svetu godi* (What is happening around the world) which was also noted down by Matevž Ravnikar-Poženčan in Gorenjska. The poem starts like this:

Oh, a splendid, a splendid castle stands there,
Below the castle are three lime threes
Below the castle are three lime threes.
An honourable assembly sits under the lime trees,
In the middle among them is a splendid master.
He takes a curved horn into his hands,
And whistles so hard that it makes the mountains shake.[…]
He whistles the second time, something rustles,
Another servant is standing there.
"What is happening around the world?
Explain to us, you servant!"
"I come from another land,
Where centaurs live:
For wars they are used,
And are as swift and as terrifying as lightning is,
Pesoglavci (the dog-heads) they defeat,
And know nothing about who people are."[65]

In this poem, centaurs are chasing "dog-heads", which are figments of people's imagination about how the dangerous hostile people look like.

[65] Š I: 107, no. 60.

Half-horses, which are part of traditional folktales in Slavia Veneta (Venetian Slovenia), had the same characteristics as dog-heads, and they also persecuted Christians. Ostermann wrote about how people imagined half-horses in his work "Life in Friuli":

> **Polkonji**
> *Polkonji the kind of centaurs, and pesoglavci (*cynocephals*) with a head of dog were bloodthirsty and chased Christians* (Osterman 1940: 450).

The folktales about half-horses and dog-heads were mixed in the imagination of the people and blended mainly because of the half-human and half-animal appearance of both of these two supernatural beings.

Although they are often compared to each other, the half-horses and dog-heads remain contradictory characters also in the description from Štajerska, published by Josip Pajek:

> **Polkonji**
> *People living between the river Mura and Drava know quite a few stories about Half-horses. They were human beings, with the torso of a human and the lower part of the body of a horse. They were bareheaded, had stupid noses and a long beard. Half-horses hated Pesjani and Pesogalvci* (Pajek 1884: 160).

It seems that Pajek linked his description of half-horses to the one made by Henrik Rešek, who heard people talking about half-horses in Žitarska Dolina, located between the rivers Mur and Drava and published in his article in the newspaper *Novice* in 1860.

SNAKE

The mythical snake appears in ancient cosmologies as the cosmic snake, the Creator and also as a mythical ancestor of certain nation. In the oldest cosmological myths, the cosmic snake is often seen as the carrier of the world, which it can also destroy with its movement. Thus, the snake appears not only at the beginning but also at the end of cosmogeneses as an apocalyptic, destructive force or as deity.

The snake can also be replaced by a fish, which lives on the seabed. For example, the Slovenian lore depicts the fish Feronika, which rules over the water. Slovenian folk narratives and folk songs describe it as a 'fish that carries the world' or as a pair of fish. When it moves the earth shakes, there are floods, natural disasters or even the end of the world. (See the chapter about fish Faronika).

In contrast, the *ouroboros*, the snake eating its tale symbolizes life and death and an eternal cycle and time without its beginning or its end.

THE WATER SNAKE

The South Slavic sea snake *Aždaja* (Azi Dahaka) is known in Serbian, Bulgarian and Macedonian lore. It is supposed to live in standing and deep water and is the mistress of waters. People said that it evolved from a 100-year-old snake that had, according to some descriptions, four legs, a long tail and wings. *Aždaja* is dangerous for both people and animals, and it wants to swallow and destroy the sun and the moon (Radenković 1997: 105–6). Similarly to *Aždaja*, a hundred-year-old snake also presents danger. We hear about the latter in the lore of *Rož na Koroškem*/Rosental in Koroška/Kärnten. According to these folktales, the snakes grow into giant monsters when they grow old, and they travel from the river Drava straight into the Black Sea and from there into the Tower of Babel where all animals which are over a hundred years old gather (Šašel, Ramovš 1936–7: 25).

The Serbian water snake *Aždaja*, as well as the Koroškan snake monster, which travels through the river to the Tower of Babel are related to dragons and are difficult to categorize into one or the other group of mythical animals.

THE SNAKE QUEEN OR THE SNAKE KING

As the keeper of treasures, the snake is the bestower of goods and fertility, which is why the snake is the attribute of every great goddess of nature and fertility. According to the old religious perceptions, it also gives men strength for insemination.

In Slovenian folklore, the queen snake or the white snake often appears. She is the leader of all snakes and also the mistress of earthly riches, which is why people tried to seize its crown, the golden apple or the diamond or the *žilštajn* (the snake stone), each of which represented the key to the riches. The snake queen can have a diamond or a golden apple not only upon its head but also under its tongue or in its body. People often tried to trick the snake and steal its crown or its key to the riches. They, for example, lay milk for it and while the snake was

The Snake Queen, Jože Karlovšek, 1955, Archive ISN ZRC SAZU

drinking, put the crown on a white napkin. They might steal it and run away, but the snake always takes revenge and mercilessly punishes the thief. The snake also takes the crown off when it is bathing, as in the story recorded by Janez Majciger in 1883 in Štajerska:

> **The Snake Queen**
> *Near Ptuj they talk about a giant snake with a golden crown, which is the queen of them all and lives in the water. On a beautiful spring day, it puts its crown, which is worth millions, on the riverside. Woe betide the person who dares to take it! She would make just one whistle and all other snakes would gather around her. They would run after the thief and tear him into tiny pieces* (Majciger 1883: 601).

There are also some stories about a man who tried to trick the snake by rolling a wheel down the hill. While the snakes are chasing the wheel, the snake queen takes off her crown at the top of the hill and joins them in their chase. The man does steal

the crown, but the next day, when he comes back for the wheel a snake, hidden in the woodshed, bites him.

The crown of the snake queen is also stolen by a mythological hero (usually by Kresnik), who enters the snake queen's kingdom on the back of a horse. In order to run away from the wrathful snake, the rider has to jump over a high wall. Even frequently, the folk narratives depict a hero who has to build a long corridor thats leads him back home. He also has to put iron gates in it; while he is trying to run through the corridor away from the snake, he has to firmly close these metal doors behind him so the snake has to break them down if it wants to come after him. The snake loses its strength when it reaches the last door and is left lying there.[66] This folktale from Štajerska preserves the memory of the ancient myths about Kresnik, although the mythological hero in this tale is replaced by the farmer.

SNAKE AS THE MYTHICAL ANCESTOR

The symbolic meaning of a snake can be found in the myths about the birth of certain nations. In these legends, mythical ancestors are presented by the image of a snake. Thus, according to the Ancient Greek lore, *Cadmus* and *Harmonia* who were the ancestors of the Illyrians, the founders of Thebes and the parents of *Illyrius*, moved to south Illyria in the form of two snakes (Šašel Kos 1991: 183–192). Such religious beliefs had later influence on numerous stories about people who were cursed, especially about cursed rulers, noblemen and noblewomen (Kropej 1995: 137–138). In Slovenia the most famous such folktale is the legend about Veronika from Kamnik Castle.[67]

SNAKE AS THE SOUL OF A DECEASED

According to ancient religious beliefs, the snake also symbolizes the soul of a deceased. As such, it can bring prosperity to its homestead. As the guardian of the house, it was believed to protect the home, similarly to the house goblin, called *gospodarček* ("little master"), which is in Russian lore named Domovoy, or as house spirits or gods, such as were the Roman Lares, which protected the houses and the fields from misfortune. Thus, snakes, which are called the *ož*, the *vož*, and also the *inčesa* in the Western Slovenia, guarded the homestead and spent time mainly at the fireplace. Sometimes they appeared in front of children and people, who treated

[66] Freuensfeld 1886: 267; Kelemina 1930: 351–352, no. 246/III; Kropej, Šmitek, Dapit 2010: 36–37.

[67] Published in English in: Kropej, Šmitek, Dapit 2010: 32–33.

them with kindness and gave them food and milk to drink. They brought luck and well-being to their homesteads.

Thus, in some folk narratives, the snake queen gives its crown to the children or to the kind people.

The snake bestows the crown

There once was a farmwife who had small children. She had to work on a field and had to leave her children at home. She poured them milk in a bowl as to not leave them hungry while she was gone. They never left anything in the bowl, thus their mother always praised them for being such obedient children. But the children claimed: "But we never eat alone, a beautiful birdie comes and eats with us." The mother thought that a cat might come and join her children while they ate but she found it strange that they were talking about a white bird. She wanted to make sure which animal the children were talking about. Therefore, she hid in the house after giving the children milk in the doorway. S oon, a white snake with a beautiful crown slithers from under the table straight into the lap of the youngest. The mother is paralyzed by fear. But the children caressed and stroked this beautiful "birdie". When the snake fills up on milk, she shakes the beautiful little crown off her head and again finds its way into the hole. As soon as the snake is gone, the mother jumps into the doorway and grabs the children and takes them to a safe place.

Of course, she does not forget to take the crown as well and puts it into the wooden chest where they keep the yarn. The grandfather had to spin the yarn all winter long but still he could not spin it all. The woman thought to herself: "What could this be? Might the crown have such power?" Thus, she removes the crown and the yarn was soon threaded. They put the crown in the grain and they had to measure it over and over again, but still they never ran out of it. They also added the little crown to other things and shortly the house became the richest in the village. They kept the little crown as long as lived this generation of people who treated the snake with such kindness and affection (Kelemina 1930: 135–136, written by Novak in 1858).

In this folktale from Podbrezje in Gorenjska, the house snake comes to drink milk with children every time the parents are not at home. In some folk narratives, the snake even drinks out of the baby's bottle (ATU 285) and it also comes at night if the people set milk in a cup just for her.

This folktale presents very clearly the magic power of the crown that brings good fortune. Wherever you place the crown, be it next to the yarn, the grain or potatoes, you will have an abundance of it. A ball of endless wool carried a similar power; it

was given as a gift by the *žalik žena* (fairy or Fate), and comes to an end only after the local people curse it.

However, when the house snake, which is in Slovenia often called the *ož*, is not received with kindness or is even killed, then great misfortune befalls the homestead, as can be seen in the folktale from Martinj Vrh, which is near Škofja Loka (Tušek 1858: 97).

The *ož* also protects the house against disasters and also warns the family about the danger threatening them or their household. In return, they express their gratitude by giving it dinner, most of the time they give it a bowl of milk. But woe betide the master of the house if he kills the *ož*, for he will soon mourn because death will take away from him the person who is the closest to him.

People also told stories that it once occurred that a man fell into a cave, which was full of snakes. He survived among them because he licked the *žilštajn* (snake stone), as the snakes did. In other versions of this folk narrative, the snake queen or the snake king *Kačjak* saved the man who fell into the cave by throwing him out with the help of its tail and save him from almost certain death. However, the snake queen often demands that this boy must not reveal their secret. If he does, then the snake takes revenge on this boy who was so greedy to come back to steal their riches.

CHASING AWAY THE SNAKES

In some folktales, snakes often pester people and are seen as a form of punishment that befell people, or an individual, because of the sins they had committed. As God's way of punishment, the snake might wrap itself around the neck of the sinner and let go only after many years have passed. They also believed that the snakes will multiply if they kill them. They might even attack the whole town or the village. According to folk tradition, they might also serve as punishment for people's misconduct. When this happened, they had to ask for help of professional snake chasers, who were people with extraordinary talents or vast knowledge. According to folktales, they are usually sorcerers, mainly so-called *črnošolci* (sorcerer's apprentices) or fairy tale or mythological beings, such as *Jurij* (George) and *kresnik*. Chasing the snakes can also be very dangerous. The snake queen or the white snake needs to just whistle and all the snakes that are subordinate to it will gather at once.

The White Snake

The Vžekar family in Poden/Bodental (a hamlet across Ljubelj in Kärnten/Koroška) once had so many snakes that the housekeeper could no longer keep up with them. They crawled all over the granary and in the kitchen, they

were found in the cooked cabbage and in the cribs of the children, although they did not do them any harm. The members of the Vžekar family went on pilgrimage but none of it did any good.
One day a traveller came by and claimed that he could chase the snakes away, but only if the white snake was not near. All of them confirmed that they have not yet seen one. Some say that they really had not seen it before, while others say that they kept it a secret.
Thus, the traveller started with his preparations. He went to the end of the road where a tall spruce tree grew. He send for some dry brushwood and branches and ordered for it to be put around and around the spruce tree. He put this heap on fire and climbed on the tree and started to whistle on his flute in a very high pitch. The snakes started to wind theur way towards the spruce tree and most of them came from the house. They all died in the fire. But soon, the people heard something from afar, from Helige Wand (Sveta Peč), to be exact, a piercing whistle that jarred ever bone in the people who were near.
The man on the spruce tree screamed:
"People, run, and pray for me, for I am lost!"
There truly came a white snake, which was as fat as a long, wide wooden pole. It rushed through the fire and straight on the spruce tree so that the men fell down from it and, together with the snake, died in the fire.
They put a cross in that exact place in his memory (Šašel, Ramovš 1936-37: 26–27).

The snake often personifies evil, since the snake is the allegory of evil in the ancient myths, and it needs to be defeated because it presents a threat to the world. This is the case in the myth in which the snake eats the sun. When the snake has such a negative role, it is called the *vipera* or the *ses*. The *vipera* of Goriško was said to have a comb of a rooster or a golden apple on its head, while it could also whistle beautifully. In many aspects it is thus similar to the *basilisk*, which was mentioned in the Bible. The *ses* is present mainly in Štajerska as a big and dangerous snake, which attacks Kresnik.

DRAGON

The dragon is the symbol of the ruling and life forces and is as such connected also with thunder and fertility. The Greek, Roman and Slavic etymology describe it as having the same origin as the snake has. The word *zmij*, with which South Slavs used to name the snake, is derived from the word *zemeljski (earthly).* The dragon had different names in Slovenian folk tradition, such as *drak, lintver, zmin, pozoj, viza, iza, premog* (coal) and many more. The names changed according to different times and different places, and the dragons also often differed according to their origin and character. Similarly as the snake did, the dragon (among other things) functioned as a mythical ancestor, a giver and a guardian of hidden treasures. The most famous among those who guarded the treasures is a dragon or a snake in the folktale about Zlatorog (Goldenhorn). In ancient myths, the dragon is the guardian of the Golden Fleece, the golden apples from the three of Hesperides and other treasures.

ATMOSPHERIC DRAGON AND THE DRAGON FROM THE ROOSTER'S EGG

People believed that the dragons caused storms, hail and other natural disasters, while they also personified the destructive forces of nature, such as landslides, earthquakes, avalanches etc. Simon Rutar wrote extensively about the dragons in journal *Kres* in 1885. He emphasised not only the mythological meaning of the dragon, but also that people imagined it was also able to cause natural disasters (Rutar 1885: 42).

With his body, the dragon could make the waters stop from flowing or even create new springs. The folktale describes the intermittent river "Lintvern", which has its spring under Zaplana near Vrhnika, and about which wrote Johann Weichard Freiherr von Valvasor. This story was told to him by a farmer.

The Dragon from Lintvern under Zaplana

There, where the dragon lies, is a spring. When too much water gathers for the dragon, he pours it away. This goes on and repeats over and over again. As long as the dragon is under the ground he will live, even if it is for thousands of years. But when he comes from earth into the air, then everything under his feet will cave in and break until it kills him.[68]

[68] Valvasor 1689 IV: XXXI; Grafenauer 1956: 332.

There are numerous folktales that describe how the dragons can cause storms and natural disasters. In Prekmurje, for example, Števan Kühar heard that *pozoj* caused such hail in only half an hour that it peeled the bark off the trees (Kühar/Novak 1988: 148–149).

The dragon that lived in a lake in the Matkov kot near Gornji Grad was so restlessly pecking at the rock called Ribča Peč where the local people dried their fishing nets that he eventually broke through the rock and caused a flood. The lake started to overflow and also took with it the *lintver* (dragon) who was killed by a larch tree with three tops. The narrator added that the people consequently believed that only a larch tree with three tops could kill a dragon.

The Slovenian narrative tradition often mentions a that dragon is hatched from an egg, which happens also in a tale about the Solčava dragon, which was hatched from an egg of a rooster.

The Dragon from the Rooster's Egg from Once Existing Solčava Lake
It was once told that there was a lake in the Solčava Valley and right in the middle of it was an egg of a rooster within the rocks. A dragon hatches and pecks and pecks into the rock until he breaks through the grey rocks and shows itself to the world. The furniture, the rocks and other things flew behind it and killed it. You can still find the claws of the lintvern on the field of Štajerska. That is also when the lake poured out completely (Železnikar 1860: 89).[69]

Ivan Železnikar, who was the first to publish this story in journal *Slovenski glasnik* in 1860, wrote that "the dragon in the folktales of our people presents the same as what the learned world calls natural disasters, such as earthquakes, landslides and similar" (Železnikar 1860: 89). Natural disasters, which are caused by the dragon, often kill the dragon as well.

Ivan Grafenauer, who referred to Železnikar's article, gathered other study material about dragons that could cause raging storms and natural disasters. He agreed with Železnikar's definition of a dragon, describing it as the cause of atmospheric and earthly catastrophes. But he also added mythological interpretation to this scientific explanation about the origin of the folktales about the dragon from the rooster's egg. He linked the lore about the dragon from the rooster's egg with the cosmological rooster's egg out of which gushed seven rivers, which is described in the cosmological story *Povest o božjem kokotu* (The Folk Narrative about God's Rooster), which was told by Janez Trdina, who heard it in Mengeš. Grafenauer compared these tales with the tales of other nations and found similarities and links even with cultural tales, e.g. of the Maasai people (Grafenauer 1956: 329–330). Since the dragon is a

[69] After: Grafenauer 1924: 315; Kelemina 1930: no 174/II.

cosmological supernatural being, which appears at the beginning and the end of the world, his role here was transferred on the local level. Grafenauer's comparison between the egg out of which the dragon had to peck, and the egg of God's rooster – as a metaphor – could be correct from this point of view.

The folk tradition about the lake that runs out of its water and the dragon that is the cause for this was connected by Ivan Hrovatin with the memory about the lake which stood at the same area before the settlement was built. The tale presents a kind of a local cosmogonical myth about the origin of new settlements of mainly Slavic inhabitants (Hrovati 2007). Simon Rutar published several tales in his historical presentation of the Tolmin region (Rutar 1882) at the end of the 19th century, which were about the origin of the settlements on the area where the lake once stood.

A folk belief that the dragon can hatch out of the rooster's egg spread throughout Slovenia. The rooster was believed to be seven years old, black or multi-coloured, while other folktales describe it as being a hundred years old. According to some narrations, it can also be hatched out of the egg of a black chicken, which has been at the house for nine years. The egg should roll around in the mud, earth, marsh and rocks at the edge of the lake, as it does in the tale about the dragon from the Solčava valley.

A dragon is not the only being that can be hatched out of the egg of the rooster. Some tales claim that a devil or a dwarf or *blagonič* can be hatched as well. Lovro Žvab from Tupalče wrote about a *blagonič*, which hatched out of an egg of a seven-year-old rooster.

Blagonič from the egg of a rooster

Those who wish to have a lot of money must, when the chicks are hatched, choose a black rooster, which must be fed under a bushel. When seven years pass, the rooster will hatch an egg, out of which will be hatched a thing, which is called blagonič.

The blagonič must be always kept and fed in a secret place and it will repay its master with as much of money as he will need. But if the rooster resents the master for not feeding it well, then blagonič will disappear and take all the good luck with him.

One day the master cooks the blagonič some fava bean (vicia faba), which was not even well-cooked, and makes sausages for himself. This makes blagonič very angry so he goes in the barn, hangs on the door the most beautiful ox by its tail and runs around the house, screaming, "The broad bean is not well-done, the ox is hanged by its tail!" and thus luck never returned to that house again.[70]

[70] Manuscript of Lovro Žvab in Archive ISN ZRC SAZU: ŠZ 7/216, 8. Published by Kropej, Dapit 2002: 26, no. 8.

Not only the dragon or *blagonič*, but also the devil or a dwarf can be hatched out of an egg of a rooster. Moreover, a creature similar to the dragon can evolve from a hundred-year old snake, a frog, a crab or even a fish.

CHASING AWAY THE DRAGONS

Mainly because the dragons caused storms and natural disasters, the people chased them away in a similar way as they did natural disasters, such as hail, strong winds and storms. They actually believed that magic can chase away the dragons and that only some chosen people have such power in their hands. These were the people who had expert knowledge and they had to go to different schools where they learned secret skills. The dragons and the snakes can be chased away by a *črnošolec* (sorcerer's apprentice), a person who has supernatural abilities. Thus, they believed they can summon the dragon from a swamp, mount it, and ride with it into the "land of the rising sun". The people also believed that the sorcerer's apprentice, the *kresnik*, knew where all the treasures, which are kept by the dragon, are hidden.

Matija Valjavec also noted down the folk narrative that the *pozoj* is a big horse with wings, which can be mounted only by the *grabancijaš dijak* (sorcerer's apprentice) who goes with it into the land of the Arabs.

Ivan Grafenauer believed that the *grabancijaš dijak*, the same as the *črnošolec* or the student of the thirteenth college, was a sorcerer which acted in the name of natural forces in the Kaj-Croatian and Eastern-Štajerska narratives. These forces try to kill the small dragon when it is born with everything they have at their disposal (Grafenauer 1956: 324). Grafenauer agrees with Jagić that people believed that the *grabancijaš dijak* was equated with a young priest. The *grabancijaš dijak*, the sorcerer's apprentice, the student of the thirteenth college were supposed to be young priests. Jagić tried to prove that a priest or a pure young man was, according to medieval definition, needed for exorcism by the church. They started to appear in folktales to protect people from the evil spirits and also from their servants who were thought to cause storms. Uneducated people also believed that these wizards did not just conjure or pray but also used their magical powers (Jagić 1877: 456). The etymology of the name *grabancijaš* does not suggest that it is derived from the word priest, but from the Latin word *nacromantes* and Italian *negromanzia, gramanzia* (Miloševoć-Đorđević 1984). *Grabancijaš,* who chased the dragons away, was therefore named after a *nekromant*, i.e. the one who chases the souls of the deceased away, the sorcerer.

The black school in which *grabancijaš dijak* or *črnošolec* learned their skills is, according to some folktales, named the "Thirteenth College in Bologna". Grafenauer

assumed that this school was a variation of the School in the Tower of Babel (Grafenauer 1956: 325–326), which Radoslav Razlag mentions in one of his records of folk tradition near Ljutomer and Mala Nedelja:

These students train different secret arts; they sit on a stick like pigeons do and every year the dragon takes away one out of ten of them.[71]

Matija Valjavec noted down a legend in Ludberg in which he mentions the Thirteenth College in Bologna:

> *Nobody can chase away the dragon except for the grabancijaš dijak, who visits the thirteenth college in Bologna. These students have a big wheel with thirteen spokes. Each grabancijaš steps on one of them. They spin the wheel as fast as they can and the one which is the first to fly away is the real grabancijaš, the one who will be the first to chase away the dragon* (Valjavec1866: 309–310, no. 10).

Josip Freuensfeld heard people talking about the sorcerer's apprentice, who have power over dragons. He writes that:

> *Only a sorcerer's apprenticehas the power over a dragon, he mounts it and rides it and calls up lightning, thunder and hail. A seven-year-old rooster once hatched an egg, which was as big as pigeon's. He buried it in manure, where it was found by the shepherds. They cracked it and a dragon jumped out and killed all their cattle. The sorcerer's apprentice could chase it away. He is also the only one who can chase away the dragon which evolves from a crab. It is so powerful that its hail can kill everything* (Freuensfeld 1886: 270).

In his hometown Prežigal near Slovenske Konjice, Josip Pajek heard people talk about a dragon that could be chased away also with the help of a priest, who would offer mass just in time, or on regular basis:

> **The dragon in Konjiška Gora (Mt. Konjice)**
> *The lintvert lives in the marsh at the top of the Konjice Mountain. The parish church has to offer a mass every Friday to keep the lintvern (dragon) in the mountain. Still, it sometimes escapes and a violent frtuna, which is a storm, strikes* (Pajek 1884: 89).[72]

[71] Razlag 1852: 98; Pajek 1884: 90; Kelemina 1930: 41, no. 4/4.

[72] Compare also: Krainz 1879: 15–16; Kelemina 1930: 241–24, no. 173.

THE DEFEATED DRAGONS

Many folktales describe a dragon that can be defeated with a trick or by using force, especially when it abducts girls and cattle and destroys the place where they live. The dragon from Wörthersee was given a wagon full of lime. After he ate all of this lime and quenched his thirst with water, and the dragon burst after this.[73] A similar thing happened to the Postojna dragon (Kleinmayr 1928: 16–17; Dapit, Kropej 2004: 40, no. 24).

Another variation of this story about the dragon from Wörthersee/Lake Wört near Celovec/Klagenfurt explains that the dragon was defeated by strong and fearless man named Hercules:

The Dragon of Celovec

There is a lake now where many centuries ago the old Celovec Castle stood. Those who lived in the castle were insolent and believed in nothing but having a good time. Even at Christmas they would dance and make merry which ran against local tradition and the beliefs at the time.

Once, an old man came to the castle with a little barrel under his arm. He warned the people saying: "Stop. Stop, go and repent! Otherwise I will pull the plug on this barrel and everything will be flooded." People laughed at him: "What can you do with that little barrel?" They danced on and continued to make merry. Later in the evening, he reappeared and warned them again, "Stop. Stop dancing, or I tell you everything will be flooded." But again there was just laughter. The third time he came around midnight, "If you will not obey, I will pull the plug!" And he did.

Water began to pour out of the barrel and it ran and ran for so long that the town was completely flooded. That is how the lake at Celovec was formed. For many years after, a bell could still be heard chiming deep down in the lake. On that spot a church was built – dedicated to the Virgin of Goretti and it is a place of pilgrimage for Koroškans where they pray for rain. Many years later, the people built the new town of Celovec where it still stands today, not far from the lake. Close to the lake lived a farmer who had a seven year old rooster. That rooster laid an egg that was buried in horse manure. Out of that egg hatched a dragon that grew and grew. He was incredibly voracious. He lived in the lake where he caught fish and everything else that he could swallow. If he did not find enough food, he came inland and dined on passing carriage drivers and their horses. He grew to be twelve metres in length from head to tail. He had such a strong breath that he could use it to pull everything towards himself, even a person

[73] L. Reggi, *Zmaj v celovški okolici*. Mir 24 (1905).

standing twelve metres away. He resembled a crocodile. In Celovec, they had a rascal locked up whose name was Hercules and who had been sentenced to death. He was unusually strong and fearless, so they said to him: "If you kill this dragon you will be pardoned."
Hercules immediately agreed. He made a heavy club into which he hammered thick, sharp nails. Knowing that the dragon had such a strong breath that he could draw people towards himself, he tied himself to a tree that grew close to the lake. The dragon appeared out of the lake, drew in his breath with all his might, but he could not tear Hercules from the rope. He breathed in even harder, with such force that the dragon himself was drawn towards Hercules. When he was very close, Hercules hit him over the head with his club and the dragon instantly toppled over and died.
In those days Celovec was rather small. It was only later that it grew into a city. At the New Market Place they erected a monument to Hercules. It shows what he was really like and how he felled the dragon with his club. (Šašel 1951: 4; Kropej, Šmitek, Dapit 2010: 38–41)

Another famous dragon that lived in the mountains is the dragon in the mountain Krim. People told stories that he occasionally made the Barje (the Ljubljana moors) shake.

Among the dragons that lived in the mines, the dragon in Idria could be mentioned. When the miners started to take away his treasure, he tore away a piece of the hill Kobalove planine.

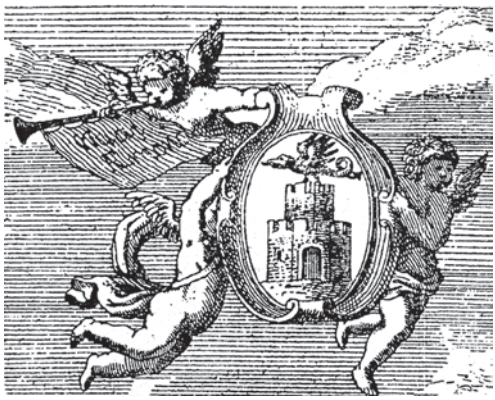
The dragon from Ormož in Štajerska had its head under the bell tower while the source of the stream was right under its tail.

THE LJUBLJANA DRAGON AND THE ARGONAUTS

According to some ancient sources, Jason and the Argonauts sailed on the river Ljubljanica. The Greek historian Zosimus was the first to establish the connection between Emona (now Ljubljana) and the Argonauts (5th–6th century AD). He writes that the Argonauts sailed on the Ljubljanica River in a region where Emona stands.[74] Johann Weichard Valvasor (1689, XI: 705) narrated that on his way past Emona, where Ljubljana stands today, near the Barje (the Ljubljana Moors), Jason slew the dragon; to this day, the event is depicted in the Ljubljana coat of arms.

In his historical overview of Vrhnika (Roman: *Nauportus*), Jože Rode also mentions the legend about Jason, who allegedly sailed on the Ljubljanica. According to this legend, Jason, who sailed past *Veliki Močilnik*, leaned with his fist against the cliff

[74] Zosim, 5, 29, 1–3; after: Šašel Kos 2006: 17.



The dragon on the coat of arms of Ljubljana; Valvasor (1689, XI: 666)

with such strength that you can still see the print of his hand in the cliff which is named "Jason's Fist". The famous Greek hero Jason and his comrades went on a dangerous quest to bring the magic fleece of a ram with golden wings. His magnificent ship of fifty oars was made out of wood, which could not decay, by the most reputable builder. The ship was named "Argo" after the man who built it and whose name means "a fast" ship.

Jason and his men (the Argonauts) stole the Golden Fleece from the king who had his kingdom on the shores of the Black Sea. While the ship fled from its followers, it accidentally sailed into the Danube instead of into the Aegean Sea. The runaways had people trying to track them down behind them and could not turn back; thus, they continued to sail on the Danube, entered the Sava River and finally rowed to the Ljubljanica River. Suddenly, a violent storm started, which threatened to crash the ship against the cliffs in Veliki Močilnik. Jason, who was a hero among heroes and had a big and strong fist, struck it against a vertical wall which caved in. His heroic fist anchored the ship like a powerful anchor. The ship was actually so light that they could carry it (after they took it apart) on their shoulders on their twelve-day walk. The track of Jason's fist can be clearly seen in the rock above the Velika Ljubljanica source.[75]

These folktales have been kept by the people up to this very day.

BASILISK (*BAZILISK*)

The imagination of the people created numerous similar mythological beings, using the dragon or the snake as a role model. The *bazilisk* (in Slovenian lore called also *káčec*) was mentioned in the Bible. According to ancient religious beliefs, *the bazilisk* was an extremely poisonous snake with wings, head, and feet of a rooster. Bazilisk was so poisonous that it could kill with one glance or with its breath. It was supposedly hatched from the egg of a seven- or fourteen-year-old rooster, which had been buried in the mud and grew under the protection of a toad, a frog, or a snake. From this point of view, the notion of the basilisk influenced the tradition about "the dragon from an egg of a rooster." According to Pliny the Elder (23 AD–79 AD), the

[75] After: Cerar-Drašler 2004: 46.

basilisk allegedly lived in Libya or Egypt. Hildegard von Bingen's "Physica" (VII, 12) from the 11th century, was largely responsible for spreading the tradition about the basilisk in the Middle Ages. According to medieval writers, the basilisk was believed to be a real animal and thus it is no wonder that it was in 1474 when the Town Council of Basel, sentenced an eleven-year-old rooster, which was believed to have hatched an egg, to death by decapitation and cremation.

The lore about snakes with a rooster's comb on their heads and a diamond underneath their tongues was spread among South Slavs. Amulets in the form of half a snake and half a rooster were found in the Balkans, which indicates that people must have believed in the protective power of these animals. In alchemy, *the basilisk* symbolized the destructive fire that foretold the transformation of metal. The *basilisk* was also believed to have the power to heal, similarly as the horn of a unicorn. That is why it was also used in medieval medicine.

MALAVAR

An animal similar to the basilisk is *malavar,* named also *malavr, molavr* or *balaver*. It is not as similar to the snake as it is to a large black lizard with a comb on its head, which is similar to that of a rooster. It was believed to have a diamond beneath the comb, bulging eyes, a big head and the body similar to a lizard. The malavar was believed to be so poisonous that his breath could kill in the same way as the basilisk could. The folktales about the malavar were kept in Primorska and in Karst.[76] Anton Pegan, from Štanjel on the Karst Plateau, noted a folktale about the malavars in the middle of the 19th century:

> *The malavars are big lizards, which sing extremely beautifully. They have a red comb on their head and a diamond right beneath it. But the Lord protect the man in which it blows because it will kill him instantly. And vice versa, a man can also kill them as well if he is faster and is the first to blow in their direction. Those who wish to have their diamond must leave them on an anthill for a fortnight, so that the ants eat their meat and the diamond becomes clean. They only show themselves once in a year, on the hottest day of the year. They sunbathe in the clearing from noon until one o'clock and then they again disappear for a year.*[77]

[76] Compare: Marija Jamšek, Čudna pošast v Kobjeglavi. *Tedenska tribuna*. Ljubljana, 5. 10. 1958.

[77] Manuscript of A. Pegan, 1868, Archive ISN ZRC SAZU: ŠZ 8/16. Published: Dapit, Kropelj 2004:35; Pegan/Černigoj 2007: 154–5.

The malavar is similar to a mythical fiery salamander, which is in Tyrol called Tattermandl (Petzoldt 1995).

MOČERAD, MEGLENŠČAK, MODRAS

In Slovenian lore, the mythical animal *močerad* (salamander) is also called *meglenščak, modras* or *salamander.* It was allegedly hatched out of a snake's egg. It is short and has stout body covered with short and slightly brown fur. The meglenščak is so poisonous that there is no cure for its bite. People who lived near Mala Nedelja in eastern Slovenia believed that when it was angry, the salamander whistled loudly to summon other salamanders. When it was enraged, it could become so wild that it peeled the bark off the tree. It liked to stay in swamps and marshes, which were covered with bushes and grass. The salamander could kill a man instantly if it only touches him. It was said to have been hatched out of a snake and thus lived like a snake (Pajek 1884: 66).

MODRAS (VIPER)

People from the Karst Plateau told stories that the viper evolves from an adder, whose head had not been crushed but merely severed from its body. The new head was believed to be similar to that of a cat. They also said that the vipers lived in all the cold springs and prevented the water from being warm.

The vipers live in every cold spring and they prevent the water from becoming warm. If the spring does not have a viper, then it will not be cold. But when they climb into water, they leave the poison on some rock, which is why the vipers do not bite in water.[78]

Anton Pegan, from the Soča/Isonzo Valley, reports that if the spring does not have a viper, then it will not he cold. In the vicinity of Bohinj, the name *modras* was also a common name for any snake.

In Rezija/Resia Valley, the salamander was called *wodnek* or *žabarok* and was believed to be a very dangerous and highly venomous animal. And when it attacks a man, nobody can remove it. The attacked man can only warm up milk, and the animal will leave him after it smells the hot milk (Dapit, Kropej 2004: 10).

An animal similar to the salamander us the *skok*, a mythical animal that evolved from a snake. Its tail was cut and afterward it grew paws. The skok is allegedly strong enough to tear down the sturdiest door.

[78] Manuscript of A. Pegan, Archive ISN ZRC SAZU: ŠZ 8/63; published Pegan Černigoj 2007: 186.

VIZA

The *viza* or *iza* is a dragon monster, which destroyed the old square in Podsreda in Kozjansko, which once stood further south-east from where it stands today. Josip Vidic sent his records of this folktale to Karl Štrekelj in 1891.[79] Janko Orožen published an abridged version of this story (Orožen 1936: 210–211). The story is that the *Viza* was hatched in a mouldy beech tree wood and fed on it. When it ran out of it, she stormed in on the town square and destroyed the town.

MYTHOLOGICAL BIRDS

Among the birds with mythological connotation, the eagle occupies the highest position. The eagle was the bird of ancient Zeus and also of the Slavic god Perun. The eagle belongs to the supreme thunder-making deity. According to folktales a human girl Nasta, who was taken in heaven, as the bride of the Sun, also turned into a bird named Lasta – a swallow (*lastovka* = swallow).[80]

ROOSTER

The rooster, and not only the eagle, is also the companion of the celestial deity in numerous myths. Because of this it symbolizes the sun. The cosmogonic myths often describe an egg of a rooster out of which gushed seven rivers, which soak the dry land and make it fertile. The story about the rooster and its egg was published by writer Janez Trdina as a myth from Mengeš which is about God's rooster. This tale was remade in literary form, but it still has its basis in folk tradition.

The rooster is a popular metaphor or a symbol of fertility. It is often used as a Shrovetide mask, for example *piceke* (chickens) from Ptujsko polje in Štajerska, and the mask of a rooster in Mersin, a village above Matajur in Slavia Veneta/Venetian Slovenia, where the mask of the rooster is the most prominent one. It is a few meters tall and is accompanied by a chicken. The masks include many animal images, such as a hind, a goat, *rusa* (animal mask in a form of a horse) or a horse, and a bear. The oldest image, which is 20,000 years old, or even more, is of a *čarovnik* (magician), painted on a rocky wall in the Pyrenees. It represents a man with a mask of a made-up

[79] The manuscript of Josip Vidic in Archive ISN ZRC SAZU: ŠZ 7/158.

[80] Matija Valjavec, *Pripovedka o soncu in Nasti*. Slovenski glasnik 1867: 93; Kropej, Dapit 2011: 14–15.

animal with the antlers of a deer and the tail of a wild horse. Animal masks serve as a proof of the existence of old religious beliefs, which have been kept up to this very day in various stories about mythical animals.

BIRD OF PARADISE AND THE GOLDEN BIRD

The Golden Bird, Zvonko Čoh (Dapit, Kropej 2004)

A golden colour is used to denote the *bird of paradise* or the *Golden Bird*, which can either sing beautifully or its feathers have magical power. Listening to the bird of the paradise in the other world makes the time fly by. This motif is widely spread in folk narrative ATU 471 A "The Priest and the Bird" and also in folk songs "The Monk and the Bird of Paradise" (SLP I/1970, no. 55). The tale about the magic singing of the golden bird was published by Ivan Tomšič, who heard about it in Tržič in Gorenjska. The content of the story is the same to the folk song about the bird of Paradise and the monk.[81]

The Monk and the Bird of Paradise

In a monastery there once lived a very pious and scholarly monk. Deep in thought one morning, he ventured into the nearby woods to which he often withdrew to embrace the peace and quiet of nature. It was springtime and the trees were blossoming. Everything was still and quiet in the forest. The monk thought, "Oh; how beautiful, how gorgeous is spring. After spring comes the hot summer and soon thereafter the cool autumn. A man would have to be completely insensitive if such a magnificent and beautiful change of nature would not make him happy. And Eternity? It is unchanging. How can man tolerate such monotony after his death? Surely he can experience no greater joy than this."

As he pondered this, he walked deeper and deeper into the woods and lo and behold, how strange! Even as he watched, the forest changed. All the familiar images were disappearing right in front of his eyes. Oak and spruce trees were

[81] The tale was first published: Ivan Tomšič, Večnost. Vrtec 3/1 (1. 1. 1873), 8–9.

vanishing and in their place appeared beautiful green cedars and feathery palm trees. Enraptured by this indescribable beauty the monk stopped and asked himself if this was reality or a dream. Suddenly, he heard the most melodious bird song coming from the top of a palm tree. High up in the tree he spied a small bird with shining golden feathers which sang in an exquisite, delicate voice. The monk listened to the sweet song as it gently played into his heart. Tears of joy glistened on his cheeks. "A few hours have passed while I've been here listening to this delightful singing," thought the monk. "Now I have to go home again. It is hard to part from a beloved spot but I think the bird of paradise will sing again tomorrow and I will come and listen to it."

He returned to the monastery, full of joy. The forest became more familiar again, cedars and palm trees disappeared and were replaced by solid oaks and tall, slender spruce trees. When he came to the edge of this extraordinary forest, he saw that the hills were as they had been, the spring at the edge of the forest rippled as it had done before; nor was there any change in a nearby stream. But the monastery! The monastery was completely different. It had a tall steeple that had not been there in the morning.

When the monk entered the monastery there were strange, unknown faces everywhere. He went quickly to his room. But what a surprise awaited him! Where once his chamber had been, there were now only walls with no door. Frightened, he asked the other monks who were following him curiously as though he were a stranger, "Where is Abbot John?"

"Our abbot's name is not John," replied the monks, "Our abbot s name is Paul Chrysostom. But tell us, stranger, who are you that you act as though this were your home?"

"Who am I?" replied the monk, "Don't you know me? I am Peter, your brother, who went to the forest this morning."

"Peter," said one old monk, "What? You are Peter? I read in our monastery's ancient records that a thousand years ago a Brother Peter lived here. One day he went into the nearby woods never to return. Is that really you?"

Peter lifted his arms towards heaven and said, "Imagine! I spent a thousand years in eternity; I wish I could return immediately and hear again the wonderful singing of the bird of paradise."

That very moment he disintegrated into dust. The monks grew fearful. Somewhere in the distance the words "Eternity, eternity" could be heard. (Kropej, Šmitek, Dapit 2010: 44–46).

While the bird of paradise sings so beautifully that thousand years pass as quickly as a day, the golden bird has magical golden feathers that bring riches and prosperity.

Sometimes it also has the healing power to cure all the diseases.[82] The tale of "The Golden Bird" is classified in the international narrative type ATU 550 and is one of the most popular tales also in Slovenia.

ANIMALS IN STAR CONSTELLATIONS – THE BEAR

Some of the animals in folktales have been elevated to the sky in the form of different constellations. Among them is the bear, which has to replace the traveller's horse it had eaten and thus has to pull St. Martin's wagon instead of the horse. Because the bear or the wolf eats the horse, St. Martin or some other saint or hero has to hook it up to the wagon, and it finally lifts it up among the stars. The tale describes how the Great Bear or Plough (Ursa Major) was created.

The Great Bear or Plough can be seen clearly in the summer night sky as the constellation in the shape of a wagon. But because it constantly changes its position in the time until winter, people soon started to make up stories about the hunt for the celestial bear. The stories about the celestial wagon were also created very early. In China, it was, for example called *ti-che*, which means the ruler's coach. The Roman people called it *plaustrum*, while the name *voz* (cart, wagon) is known to Germanic people as well as to Slavic people.

The constellation the Ursa Minor was called in Slovenia *Mala medvednica* or *Mali medved* (Little Bear) in the west of Slovenia, but when it comes to naming the Great Bear the folk tradition does not mention a name derived from the word used for bear. Dalmatin mentions a plough in the sky (*Kulla na nebi)*, Slomšek calls it a celestial wagon *(Nebeški voz),* Stritar writes about the wagon in the sky *(Voz na nebu)*, Valjavec spotted the name the wheels of Elijah (*Ilijina kola*). In Bohinj, they name this constellation the Wagon of St. Elijah. Thus, a riddle was made: "Which saint has not yet died?" – "Elijah, because he continues to ride in the sky." The term "St. Martin's wagon" was spread mostly in Primorska, e.g. St. Martin's wagon in Pivka. In Žiri, it was called the ox's wagon, but commonly used name for it is the "Big Wagon" (*Veliki voz*).[83]

The memory of the yoked animals of the great celestial wagon has been preserved in folktales. Thus, according to the folk tradition from Ilirska Bistrica, the wagon was pulled by an ox and a wolf, while according to a tradition from Motnik, a couple of horses were yoked together to pull the wagon, while a story has also been told about the driver giving the horses the water from the River Mur.

[82] Published in: Dapit, Kropej 2004: 50–51.

[83] More about this see: Matičetov 1973.

In 1872, Janez Potepan from Zemono near Ilirska Bistrica recorded a tale in which he explains why the constellation Ursa Major (Great Bear) has the shafts of its wheels askew.

The Wolf and the Ox Pulling the Wagon
It is said about the Wagon that St. Martin was carrying wood through the forest with an ox yoke. A wolf came out of the forest and ran into one of the oxen. He slaughtered the ox and broke the shaft, and that is why the shafts are now askew in the constellation. But St. Martin made the best of it and yoked the wolf together with the other ox to help him pull the wagon. The wolf was pulling in the direction towards the forest the entire time, while the ox was pulling outside of the forest (Potepan 1872: 259–260).

Tales such as these can be classified in the international narrative type ATU 1910 "The Bear (Wolf) Harnessed". They are spread from Brittany to Mesopotamia, but they are not always related to the constellation. Other saints also appear instead of St. Martin, St. Jacob; in Macedonia, St. Naum yoked a bear, which has eaten an ox from a poor farmer. In a fresco from Križna Gora near Škofja Loka is an image of the Bavarian St. Korbinian, together with a bear which tore his horse apart and then carried his a heavy load

A wolf and a bear can be also yoked together, while the devil serves as the wheels of the wagon, as can be seen, for example in the narrative from Oseacco in Resia:

Giddy-up, Wolf! Giddy-up, Bear! Carry your load, Devil!
My father told me that there was once a man who was exiled to the forest. The person who sent him thought he would never return for no one who went into that forest ever came back. The great lord of the castle, who was sending the man into the forest, gave him a carriage and two horses and told him to bring back wood. The man dutifully loaded the cart with logs and was getting ready to go home when a great starving wolf appeared. He wanted to eat the man but the man said: "Rather than having you eat me, I'll give you one horse. However, you will have to return the favour and replace the horse so we can pull these logs home!" So the starving wolf ate the horse and took his place in the harness. When they were ready to go a big bear appeared. He was also hungry. The man reached a similar agreement with the bear. After the bear had eaten the other horse, he also took his place in the harness next to the wolf.
When both were ready to draw the cart, the devil arrived. When the man saw the devil he thought fearfully, "I fed the wolf and I fed the bear but now the devil will eat me!"

When the devil came closer, the man asked him what he wanted. The devil replied that he was going to tear the wheels off the cart. The man said, "If you take the wheels from the cart, how are the wolf and the bear going to pull the cart and drive the logs home?" Then the two of them made arrangements that the devil would climb under the cart and would carry the cart on his back all the way home.

So the devil unhooked the wheels from the cart and played with them until they broke into small splinters.

After he had had enough of playing, the devil climbed under the cart and carried all its weight on his back. The wolf and the bear pulled him and the man yelled from behind, "Giddy-up, Wolf! Giddy-up, Bear! Carry your load, Devil!" When he arrived at the castle, everyone was amazed that he had not only come home safely but had brought the wolf, bear, cart, logs and the devil as well.[84]

Slovenian etiological or explanatory tales explain the constellation the Ursa Major mainly with the motif of yoked animals. Just next to the Croatian border, in the village Zamladinec, Matija Valjavec noted an entirely different tale about the origin of this constellation. The story about "the Dobrorad's Celestial Wheels" says that God put Dobrorad, his wagon, his yoked mere and a foal, in the sky because of Dobrorad's good deeds on earth.

Many other star constellations can be found in Slovenian folk narrative tradition. Among others, the Dragon (Draco), the Eagle (Aquila), the Swan (Cygnus), Monoceros, Capricorn, the Big dog (Canis Major) and the Little Dog (Canis Minor), the galaxy Milky Way and many other, about which people made up different folktales and imaginary explanations.

[84] This folktale was told by Anica Managátova on the 18th of August, 1975 (published: Matičetov 1987; published in English: Kropej, Šmitek, Dapit 2010: 47–48).

BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH

People's encounters with the supernatural world are described in numerous folk and belief tales that represent a document of people's concepts of the structure of the world and the laws that define and determine it. Images of supernatural beings from this supernatural world are often unclear. They transform and blend into each other, and sometimes it is quite difficult to distinguish between them and even more difficult to define them with precision.

This part of the book focuses on the supernatural beings residing in nature such as demons, spirits, fairy-like beings, and other supernatural apparitions that people imagined as inhabiting the world of twilight. Since they feature in a far greater number of tales than the myths about the supernatural beings akin to the gods and deities, it is impossible to include all folktales about them in this book. In order to best present the many motifs discernible in the Slovene narrative tradition, only sample cases, and sometimes only summarized texts, have been selected. Stories about these supernatural beings are still being created, or are modified anew. Even today, human imagination produces new supernatural beings or subvariants of the existing ones, as is evident also from more recent publications on folklore. However, the basis of the Slovenian mythological tradition has been preserved in older published texts that may date as far back as the 17th century, and occasionally even earlier. The majority of this material was collected in the 19th and in the first half of the 20th centuries. Milko Matičetov managed to preserve from oblivion some major traditions, particularly from Val Resia, as well as from the Slovenes living on both sides of the Slovene border with Italy. Although the narrative tradition is still alive to some extent, especially in remote areas, it is evident that what has been retained today are shorter genres as well as folktales and stories that are presented as true events experienced by one or more people. This has impoverished the once rich and diverse treasury of Slovenian folklore.

The Twelve Month of the Year, Hinko Smrekar (Literarna pratika 1914)

Giants and other large, supernatural beings were said to reside in forests, on mountains and in rocky caves or other remote locations. Many etiological or explanatory stories exist of how they built their castles by shattering rocks and pulling trees up by their roots. They supposedly handed each other tools from one mountain peak to the other. There is hardly a single mountain in Slovenia where the people have not described one of the peaks reaching to the sky as a petrified colossus, giant, *ajd* or ogre. The name *ajd* derives from German *Heide,* heathen, which means pagan.

THE GOLDEN, SILVER AND THE BRONZE AGE AND THE GIANTS (*AJDI*)

Slovenian folk tradition preserved the tales that the giants, as the first inhabitants, at first lived only on the Golden Mountain, from where they moved to the other mountains as well. Because they were pagans, God sent a flood to destroy them. When the water ran away, the lakes were made and people came. Someday, the people will also die out and that is when the dwarfs will come.

Števan Kühar from Prekmurje recorded one of the versions about the beings who existed in the past, and about the beings who will live when we are gone.

> *What were the people who lived before us like and what will they be like when we are gone?*
> *Before we existed, extremely tall and strong people lived in this world. There were the people of God the Father. That their powers must have been really great can be seen from this event.*
> *In Tišina and in Martjanci, people started to build churches and also to put plaster on both of them at the same time. It happened that the woodworker from Tišina yelled out to the woodworker from Martjanci to lend him his hatchet. The latter was able to throw the hatchet with ease all the way to Tišina, although it is at least seven kilometres away.*
> *They say that we are the people of the Holy Son, and that people of the Holy Spirit will come when we are gone, and they will be called palčki (dwarfs) because they will not be taller than the thumb on our hands and they also say that twelve of them will be able to work in one threshing floor* (Kühar 1910: 61; Kühar/Novak 1988: 151).

In the Mežiška valley in Koroška, people also said that the giants (*ajdi*) first lived on the Glass Mountain, which presents the world above us. From there they moved to various summits and hills. They are described as not very clever, a bit clumsy and so tall that they were able to ladle the water from the stream while they were standing on the top of the summit. They threw the objects they needed from one hill top to the other and also talked to each other from great distances. These features of theirs were not typical only for the giants in Slovenian lore but also in folklore from other European people. These stories sometimes also contain the motif of competition of who can squeeze the stone the hardest (ATU 1060 "Squeezing the Supposed Stone"). The giant crushes the stone into the dust, while the man takes the cheese and only water comes out of it. This is enough for the giant to become scared so he does not wish to fight against the man anymore (Möderndorfet 1946, 96–97).

The Ajd/Giant, Veno Dolenc (Dapit, Kropej 1999)

According to Slovenian lore, the exceedingly tall *ajdi* represented an ancient population which lived in the mountains, far away from other people.

THE RIB OF THE PAGAN GIRL IN GORNJI GRAD

A horrible rib hangs in the church in Gornji Grad, such as no animal living on earth has. The writer does not know when and if it was there that they dug it up.

The folktale says that it belongs to a *pagan girl* and also says that when the rib, from which one drop falls every year, remains with none left, the Judgment Day will come. [85]

[85] Pukmeister 1857: 239; *Barth. Kopitars Kleinereschriften*. Herausgegeben von Fr. Miklosich. Wien 1857: 151. A similar folktale was documented in Crngrob in Gorenjska (Upper Carniola).

GIANTS BUILDING CASTLES ON THE MOUNTAINS

Slovenian folk tradition also tells that the giants built castles and altars and had to break the rocks and tear up trees by the roots. They passed the tools to one another from one hill top to the other. The castle on Planina was supposed to be made in the same way, as well as the church in Maria-Gail/Marija na Zili in Kärnten/Koroška. On the mountain near Dobrla Vas, they set up a giant's altar, which is as tall as the mountain (Kelemina 1930: 238–239).

The church on the Mt. Hum was also built by the giants and they passed the hatchet from Martjanci to Tišina. In another folktale, the giants passed the hatchet from Podgora to Zabukovec, as is described in a tale written by Josip Vidic[86] from Št. Pavel pri Preboldu (St. Paul near Prebold) in the Savinja Valley in 1910.

The Ogres of Zabukovec and Podgora

The mountain ridge of Savinja is split down the middle by a valley near Sevnicnica. Lining the right bank are the Podgora hills and on the left, the Zabukovje hills. They say that in the olden days two ogres built their houses there, one on Rudenik and the other on Travniki. These two hills are of approximately equal height and stand opposite each other. As the two ogres owned only one hammer, they threw it from one hill to the other across the valley as long as they needed it for building. (Kropej, Šmitek, Dapit 2010: 66).

There are many tales such as this in Slovenia. One of them has also been preserved near Šmarje and Rogaška Slatina, and describes how the giants built the church on Tinska gora/Mt. Tnje. When they finished their job, they threw the tools to Krapina in Croatia and built a church there as well:

Tinska Gora and the Giants

The belief in Ajdi has been kept in Slovenia up to this day. This is what they say about them: The Church of the Mother Mary, near Tinska Gora in the parish of Zibika in Šmarje, was supposedly built by the pagans Ajdi. They were extremely tall and powerful and people were afraid of them. Their daughters brought the builders plaster in giant tubs, which they carried on their heads.

When the men finished their job they picked up their construction tool and threw it from there to Krapina in Croatia and later they build up the church there as well.

The succursal of the Mother Mary on Sveta Gora at St. Peter's perish was

[86] The manuscript of Josip Vidic, Archive ISN ZRC SAZU: ŠZ 7/166. Published: Dapit, Kropej 1999: 40–41.

built by the Ajdi, which also carried the bells on their shoulders up to the bell tower (Dragoslav 1884: 204).

Folktales about the giants have different historic background and often testify about the old pagan population. People often interpreted the ancient forts and temples as being built by the *ajdi*. The name of the town Ajdovščina has its roots in such beliefs. In order to distinguish such connections between the giants and the archaeological findings of ancient settlements, one needs an in depth knowledge about the folk tradition, as well as the knowledge of the past. The appropriate course of such research has been presented by Katja Hrobat with the example of Ajdovščina above Rodik (Hrobat 2005).

The historical aspect of folklore about the giants was also stressed by Andrej Pleterski, who tried to distinguish the connection between the tradition about the giants and the ancient population in the outskirts of Istria, where the Vlachs lived. He attempted to prove that the oral tradition can also serve as the source of information about the migration and settlement of the people in the past (Pleterski 2004). A similar connection between the tradition and the settlement of the people was made in Police in Tolminsko (Pleterski 2006). The fact that the Vlachs presented a giant ancient population proves the name *lah,* meaning a giant, which is derived out of the word "Vlachs", later also "Lahs" (Italians).

In some tales, people built a church or some other building out of stones that were brought by a pagan girl (*ajdovska deklica*) in her apron, such as the one in the tale from the Mežiška Valley in Koroška (Mőderndorfer 1946: 97).

PETRIFIED GIANTS

Individual mountain tops, rocky cliffs and layers of rocks were, according to the folk belief, created because the giants brought the stone cliffs from the flatlands into the hills. The Kamnik Alps were supposed to be made in this way because the *Bewitched Soul* (*ukletnik*) was constantly rolling the rocks into a godforsaken place, where he was chased away by a hermit (Andrejka 1918: 140–141). People also believed that the stone tops of the mountains were made because the giants threw at that exact place a certain item, for example, a stone needle used by the giant's wife to sew his shirt (Zupanc 1969: 21), or that a giant's dragon's tooth fell in that exact spot, as is explained in one of the tales about the solitary mountain Babji Zob (Hag's Tooth) near Bled.

Almost all of the hills pointing out in the sky in Solčavske planine (Solčava Mountains) are believed to be the giants (*orjaši or stramorji*) turned into stone.

The Solčava mountains are the Stramorji and the Orjaši turned into stone
The Stramorji and Orjaši had always been raging against this world, but God turned them into stone. Almost every sharp hill that points in the sky represented, according to folk belief, a giant turned into stone. Thus, Solčavske planine are giants turned into stone (Trstenjak 1857: 114–5; Kelemina 1930: 236, no. 166).

Other mountain walls and tops, mainly in the Alpine region, were also interpreted as the giants and *ajdi* turned into stone, similarly to the pagan girl from Prisank.

The Pagan Girl (Ajdovska deklica) from Prisank
Above Vršič, in the mountainside of the rocky Prisank, there is a pagan girl turned into stone, who gazes with amazement above the Trenta Valley. […] The old shepherd, who shepherd a flock of sheep under Vršič, told me (in the green valley under Prisank) that the pagan girl was a kind and warm-hearted girl and she helped the mountaineers and people who transported goods to find their way through snow blizzards into the Trenta Valley. She was believed to live under overhanging rocks and rocky ledges. […] on one winter day, the dark grey clouds gathered above Prisank and while the bora wind was guffawing with its cold laugh, the snow fell and covered all the tracks. The old bachelor whistled and a herd of chamois went running into the valley right next to the pagan girl sitting under the cliff and caused an avalanche.
The mountaineers and people who transported goods were headed towards Trenta and further on towards the sunny Primorska escaped the white thundering death by a whisker. The snowdrifts were so big that the people would get lost, if it were not for the pagan girl who left her hiding place, gazed through high snow in front of them, and showed them the way. After long days, the people who transported goods came back on the same road and there, under the overhanging rock, at the foot of the Prisank, they left some wine, bread and meat for the pagan girl. Every time she helped them, they rewarded her in the same manner and thus she was never thirsty and hungry.
The pagan girl was not only a leader, but also a Fate. In the dark nights, she visited young mothers and foretold the destiny of their new-borns. One day she came to a young shepherd in the Trenta Valley. The mother who has just given birth to a son was sleeping in the warm cottage, when the pagan girl quietly came near the cradle, leaned next to the baby and predicted: "Once you grow into a young man, you will be brave as a hunter like the people at the foot of Prisank have never seen. You will follow the white chamois with golden horns on the cliffs and overhanging rocks. You will shoot it, sell the golden horns and become immensely rich."

When the pagan girl's sisters found out about this prophecy they cursed her and she turned to stone as soon as she returned to the wall of the Prisank. She has remained there up to this present day and gazes with her big stone eyes in amazement above the Trenta Valley (Zupanc 1971: 77; Cerar Drašler 2004: 161, no. 42).

Clairvoyance or the power of foreseeing one's fate, such as the pagan girls had, was fatal for the pagan girl in this tale, the Fate from Prisank. Her foresight was too "blasphemous" because she foretold the death of Zlatorog (Goldenhorn), which was seen as an untouchable animal. The other pagan girls resented this, they cursed her and she turned into a stone.

In Resia Valley, people tell that on Mt. Kanin the tops of the mountains rise in the shape of a lying girl – a giantess. The imagination of the people painted the images of the giants or the wild women (*divje babe*) all across the extensive Slovenian mountain world.

PEOPLE AS THE TOYS OF THE PAGAN GIRL

Slovenian folklore is also familiar with a well-known international tale type ATU 701 "The Giant'sToy" about the giants or pagan girls which think that people are interesting toys and thus they raise them up from the ground and carry them into their homes. One of such narratives is a tale about the pagan girl who carries away in her apron several people and the cattle, but is ordered by her father to take them back to that exact place where she had found them (Möderndorfer 1946: 97–98).

This tale includes also a very widespread motif of a man who tricks a blind giant or a sorcerer with an iron stick, which he uses instead of his finger in order to make the giant believe how powerful the new generation of humanity truly is.

The tale, about the giant's children who take away the people because they think they are toys, has been kept up to this very day and it was recorded by Ljoba Jenče in Šempeter in Dolenjska:

The Pagan Girl and the Cursed Mowers

It has been 500 years since the giants built the "Šentrupert Beauty" and the "Okrog Flower". The one in Šentrupert was dedicated to St. Rupert, the one in Okrog to St. Barbara. People still say today: "Oh, my dear Barbara, are you going to protect my home!"

These two churches were built at the same time. People had only one hammer to break the stones and thus they had to pass it from one church to another. The pagan girl was also with them and she brought lunch to the builders. She was very, very tall.

One day, when she was coming home from the field, people were just cutting grass in the meadow in the middle of it. Six people scythed, she stopped and observed what kind of animal was eating the grass. These might be grasshoppers, and so she bends down, picks the mowers in her apron and takes them and their scythes to the chicken. The mowers had lunch behind the bush; some wine and bread. The chicken ate the mowers, but they left the lunch.
Since then, six tall men with big black hats come every Saturday from eleven until midnight to eat lunch. They sit in a circle and light up the fire.[87]

According to some tales, the giants were destroyed by the *pasjeglavci* (the *dog-heads* or *cynochephalus*). These also destroyed the castle of the giant under the Cerklje Mountains, in the valley "Pri Ajdovskih dekilicah" (By the Pagan Girls). They killed the giant while his two daughters sought shelter in Krvavec (Slovenian *kri*, *krv-* means blood) which got its name "Bloody Mountains" because a stream of their bloody tears ran all over it. This folktale was recorded by Andrej Mejač and published in the journal *Ljubljanski zvon* in 1890 (Mejač 1890: 354–356).

THE GREEKS (*GRKI*)

The giants in Slovenia were named also *Grki* (Greeks), *Grkinje* (Greek women), because the Greek people were, according to South Slavs' oral tradition (while in Slovenia mainly in Bela Krajina, thought as being an ancient population that was exceedingly tall, such as the *Ajd* or *Oger* (Ober or Avar), *Lah* (Italian) or *Rimska deklica* (Roman maiden). Janko Barle collected many folk legends about the *Grk* (Greek) mainly in Bela Krajina.

The Greek Woman Doing her Washing in the River Kolpa
The Greeks were tall and powerful people. The old Fabečka from Griblje told me that her grandmother's grandmother was a Greek woman. Kolpa was then a stream, but it was as wide as that ditch in the middle of it. The Greek woman stood there with one leg on the one side and the other on the other side of the River Kolpa and did the washing in it.

The Greek woman stands with one leg on Kučer and the other in Lipnik
Other people tell that the Greek woman was even taller: she stood with one leg on Kučer (a hill above Podzemelj) and the other one on Lipnik in Croatia, which are almost two hours apart and washed the laundry in the Kolpa (Barle 1893: 10).

[87] Manuscript by Ljoba Jenče, 2005, Archive ISN ZRC SAZU; published: Kropej 2008: 206.

The Greek Plow without Animals

The Greek were so powerful that they did not need animals to plow. There are still tracks left from the fields where they ploughed. Each of them ate a bucket of buckwheat mush for just one of their meals (Barle 1893: 10).

The fact that the Greeks were also strong workers and were able to perform tasks much faster than people could is also told in the story about a Greek who does difficult tasks for his master. Among other tales about the Greeks from Bela Krajina, Janko Barle also wrote two fairy tales. The first one describes how the Greek woman wants to make sure whether the boys are strong enough to keep away the Turks. Because she cannot see very well, they trick her and place an iron tooth of the harrow instead of a finger, which she squeezes so had that she crushes it (ad ATU 1060). The other story describes how a Greek placed his bet on who could eat more barley porridge (*ričet*) with a maidservant. The maidservant sews a wineskin under her dress and throws the little barley in it. In order to see who ate more, they cut their stomachs (ad ATU 1088). The Greek observes that he has been tricked and kills the maidservant (Barle 1983: 10).

Ivan Šašelj did not publish the stories about the Greeks in his collection (Šašelj 1906: 1909) in which he gathered folk tradition from Bela Krajina, but he did mention the word *grčina*, meaning a colossus, a giant (Šašelj I 1906: 255).

At the end of his article "The Greeks in Bela Krajina", Janko Barle noted that nobody had yet written anything about the Greeks, and that it would be interesting to discover whether the same name was used for the giants in some other place. He adds that the tradition about the giants was spread also with South Slavs and that they did not get it from other nations. Franz Krauss claims the same in his book *Volksglaube und religiöser Brauch der Südslaven*, on pages 129–133. To the people near Rijeka in Croatia, the word Greek means the same as an unknown foreign man, the same as is the German man to the Slovenian and Russian people, and the same as is *Kranjac* to the Croatians.

It was not until forty years later that Niko Županič wrote that the name *Greek* used to denote a giant among the People of Bela Krajina and Banat in Croatia (Županič 1934: 166–179). He came to the conclusion that the word *Greek* denoting a giant has been used not only in Slovenia, but also with other Slavs. The name came from the south of Croatia, to Bela Krajina. According to him, when the Croats or the Illyrian-Roman Vlachs arrived in the ancient Roman province Dalmatia, they believed that the great forts and unusual buildings must have been built by Greeks, a fairy-tale nation of giants (Županič 1934: 171, 175). The word *Greek* denoting a giant is still used today in the folk narrative of South Slavs.

Vlajko Palavestra, who conducted research about the oral tradition about the Greeks in the Dinarides, made a connection between the name *Greek* and the Vlachs, an ancient population living in the Dinarides (Palavestra 1966).

ROMAN GIRLS

In addition to the Greeks, the Slovene folk narrative tradition includes also the *Roman girls*. Similar stories were told about them as they were about the pagan girls, the Greeks and other giants. Davorin Trstenjak recorded this narrative in Štajerska:

The Roman Girls in Štajerska

The girls from the generation of giants are named the Roman girls in Štajerska. Take a step on the big square in Ptuj and look at the giant monument, which was dedicated to the god of sun. Just ask the girl from Haloze, crouching next to it and selling plums, who erected the monument and she will reply curtly: "The Roman girl brought it here in her apron!"

The Roman girls were so strong that they could pick up the ploughmen, the drovers, the horses and the ploughs from the field and take them all home in her apron.

The Roman girl was able to uproot an oak tree with ease, the same as if she were uprooting garlic from the garden, and she also threw a millstone in the Drava River or brought the blacksmith an anvil from off the roof.

She was also so hungry that she ate q whole ox for breakfast and drank a tub of wine as well (Trstenjak 1930: 239–240).

In Slovenia, the tradition about the Roman girls has not been kept to such extent, but the motif where it does appear is in accordance with the belief the ancient population had; that they were exceedingly tall and exhibited strange behaviour.

THE OGRE (*OGER*)

The memory of *Oger* (Ober) remains but only in fragments. A paragraph in the journal *Slovenski gospodar* from 1940 describes the *Ogri*, who invaded Slovenj Gradec: "In 1489, the Ogres invaded Grad and occupied it, together with its bridge."[88]

The name *Oger* for a giant was in Slovenia used mainly in Koroška and Štajerska. The word *Ogre*, denoting a giant, has been widely spread throughout Europe. In

[88] Slovenski gospodar (7. 8. 1940): 3.

Slovenian folk tradition, ogres were presented as gigantic frightful creatures because of the invasion of the Huns, the Ostrogoths, the Gepids and other nations, who invaded other nations after the fall of the Roman Empire.

HRUST

The giant was in Slovenia named also the *Hrust*. Matevž Ravnikar-Poženčan explained both of the meanings of this word in his manuscript notebook about the *Hrust*.

The Hrusti
The word "Hrust" is used to describe the giant in Kranjska. Thus, to a man, who is extremely strong and tall they say: You are just like a hrust (hulk).[89]

THE LOCAL GIANTS

A hulk called Hrust allegedly lived on Šmarna Gora, a mountain in the vicinity of Ljubljana. The story goes that this evil hulk *Dovjež* or *Hrust* threw a pile of rocks from the Posavje and Vižmarje flatlands on the other bank of the river Sava and thus a big hill was created. But when he stepped on its top it sank. Today, there is still a sinkhole between Šmarna Gora and Grmada (Kelemina 1930: no. 55/IV)

The giant from Lubnik, who lived in the hills of Škofja Loka (*Škofjeloško hribovje*), used a spruce tree to sweep away the opposing army that came to attack the people of Škofja Loka. The tale about the giant from Lubnik was also recorded by Lojze Zupanc (1973: 60), who often changed the folk narratives according to his liking. He also used his imagination to change this tale, but it is still based on folk tradition with the motifs related to other narratives about the giants, which can, due to being so powerful, from time to time also help people.

In Štajerska, people also told stories about *Špelca*, a mad giantess, but they could never catch her. In the end, it was the giantess herself who revealed the secret of catching her. The trick was by using a dress that was still in the form of flax an hour previously (Sokolov 1889: 11, Kelemina 1930: 172).

The giants occasionally helped people, but more often they pestered them, stole their cattle and harvest, destroyed their fields and buildings; therefore, the people tried to get rid of them, but that could be done only by using a trick, as often described by some tales.

[89] Manuscript of Matevž Ravnikar-Poženčan, Archive NUK: MS 483.

It is said that a giant named *Robavs* lived in Borovlje and a giant *Rogovilež* lived in Mojstrana in Gorenjska. Both of them are mentioned by Mirko Kunčič in his "Triglav Fairytales" (1940, 1944). Robavs was a powerful fellow with arms like iron, a heart like stone and a roaring voice. He also pulled teeth and was able to heal others. The giant Rogovilež frightened the people and thus the Fates (*žark žene*) set a giant snake on him, which killed him. His head was taken by the shepherds on the top of the Žolezen, where it turned into stone and it has remained there for a thousand of years.

The tale about *Krimski Mož* (Man from Mt. Krim) is interesting because it blurs the distinction between a giant and a wild man. *Povodni mož* (the Water Sprite) and the Man from Krim are involved in a fight (Govekar 1892: 13–15; Mokriški 1918: 60–62), similarly to the Water Sprite from Bled and the Water Sprite from Bohinj.

People in western Slovenia told stories about *Blagodéj*, a giant supernatural creature that helped underprivileged people. He was said to appear in various forms and lived in the mountains between the Bohinj, the Soča Valley and the Vipava Valley. The only preserved source mentions that Blagodéj is from Primorska. It was believed that he helped the poor who had been wronged by the rich. Loggers from Idrija, who had been cheated by a wealthy skinflint, received payment in wood split by Blagodéj with his own leg (Kelemina 1930 no. 167, Matičetov 1989 no. 3: 89–90). This folktale reminds us of international narrative type ATU 650A "Strong John".

A tale about a tough fellow Tuhínc has been kept in Prekmurje:

Tuhinc

A foster father from Prekmurje once wrongly obtained the millet of some orphans. When they were threshing this millet, a stranger came to the door and stood there and waited for somebody to call him to work. When the foster father noticed this, he ordered him to go and thresh the millet. The stranger was looking forward to this. He suddenly went to the machine and effortlessly pushed very hard. Before he arrived, four hired men could barely push it! When it was time for breakfast, they called for "Tuhinc" to come and join them. But he did not wish to and said that he wanted to wait for other people to be full first. While they were eating, he spun the machine with great haste. After their breakfast, the workers came back to the threshing floor and what did they see! The millet was ground and cleaned. They offered him some food. He needed neither a spoon nor a knife; he spread the food on his hands and licked it. It was then that they realized that this is the "devil". He vanished in the same way as he had appeared (Kühar 1911: 144–145; Kelemina 1930).

In Resia, and particularly in the village Stolvizza, people tell of the enormous *Dardáj*, named also Dardéj and Dardák, who lived under Indrinica, in the wilderness

of the mountains. The enormous *Dardéj* protected these people from their neighbouring *Biski* or *Bijani* (the inhabitants of the village Bila), who were trying to take possession of their mountain horse pasture, by driving their horses over a rocky overhang. Consequently, the overhang has been named *Konjski Plaz* (Horse Landslide). After that, the war between the inhabitants of Oseaco/Bila and of Stolvizza/Solbica was over (Dapit, Kropej 1999: 43–44).

POLIFEM THE CYCLOPS

Slovene folk tradition has preserved the memory of the one-eyed giant, the cyclops Polifem from the Homer's Odyssey. This ancient myth has been transferred into the international narrative folktale type ATU 1137 "The Blinded Ogre". The story describes a young man who becomes a captive in the hands of a cruel cyclops Polifem, who is a sorcerer or a *dog-head* in Slovenian folktales.

The philologist Gregor Krek was the first to publish a Slovenian folktale from Štajerska about a one-eyed *pesoglavec* (a dog-head), who lived on a mountain near Rogatec. This tale narrates that the pesoglavec was hairy below the waist but had a human form above the waist: it fed on people, until four out of seven travellers pushed him on the knife which was set on the pole and blinded him (Krek 1882: 42–52, 103–115, 155–174).

A similar story was recorded by Milko Matičetov in 1967 in Črni Vrh above Idrija. A boy who went into the forest was caught by the cyclops, who took him with him into his cave where he fed him on hazelnuts. The other dog-heads came to ask whether he has gained any weight. Eventually, the boy blinded the cyclops with a sharp stake and ran away across a stream, which the dog-heads could not pass, and was never again found by them (Matičetov 1967). In the 1970s in Resia, Milko Matičetov discovered another fairy tale "About a Great Fear" where Polifem is substituted with a grand sorcerer (Matičetov 1973).

THE WILD, THE FOREST AND THE MOUNTAIN MEN AND WOMEN

According the folk tradition, wild men (*divji možje*) and wild women (*divje žene*) lived mainly in forest and hills. They were heavily built, much more so than the fairies. They were also wilder and taller, and looked like savages. They were knowledgeable and were able to control nature and both animal and plant worlds and the weather as well, just like giants could. They could be benevolent to people, but also hostile and harmful. They were able to foretell future; the weather, the harvest, and also what would happen throughout the year.

They gave advice when to sow and plant fava beans or other crops, so the harvest would be rich. They taught people how to make cheese, where to find medicinal herbs, how to grow crops, where to dig ore, etc.

If people gave them food, they repaid them and helped them in the field, they brought back any lost cattle to the shepherds and game to hunters so they were able to hunt them down.

The wild men and women were also hostile. They could also kidnap people, kill them and steal their food, destroy their crops and take away their animals. The people tried to get rid of them, to catch or even kill them. They tricked them by using an object, which could be turned or curved in a wrong manner. Thus, they tried to catch a wild man by using a hatchet with an inverted blade or to tie him with evil grape vines or the *Wayfaring Tree* twisted in a wrong manner.

The wild men and women were common all over Slovenia, but people named them in different ways. In some parts of Gorenjska and also in Resia they called them *dujak*, while they called them *pogórni mož* (mountain man) and *pogórna žena* (mountain woman) in other parts of Slovenia. In Velika Planina, they called them *douji mož*, in Koroška they were *gózdni mož* or *gorni mož*, around Triglav and also in

Hostnik/forest man, Boris Kobe (Trdina 1970)

other places in Slovenia they were named *gorski mož*, in Dolenjska they were called *hóstnik* (forest man), in the Šaleška dolina *podzemeljski mož*, in Bela Krajina they were also called *vilenják*, in Pohorje *lesni mož*, and in Bohinj *podlesni mož*.

The *dívja žéna* (wild woman) was most often called *dívja bába* or *dívja dékla,* in Primorska *divjačésa, dujačesa, krivopéta, krivapéta, krivopétnica.*

The people imagined them as having a huge stature covered in hair or even in moss. Matevž Ravnikar-Poženčan, who was gathering folk tradition from Gorenjska in the 19th century, described *pogorni mož* and *pogorna žena* like this:

Pogorni mož, pogorna žena
This giant forest spook is all covered in moss. If s/he sees a man s/he laughs out so loud that everything shakes. The woman is smaller than the man.[90]

Ravnikar-Poženčan also wrote about the wild man Silvanus, who advised people when to plant:

Silvanus
This one walks in the forests. Once, it came to the Vidniče manor house in the Cerklje parish to some farmer and advised him to plant in the worst cold, in the snow: "Farmer, plant fava beans!" The wild man picked up the seeds, which rolled up in his direction and ate it. The farmer had a very beautiful fava bean crop on that field ever since because he followed his advice.[91]

Silvan or Silvanus is the Italic god of forests, and it was an important deity in the Roman province of Illyria. The Roman people associated it with Mars, while it was linked to Pan in Istria (Stipčevič 1974, Šašel Kos 1999: 32). A similar tradition is still alive among the Rhaeto-Romanic population and among the Ladin-speaking inhabitants of the Dolomite region in Friuli as well, where he was also named *Salvan*. The people imagined him as a very hairy wild man, sometimes short and at other times tall, who has the ability to become invisible. Silvan is believed to be the protector of farmers and their herds.

THE WILD MAN PASSES ON HIS KNOWLEDGE ON PEOPLE

Although the wild man helped people and offered them advice, also about when to sow and when to plant, and offered a helping hand, brought back any lost animals and game to the hunters, people still tried to get rid of him, because he stole their

[90] Manuscript of Matevž Ravnikar-Poženčan, Archive NUK: MS 483: XI.

[91] Manuscript of Matevž Ravnikar-Poženčan, Archive NUK: MS 483: XI.

bread, milk, cattle, the crops they gathered, and even people. Some tales describe how people made a trap for this wild man, got him drunk, gave him boots in which he slipped and fell, tried to chase him away with a bear or gave him a rifle and gunpowder, claiming it to be a pipe and tobacco. (Šašelj 1906: 213–215)

Once people catch the wild man, he tries to redeem himself by disclosing a secret and offering knowledge only he possesses. The wild man shows them the location of ore, explains what to do with rennet, and tells them how to keep epidemics and other diseases away. But he never discloses all the secrets it has, but keeps some to himself. When the people set him free, he makes fun of them, as if to say that they has a bird in their hands but they did not take advantage of it, and that they could also ask it many other things, such as, for example, why is there a cross in a walnut.

The motif of the wild man, who teaches people various skills and passes on them the knowledge he has, but in the end it replies curtly that he could teach them much more if only they knew how to treat him, occurs frequently in folktales. This was established by Ivan Grafenauer (Grafenauer 1952–1953: 124–153, Grafenauer 1954: 130–133, Grafenauer 1958: 49–57), who noted that the *divji mož* (wild man) and the *gorni mož* (mountain man) are often mistaken one for the other and sometimes the other takes part in the tale with the same motif. Grafenauer also presumes that this tradition was in its origins connected with the wild man or the forest man, and not with the dwarf-like mountain man (*gorni mož*). He adds that the tales from Graubünden, which belong among the oldest Rhaeto-Romanian cultural layer, describe this fairy creature, drunk with wine, as a tiny, three-and-a-half feet tall, but very robust little man. A tale from Tyrol, with origin found among ancient Alpine people and Valachs describes a wild man called *Salvanel*, a master of a flock of sheep, who at night secretly joins the shepherds, and drinks their milk, and teaches them how to make butter and cheese in return.

Ivan Grafenauer finds the origin of the motif of getting a mythical creature drunk in the myth about the king Midas of Phrygia. He compares it also with the myth about satyr Silenus – the teacher of Dionysus (Bacchus) – from Asia Minor. Grafenauer also linked this legend with apocrypha found in Talmudic legends, such as Salomon and the Asmodeus (*Ašmedaj*) and "Building the Master's House". And he also drew some parallels with ancient Indian Vikramaditya mythology (Grafenauer 1952-1953: 144–149), and later with the medieval German poem about Salomon and the intoxicated and captured dragon. He also compares this motif with the Serbian fairy tale about the intoxicated and captured elephants (Grafenauer 1958: 57).

Ivan Grafenauer assumed that such tradition has cultural and historical background from the days when the native population who lived in the hills passed the knowledge about how to make cheese to the newly settled population in the Central and Eastern Alps, since making cheese out of fresh milk is not of ancient Indo-European

origin. The Celtic, German and Slavic people knew only about the soft cheese made from sour milk. The German people are said to have learned how to make cheese in the 5th and 6th century from the Rhaeto-Romans, similarly as the Greeks learned cheese diary practices from the ancient native Balkan peoples (Grafenauer 1958: 50).

In Slovenia, many tales with such themes have been preserved. Ivan Grafenauer published a great deal of work from Slovenia and from abroad. Milko Matičetov also found such tales in Trenta and Soča Valley (Grafenauer 1952.1953: 142–143), as late as in 1952, which shows how this tradition was deeply anchored mainly in the Slovenian Alpine region and not only in the west, but also in Koroška, where the mountain man plays the role of the wild man. Most often, he knows the whereabouts of ore and shares this information with people (Šašel, Ramovš 1936: 5. Dapit, Kropej 1999: 16–18, no.8). According to Ivan Grafenauer, the tales about a captured wild man, who shows people where ore is, refer to the discoveries of iron and lead resources or to a newly revived mining industry in the High Middle Ages (Grafenauer 1952–1953: 138).

Similar to the Wild Man, it was *dujačesa* (wild woman) who taught people how to make cheese in Alta Val Tore/Terska Dolina. The local people made her do it, since they took away her child and promised her to return it after she taught them how to make cheese.

THE WILD MAN WRESTLES WITH A BEAR

In addition to the motif of a "Captured Wild Man", there are also a widespread tales in Slovenia about a wild man, who wrestles a "wild kitten" (ATU 1161), such as in the tale of the Mountain Man from Rosental in Koroška:

> *The Mountain Man came to some man to lie on the boards above the bread oven. One day, a traveller with a bear on a chain came as well and tied the bear next to the corner pillars. At once, the bear and the mountain man started to wrestle. They jumped on each other and fought that the hair flew through the air. But the bear was stronger. The Mountain Man had to run away. The next day, the Mountain Man yelled from the forest to the farmer: "Do you still have that wild kitten?"*
> *The farmer answered: "Yes, I still do!"*
> *From then on, the Mountain Man was afraid to come back and lie on the boards above the bread oven* (Šašel, Ramovš 1936: 5–6; Dapit, Kropej 1999: 19).

Ivan Grafenauer assumed that this motif originally referred to the supernatural beings, such as a dwarf or a *kanih*, since the forest beasts allegedly obeyed the

Wild Man. Moreover, the Mountain Men were strong, though dwarf-like creatures, and they knew where the treasures and ore, especially silver and gold, were hidden (Grafenauer 1940: 54).

WILD MAN AMONG LUMBERJACKS AND HUNTERS

The wild man loved home-made bread and milk. He sometimes also stole food, but he mainly came to get food from the farmers on their farms, the shepherds on their pastures, and the hunters in their hunting cabins. When people gave him food as offering, he made it up for it and thus they had big flock and lived in prosperity. He chased the game in their direction and even brought them a gold or silver coin (Tonejc 1884: 606–606; compare: Kelemina 1930: 151).The hunter who was afraid of the wild man tried to chase him away by offering him a rifle and gunpowder while he lit a tobacco pipe for himself.

The wild man also presented danger for the lumberjacks in the solitary cabin in the middle of the forest:

Lumberjacks and the Wild Man

Lumberjacks had a mountain hunting cabin where they went to cook during the day and to sleep during the night. Every Sunday they attended mass and left a guardian in the cabin. But when they came home, he is nowhere to be found. The same happens the second, the third and the fourth Sunday. One of them offers to stay at home that day because he wants to see where his people had disappeared to and who took them so far away that they never returned again. The one who was appointed to be the guardian usually lied in bed and pulled the blanket over his head. But this one found a log, put it in bed and covered it with blankets. He hides himself behind the door and takes a hatchet in his hands. He waits to see who will come. When the lumberjacks are long gone, the wild man comes, opens the door, steps next to the bed, takes the blanket and the log, believing it to be the lumberjack and carries it through the door. The lumberjack jumps behind him, and right at the threshold buries the hatchet between his shoulders. The wild man roared out from all the pain.

A few days later, the lumberjacks see the wild woman holding the wild man in her arms and he still had the hatchet in his back. From then on, the lumberjacks lived in peace.[92]

[92] Manuscript of Gašper Križnik, Archive ISN ZRC SAZU: ŠZ 3/49. Published: Dapit, Kropej 1999: 12–14, no. 6.

This time, the lumberjacks get rid of the wild man because they set up an ambush for him. In the narrative from Borovnica near Vrhnika, a beggar similarly tricked the wild man, who came to eat the food they grew on fields and also killed people. The beggar did not lie on the bed, because there were sharp knives set on it instead of the sheet, but hid underneath it. When the wild man came to kill it with a log, the beggar screamed from underneath: "I am not here!" The wild man became so scared that he ran away, but was entangled in a pea shrub and fell so hard that he died.[93] In 1970, a similar tale was told to Tone Cevc by *Jerištov Oče* (Father Jerišt), in Velika Planina (Cevc 1993: 64) where they kept many tales about the *douji mož* (wild man) and *douja žena* (wild woman), who help the shepherds, but at the same time also scare them.

WILD MAN KIDNAPS A GIRL

The wild man can, like the water sprite, kidnap a girl in order to take care of him and to be his wife. But if she left him, he mercilessly tore apart the children they had together, similar to the tale from Windisch Bleiberg in Rosental in Koroška:

Mountain Man kidnaps a Girl
The mountain man caught a beautiful girl raking leaves, and dragged her into his den, and never left her leave his sight. The girl grieved and begged her husband to let her at least pick flowers and blackberries, but she was refused and threatened with being torn into pieces if she did not obey. They lived together for a year and had two children when she started to long for her home. She escaped in secret, picked up some flowers and crawled in between the bramble, waded across a river and felt free. The wild man soon stormed in after her, but he could not reach her. He held one of the children in one hand and in his anger tore him into little pieces (Šašel, Ramovš, 1936: 5; Dapit, Kropej 1999: 18).

The girl was able to escape the Mountain Man (in Rosental: *hornə mozh*), because she crawled in between the bramble and waded across a stream, which are the boundary lines separating the world of a man and the world of the supernatural beings of nature.

The tales about the Wild Men were also present in Resia, where he was given the name *dujak*. He stole a girl and made her his wife, and also *vice versa*; the Wild

[93] Manuscript of Franc Kramar, Archive ISN ZRC SAZU: ŠZ 5/2, 4. Published: Dapit, Kropej 1999: 14–16, no. 7.

Woman (*dujačesa*) also married a man from Resia (Matičetov 1968: 223; Kropej, Šmitek, Dapit 2010: 59–60). Marriages between people and fairy creatures were not rare in folk tradition, which will be seen in stories about water sprites, and the fairies.

KRIVOPETA (WILD WOMAN WITH FEET TURNED BACKWARDS)

In their imagination, people often associated the wild women, especially *krivopete*, with the notion of cannibalism. They were dangerous not only to the children, but to adults as well. Ivan Trinko published one of such discussions about the wild women in the journal *Ljubljanski zvon* (Trinko 1884).

The *krivopete* had the same ambivalent character as did the wild men: they did help people but they did them much harm as well. *Krivopéta*, *krivopétnica*, *dúga žéna*, *dujačesa* and other women living near Idrija, Tolminsko, in Trenta and Slavia Veneta (Venetian Slovenia) were mainly evil female supernatural beings, who could control nature. In the Soča/Isonzo Valley, they even told stories that it was the wild women who dug a new river bed for the Soča River (Kelemina 1930: 216).

They allegedly appeared most frequently just before stormy weather. People thought that they brought hail, just like witches did. But they also advised people when to plant and when to reap, and since they were able to foretell the future they could also create natural phenomenon which helped or harmed the farmers. They worked in favour of those who gave them food (an offering); they were said to protect homes and children; they harvested wheat for them and helped them in other ways as well. However, people had to treat them with great care. They predicted weather from the top of high mountains, occasionally taught people how to take advantage of natural phenomena and gave farmers advice for farming chores, but they choose their own payment for such advice. While the people were working on the field, they took away their children (Trinko 1884). Sometimes they lured a man to help them with different chores, they shared with him different secrets and knowledge, but woe betide him if he spread them to other people once he arrived home.

They were believed to live in caves, to have long, rumpled green hair and feet and hands bent backwards. Some said that they had the hooves of a horse, the same as the *farce* from Bovec and the *vesle* from Gorica. The *žalke* (holy women) from Rosental were said to have their feet bent backwards (Graber 1914: no.3). The *Willewies*, *Bilwis* (the white fairies) from Koroška were also disfigured, the same as the *Anguane* in Slavia Veneta.

In San Pietro al Natisone/Špeter in Italy, but also in Resia and Slavia Veneta people said that the *krivopete* could be chased away by the sound of the bells, which they believed was the barking of the dogs of St. Lenart.

KODKODEKA FROM VAL RESIA

In Resia, people told stories about *Kodkodela* or *Korkodeka*, a wild woman who did everything contrary to what other people did. When the drought was severe and people wished for the rain to fall, she went to the river to wash her clothes and prayed for the sun to shine so that the feathers in her pillows would dry. She was in bad terms with everyone and when she had enough of it all she set the village Stolvizza on fire and went somewhere across Kila (Matičetov 1968: 222).

CHANGELING (*PODMENEK*)

Slovenian folk tradition about the wild women and fairies also mentions *changelings*,[94] i.e. a wild woman replaces the child of a woman for her own. Such child – a changeling – was in Slovenia named *podmének, preménk, obranov otrok* (Obran's Child) or *odmenik*. The *Podmenek* was a creature of unusual appearance and behaviour, for instance, it had a big head; it was black, had hearty appetite and was constantly hungry and screaming. The wild women took away the human child to feed and raise him. In Slovenian narrative tradition, the child is often taken away also by the devil, the *škopnik* or the water sprite (Kelemina 1930: 162, no. 108). The exchange can be caused by a curse, by the incorrect behaviour of the godparents who were taking the baby to baptism, particularly if they neglected to make the sign over cross over the child at a crossroads, or if the mother and the child were not protected in the most dangerous period, which is forty days after the birth.

This motif appears in the folk song *Hudoba odnese svetega Lovrenca* (The Devil Takes Away St. Lawrence) or *V zibki zamenjani otrok* (The Changeling in the Crib) (SLP I: 184–188, no. 35). This song originates from the apocryphal legend in which the infant St. Lawrence (sometimes also St. Benedict or St. Stephen) was replaced by the devil for one of its children. According to lore, the child is returned to his or her parents if the changeling (*podmenek*) is exposed and was given a cup of porridge and a spoon too large for the cup or was beaten with hazel switches until the human child was thrown back in the crib. Pleas and prayers did not help much.

The lore about the *podmenek* is spread not only throughout Europe but is known also outside of it and has its origin in the belief in an evil spirit which settles among humans, in exorcism and in folk explanations of the birth of handicapped children who were believed to be the children of supernatural beings (Matičetov 1974).

[94] More about this see: Röhrich 1967.

In Slovenian folklore, the fairy was named *vila*, white lady or the white woman (*bela žena*), the holy women (*sveta žena*), the venerable woman (*častitljiva žena*) and the God's girl (*božja delkica*). They were considered to be supernatural beings, but people sometimes imagined them also as being priestess, clergywoman and prophetess such as were Pythias in ancient Greece, who lived in remote and inaccessible areas. Sometimes people also believed that they were indigenous women, who kept their distance away from settlement of men, but they were able to foretell future and to help people because they were learned priestess. They are described as such in the paragraph published in the journal *Novice* in 1844 by an unknown author.

Sibile Prerokile (Sybils) and the White Women as the pre-Christian Prophetess

Sybils, the white women, the venerable women, žalikžene, the holy women, rojenice (Fates) were pre-Christian seers and priestess. […] They knew everything. They stood on hills and shouted out loud when it is time to plough and to sow and when to celebrate certain holidays. They liked to come in the village to visit people whom they treated with kindness. The white woman sometimes also took care of all the cattle in the barn, even before the housewife woke up. They were there when a child was given birth to, thus they were also often called rojenice (Fates). They went to work on the field all by themselves and they especially liked to weed millet. Every farmer was happy to see a white woman on his field since this meant that the plants will grow very well, like hops does. A house in which the white woman stepped was a fortunate house. […] That was in the old days in Slovenia. They were honoured and renowned and although it is more than a thousand years since they have disappeared, people still remember a lot of the things they learned from these learned women. (Novice II, no. 2: 169).

The folklore about the fairies intertwines with the tradition about Sybils, which are in Slovenia known as *šembilje*. Because they were seers and were able to predict one's fate and future, their features which are in Slovenia used with *rojenice* or *sojenice* (Fates) and *šembilje,* blended with the tradition about fairies. Sometimes, their ability to predict and influence one's fate prevailed. In some countries, the name used for fairies is even derived from the word "fate", such as with the Romanic *Fatae*. The Germanic *Feen* and the French *Dames Blanches* or *Bonnes Dames* used to be depicted with the symbols of the solar motion or with the wheel of luck or Fate.

A FAIRY TEACHES PEOPLE TO SING AND DANCE

People believed that fairies live in the trees, in inaccessible forests, cracks, in hollow sheer rocks, on the top of the mountains, where they were said to have a hidden paradise; they were also said to live near springs and wells, lakes and in the rush on the river banks. They gathered at dusk and late hours at night and danced and sang. Wherever they choose to stay, they brought fertility and prosperity with them. According to some stories, they also taught people how to sing and dance (Kropej 2002: 137–138).

Fairies are also among those mythological beings who can lead a person to the places and time that are connected to the world beyond. The saying "dancing through time", has a wholly literal meaning. Fairies dancing their round dances in remote places can take a coincidental observer with them. Literature of the 16th century abounds with mentions of dancing fairies; one of the most famous is Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream".

Numerous tales describe a fairy circle that is potentially very dangerous for an observer. If a young man enters the circle he may disappear. Sometimes he may be rescued, but this is possible only after a full year has passed, and at exactly the same place. Pulling him out by throwing his coat over him, his rescuer must be careful to remain with one leg outside the fairy circle (Briggs 1979: 88–89).

Slavic fairy lore often mentions how fairies punish those who interrupt their dancing by inflicting wounds on their body and spirit. It may be something as seemingly minor as an intruder trampling the grass on which they are dancing and the fairies take their revenge by paralyzing their arms or legs, or piercing their hearts with their arrows, leaving them to die. Their victims may also lose their minds (Krauss 1890: 80–91). If a person returns from a mountain sick, people say that that person had chanced upon a fairy circle along a lonely mountain path. All of these events occur during a time that is liminal, sacred, and therefore highly perilous.

FAIRIES MAKE NATURE FERTILE

An important part of Slovenian folklore presents the fairies as distributers of wealth and prosperity. This derives from the connection between folk tradition about fairies and fertility cults. Such fertility cults were connected with the goddess *Nerthus* (*Berta*, *Percht*, *Pehtra*, *Pehta*), and the Celtic maternal and water deity *Modron*. Thus, the folk tradition about them is interwoven with the tradition about *Pehtra Baba* or *Mokoš*.

The White Lady, Felician von Myrbach (ÖUMWB 1891)

According to tales, people would leave for them offerings such as milk, dumplings, and other foods in the fields and pastures. In return, fairies took over their chores on the field, they took care of their cattle, rode and groomed their horses and also presented them with yarn that had no end until someone actually mentioned the end (of the yarn), etc.

Fairies also kept cattle. The stories from Bela Krajina mention them coming at night to the banks of the River Kolpa together with their red cattle. Sometimes they would abduct a young boy who had to work for them.[95] He would be able to escape if he climbed through a forked branch of a bramble or some other bush with thorns, or if he waded across a river, or crossed the boundary line between the abode of the fairies and the abode of the people just in time.

FAIRY WIFE

Those who did a good deed for a fairy, such as untangle her hair, provide shade for her child, or weave a wicker roof to protect the sleeping fairy from the sun, were rewarded either by being given a flock of sheep, which started to follow them from afar, or by granting them extreme power, or by giving them a whistle or some other instrument, which made people dance.
In some tales, a fairy grants a young man's wish and takes him for her husband. As a fairy, a mother and as a seer, she allows to live only those of her children whom she perceives to be honest in the future. Conjugal happiness with a fairy also lasts only until her husband breaks the taboo, for example if he calls the fairy by her real name of if he hits her, curses her, shares with children her secret etc. The fairy disappears at the exact moment the taboo is broken.

[95] Samotar, Žalik-žene na Volinjaku pri Prevaljah. Mir XII (20. 1. 1893), 5.

Thus, according to a tale, the farmers Polharji had a fairy for their mother. The story recounts that once, a handsome young man from this family saw a girl dressed in white sleeping next to the path of the meadow under the Učka Mountain. To protect her from the sun, he cut a big branch and put it next to the girl. For such kindness, a fairy granted his wish and married him. Although the fairy left this man, who had once in amazement named her: "Fairy, she is a fairy!"; she still raised the daughter they had together, who became the mother of the Polhar family we know today (Novice XI, 1853: 303, no. 76).

The tales about the *žalik žena* who came and lied in bed with a farmer, were frequent mainly in Koroška. This would bring great prosperity to the farmer's house. She sometimes also gave to the housewife a yarn that had no end. The fairy disappeared if the housewife or some other member of the family chased it away or cursed it, became angry because of the yarn and said "will there be no end of this yarn". It was also not permitted that a housewife cut off the fairy's braid, which fell from the bed on the floor. In any case, the fairy or the *žalik žena* never returned if any of this happened and they took with them also the future prosperity of that house.

Urban Jarnik (Jarnik 1813) and Matija Majar Ziljski were among the first ones to write about the *žalik žene* in Koroškan folk tradition. The latter published the following paragraph in Vraz's journal *Kolo* in 1847.

Fairy Bestows a Yarn's End

The white women also came to the farmers in their houses. One early morning, as soon as the wife of the farmer got up from the bed in which she slept with her beloved one and went about her errands, a white woman came and took her still warm place next to her beloved. According to the tale, this occurred in a house in Rožje. Her long blonde hair fell from the pillow on the floor. When the wife returned, she noticed this and lifted them from the floor on the bed so they would not get dirty. The white woman repaid her by handing her an end of a piece of yarn: "This is in return for the kindness which you have shown", she says, "Although it is not much". The wife takes it and winds it in a ball. She winds and she winds but she does not run out of it. A neighbour finds her like this, and she hits her knee in amazement, saying: "God bless you! Does the yarn end at all?" and it was at that moment that she ran out of it (Majar 1847: 14–15).

The motif of a fairy as a wife or a lover like the famous French *Mélusine* (Mot. F.301.6)[96] is often the main motif in the tales about fairies. Heroes are born out of such relationships. The fairies were mothers of heroes mainly in the epics of South Slavs,

[96] For more see: Zipes 2012: 28–32.

among them also of Prince Marko (Kraljevič Marko). The fairies were sometimes only foster mothers, who gave their heroes their great powers and the ability to surmount the obstacles and the enemy. Among such heroes were for example the knight Lancelot, Tristan de Nanteuil, Ljutica Bogdan, Zmaj Ognjeni Vuk, Peter Klepec, etc.

FAIRIES – HEALERS

The fairies had the healing powers, which were typical for elementary supernatural beings of nature, such as were also wild man and wild woman. The Slovenian folk tradition also kept numerous tales in which the fairies have healing powers and not only know about the healing properties of herbs and other plants, and also objects, but are also able to heal with their supernatural powers.

The tale about a soldier named Groga from Grobnik in Bistriška dolina tells how the fairies protected him from gunshots on the battlefield (Kelemina 1930: 5/I), by giving him holy books. With them, he was also able to heal people. Due to their magic healing power and their protection from misfortune, the fairies are very similar to witches and other supernatural healers.

In contrast, the fairies who appear on the battlefield remind of the Germanic Valkyries, who have the power to protect the soldier from gunshots and also to take the dead heroes in the Odin's hall, i.e. Valhalla.

FAIRIES – PHANTOMS

The fairies could also be terrifying and fatal for the people, because the wealth and prosperity were connected with their antitheses: misfortune and death; thus, fairies had also a negative, destructive side. The ambivalent nature of the fairies is reflected by their punishing those who wander into their secret world or even try to do it harm. Woe betide a lumberjack who tried to cut down a tree in which they lived, for he would not return alive from the forest.

It took great effort for the people whom the fairies took away to come back. They were often left with physical and mental consequences. The negative image of the fairy is metaphorically expressed also with an image of the enchantresses and a phantom leading to ruin like Fata Morgana,[97] which became the synonym for a phantom, which no one can resist and leads one to ruin and death. Fata Morgana was later the master of the kingdom of the death. She was believed to be very similar to Luxuria, the ancient goddess of dissipation, which is intertwined into the image of the fatal phantom.

[97] For more see: Zipes 2012: 195–196.

People believed that the first, third or seventh night after the baby was born, beautiful, tall and slim women came to predict the future of the baby. This prediction was irrevocable. According to other tales, the first one, dressed in white, foretold good events; the second, in brown foretold unhappy events and the third one, in black, foretold death. Yet according to other tales, the first one foretold childhood, the second one maturity and the third one old age and death. The latter was dressed in white, the first two in red or blue.

Similarly to the *rojenice* of Slovenia, the ancient myths mention the Greek Moirai (*Moirae*) or Lathin *Parcae* who start to spin the thread of life (*Clotho*), measure and spin the thread (*Lachesis*) and cut it when death approaches (*Atropos*). From here derive their characteristic attributes: the distaff, the spinning wheel, and the thread. According to a Greek myth, Moirae were the daughters of Zeus and Themis, thus they were the children of the supreme god and his embodiment of Justice, thus they played an important role, which can be seen in Nordic epics and in Germanic mythology in which the Norn (the Germanic Fates) present an important part not only with the birth of a child but also in the battlefields.

The Fates, Gvidon Birolla (Möderndorfer 1957)

According to the research made by Rolf Brednich, the tradition which developed among the Greeks, Albanians, Macedonians, Bulgarians, Romanians, Serbs, Croatians, Slovenians, Czechs, Slovaks, Lusatian Serbs, Lithuanians and Latvians is different from the tradition of the Romanic, Germanic and Anglo-Saxons nations, where the beliefs regarding one's destiny are transmitted to the fairies (Brednich 1964: 244).

According to Slovenian folklore, a certain and destined death can be avoided by praying to God, which is repeated at that exact moment when one should hang himself or step on a rotten bridge; according to the rule: it was time, but the man did not come. People who did not have the knowledge

about the secret laws of fate and tried to escape from it were brought even closer to the fulfilment of their prophecy, e.g. the prophecy made by Fates that a child will be killed by a lightening comes true (ATU 934). Similarly, a prophecy that a boy will be killed by a tree is fulfilled. It was said that the boy will be killed by an apple tree on the garden, thus the father cuts it down, but the boy trips over its stump and dies (Kelemina 1930: 109–114).

In Slovenian folk tradition are preserved the stories about Oedipus, whom the fates prophesied that he will kill his father and marry his mother. The first protagonist of these legends was in Slovenian lore Judas the Apostle, later also St. Andrea, St. Matthias and St. Luke. Slovenian versions of this legend with St. Matthias as the protagonist, have no motif of incest, since the hero kills his father and mother by mistake, believing that his wife is in bed with her lover (ATU 931). In Dolenjska, the story about St. Matthias was recorded by Fran Sreboški Peterlin (Peterlin 1864: 178; Kelemina 1930: no. 205). The same motif appears also in a folk song "St. Luke kills his father and his mother" (Š: no. 608).

The *rojenice* (the fates) are in Slovenia first mentioned in the *Celjska kronika* (Chronicle from Celje) in the 15th or 16th century in a sermon: "De Royenicis id est tribus Parcis."

In Gorenjska, Matevž Ravnikar-Poženčan described them like this:

> **Rojenice (Parcae)**
> *They say that they are three of them and they enter one's house when a child is born to determine his fate. On this occasion, a loaf of bread must be prepared for them on the table. One among the Parcae creates the yarn, the second spins it and the third one cuts this thread of life when death comes. The names of these Parcae are not given* [98].

In journal *Slovenski glasnik* in 1866, Matija Valjavec from Zamladinec in Croatia noted down the Kaj-Croatian material he gathered. He also mentions the Fates (Valjavec 1866: 24–25, no. 1).

The prevailing opinion today is that the people believed in the existence of *sojenice/rojenice* (the Fates) in the Indo-European and Slavic mythology. Prokopios does mention the presence of monotheism among the Slavic people and the Antes in the 6th century, and adds that they do not know anything about the Fate and that they do not believe that it had such power over a man (*De bello gothico* III, 14). Ivan Grafenauer believed that the Slovenian and Kaj-Croatian tradition about the Fates was not of Old Slavic origin and that it was taken from the Greeks or from the Southern Alpine natives only in the second half of the 6th century. It seems that the

[98] Manuscript of Matevž Ravnikar-Poženčan, Archive NUK: 483, XI.

Slavic people believed in the Moirae blended with the notions of Old Slavic deities of birth and fate, named *Rod* and *Rožděnicy*.[99]

In Slovenian folklore, the lore about the Fates frequently became contaminated with the lore about other female supernatural beings such as fairies and Sybils and with their prophecies.

ŠEMBILJA (SYBIL)

The name *Šembilja* is Slovenian variant of the word *Sibila* (Sybil), used in Ancient Greece to indicate a woman who foretold future events when enraptured. Originally, there was merely one Sybil but in the Middle Ages, when interest in prophecies about one's future increased, the sources indicate that there were as many as twelve (this number corresponds to the number of prophets in the Old Testament), as can be seen in visual art as well. The thirteenth Sybil was included in literary folklore as *Makeda* (or *Maqueda*), the *Queen of Sheba*. Different versions of Sybil's books spread throughout the Austro-German part of the monarchy and came in Slovenia as well, starting with the *Bukle Sibile Prerokile*, transcribed in 1892 by M. Lapusch from Koroška. From there they spread all over Slovenia.

Urban Jarnik also wrote about the Koroškan folk tradition about *šembilje* in 1813 in an article in which he reports on the Slovenian Sybils (Jarnik 1813). Matija Majar was the next to write about them (Majar 1847). Simon Rutar gathered important material about *šembilje* in Primorska in 1895 (Rutar 1895: 5), and Matevž Ravnikar-Poženčan wrote about them in Gorenjska.

In 19th century folktales, Šembilja was mentioned as King Solomon's sister who was much wiser than the king himself.[100]

Matija Majar published a tale in *Kolo* about the Virgin Mary, who is told by Šembilja that she will give birth to the Saviour (Majar 1847: 16–18).

Twenty years later, Anton Pegan noted a similar tale in Tolminsko. In this version of the story, Šembilja recognized the Virgin Mary after dreaming about a log, which swam in the middle of the water, but is suddenly turned around in such a way that it created a footbridge across the water (Pegan/Černigoj 2007: 161).

In Štanjel, people recounted a version of the story in which Šembilja tricks her brother, king Matthias (Kralj Matjaž) and becomes wise instead of him.

[99] Grafenauer 1952: 68–70; Grafenauer 1945: 50.

[100] Novice 16, no. 31, 1858: 245–246.

Šembilja Tricks Her Brother King Matthias to Become Omniscient
King Matthias always asked God to make him omniscient. One day, God tells him that there is a spring of omniscience on top of the mountain and whoever is the first one to drink out of it on the first Friday after New Year's Day will become the wisest person alive. This happened only once in a decade and the following day was this very exact day. King Matthias told this to his sister Šembilja, who asked if she could go with him. And so they went, and once they were already near the spring they rested and king Matthias fell asleep, while Šemiblja got up, drank the water and became omniscient. When King Matthias woke up, he got up and drank the water, but since he was not wiser than before, he thought that God had made a fool out of him. Thus, King Matthias became angry and declared war against him.[101]

The people of Primorska and Karst told stories of how *Šimbilja* taught blacksmiths to forge iron. A similar folktale was recorded by Matija Majar Ziljski from Koroška and published it in *Kolo* in 1847, with the white woman as its protagonist, but it has the features typical for tales about šembilija (Majar 1847: 15).

Šembilija in a Racing Wagon
People also often tell stories about a šembilija racing in a fiery wagon on a cart track or on a night sky or through nature, making terrible noise.

It is interesting how people's imagination started to make associations between the šembilja's fiery racing wagon and the tracks of the wheels or with cart tracks in the stony Roman roads. In Karst, people have rich tradition about supernatural beings, *šembilje*, and the tracks of the wheels, or their wagon, in the stones.

The Wagon with No Yoke
There were terrible wagons with no yokes. When they appeared, a terrible breeze started to blow. All the horse and cart drivers were afraid of it, since they knew these were the souls from purgatory. They say that they can still see the cart tracks the šembilje made near the Zavrhkov cemetery.

There are many more tales such as this, which were described in detail by Katja Hrobat (Hrobat 2005: 267–268). The pounding and the thunder that was made by them was also explained as coming from witches, the devil and the souls lost in purgatory. All of these connections match the description about the wild hunt and

[101] Manuscript of Anton Pegan, Archive ISN ZRC SAZU: ŠZ 8/58; published Pegan/Černigoj 2007: 158–159.

Pehtra's Wild Hunt. In these stories, šembilja took the role of the Pehtra Baba or the Wild Hunt.

People saw many similarities between the tales about St. Elijah and the šembilja racing in the night sky, because the Slavic god Perun was substituted with the Christian St. Elijah. Elijah races in the sky in a fiery wagon, which reminds of Perun's lightning and thunder. Zmago Šmitek wrote about such similarities (Šmitek 1998: 89–137), which were also considered by Katja Hrobat (Hrobat 2005: 269–270). The wild race with a wagon or sleigh through nature, remote paths and cart tracks, and rushing through the night sky so fast that we can see lightning and thunder, is very similar to the Wild Hunt. However, it would be still difficult to prove that Šembilja took over the role of Perun or St. Elijah.

WATER FAIRIES AND MERMAIDS

People believed that the mermaids (*morske deklice*) also helped them work in the fields; they weeded wheat, helped with harvest, and did other work, just like fairies did. As was told in Štajerska, people set food for them in wicker baskets, to repay them. The water fairies were (such as all other fairy beings) also seers, and the same as did the fairies in folk narratives, they sometimes also married a farmer. They also had children, whom they killed at birth if they predicted that nothing good will come out of them. With their advice and work, they bring prosperity to the household, like in the tale "The Mermaid Chooses Her Husband" (Pajek 1884: 248–249; Kelemin 1930: 137). A young man who is pulled under the water by the mermaids in order to make him her companion will always remain young (Trstenjak 1859: 5–6).

THE SINGING AND DANCING MERMAIDS

Josip Pajek (1884) cited Radoslav Razlag: in Štajerska, people name fairies the "white women", "white girls", "mermaids". In 1789, there still lived people who claimed that the white women really do exist. They never saw them, but they heard them sing very beautiful. They were good to kind people and young men and shared advice about work.

As can be seen in this paragraph, the Slovenian folk tradition also mentions one of the characteristic of the mermaids: they sang beautifully. Other records affirm

this; e.g. about the water fairies who gather on the river banks, covered in bushes and rush. They bath there in clear nights and sing.

Mermaids Teach People to Sing
Mermaids come from the sea at eleven in the evening and sing for an hour. Woe betide a man who hears them. They sing so beautifully and lure every man in the water. A man learned how to sing from mermaids. All the beautiful songs sang in churches and also other beautiful popular songs were made by mermaids.[102]

Slovenian folklore also mentions that the fairies, just like the mermaids, taught people how to sing and dance. Just like fairies did, they danced very beautifully, but they were also dangerous when they did. Anton von Mailly published a tale about the nymphs from the shores of the Lake Bohinj who make a man who comes close to them dance with them until dawn when he dies and is left lying on the shore (Mailly/Matičetov 1989: 81, no. 30).

Singing and dancing mermaids were known also in other parts of Europe, and have origins in antiquity. The sirens sang so beautifully and enchantingly that they were dangerous for the sailors. In Greek mythology, a *Siren* was an enormous bird with a head of a woman. With her singing, she lead in ruin sailors who sailed by her island near Sicily. *Scylla* and *Charybdis* also lure sailors in ruin. In Greek mythology, they were initially beautiful nymphs, until the sorceress *Circe* turned them into a monster with six heads. Each of them stood opposite on one side of a narrow channel of water and woe betide a man whom they enticed into the cliffs.

MERMAID DROWNS A MAN

In his book *Bisernice,* Ivan Šašelj wrote about fairies in Bela Krajina, who liked to live at springs, where they were seen how they washed, combed their hair, spun thread and played. They were also dangerous for the people passing by.

A Mermaid (povodna vila) Sticks a Piece of Bread out of Water
A man crossed a dam in moonlight in the middle of the night and noticed a hand sticking a piece of bread out of water. He got scared and ran away. If he took the bread out of the hand, he would be pulled under water because this was the hand of a mermaid (Šašelj 1906: 216).

[102] Collected in *Svetinje in Štajerska*, published by Freuensfeld 1884: 297–298; Kelemina 1930, no. 146/I.

In Štajerska, people also believed that the wild women, who lived in some spring, often pulled people in its whirlpool. For those who were destined to meet death in that spring, it was almost impossible to escape their fate, as is described in the tale, recorded by Števan Kühar in Prekmurje (Kühar/Novak, 1988: 179). In it, a man cannot escape the hands of unrelenting Fate even if he is killed by a little fish that jumps on shore and splashes him with water (Kelemina 1930: 214, no. 149).

Mermaids who were scorned or laughed at had no mercy for such people and they tickled them out of rage until they died, as recounted by people in Prekmurje. Woe betide also a man who watched and listened to them in secret or even took away their clothes (Majciger 1883).

RUSALKA

The name *rusalka* was used for mermaids by South and East Slavs and is rarely mentioned in Slovenian folk tradition. Davorin Trstenjak wrote about *rusalkas* in Prekmurje, a region of eastern Slovenia:

> **Rusalke in Prekmurje**
> *[…] Our neighbouring brothers over the river Mur still know some stories about rusalka and they still name the Pentecostal Sunday "risalska", as was noted by Števan Kuzmič. They are dressed in green, have green shoes, green coat and green hair. Their coat was similar to long underwear, worn in the past by women. Ulrich Lichtenstein mentions them in his love song: "Godesche ein windisch weiber kleid".*
> *According to most tradition, Rusalke lived at the bottom of clear waters, they remained forever young and if they took a young man into their homes he would remain forever young as well. Whoever laughs at them when they comb their green hair at the bank of the river will be punished if they get him for they will tickle him until he dies. In the nights, they ride white birds in the green mountains, because that is where Beliči, their lovers, who protect pure gold, live […]* (Trstenjak 1859: 5–6; Kelemina 1930: no.146/II).

Trstenjak makes a connection between the name *rusalka* and the Pentecostal Sunday or the *risalska* Sunday.

Rusalke, which were among other Slavic people known also as fairies living in the forests or in the fields and who bring moisture to the earth, as was believed by Russians and Ukrainians, came in the middle of the night next to the rivers, lakes and the sea. Thus, the days around Pentecostal Sunday, were by some Slavic people

named *rusalije*. In Prekmurje, *risali* or *risalski svetki* were the days of flowers. This holiday was connected with vegetal spirits, customs and ceremonials. Etymologists interpreted the word *rusalije* as being derived from the ancient Roman holiday of *Rosaria*.

THE DEPARTURE OF WATER FAIRIES

Water fairies joined people as long as nobody insulted them; for example, they left as soon as people started to whistle, scream or crack whips and also when shepherds started to use whips for their cattle instead of a song or whistling. They also could not tolerate tobacco, whistling and screaming (Zupanc 1956: 29–31).

Janez Majciger wrote about the aquatic maids, who once swam from the river Sava into the river Sotla were captured by the water sprite who lived in Veliki Pekel (Big Hell) in Sotla.

WATER SPRITES IN RIVER SOTLA

[…] Aquatic maids once swam from the river Sava into the Stola, but when they tried to return, the master of Veliki pekel (Big Hell) crossed their way. He chased them in his abode and put a large chain on them so they were not able to escape, but allowed them to appear on the surface. A lot of people heard their melancholic singing in the middle of the nights. Malo peklo (Little Hell) is just nearby, and the Škrat (Dwarf) lives there (Majciger 1883, no. 26, 27; Kelemina 1930, no. 229/1).

WATER SPRITES (*POVODNI MOŽJE*)

The water sprite (*povódni móž*) was imagined as being large, green and scaly or hairy man. People imagined him as being dressed in a green coat and having multicoloured trousers, a red hat on his head and either glass or silver shoes on his feet. He might appear looking like an old beggar,[103] or even as a young man, a young boy or a boy dancing on water. In Pohorje, people imagined him rowing across a lake, wearing a belt, which he sometimes puts away on the shore, and the person who got the belt became very powerful (Majciger 1883, no. 7).

[103] Popotnik 4, no 10, 1883: 153–155.

The *povodni mož* was believed to live in an underwater castle and was superior to all other water animals and also water fairies or mermaids. The fairy tales describe this castle as a wonderful palace, full of jewels, with halls illuminated by golden fish. Around the castle grew bush that had the miraculous flower of immortality.[104]

Water sprites in Slovenian folklore are related to Poseidon of antiquity or the Roman Neptune, god of water and the sea, who was like Zeus and Hades the son of Cronus.

In Slovenia and its outskirts, he was also named *povodnják*, *jézernik*, *vodéni človek*, *vodnár*, *vodovnik*, *vódni mož*, *muk*, *gastrin*, *selémsonar*, *motovílec*, *mitál*, *váncaš* and *mámalić*.

Janez Majciger wrote extensively about the water sprite in 1883 in his article "Water and its Power in the Imagination of Slovenians in Štajerska" in which he gathered a large collection of folklore about water sprites living in numerous Štajerska waters. Various tales describe the water sprites living in the rivers Drava, Sava, Mura, Krka, Kolpa, Sotla, Soča, and in the streams Ižica and Rašica, springs such as the Obirski stream, and lakes in Bled, Bohinj, the Wörthersee and Lake Cerknica (Kelemina 1930: 295, no.215). It could be said that the imagination of the people provided stories about water sprites living in every stream and in every pond.

THE WATER SPRITE MOVES HIS LAKE

Numerous folktales describe the water sprite moving from one lake into the other, usually due to people behaving in a certain way, for example if they are stingy, if they throw stones in the lake, curse, whistle, crack whips or ring with bells.

Thus, the Water Sprite was said to move from where the River Paka meets the River Savinja, the same as the Water Sprite from the pond near the church of St. John above Maribor, who travelled through the river Drava to Črno Jezero (Black Lake) at Planinka in Pohorje.[105]

People used to tell also this story about the water sprite in the lake on the highland Pohorje:

The Water Sprite from Uršlja Gora in Koroška Moves to Pohorje

There was once a lake on the mountain Uršlja Gora, and you can still see where it was. A Water Sprite lived in it. He helped people who were hard-working and honest. […] There is a hill behind Šmohorica and through it you come to a cave. When a church was built on Uršlja Gora, where people from the Podjun Valley went on pilgrimage between Assumption and the Nativity

[104] Vrtec 14, no. 2, (1. 2. 1884).

[105] F. P., *Črno jezero na Planinki*. Popotnik IV, no. 10 (25. 5. 1883), 153–155.

of our Lady, the Water Sprite no longer wanted to live there. Thus he moved the lake on Pohorje with the help of his oxen. He also took some maidservant with him and made her his wife. When she escaped and never returned, he killed the child they had.
When dark clouds gather above this lake, bubbles form on its surface, as if the water wanted to boil. The Water Sprite is the one who is doing this.[106]

The story published in the journal *Popotnik* (1885) also describes the Water Sprite emptying the lake and leaving the area for St. Ursula.[107]

Some other tales explained that the Water Sprite left the cliffs of Šmohorca at the ridge of St. Ursula because of the noise made by the railroad and the drivers who cursed on their way.[108]

The Water Sprite moved around together with the lake with the help of the farmer's ox-driven wagon and left a bag of gold hanging on the ox's horn. This motif appears often in the stories about the Water Sprite, but he often leaves different payment. Occasionally he fills an ox's horn with gold, and more often pays with charcoal, nails or scales,[109] which turn into gold in morning light, but only when people follow his instructions. Some were left empty-handed due to being impatient.

The Water Sprite, Gvidon Birolla (Möderndorfer 1957)

CATCHING THE WATER SPRITE

People used to set food, wine and boots covered in resin in order to catch the Water Spirit. This is very similar to folktales about how people tried to catch the wild men. In one such tale, the Water Sprite lives in the lake on the Uršlja Gora hill and helps hard-working

[106] Mir 11, no. 24, (30. 8. 1892), 103–104.

[107] Popotnik 1885, 139; compare also: Hans von der Sann, *Wie der Bachersee entstanden ist. Sagen aus der grünen Mark*. Graz 1912 (2. Ed.), 130–133.

[108] Mir 37, no. 18 (3. 5. 1918), 95–96.

[109] Vrtec 20, no.12, 1890: 197–198.

and honest people. One day, he is caught and kept locked for some time. When he finally escapes he yells to the people: "You caught a bird, but you did not know how to use it!" People thought that he may have been talking about the treasures hidden in the Uršlja Gora.[110]

OFFERINGS FOR THE WATER SPRITE

When the water sprite becomes angry, he agitates the water from the bottom of the sea, lake or the river, and creates the waves that rise above the surface and create thunderstorms and gusts of winds that sink ships and boats. Sometimes, a water sprite would create a storm because a man who had done something that made him angry was traveling on the water; for example, this happened for Gestrin and the water sprite from the River Mur. If the sailors wanted to calm the water sprite, they had to give him an offering or throw the object of "transgression" into the water.

The water sprits, similarly to the dwarf, could become angry also when someone threw a stone in the water. He would storm in on the surface and yell: "Who knocked the spoon from my son's hand?" The water sprite from Pohorje who lived in the Black Lake in Ribnica also became upset if people threw stones into the water; as a result he created a terrible thunderstorm (Macun 1869: 94). In other stories, he would get angry if someone spat in the water.[111]

KIDNAPPING CHILDREN AND YOUNG WOMEN

The motif of kidnapping children and women is found in fairy tales, folktales, as well as in songs (Š I: no. 81, 82). Johann Weichard Valvasor wrote about the kidnapping of the maid Urška while dancing, in Ljubljana in 1574 (Valvasor 1689, XV: 460–461, 685). This "incident", was translated into the poem *Povodni mož* (The Water Sprite) by the famous Slovenian poet France Prešeren. The poem recounts the tale of the Water Sprite who kidnaps Urška and takes her in the humming waves of the Ljubljanica River.

Janez Majciger (1883) published many tales about girls and children being kidnapped from all over Štajerska. Such stories can also be found in almost every collection of folk narratives and fairy tales.

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[110] Mir 11, no. 24, 1892: 103–104.

[111] - kl -, Ribniško jezero na Pohorju. Popotnik IV, no. 18 (25. 9. 1889), 282–283.

THE FIGHT IN THE LAKE

One of the most famous folktales about the fight between two water sprites in Slovenia is the story about the fight between the Water Sprite from Lake Bohinj and the Water Sprite from Lake Bled. This story was published in 1860 in *Novice*. The Water Sprite from Lake Bohinj wanted to get back his wife, who was kidnapped by the Water Sprite from the Lake Bled. There was a fight in the water and red foam appeared on the surface, which indicated that the Water Sprite from Bled had won.

The Water Sprites from Lakes Bohinj and Bled

One day a man called Žlinder was on his way from Bohinj, returning home to his farmhouse at Mlino near Lake Bled. On the loneliest and most tedious part of the journey, he was approached by a stranger who seemed unusual. The stranger accompanied Žlinder and they began to speak of this and that. Žlinder, who was initially very much surprised to see a stranger beside him, gathered up his courage and asked the stranger where he was headed. The stranger replied, "I am the Water Sprite from Lake Bohinj and I am going to fetch my wife, whom the sprite from Lake Bled carried off while I was away." Žlinder had heard stories accusing the Water Sprite of many terrible deeds, so you can imagine how he began to tremble at these words. But on this occasion the Water Sprite seemed quite amiable. Thus, chatting as they walked, they reached the lake. Before they parted, the Water Sprite said, "Come watch the lake. When the fight for my abducted wife begins you will know how I am doing by the foam which comes up. If the foam floating on the surface is bloody, you will know that I am not doing well. If, however, you see white foam, you'll know I am winning."

With these words the sprite hurled himself noisily into the depths of the lake and the battle began. Then lo and behold: bloody foam rose to the surface. The winner was clearly the sprite from Bled who had abducted the Bohinj sprite's wife and taken her to his crystal palace at the bottom of the lake. The Bohinj sprite was never seen again.

It is also said that the Bled Water Sprite used to come every morning to a farmer called Orav and buy a penny's worth of bread. He always paid with a shiny new coin but instead of being handed the bread directly, it was placed on the window sill where he left his coin in exchange. They say that the Water Sprite himself warned Orav's wife when he first came to get the bread, "Don't hand me the bread directly. I have not been baptized and would tear out your arm." Thus he always collected the bread from the window sill.[112]

[112] Novice 18, no. 10 (7. 3. 1860), 76. Kropej, Šmitek, Dapit 2010: 63.

Another variant about the water sprite from Lake Bled, tells about the fight between the *podlesni mož* (wild forest man) and the water sprite from Lake Bled:

About the Podlesnjak (Wild Forest Man) and Water Sprite from Bohinj
The charcoal burner living next to the lake is visited by Podlesnjak, who eats all his buckwheat mush (žganci). He promises happiness and wealth in return, but he first needs to beat the Water Sprite. If white foam appears on the surface of the lake it means that the Water Sprite is dead and if the foam is red, that Podlesnjak died in the fight. Red foam appeared, the lake started to rise and the charcoal burner was barely able to escape.[113]

Marija Stanonik and Niko Jež published the notes made by Emil Korytko in 1837, which describe the fight between the *Povodnjak* (Water Sprite from Bled) and the Water Sprite in the brook Slap, whose wife was stolen by the first (Stanonik, Jež 1985: 120–121). Much later, in 1960, Milko Matičetov also recorded the variant of this folktale in Bled (Matičetov 1985: 25).

A similar folktale was recorded by Ivan Tušek in Jelovica in Gorenjska which narrates about the fight between the Water Sprite from the lake in Praprotno and the Water Sprite from Črno Jezero (Black Lake) in Jelovica.[114]

DIFFERENT WATER SPIRITS

Salmsonar

People living in the vicinity of Gorica/Gorizia imagined a special water spirit called *salmsonar.* Anton Pegan heard people talking about them near Gorizia in 1868 and recorded a story about them. They were said to live in the water; during the day, they stayed in its depths and came on the surface in the night. The people they found in the water were taken with them to the bottom of the water, where they are buried or kept, for they could later also turn into a *salmsonar* (Pegan/Černigoj 2007: 153).

Gestrin

In the River Drava, G*estrin* sometimes showed himself in the middle of the night and was often joined by the sea or water girls. He was said to be a slightly smaller water sprite with fins instead of legs but with a bad temper. He whirled people about or threw them off a cliff. The ferrymen and the fishermen had a habit of throwing

[113] Vrtec 3, no. 7 (1. 7. 1873), 124–125; compare Mencinger 1961 (I): 310.

[114] Tušek, Novice 1857: 139–140.

him a ring wrapped in a napkin when they left the shore in order to be assured of his kindness and benevolence.[115]

Water Sprite in the River Mur

The water sprite in the River Mur was as dangerous *Gestrin* was, but he was able to flatter others with gifts. He was especially angry when a person who had done something wrong or committed a sin, was using in a boat on the water, as the folktale published by Janez Majciger recounts:

> **The Water Sprite in the River Mur Needs to be Given Offerings**
> *A girl who was quite insolent was travelling on a boat to a feast in Prekmurje. The Water Sprite quickly realized what kind of a girl was among the people and started to make terrifying waves in order for the boat to tip over. There was a great danger that all of them would die. Suddenly, a man on a boat remembered that the girl should throw in the water something that is dearest to her or else the water sprite will not rest in peace. The poor girl throws her new shoes with beautiful heels into the turbulent water and saves the people on the boat from drowning* (Majciger 1883: 558–561, no. 23).

Vancaš

In Štajerska, people believed that those looking for the water could find it if they gave the *vancaš* an offering. When people were digging for a spring, but were not able to find it for a long time, they had the habit of saying: "*Vancaš* should be given an *ofer* (offering)."

In Štajerska, the verb *vancati* allegedly denoted to look for water (Pajek 1884, Kelemina 1930: 392, no. 160/II).

Muk

A water sprite who was said to live in a pool where the brook Pišenca flows into the river Sava was called *muk*. He has a crystal castle in the bottom of the pool. But a man who bends to the surface of the water in order to see the castle is grabbed by the water sprite and taken in the whirlpool. On moonlit nights, the water sprite sits on a rock and longs after his son *Muk*, a beautiful boy, who was kidnapped by a traveller (Vendot 1908: 173–174).

Janez Majciger recorded a different description of *Muk*, according to folk tradition from Štajerska:

[115] Davorin Trstenjak, Slovenski glasnik IV, 1860, 170; Kelemina 1930, no. 160/I.

Muk lives in a pool. He is a big man, who waits in the hole under the shore for a child to pull underwater. They heard him splashing the water; he almost poured all of it out. Shallow shouts of the children were heard from under the ground (Majciger 1883: 558–561, no. 19).

According to this folk narrative, *Muk* was a water sprite, the master of the spirits of the children, who are kept in the water depths.

Motovilec

In Kranjska Gora in Gorenjska, people told stories about the water sprite *Motovilec*. People wanted to scare their children with him, and said to them:

Do not go to the river Sava or else Motovilec will pull you in.[116]

Mital

The lake beneath Kum, not far from Radeče in Kranjska, was allegedly inhabited by *Mital* or *Mitalu*, an evil spirit, who most often manifested himself in the form of a dog. In the clear, moonlit nights, he came from his castle on the reef by the water or on the roofs of the surrounding mills. When angry, he caused thunderstones and strong winds. Johann Weichard Valvasor wrote about him,[117] as well as Franc Kraus.[118] Davorin Trstenjak described Mital in the journal *Slovenski glasnik*:

Ancient Carniolians believed "Mitau" to be an evil spirit who lived in a lake named Mitalo and manifested himself in the form of a dog.
One day, a hunter chases a stag to the lake and shoots him. The gunshot wakes up Mital and he creates a terrible wind, which pushes the hunter in the lake where he drowns.[119]

Also the water demon from Silesia, known as *Utopilec* or *Topilec* can have the head of a dog, a goose or a horse. It may appear as the dog itself or as a young man with fins like a fish, dressed in red, black, blue or green clothes (Petzoldt 1995).

Mamalić

Similarly to the guardian of the home, the water sprite *Mamalič* from Venezia Giulia stayed in a house where people gave him food. Just like the dwarf-like

[116] J. Borovski, Motovilec. Slovenski glasnik 7, no. 21 (1. 10. 1861), 117–118.

[117] Valvasor 1689, II: 195, 207.

[118] Zeitschrift für Österreichische Volkskunde II, 1897, 146.

[119] Slovenski glasnik III, 1859, 98; Kelemina 1930: 72, no. 19.

supernatural being *Blagonič*, *Mamalič* would also punish those who dared to eat the food that had been prepared for him (Mailly,Matičetov 1989).

Rakuž

Matevž Ravnikar-Poženčan recorded stories about *Rakuž*. People from Gorenjska described it like this:

> *This is an apparition in a shape of a crab. With its body, he once closed Potok, which flows into the river Račica or Rašica (there is a village Rašica on the hill above it). The water that got caught behind was full of crabs.*[120]

Brbúč

In the surroundings of Novo Mesto, people still tell stories about the water sprite *Brbúč.* He was said to live in reservoirs, wells and brooks. Adults told stories to children that Brbuč will pull them in the water in order to keep them away from reservoirs and protect them from drowning (Hudoklin 1991).

GOBLINS AND DWARFS

The mysterious world of earthly treasures, be it mines, precious stones, water springs, fertile fields or game, was always the subject of imaginations. People believed that earthly treasures are watched by the dwarfs, goblins or gnomes, and other similar supernatural beings of a short stature. They appear everywhere – in the forests, in the old tree hives, mountains, mines, marshes, next to the domestic fireplace, at the blacksmith's or in the shoemaker's shop; they were also believed to fly in the air and bring money through the chimney.

Slavic folklore preserved the memory on many different kinds of goblins; the forest goblins who protect the forests, the trees, the game and forest treasures; the goblins in the fields who help the farmers with agricultural chores and expect a gift in return, like a bowl of porridge or some other food; the mountain goblins lingered with cattle and sometimes also surprised shepherds on the pasture. However in Slovenia, the most frequent were the mine goblins who watched over the ore in the caves and mines.

[120] Manuscript of Matevž Ravnikar-Poženčan, Archive NUK: Ms 483, XI, no. 17.

MINE GOBLINS

The tradition about the mountain or the mine goblins was the most widespread in Slovenian lore. They lived in rocky caves, pits and near golden wells, where they dug and liquefied ore. The location in which the treasure is buried was marked by a flame, which could sometimes be seen at night. People say that the treasure is "blooming".

Johann Weichard Valvasor wrote about goblins and noted that Zlata Gorica in Posavje was named after veins of gold, which disappeared when one of the noblemen dug a well there. Valvasor also mentions the *bergmandeljci* (mountain goblins) who lived in the mine of Idrija.[121] Whenever they were heard, great veins of gold were found. The local miners left them food in small pots and every year, at a given time, the miners set a little red coats for them in order to preserve the favour of the cave spirits.

In the town Idrija in Notranjska (Inner Carniola), which was famous for the mercury mines, people told stories about the mountain gnome, named *perkomandelj*.

Perkomandelj from Idrija

Many, many years ago, an honest miner lived in Idrija. He had many children but little bread. One day, he went early in the morning, as usual, to the mine and the supervisor assigned a tunnel to him. It happened that the man with whom he generally dug was away sick. The miner did not complain, he just descended into the tunnel and began working.

As he searched tirelessly for a couple of hours for quicksilver, he spotted a tittle green light in the distance. When the apparition, approached he saw it was a perkomandelj, a little man with a little red hat on his head, with a purple jacket and red pants, holding a light in his hand. When the miner had collected himself, he mastered all his courage and addressed the perkomandelj but got no reply. Without saying a word, the perkomandelj hit a wall, which opened and took out some very nicely crafted mining equipment. Still without speaking, he took his place next to the miner and both of them worked very hard. After eight hours, for that is how long the miners' working day lasts, the little man tapped the wall again. It opened and he disappeared with his tools. The miner went home.

The next morning the miner found the little man already at work. This went on for a whole month. A payday approached, the miner worried about how he should pay the little man for his work, so he went to the priest and explained his problem. The priest recommended that he divide the earnings fairly between the two of them.

When payday arrived everyone was surprised at how much the miner had

[121] Valvasor 1689, XI: 349–350.

accomplished and asked him how he had been able to dig out so much ore in such a short time. The miner did not respond to their curiosity and returned to the mine immediately after receiving his pay.
The little man was sitting on a big stone, waiting for him. The miner pushed the money towards him so he could divide it, but the little man shook his head to indicate that he had no wish to be the one to divide the pay. The miner sat down beside him and began to count the money himself until there was only one coin left. The miner put it on the perkomandelj's heap saying, "You keep this one for you worked way more than I did!"
The little man shook his head and threw the coin on the miner's pile. But the miner did not want to take it and kept pushing it towards the perkomandelj. They quarrelled for a long time until the miner had a bright idea, namely to split the coin in two. He took an axe in his hands and said to the little man, "You know what, let's cut the coin in two and each can take half."
The miner lifted the axe to carry out his plan but the little man suddenly spoke up: "Stop!"
The miner, curious to hear what he had to say, put the axe aside.
The little man said, "If you had said three more words when I first came, I would have crushed you into dust. Besides, I really like you because of your honesty. If you had kept the coin yourself you would never have seen your wife and children again. I would have torn you to pieces. But because you are so honest you can also take my money. Remember the spirit of the mountain while you live in happiness and content. You will enjoy good fortune."
With these words he disappeared. The miner was grateful for the idea he had had. Without the idea, he would have taken the whole coin himself just to stop quarrelling with the little man. He went home and told his family and friends about the perkomandelj, and soon all of Idrija knew about it.[122]

Perkomandeljc/Mountain Goblin, Andrejka Čufer (Kropej, Dapit 2002)

[122] Zmago Eržen, Besednik 6/6 (10. 6. 1874), 59–60; Kropej, Šmitek, Dapit 2010: 79–80.

In Rosental in Koroška people talked about the forest goblin named *šqrat*, and about an underground goblin named *skuberl*. This one has a little red hat and red pants, a pointy nose and a beard. *Skuberl* was said to live in caves in which the miners dug for ore. When the miners leave the cave, he starts knocking, and where he is heard knocking, there is ore. He cannot stand to hear people whistle and often eats the lunch of the miners. Once, they set out spirits for him and he got drunk. He never knocked again in that mine, and the miners had to leave that cave (Šašel, Ramovš 1936-1937: 9, no. 6).

In Mountain Peca in Koroška, a mountain goblin had allegedly been leading a miner along a shaft for three hundred years. They walked through the whole of Mt. Peca. The goblin took revenge on him because the miner gave him spirits to drink, and after that demanded from him to show him where the ore is located. When the miner returned and when he came home, his people were no longer there, for they had been dead for three hundred years (Mőderndorfer 1946: 84).

In Dolenjska, a goblin was believed to live in high mountains in a cave, in which he sits behind a stone table with silver and gold coins on it. Folktales also mention that a strong spring is located under the table, and when Judgement Day comes, it will spill all over the country.[123]

WATER GOBLINS

The water goblins are described mostly in folktales from eastern Slovenia and Notranjsko. Thus, a goblin was believed to live in the river Sotla in *Mali pekel* (Small Hell) near Mala Nedelja. He did neither harm nor good to the people, they were just not allowed to catch fish and crab in his waters. His biggest enemy was the Water Sprite, who chased him away from *Veliki pekel* (Big Hell), which was the original abode of *Škrat* (Majciger 1883).

Emil Korytko mentions a goblin from Vranje Jezero/Urainer See. People told stories that he told to a fisherman who lived near the lake to catch as many fish as he wished to, except for the last one. Since the fisherman caught the last one as well, the goblin appeared and filled up the entire lake with earth.[124]

TREE GOBLINS

The belief in tree goblins, the so called *lesniki* was very widespread in Slovenia. *Lesniki* were believed to live in trees and forbade people to cut them down. Johann

[123] Fran Sreboški-Peterlin, Novice 22 (1864), no. 24, no. 25.

[124] Manuscript of Emil Korytko, Archive NUK: MS 455, II, 29–36. Published: Stanonik, Jež 1985: 115.

Weichard Valvasor noted that there was a nut tree near Senožeče. What was strange about this tree was that it remained lifeless and without leaves until the Midsummer night. On St. John's Day, it grew green and started to bloom and produce fruit that was as big as the walnuts on other trees were. But it was not safe to walk under this nut tree on that night, because such uproar was created in the branches at exactly midnight that it was as if a tree ghost or *lesnik* lived in it.[125]

The tree goblin is also mentioned by Georg Graber, Anton von Mailly and Janez Trdina (Kelemina 1930: 170–172, no. 115). In the Ščavnica Valley in Štajerska, the shepherds are afraid of *babji šentek* or *šotek*, who is said to live in trees. If he caught a man, he either took his hair or merely ruffled it (Kelemina 1930: 115/V).

GOBLINS AS HOUSE SPIRITS

Folk narratives also mention goblins who are house spirits, named *gospodarček* or *dedek*. They were similar to the house gnomes of antiquity: Roman *lares* or Greek *penats*, who had alters in people's homes. They were the guardians of the home.[126] Such narratives are similar to the tradition derived from worshipping ancestors and house idols. Their place was often by the heart or under the doorstep, sometimes they were also found in saltcellar, as it is known that the salt keeps away the evil spirits. In the Ščavnica Valley in Štajerska, such house spirit was called *šetek*. Out of all things, *šetek* loved to stay in the kitchen in the saltcellar or in the barn with the young cattle. Whatever the people cooked or baked, he had to be the first one to try it or else he would play a trick on them. Of all food, he liked millet the most.

A goblin, especially the one who lives near the homestead, takes revenge on a person who eats the food that had been set for him or if he is not given any, like the house sprite *Blagonič*, who is hatched out of a seven-year old egg of a rooster.

BLAGONIČ

According to local belief, whoever wants to have a lot of money has to choose a black rooster from a brood of hatched chicks and keep it under a cup for measuring wheat for seven years. At the end of seven years the rooster will lay an egg and out of that egg a being known as "Blagonič" will hatch. Blagonič must always stay hidden

[125] Valvasor 1689, IV, 578; Kelemina 1930: 170, no. 115/I.

[126] In Slovenian folk tradition, they frequently appeared as a white snake (*ož* or *inčesa*), in the lore of Serbia also as a white wolf, as noted by Ljubinko Radenković.

and be well fed. If he is content and not hungry, he will bring as much money to his master as his master needs. But if the master loses Blagonič's favour, then the household will no longer enjoy good fortune.

It so happened that the master of a household cooked beans for Blagonič, but undercooked them so they were hard; meanwhile he prepared sausages for himself. Blagonič became very angry. He went into the barn and hung the best ox on the door by its tail. Blagonič started running around the house yelling, "Beans hard; ox hanging by its tail." There was never any good fortune at that house.[127]

This folktale is connected with the folk belief about the dragon hatched out of the rooster's egg.

The person who succeeded in getting the goblin work for him put a gold coin on the window. The goblin took the gold coin, returned and poured an entire bag of coins in the room. The same trick was sometimes used in a wrong way; for example, if the coin was replaced by a thorn, a stone, a dead cat, etc. the goblin would pour the same object in the house and cause its master damage. In a folktale from Štajerska, a goblin came in the form of a bright beam of light flying through the night sky.

GOBLIN (*ŠKRATEC*) BRINGS MONEY

Sometimes there is something bright flying through the air, just slightly above the trees, something similar to a fiery broom. At a crossroads, a man can (by saying certain prayers) make the škratec work for him. To repay for his work, he must promise his soul, his wife or child, and has to sign the contract with his own blood. The goblin brings to the house an abundance of the thing which was set for him on the window. People must also leave millet porridge for him, for he likes it the most.

One day, a farmer promised to give škratec the mother with children. Diligently, goblin brought the money. Every year, the farmer's neighbour saw that something bright came through his chimney. Once he also saw a goose that brought a little bag, full of money and put it next to the farmer's bed.

One day, the jealous neighbour saw that the farmer put a silver coin on the window. He quickly put it in his pocket, and put a dead cat on the window. The goblin spent the whole night killing cats and brought so many to the farmer, that he was barely able to bury them when the morning came.

[127] Manuscript of Lovro Žvab, Archive ISN ZRC SAZU: ŠZ 7/216. Published: Kropej, Šmitek, Dapit 2010: 76–77.

When the time has come the goblin demanded his payment: the mother with her children. But the cunning farmer gave him a hen with chickens. The frustrated goblin took them and flew away.
When the farmer was dying, the goblin demanded to have his soul and the priest was barely able to chase the goblin away (Pajek 1884: 228; Kropej, Dapit 2002: 29–30).

The goblin flying through the air in the form of a fiery broom is reminiscent of a supernatural being: the *škropnik*. While bringing money to the master, it is closer to the stories about sorcerers and sorceresses and their assistants, which are usually the devils or the tamed spirits.

According to some folk narratives, the housekeepers were believed to have a goblin or a devil kept in a glass jar, a box or in a glass bell. They would set it free only when they wanted it to do something for them, as in a tale "A Goblin in a Jar", which also mentions how the goblin was, after escaping from captivity, afraid that the housekeeper would catch him again.[128] A similar folktale about a goblin who brings good luck was told to Tone Cevc in Velika Planina in 1970 (Cevc 1993: 84).

DWARF

A supernatural being similar to a goblin but with a more pleasant dispositions is a dwarf, named *palček, palečnjak, ninek, nendljek, malik*. Contrary to the generally unkind sprites, dwarfs have a milder disposition and often help people with their chores, especially with sewing their clothes and making their shoes and finding and handling precious stones and metal. The dwarfs are often protagonists in folktales, for example in the folktale types: ATU 327B "The Dwarf and the Giant", ATU 700 "Thumbling" and ATU 709 "Snow white and the Seven Dwarfs".

Folk prophecies predict that in the future, people will be no taller than our thumb, while our ancestors were said to be the giants, who had their thumbs as big as is our body.

[128] Recorded by Milko Matičetov in Velike Češnjice pri Šentvidu pri Stični in 1950. Published: Kropej, Šmitrk, Dapit 2010: 73–76.

KAHNIH

Very similar to the house goblin was *kanih,* who was said to be as short as a boy, but an extremely strong man. Living close to human dwellings, he was believed to come to people's houses to brew unusual potions on the hearth. He persuaded people to perform good deeds but would punish them if they irritated him. According to the lore of Solčava in Savinjske Alpe, the *kanih*, whose pants had been ripped by a bear, still sits on a ridge and sews the pants with a thread that has been twice wrapped around the house (Kocberk 1926: 268, no. 85; Kropej. Šmitek, Dapit 2010: 81–82).

The *kanih* is also mentioned in one of the oldest Slovenian charms against sprains from Gabrje near Gorizia (Š I: 5171), according to which the *kanih* was the son of St. Blaise.

ČATEŽ

Čatež is a supernatural being in human form above the waist and as a male goat below it, with horns and beard on its head. *Čatež* posed a threat to the travellers and foresters whom he lured to remote places by imitating familiar voices and filling them with panic (just like the deity Pan). According to the tradition from east and west Slovenia, *Čatež* lives in mountains, forests, and marshy areas. Similarly to the *orko*, he is able to alter his size. Among other things, people described how he rolls the stones from the mountains, steals grapes and gets drunk. Sources of drinking water were discovered in places where he was believed to linger. Folk belief about *Čatež* was first recorded by Davorin Trstenjak[129] and Josip Pajek[130] in Štajerska.

Anton von Mailly recorded in Slavia Veneta this folktale and published it in 1922

Čatež

Among the Slavs that populate the region of Primorska, especially around the Soča Valley, Ajdovščina, Buzet, Čepić and elsewhere, there lives, hidden among trees, a whimsical forest being, similar to a satyr – the Čatež. It is half man and half goat, resembling goat from the waist down. It has horns, long ears and beard and can change its size as it pleases; in a meadow it is

[129] Davorin Trstenjak, *Mythologične drobtine* 16: O Čatežu. Slovenski glasnik 3, 1859, 189.

[130] Josip Pajek, *Črtice iz dušvnega žitka štaj.* Slovencev. Ljubljana 1884, 32. Compare also: P. L. Hrovat, *Paberki staroslovenski*, no. 20. Dom in svet 5, 1892, 377; Kelemina 1930: 174–175, no. 118.

no taller than a blade of grass but in the forest it can be taller than a tree. It usually hides from people behind tree trunks. It shows its simple side to the people that it addresses, but also its malevolence. It often scares travellers and woodcutters or makes noises that cause people to lose their way and get caught by the darkness. Then it takes them to its cave where it tortures them until they succumb.

It appears on cliff tops whenever it pleases and sometimes on damp ground in the forest where it explores water springs. In places where čatež lived, people often found springs with excellent drinking water. It has also been known to give shepherds tree branches or switches as gifts to help them control their animals. But if somebody enrages it and confronts it, it will take revenge. It can roll stones down a hill that could destroy a farmer's house (Mailly, Matičetov 1989: 77–78; Kropej, Šmitek, Dapit 2010: 83–84).

A literary version of the Čatež legend was published by Lojze Zupanc[131] and later also by David Vasiljevič (2006).

Čatež, Andrejka Čufer (Kropej, Dapit 2002)

[131] Zupanc 1994: 68.

ORKO

The *orko* is a supernatural being of a wild nature who frightens people in forests and in alpine, and solitary places. It was also named *orkul*, *orkljič* and *ospel*. In the Karst and mainly in the vicinity of Sežana, people told stories that the orko is the ghost of a dead man, who cannot rest in peace. In the Resian village of Stolbica/Stolvizza, the orko is known as a small man called *lorgo* while the people of Bila/San Giorgio call him *largo borgo*.

Lorgo, Largo Borgo is Afraid of the Knife
Lorgo (Stolvizza) or largo borgo (San Giorgio) likes to tease people and close their roads, but he is shy and they say that he is especially afraid of the knife (Matičetov 1968: 225).

In Friuli and Venezia Giulia, people believe that the *orkul* quenches his thirst in the river Soča by stepping on Sveta Gora (Holy Mountain) with one foot and on Mount Sabotin with the other. The lore from Valli del Natisone is quite similar. People in Karst call *largo borgo* the *orko,* in Solkan he is known as the *orkljič,* and the inhabitants near Ilirska Bistrica call him *vuorek* or *podlegaj*. He was said to take the form of a donkey. If a man would sit on him, he would grow high into the stars and throw the man from high up and also catch him so that the man would not be hurt. If a person had rein or a rope with him, he could tame the *poglegaj*, as in the tale from Slovenjska Bistrica.[132]

The name *orko* is derived from the Latin world *Orcu(m)*, meaning either "the place of the dead" or "the deity of the dead." European folk tradition presents it as an evil monster that eats people. The orko appears as demonic creature in Croatian folklore.[133] The *ork* is known also in the Germanic, Romanic and Scandinavian folk traditions. The orko could lure the traveller into unknown places, where he is left to wander about until he eventually founds himself exactly where he began the previous day. It is able to change its appearance and to scare people. Once it goes away, it can leave a smelly trace behind. Assuming the form of a small ball, the orco positions himself on the footpath, and as soon as a traveller steps across it, the ball instantly grows to the sky. This scares the man so hard that he falls to the ground, unconscious.[134]

[132] Josip Potepan Škerljev, *Arkiv za poviestnicu jugoslovensku* 11 (1872); Kropej, Dapit 2002: 41, no. 24.

[133] More about this see: Lozica 1995; Lozica 2011.

[134] This folktale was told by Cirilla Madotto Prešćina in Coritis in Val Resia, recorded by Roberto Dapit in 1994, and published: Kropej, Šmitek, Dapit 2010: 84–86.

ŠKOPNIK

An important part in the Slovenian tradition is the celestial supernatural being *škópnik*, also named *škópnjak, škópnek, škópnjenk, škómpnik, škómpnjek* or *zmin*. It appears in the form of a burning sheaf (straw) or a birch tree broom flying through the sky, which people in Štajerska call the *zmin* (Pajek 1884: 228). According to other traditions, the škopnik flies through the sky in the shape of a burning bird, a radiant being, a small man with bristling hairs, or a burning man. The škopnik was believed to fly in the sky mainly in the middle of the night, and to sit on top of spruce trees, thus scorching them. If the škopnik were to sit on top of a house or the heart, it would not mean something good, and would probably bring bad luck. In Rosental in Koroška, people believed that a person died on the place where the škopnik fell on the ground, or that that spot would be afflicted with hail (Šašel, Ramovš 1936-1937: 9–10, no.8).

The tradition about him has merged with the tradition about a dwarf. In this way, the *škopnik* is said to bring riches and luck as well.

The first to mention the *škopnik* was Urban Jarnik in 1812, in a poem to honour the bonfire on the Midsummer Day. Radoslav Razlag equated him with a meteor. Škopnik was popularly depicted as a *comet's tail*, or as a *shooting star from the nest of škopnjek*, as for example also in Rute/Ruttach above Bistrica near Pliberk. In west Štajerska, they called the shooting star *zmínje leti* (the zmin is flying).

The common belief among people was that the shooting stars are souls that have passed to the other world or predict the death of a certain man.

The škopnik was also believed to be represented by the so-called St. Elmo's fire, sparks that can be observed during thunderstorms. The Alpine Germans call them the *Perchtenfeuer* (Geramb 1924, Kretzenbacher 1914).

Jakob Kelemina believed that the škopnik is one of the *ozins* who make one's breathing difficult, they suffocate him and bring death (Kelemina 1930: 16). Milko Matičetov also emphasized the astral nature of this mythical being that could be equated with a meteor, as had been noted by Radoslav Razlag. Nests of the *škopniki* were believed to be points on the sky, from which were scattered shooting stars called the *radiants* by astronomers (Matičetov 1972).

As people imagined time as personified being, the wind also had an anthropomorphic form. Janez Majciger wrote extensively about the folk tradition about the winds in his article "Air and its powers in the imagination and folk narratives of Štajerska Slovenians", published in 1884 in the journal *Kres*. Jakob Kelemina also presented a great deal of material about the winds (Kelemina 1930: 247–250, no. 183–185), while Milko Matičetov wrote about the wind in terms of its role in the Slovenian mythology and storytelling, especially in the folk tradition of Koroška (Matičetov 1965: 1211–1214).

Among other natural powers and natural elements, people in Resia also personified the thunderstorm. They called it *hüda ura* (thunderstorm) and imagined it as being an old woman with a beard and basket. People ran into her in the mountains, especially when a storm was approaching (Matičetov 1968: 225).

In the folk tradition, the wind in the form of an old woman rules over individual winds and whirls and lets the winds out of a hole. The wind can punish people, but it can also help, as in the folktale ATU 480 "The Kind and the Unkind Girl" from Primorska,[135] in which the stepdaughter, who is sent by the stepmother to get her some strawberries in the middle of the winter, is brought a basket full of ripe strawberries by the winds.

The people of Vipavsko imagined the wind as old, grey, raggedy and scratched man. In Karst and in Goriško, people told stories that the old woman lets the winds out of a hole every time she becomes enraged (Pegan/Černigoj 2007: 146–148).

In Bela Krajina, people believed that every time a storm broke out, some sort of a giant or hulk was howling. Above Čemšenik, people believed that the *vetrnik* (whirlwind) emerges from holes with the same name.

The Wind, Gvidon Birolla (Möderndorfer 1957)

[135] Pegan/Černigoj 2007: 91–96.

In Gorizia it was believed that the *Veternik* (from *veter*, the wind) is a human, born at a certain time, lifted in the air by gale and transported around the underground; sometimes he never returns.

In Brežice in Dolenjska, the southern wind allegedly comes from Turkey and the northern one from the North Pole (it comes shortly before midnight and is born in the eternal snow and ice) from where it drags its mother, the winter. Although brothers, the winds quarrel so fiercely that St. Elias has to occasionally intervene (Majciger 1884).

Just like some other supernatural beings of nature, atmosphere and time, various personifications of the winds are protagonists in different fairy tales, as in the Slovenian folktale *Vetrovi se prepirajo* (The Winds are Quarreling)[136].

According to the religious beliefs of the South Slavs, the winds were also often personified and sometimes assumed a form similar to that of a dragon. They are often also evil as those present in Slovenian tradition, since they can also cause diseases (for further read see Petrović 2004).

[136] Brenk 1967: 87–88.

DEMONS AND BEWITCHED SOULS

Many supernatural beings in the Slovenian folk tradition are associated with beliefs in the returning dead, spirits, souls, demons and afterlife, which are often the result of the fear of dead ancestors and returning souls. Such lore contains many stories about vampires, werewolves, ghosts or lights and frightening apparitions that have to serve their sentence. Their origin partly evolved from the belief in cursed souls and from animist beliefs.

St Anthony's piglet in the hell, Zvonko Čoh (Dapit, Kropej 2004)

The so-called "impure dead", who after their death cannot find peace, have to serve a sentence and wait for redemption that will often come only on Judgment Day. Among them are demonic beings and vampires who are returning to this world and suck people's blood, endanger their lives, or frighten them in many different ways.

Usually talking, moaning, or even killing, these beings generally appear in places they were familiar with in this world. Some of the spirits return to this world to bring a certain person to the other world. Some of them were immortalized in literature, for example in *Lenore* or "The Dead Bridegroom Carries off His Bride" (ATU 365) and in *Don Juan* or "The Offended Skull" (ATU 470A), and in folktale type "Friends in Life and Death" (ATU 470). Others return to the world of the living with good intentions, to visit a beloved person, fulfil a promise, or make peace with their enemies.

Among the demonic beings there is *Death*, as well as those which personify diseases and pests as well as various monsters, for example *cynocephals*, *werewolves*, and *vedomci*.

Other important beings appear as horrible apparitions and spirits, intended primarily to educate children or to protect them from numerous risks. Many of the latter have been preserved to this day. Since new funks and spirits are created even today, all of them cannot be included in this study. These beings are based also on old beliefs and social institutions. Among them are the following: *berbera*, *brbuč*, *bauc*, *sumper*, *telebaba*, *tantava*, *witch*, *zlati škorenjci* (golden boots), and *krvavo stegno* (bloody thigh); various spirits and apparitions; ghosts or funks in animal form such as the *mules* from the folk tradition of Slavia Veneta, the *Grdina* from Resia, *Marant* the dog, and others.

Among the frightening apparitions that haunt people are the spirits that often appear at night, at midnight, and especially in the hour between midnight and one in the morning. They haunt lonely places and cursed houses and castles. Such scary spirits are disembodied but may also assume human form, particularly in the likeness of a deceased person.

Slovenian popular tradition also abounds in devils and, to a lesser extent, angels. However, as supernatural beings that embody angels generally feature in folk legends, they will not be discussed here. Also devils occasionally appear in legends, and are more frequent in explanatory, or etiological, tales. In the mythical world, devils are usually associated with motifs that are otherwise the prerogative of other beings of mostly negative nature. In Slovenian belief tales, with the advent of Christianity the devil started to take over the role of some pagan supernatural beings, particularly those of chthonic character or those that had a frightening appearance or behaviour. As has already been discussed, the devil frequently replaced dwarves, the wild man, the wild hunter and the wolf shepherd, the dragon, the *škopnik*, the *vedomec*, even the Water Sprite and the giants, and also certain gods, such as Veles and Triglav.

WANDERING SOULS

The soul, which is in Slovenian folklore often a person's double, frequently roams the world by itself. Such wandering souls can appear in various forms. People imagined it as a haze or a breath of air that leaves the sleeping, or the dying person through their mouth; hence the word *izdihniti* (to give up the breath, the spirit; to expire). The souls may also dash across the night sky in the form of a mysterious light, or dances over the fields and through the woods. The souls can manifest in a form of an animal, for example a bird, frog, mouse, dormouse, butterfly, hornet, fly, moth, snake, dog, wolf, cat, goat, horse, bull, deer, or bear. But the soul may also appear in human form, especially as an evil old woman or man.

These concepts were not widespread only in Slovenia. One such example is the story, which is widespread throughout Europe and in parts of Asia, about the human soul in the form of a hornet that leaves the human body in the middle of sleep and returns after some time. Its earliest record was found in the book "Historia Langobardorum" (Volume 3, Ch. 34), which was written by historian Paul the Deacon at the end of the 8th century. It refers to border areas between Slovenia and Italy (Šmitek 2003: 5), which are the very areas in which the lore was preserved almost to this day about the so-called *zduhač* such as the *vedomec*, the *banandant*, and the *kresnik*.

The soul can leave the body of a living human only during sleep or in a state of ecstasy. People often recounted how they travelled through unknown places while asleep. If the human is linked to an impure force the soul, upon leaving the body, performs evil deeds. The body of a witch, for example, ceases to breathe while her soul, disguised in many forms, steals crops or milk from cows, causes disease, and otherwise harms people.

The souls of those whose soul escapes during sleep are frequently embodied as insects such as flies, bees, hornets, and butterflies, but also as mice and other animals. The soul roams the world alone and afterwards returns to its body, but only if nothing stops it along the way. It cannot find its way back and return to its body if the sleeping person is moved during sleep. If, for example, the *kresnik*, the wizard, or the witch whose body the soul had left during sleep and flew through their mouth as a fly is moved, the soul will not find its way back and will circle the body in different forms for a long time (Šmitek 2003).

People firmly believed that people's souls could leave their bodies. The European Inquisition testimonies from the 16th and 17th centuries mention souls in the form of butterflies and mice. In Friuli, such documents contain interesting information on the *bandanants* convicted of witchcraft. Some were accused of

leaving their body during sleep to fight witches and wizards, while others were believed that their spirit climbed through their mouth in the form of a mouse while they were fast asleep.[137]

The soul, which in time of death separates from the body and leaves it in the form of wind, vapour, smoke, butterfly, moth, etc., was sometimes imagined as a small human with a transparent body or as a winged child. In antiquity, people believed that the soul has the form of a mouse, snake, or dolphin, and such beliefs have been preserved to this day. According to Ljubinko Radenković (1996), the soul of the deceased appears as the snake in the summer and as the wolf in winter.

When a person died, his or her family opened windows and doors so the soul could leave the house. Believing that for forty days after death the soul visited familiar places and the grave where its body is buried, people usually set food on the grave. The most difficult obstacle for the soul of the deceased was allegedly water. According to a widespread belief primarily in the East Slavic popular tradition, St. Nicholas ferries souls to the after world (Mencej 1997).

In Slavic languages, the term *nav* used to denote the deceased or the after world. Hence, the Slovenian word *navček*, the death knell. On Christmas Eve, people sometimes prepared dinner that was to be consumed together with the souls of their ancestors called *navi* (deceased). The food had to be grain-based so it could be consumed by the souls that came as birds. It was also believed that afterwards, the souls of the deceased continue to appear until Ash Wednesday.

In Slovenian tradition, the term *nav* has also been preserved in the sense of the souls of the deceased, the *navje*. Many souls cannot find peace after death and return to the world of the living to which they are bound by a pledge, debt, unredeemed sin, murder, and the like. Among the souls that return to this world are also those that had not yet received their sacraments, were not buried in consecrated soil, remained unburied, or were cursed at the moment of their death.

A cursed soul was also called *a betrayed soul*, *sinful soul*, *plagued soul*, *unredeemed soul*, *poor soul* or *believer's soul*. Such haunted souls were imagined as personified, or materialized, deceased, or as headless spirits. A cursed soul could also appear as a burning hand, glowing light, or blue flame soaring high in the sky. Those who have died a violent death were believed to haunt their murderers.

Plagued souls allegedly appear also in a funeral procession as a group of headless people who come to night mass, particularly around All Saints Day and All Souls' Day. Since on that day souls from purgatory return to their homes or roam around cemeteries and churches people should remain home. Many of these souls also attend night-time masses for the spirits. The plagued souls allegedly appear also as a shepherd in the middle of his glowing herd or as the nocturnal wild hunt.

[137] More about this see: Mencej 1997.

These souls could be redeemed by prayer, pilgrimage, fasting, by fulfilling their requests, or by providing the right answer to their laments by saying "Peace be with you!" etc. The use of the holy water, prayer, and the settling of grievances would be beneficial as well. In return, the bewitched souls would show their gratitude to those who had prayed for them by praying for them in heaven.

According to popular tradition, the pope allegedly exorcized all spirits and bewitched souls into mountain rocks, thus preventing them from returning to this world and remaining among people.

SOULS OF CHILDREN

Souls of stillborn children, or of those who had not been baptized before their death, were called *navje*, *mavje*, *movje*, *morje*. In western regions of Slovenia, people named them *vedomci*. Called *žive* in the area of Pohorje, they were believed to fly around at dusk, wailing sadly. According to some interpretations, the souls of prematurely deceased children may appear also as dwarves or birds.

The apparitions of the dead-children were believed to be either: a) the wondering souls of the children who were murdered; b) the wandering souls of the children who died before having been baptized; or c) the apparitions of the children, wandering after death. Folktales and legends of a predominantly fabulous nature often tell stories about the souls sold to the Devil, for example the soul of an unborn child.[138] An unbaptized child, or restless soul who keeps returning home because its family mourns it too much – as is the case in the folktale "The Child with a Mug of Tears" –, is redeemed when its mother stops weeping for it.

Numerous folktales that focus on supra-normality of a dead child (Pentikeinen 1968: 57) narrate tales about children who either died unbaptized, were murdered by their mothers, or have never been born. Under the influence and social norms of Christianity, the latter was pronounced the most unforgivable sin of all.

Unbaptized children were imagined as birds sitting on willow trees by the water and waiting to be redeemed by being shaken off their tree. These black birds with a strongly curved beak, long furry legs, and glowing brown eyes fly through the night air, looking for peace and salvation.

Even more common is the idea that such souls appear as small lights floating in the air; as flames trembling in the distance; as the distant light or the reminiscent of souls wandering around. They are similar with the Will-O'-the-Wisp in the British

[138] For instance in the folktales ATU 756B, ATU 811, ATU 812, ATU 1191

Isles,[139] and small naked children such as the *budikići* in Slavia Veneta (Ciceri 1992: 442), or to dwarves – named *škarifiči* in Val Resia.

The *movje*, as the souls of unbaptized children were commonly called, emit strange noises, whistle, squeak, pipe, and rustle. Allegedly, they do not carry fire or lamps because these would remind them of hellfire. They would take revenge upon anybody who dared to imitate their whistling and squeaking. If there was still fire on the site of a fire place the *movje* would dig up the fire and then dance on and around it, leaving the imprints of tiny children's feet in the ashes (Kelemina 1930: 140–141, no. 89).

Matija Valjavec heard stories in St. Bolfenk in Slovenske Gorice in Štajerska about the *movje*. According to the stories, these were souls of the children who had not been baptized prior to their death did not tolerate fire and flew around at night as large black birds. They dug up the fire tended by a farmhand in the pasture, and also scratched his head. After seeking advice from a local priest, the farmhand caught one of these birds. The priest baptized it, and the bird turned into a white dove and rose to the sky (Valjavec 1866: 228–229).

In Jarenina in Štajersko, the soul of a child who died without having been baptized was called *hudournik*. At dusk, they would fly through the air in the shape of birds, emitting strange sounds akin to whistling. They dug up the fire tended by shepherds and scratched out their eyes.[140]

The *movje* reward the person who redeems them by baptizing them or by sprinkling them with holy water by flying to heaven in the form of a white dove or an angel, and by promising that they will pray for that person.[141] According to popular belief, the *mavje* could also be saved if a shepherd threw his jacket on it and pressed it down vigorously (Pajek 1884: 108).

In Bela Krajina, people told of the souls of unborn children, called *movje*, which may avenge themselves upon their mothers by scratching their heads or even by tearing them apart, or by slaughtering them. Since these children have not been baptized they are at the mercy of Satan. In dark nights, the *movje* are believed to rush through the sky, squeaking. Each of them knows exactly where their mother resides. According to a story, the *movje* took away Marjeta Senk for having consumed a flower from the mountain Klek where witches gather, thus killing her child. Blooming on Mt. Klek, the flower may be picked only on the night when the *movje* are rushing through the air and pointing the way.[142]

As mentioned before, in some places, particularly in the west of Slovenia and in Gorenjska, the soul of the deceased child that had not yet been baptized was called *vedomec* or *vedavec*. These souls appeared in various shapes, usually as lights. In

[139] Compare: O'Connor 1991.

[140] Valjavec 1859: 38; Pajek 1884: 108; Kelemina 1930: 141, no. 89/VII.

[141] *Torbica jugoslavenske mladosti III*, no. 2. (7. 12. 1863) Zagreb, p. 59–60.

[142] J. Premk, *Čudodelna roža (Belokranjska bajka)*. Slovan IX (1911), 14–15.

Gorenjska, Matevž Ravnikar-Požen̈čan recorded a tale about the *vedomci* that appear at night as lights in marshy areas, trying to lead people astray and making them wander around aimlessly.

Vedamec
Assuming different shapes, the vedamec usually torments and irritates people. It is sometimes called "the moth" (veša), and in this case in usually appears in numbers. People say that "that person was led around all night by moths." The moth appears as a light on the marsh. Although much is known about the Vedamec, I did not have the chance to find out about it.[143]

In Gorenjska, the *navje* was called *vedamec* or the *veša* (moth). The people of Bohinj called those who were sleepwalking the *ujedanc* or the *vedanc*. The confusion in naming is therefore clearly apparent. The meaning of the *vedomec* may be, as has already been mentioned, very different. Like the *kresniks*, some of the *vedomci* could be people whose soul occasionally escaped from their body.

In Prekmurje, the soul of an unborn child is called *preklesa*. Filled with sadness, the *preklesa* keeps returning to its home to weep. The term also denoted the soul of a deceased person who had wronged someone.[144] Moreover, the soul of the child who had died before having been baptized in Prekmurje, was called *brezglavljek* (headless) or *brezglavac*. Such souls were believed to fly headless, high in the air, sometimes at high speed, weeping. At night and at dusk they looked like lights floating above the ground, generally appearing near cemeteries. They could be chased away by profanities. They tended to come close to those who were praying as prayer could contribute to their redemption. In 1911, Števan Kühar published the following story:

Bräzglaväc (the Headless)
In the evening, when it gets dark, and in the morning before dawn, you can often see a bright light akin to a candle, which is flying at high speed not high above the ground. This is Bräzglaväc (the Headless). They say that these are the souls of the deceased children who had not been baptized before their death. Once there was a man, Bratončar he was called, who early in the morning was driving in his cart to fetch a confessor. As the cart left the village numerous headless souls came to the cart. Frightened, Bratončar started to pray but this didn't help at all. The more he crossed himself the more of them came to the cart. Finally, he got angry and started to swear, and then they swiftly disappeared (Kühar, Novak 1988: 147, no. 46).

[143] Matevž Ravnikar-Požen̈čan, manuscript, NUK, MS 483, XI, no. 12.

[144] Kühar 1911: no 48; Kelemina 1930: 161–162, no. 107.

The lore about the *brezglavljeki* (the Headless) in Prekmurje was still alive at the end of the 20th century when Dušan Rešek recorded the following story.

Brezglavljeki (the Headless Souls)
Stillborn children and those who died without baptism were called the brezglavljeki (headless souls). They are buried outside the cemetery. People recounted that these children were miserable. Since they weren't been baptized they could not go to heaven.
Many people who at night were passing the cemetery on their way home saw them, and also heard their moans (Rešek 1995: 49, no. 14).

The souls of children in Slovenian folklore appeared in many shapes, most frequently as small lights floating in the darkness; as rays of light; burning candles; birds perching on a willow tree; black birds; moths; and, as indicated above, as headless shiny beings. If such a soul was redeemed, it would fly into the sky as a white dove.

CURSED SOULS

Due to their grievous sins, the souls of some deceased people were bewitched or cursed and had to roam places where they had committed their crimes as horrific night apparitions. In addition to these, this group includes those who had died a violent death, especially beheaded criminals, as well as those who had committed a crime during their lifetime but were never punished for it. They were often imagined as headless demonic beings (*acéphalous*), Perhaps the headlessness is associated with popular notions that have their source in literature on witchcraft and magic, where the acéphalos was worshipped as an omniscient god.

Although the cursed souls appear individually, they may also be in groups, attending nocturnal processions, night mass, or in the company of the wild hunt (see Wild Hunt).

Among the cursed souls that keep returning to this world, either due to their sins or because of their "impure death", are the *meraši*, the *džilerji* (engineers), the *brezglavci* (headless), the *svečniki* (candle heads), the *preklese* (cursed), the *preglavice* (troubles), and a number of other cursed souls that may appear in human form or as dogs, cats, frogs, or as moths gathering around a burning candle. Similarly to the souls of unbaptized children, they can be often seen as wandering lights or as burning candles.

The *meraš* (the one measuring), Gvidon Birolla (Möderndorfer 1957)

In Slavia Veneta, a restless soul was depicted as a wandering light or as hovering fire (the *fuch voladi*). If a reflection of the hovering fire fell upon the laundry drying out at night the person who would later wear such garments would get erysipelas, commonly called *fuch di San Antoni* (St. Anthony's fire), or pains, or would even go insane due to intoxication with the ergot of rye.[145]

The most common crime committed by these souls before their death was the shifting of boundary stones and theft of land. Those who had stolen their neighbour's land appear after death as spirits wheeling a wheelbarrow in which they transport stolen soil, or else they shift boundary stones. According to the lore, they could be saved if one answered their question of "Where can I place it?" with "Where you had taken it from." Among supernatural beings who have to return the land they had stolen from their neighbours, are the *meraši*, the *džileri*, and the *brezglavci*. This narrative motif, which is also known outside Slovenia, was borrowed by Anton Aškerc for his ballad *Mejnik* (The Boundary Stone).

The *meraš* (the one measuring), also called *merar* or *džiler* (engineer), restlessly wanders at night, waiting for redemption. The lore about these beings, which were believed to shift boundary stones at nighttime, has been preserved primarily

[145] Mailly, Matičetov 1989: 59: no. 8.

in Prekmurje and Koroška but is also known in other parts of the Slovene ethnic territory.

Svečari were imagined as creatures with a burning candle instead of a head or as large headless people who measure fields at night. According to reports from the vicinity of Croatian Varaždin and Medžimurje, the local *svečari* were ascribed the same characteristics. In both areas, the *svečari* were imagined as headless people who, when they were still alive, had been stealing land from their neighbour. After death they appear as the souls of those who had died a violent death or else had committed a crime and went unpunished; they are believed to have no heads. The *svečniki*, or the *svečari*, are the souls or the spirits of the dead who have a candle instead of a head and are usually seen during Advent and before All Saints' Day. If they bump into one another their candles emit sparks. Since they can be delivered from their cursed state by prayer, they tend to gather around those who, upon beholding them, start praying.

Svečari (Candle-heads)
The svečari are those who, while being alive, committed a wrong by meddling with boundaries in the field. This is why God does not let them rest in peace but sentences them to roam around the boundaries where they had committed a wrong. Mostly they appear during the Advent and two weeks before All Saints' Day. They don't have real heads like other people but carry in that place a large candle. When they collide they emit many sparks, like when you set a heap of pine branches on fire. If they see anybody they come closer, and the more he prays the closer they get. People believe that they can be redeemed this way. If, however, that person starts to curse, they leave him immediately (Valjavec 1866: 230).

The *svečari* in this narrative are portrayed as the cursed souls of those who had been stealing land from their neighbours and had shifted their milestones. In Medžimurje, the people of Sobotica believed that the *svečari* were sinful monks.

The svečari are monks who had lived sinfully. This is why God punished them, and so they have to roam around when the moon is young. They have burning candles instead of heads. When a person starts praying, upon beholding them the svečar come nearer but if he starts to curse they leave (Valjavec 1866: 230).

A similar punishment would befall the "surveyors" who had wrongfully measured fields. Such souls were called *džileri* (engineers) in Prekmurje. Already

mentioned by Števan Kühar (1911: no. 47; Kelemina 1930: no. 94/I), Dušan Rešek wrote about them more recently.

> ***Džilerji* (Engineers)**
> *People claimed that at night, usually in Advent, the džileri ran around the fields. These were the spirits of surveyors who during their lifetime did not justly measure land plots and now returned to this world to settle the injustice they had caused.*
> *A man from Melinci was returning from St. Mark's Fair at Beltinci late at night. He had sold a cow there and celebrated a bit in a local tavern.*
> *When he reached the bridge over the Doubel, a džiler caught up with him. He jumped on the man's shoulders and the man had to carry it all the way to the cemetery in Melinci. There the apparition climbed off his shoulders and receded in the mortuary* (Rešek 1995: 59, no. 19).

According to the lore of Prekmurje, the *džilejri* can appear as glowing apparitions with shining lamps, or as a kind of giants. People reported the sighting of a very large man with no head.

The souls returning to this world were also called *preklesa* in Prekmurje. As mentioned before, this term denoted the soul of an unborn child. But it could also refer to the souls of those who during their lifetime had committed an injustice and return to their homes so that others could settle their sins or debt and pray for them. They often left traces of their presence, for example hand imprints. If the sound of crying was heard from a house, that house would allegedly have a stroke of bad luck (Kühar 1911, no. 48; Kelemina 1930: 161–161, no 107).

The spirit of the deceased may also appear as a frog. In Resia, for example, people recounted how a woman dug some soil along the border of her field in Korito day by day, thus gradually stealing the land from her neighbor. When she died, a large frog appeared on that spot. This story stresses the importance of respecting the boundaries between plots of land. Moving these boundaries was considered a major sin, almost as serious as killing another person. The offender had to atone even after death.

The treasury of Slovene folktales and legends contains many stories about bewitched princes, princesses, counts, and countesses. Due to their sin, mostly avarice (for refusing to give a piece of bread to a beggar, for example), arrogance, or greed, they were bewitched and turned into snakes, dogs, wolves, crows, etc. They had to serve their penalty until Judgment Day. This motif is particularly diverse in fairy tales where new-born children may already be bewitched. Mothers may also curse their children, thus transforming them into crows.

Castle ruins are often associated with stories about bewitched castle lords. Among the most famous is Veronika from Mali Grad in Kamnik, who was also called the "snake virgin". The lore of Veronika of Kamnik was collected by Emilijan Cevc, who wrote an extensive treatise on it (Cevc 1958). According to some narratives, Veronika was a heathen princess, or a Christianized heathen girl who broke off her engagement with a heathen knight, while in others she was a miserly castle lady who refuses to give the money to build a church. As punishment, she is bewitched into a snake or a dragon. Sunk into the earth and guarding treasures, she waits for redemption. Occasionally, she appears as a beautiful maiden, which generally happens on quarter evenings when ghosts have power and haunt places. Then she comes to the stream or sits on the staircase. She can be saved by a seven-year-old boy who has to strike her thrice with a year-old hazel switch or with a switch that has been blessed. She can be saved in the same way by an honest young man or with three kisses from him, or by providing correct answers to her questions. In some tales, Veronika can be saved by a hero who will cut off the head of the evil spirit who is guarding her. However, as the young man usually fails in his attempts, the bewitched girl has to wait for her saviour in the cradle. This means that her saviour has not been born yet and will be rocked in the cradle that will be cut from a tree that has not yet been felled, or has not even grown yet.[146] In Slovenia, Veronika became a metaphor for a heroine who had been cursed into a snake or a dragon.

Similar tales are known in other parts of Europe, for example in Slavia Veneta, where people told the story about the *disimirina* (Ciceri 1992: 463). According to one tale, this giant snake with large human eyes was a girl who had killed her illegitimate baby and buried it under ruins. Because of infanticide, she was condemned to death. She managed to escape but fell into an abyss and died. Now, she roams around the world in the form of a large snake.

This tradition is based on the ancestor cult, combined with the motif of redemption on Judgment Day, or salvation by the divine son, or the "Rescuer in the Cradle", and with the curse motif (Kropej 1995: 136–139).

[146] More about this see: Ranke 1911.

Slovene lore abounds in stories about those who were cursed. Already mentioned was the tale of the brigandish knight from Triglav. Another such being is Hudamos the cursed dog. Worth mentioning is the legend of the "Eternal Jew" or Ahausuerus (ATU 777) that is widespread in the European lore as well as in Slovenia. Since Jesus Christ on the road to Calvary was not allowed to rest by his house, Ahausuerus was condemned to roam for all eternity. Matevž Ravnikar-Požencan wrote this story in the middle of the 19th century.

The Forest Cobbler

When Christ, laden with the cross, was led to the place of his execution, he wanted to lean his cross against the house of a cobbler to rest for a while; the cobbler did not allow this. As punishment, the cobbler must practice his trade in the woods and wander around until Judgment Day burdened by a cross. He is most often seen in dark and remote forests on Christmas Eve. For the first time, he appeared in Graz, the capital of Štajerska, when the city had not been built yet, and the second time the city was already there. He will appear there one more time.[147]

As the curse motif appears in almost every story, it is impossible at this point to explain such lore in greater detail.

DUHOVIN – THE SNAKE CHILD

Duhovin is a child born as a snake. Soon after birth, the infant discards its snake skin and becomes a true child. The tradition of the *duhovin* has been preserved mainly in western Slovenia and in Notranjsko. In Istria and the Karst, it was also called *dahovina* or *duhovinka*. According to Milko Matičetov, who collected extensive data on this mythical being and wrote a comprehensive study about it, the *duhovin* originated in the tradition of the Istro-Rumanians, Valachs, called "Čiči" because they lived in Čičerija, which is indicated by the scope of its prevalence (Matičetov 1973).

Similar to the folk fairy-tale type about a supernatural or bewitched man or woman (ATU 400 – ATU 424), the snake body initially denoted a special talent of such a person. Born in the image of a mythical ancestor (serpent), the *duhovin* is the chosen one with special characteristics and qualities. This is also evident from the reports of Martin Baučer and Janez Vajkard Valvasor, according to which the *duhovini* were born in more distinguished families, and particularly in noble ones, or were destined to have distinguished professions. According to these reports,

[147] Matevž Ravnikar-Požencan, manuscript, NUK: MS 483, XI, no. 19.

immediately after childbirth the snake was induced, through specific deeds and words, to transform into a child.

Martin Baučer (1595–1668), a Jesuit priest from Gorizia, mentions the *duhovin* in his book "Historia rerum noricarum et foroiuliensium", where he states that somewhere between Lokve, Predjama, and Cerknica lived a noble family in which all children were born as snakes. Once they were washed they assumed human form (Matičetov 1973: 63).

Janez Vajkard Valvasor reported that some women in the Karst give birth to snakes. People then beat the snakes with birch branches until they transform into children. Valvasor lists several more examples of such births in the Karst, Pivka, Notranjsko, adding that although he heard much about this he never came across anyone who had actually witnessed such birth (Valvasor 1689: VI, 314). Valvasor writes: *They say that a duhovin still lives in the Karst. He was born in such a manner but for obvious reasons remains anonymous. […] Still alive is also an old woman who allegedly witnessed this transformation twice.*[148]

As was noted by Valvasor, sometimes the snake could not be caught after birth. In this case, it disappeared.

Such tales survived even until the mid-twentieth century, when Milko Matičetov was gathering the data on them throughout the Karst and Brkini. However, at that time the content of these tales were considerably changed. *Duhovin* eventually acquired the meaning of the cursed child who could be delivered from this state by switching it with hazel shoots, by baptism, or simply by letting it drink milk and not driving it away.

People started to interpret such snake birth also with cases of pathological pregnancy, when the child disappeared after childbirth. It could also be a penalty for an unjust, quarrelsome wife. The original source of this tradition could be the myth of giving birth to a successor of the mythical ancestor (snake), so the snake image marks family members who later in life will fulfil different missions and will achieve great success. In this case the stories about *duhovin* could be the remains of the rites of passage or initiation (Kropej 1995: 150).

Slovene writers Fran Levstik and Ivan Pregelj used the name *duhovin* for an evil spirit, the devil. Jože Lovrenčič, however, defined it as an unfortunate man who was carried in the wombs of nine young women and was the son of the last one.

[148] Cited after Matičetov 1973: 64.

Belief in the dead returning is as old as humanity itself. Its origin is in dreams and in the fear of the living of those who have died. The fear was aggravated by inexplicable clinical phenomena, such as people who were seemingly dead, as well as by literary sources that further stimulated people's imagination.

Among the demonic dead, or the returnees, are the deceased that appear in the local environment in which they once lived, drinking people's blood and endangering their lives. After they die their souls remain in their deceased bodies. At nighttime they rise from their resting places and return to their graves before sunrise or before the first rooster starts to crow. By sucking the essence of life (blood) from the living they are able to preserve their body from decay.

Due to their grievous sins, vampires return to the world of the living and to the places in which they had once lived while their bodies remain stiff and numb in their graves. This is the reason that in Primorje people named them *premrl* (the stiff). As they sucked blood they were also called *krvoses* (the bloodsucker). Stanko Vraz and Ivan Šašelj preserved for posterity the term *ris* (the lynx), denoting a vampire. These creatures were thought to be particularly dangerous in Bela Krajina, where the locals told stories of the lynx, also called *vidovina*, which rose from its grave and destroyed an entire family (Šašel 1906: 216; Pajek 1884: 203).

People often confused the vampires and the werewolves. Since both were mentioned by Janez Vajkard Valvasor (1689: XI: 317, 341, 456), people obviously still firmly believed at the time in these shuddering creatures who kept returning to the world of the living. The tradition about the deceased who became vampires was recorded in the upper Soča Valley as early as the 15th century. Simon Rutar reported that a woman from Bovec had turned into a vampire (Rutar 1887: 65). In 1435, her corpse was unearthed and pierced with a hawthorn stake so as to prevent her from returning to the world of the living world to suck people's blood.[149]

Valvasor also reports on a dead man who kept returning to his home to harass his wife and even have sexual intercourse with her (Valvasor 1689, XI: 316). This story has been preserved in oral tradition and was published by, among others, Anton Mailly (Mailly/Matičetov 1989: no. 17). In 1883, Fran Wiesthaler collected in his extensive article on vampires and werewolves similar descriptions from beneath Mt. Krim in the vicinity of Ljubljana, where a similar case had allegedly taken place.

After His Death He Kept Returning to His Wife

The people living in the wetlands of Ljubljana and in Ig tell of a farmer

[149] Compare also: Matičetov 1948: 11.

named Žirovec who died in Tomišelj beneath Mt. Krim about fifty years ago. Žirovec was a rich and thoughtful man but he turned into a vampire after his death. He became the Vedomec, as the locals call such a person. As the deceased from Tomišelj were buried by their parish church in Ig, Žirovec was taken there when he died. But what happened shortly afterwards? He started to rise from his grave at night and went to his wife in Tomišelj and spent nights with her, just as he had done when he was still alive. Even to this day the old men who had known him are still alive. They often saw him sitting on a rock near his house, putting on his one and only sock. […] Although he never hurt his neighbours, all were afraid of him, which is hardly surprising.

The parish priests of Golo and Ig decided to put an end to this werewolf's behaviour. They opened his grave, drove a hawthorn stake through his heart, and covered the grave again. He was never seen in Tomišelj again, and his wife, poor soul, went insane with fear and sadness. They say that when the werewolf felt the stake going through his heart, he cried out: "Oh, now you got me caught!" And his wife gave birth to the vampire's child (Wiesthaler 1883: 703–704; Kelemina 1930: no 97/I).

Three names are blended in this story: the vampire, the *vedomec*, and the *volkodlak* (the werewolf); people often confused them.

Besides the description of sexual activities of the vampire, which resulted in the birth of his child, the story repeats the method of disabling the vampire by planting a hawthorn stake through his heart, as in the aforementioned example of the woman in Bovec who turned into a vampire. Since ancient times, hawthorn is believed to possess special powers against witches and vampires. Even in 1955, people told Milko Matičetov stories about similar sexual abuse of vampires in Novigrad in Istria, Obrov, and Ložan (Maily/Matičetov 1989: 187).

Vampires were believed dangerous mostly for those who were vulnerable, for example people living in houses that had no protection against vampires. At risk were also infants in cradles whose family had not made the sign of the cross over them before leaving the house. Equally endangered were children living on farms where neither a dog nor a rooster made a sound when the vampire flung a stone from the cemetery across the farmhouse. Such a child could have its brains and blood sucked out from its body.[150] While the extinguished fire on the hearth gave the vampire power, his power would vanish in front of a church or a crucifix.

Fran Erjavec wrote about the *premrl* (the stiff) in Zemono by Notranjska Bistrica. At night, the creature came to the hearth and regurgitated red clay ("*premrl*'s blood"),

[150] Matevž Ravnikar-Požencan, manuscript, NUK: MS 483, XI.

also called "*prelog*'s blood" (Erjavec 1883: 228). In Primorsko, people believed that the *premrl* could enter a house at night, regurgitate the sucked blood, and cook it during the night, particularly if the kettle had been left hanging in the hearth, which was forbidden. If the person whose blood had been sucked at night ingests *premrl*'s blood, that person would be cured.

Vampires could be disabled not only with the hawthorn pole but also by cutting off the corpse's head and placing it between the feet, or by being burned. They were buried "on their teeth", i.e. facing the ground, or had a nail driven through their body. In Bela Krajina, stepmothers were given iron coils under the tongue during the burial so the *vidovina*, or the lynx, would not rise from the grave and destroy the entire family (Šašelj 1906: 216; Kelemina 1930: no 97/V).

The belief in vampires was particularly widespread in the Balkans and among the Slavs, but was also known in other parts of Europe and among non-European peoples. The stories about Count Dracula became popular in the 20th century, especially as a literary genre and in motion pictures. Nosferatu, a character from a novel by Bram Stoker (1847–1912), had been inspired by the lore on vampires and on Count Dracula that allegedly lived in Transylvania in Hungary. Many movies were based on this novel, for example *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror* (1922); *Dance of the Vampires*; and *Nosferatu, Phantom of the Night*. In the spirit of the modern age, numerous computer games are being generated,[151] and fans of Dracula even have their own fan clubs and organize events dedicated to him, particularly in the United States.

[151] More about this see: Govednik 2007.

Oral tradition interpreted the volkodlak in different ways, depicting it as a supernatural being and as a man that changes into a wolf. People envisioned the volkodlak (werewolf) as:

- A being that occasionally transforms into a wolf or into of a half-man and half-wolf;
- A person already marked from birth that he will periodically transform into a wolf. The signs pointing to this are the following: his body is covered in wolf fur; he has a wolf's teeth in his mouth; the baby is born in its caul; or delivered by breech birth;
- A person who has the ability to turn into a wolf at will;
- A person who is cursed because of his sins or because his mother has cursed or bewitched him so the upper half of his body (or even the whole body) is that of a wolf. In a folktale from Dolenja Vas by Ribnica in Dolenjska, the mother cursed her sons by saying, as she threw them some bread: "Here you are, you damn werewolves!" (Levec 1883: 772; Kelemina 1930: no. 67).
- A man who, due to his sins, turns into a wolf forty days after his death, when an evil spirit inhabits and reanimates him.

The werewolf of the Slovene popular tradition has many names, for example *okodlak*, *kodlak*, *verkodlak*, and also *likantrop* (from ancient reports on *Lycaon*).

As has already been mentioned, the werewolves were often equated with vampires and the *vedomec*. Like the vampire, the werewolf sucks blood from adults but even more frequently from children if their mother curses them during the day.

Sexual vampirism is another characteristic the werewolf shares with the vampire. In a tale from Dolenjsko, a werewolf in human form courted a girl. She bore him twins, one of which was white and the other furry. The werewolf killed the white one. The furry child grew into a werewolf that was even fiercer than the father (Kelemina 1930: no. 65).

In Friuli, people believed that the werewolves were people with wolf skin that sucked blood from those who were asleep or even dead at times, which is similar to necrophilia (Ostermann 1940).

Closer to the *vedomci* is the tradition of the werewolves who roll in the remains in the field, turn into creatures that resemble the *vedomci*, and then fight the *kresniks* at the crossroads or in the fields. To prevent this, over Christmas one should not leave manure that had not been ploughed into the soil in the field. Otherwise a werewolf would appear and beat the *kresnik* who guards the home. The werewolf can also turn into a wolf by rolling in the manure or over a molehill.

People that are born the wrong way, i.e. with their feet appearing first, can transform into a wolf at will. Like wolves, they can cause damage by eating herds. Such a person only needs to roll over a molehill and immediately he transforms into a wolf.[152]

Like the *vedomec*, the werewolf can cause a solar eclipse. In Štajersko, this phenomenon is called *sonce jedeno* (eaten sun) People believed that the solar eclipse occurs when two werewolves, in the form of wolves or ferocious dogs, fight and bite each other.

Werewolves appear mostly in winter, usually around Christmastime, during the twelve nights called the wolf nights. This makes them similar to the Wolf Shepherd, the third character contaminated by the werewolf. A number of motifs from the tradition of the Wolf Shepherd have penetrated and mixed with the lore on the werewolves. The transformation into werewolves around Christmastime is reminiscent of the Polish *Wilkolaci*, people who transform into werewolves twice a year, on Christmas and on Midsummer Day. These wolf-people were mentioned by Herodotus, who reported on the Neurim, the people who turn into wolves.

As mentioned before, the werewolf can be born from the union of woman and wolf. A werewolf can also be born if a pregnant woman beholds a wolf after moonset (Wiesthaler 1883).

People frequently attempted to redeem werewolves. According to a widespread belief, the new-born werewolf who was born still in his placenta can be delivered from this state by sewing a piece of his placenta in his shoulder. If the werewolf was a breech baby, delivered with the feet appearing first, he could be saved if he was turned at birth.

A cursed werewolf can also be saved by throwing him some bread to be consumed, in the name of the God. In a tale from Dolenja Vas pri Ribnici, a driver's wife saved the werewolf that was following her husband to his home by presented him with a piece of bread in the name of God (Levec 1883: 772; Kelemina 1930: no. 67). Similarly, a farmer saved some roaming werewolves by pulling a thorn from the paw of one of them and by breaking a piece of bread and distributing it between them (Kelemina 1930: no 68).

The person who has transformed into a wolf could be saved by tearing apart his skin after he has taken it off. This happened in a tale from Savinjska Dolina, where a man tore the coat off a wolf after the animal had rushed into the church, and quickly tore the coat apart. However, the werewolf in this story was a musician who had put on a wolf coat on the wedding feast, but in the same time a curious woman opened the door, and this caused him becoming a werewolf (Kelemina 1930: no. 66).

[152] Matevž Ravnikar-Požencan, manuscript, NUK: MS 483, XI, no. 18.

Among the South Slavs, the presence of wolves and the summoning of wolves to the wedding feast were recorded in sources dating back to the 15th century. As stated by Veselin Čajkanović (1973), it shows the important role of wolves in ancestor cults. People also reported that a wizard turned all wedding guests into werewolves. In a wedding custom still preserved in Bosnia, a group of young men called *vuki* (wolves) enacts a fictitious attack upon the groom's house.

Like the tradition regarding vampires, the lore on werewolves is spread throughout Europe. The werewolf is called *Werewolf* in the British Isles, among the Germanic nations it is referred to as Wolf-man (Wodan), and the French named it Loupgarou.

VEDOMEC

The supernatural being named *vedomec* has different meanings in the Slovene tradition. It may appear as:

- A mythical creature that may assumes human or half-human form;
- A person with magical abilities that rushes about during Christmastime, Midsummer Day, or quarter weeks;
- The soul of an unbaptized deceased child appearing as a small light;
- A dwarf.

As supernatural being representing the opponent of the Slavic god Perun, the vedomec or *vidovina* (Šašelj 1909: 215–216) can allegedly be the opponent of Kresnik.[153] However, with the increasing profanation of mythology it assumed in the Slovene folk tradition, the role of the wizard, and this is the role that will be examined in more detail in this text. The *vedavci* in Pivka were mentioned by Janez Vajkard Valvasor, who described them as malevolent creatures that drink the blood of children (Valvasor 1689, XI: 456).

Vedomec, also known as *vedamec*, *vedavec*, *vedanc*, *bedanec*, *vedunec*, *vidovina*, *vedavk*, *veda*, *veša*, *vešča* (the moth), *balavantar,* and as *banandant* in Slavia Veneta, allegedly differed from ordinary people in certain physical characteristics, for example in hairlessness, baldness, in having no moustache, dim eyes, bushy black or yellow eyebrows, or an unusual tooth. Koroškans believed that children born during quarter weeks were the *vedomci* who, once they reached adulthood, gathered at crossroads and butted into each other as goat bucks do (Kelemina 1930: 92, no. 37).

As reported by Matevž Ravnikar-Poženčan, the *vedamec* could allegedly assume human or half-human and half-animal form as well as grow or shrink at will.

[153] More about this see in the chapter "Kresnik".

Vedamec

Assuming different appearances, the vedamec usually torments and teases people. In some places it is known as *veša* (moth), and as such he usually appears in numbers (Ravnikar-Poženčan/Stanonik 2005: 76, no. 52).

In this case, the *vedamec* becomes similar to witches, the incubus, or the nightmare. Similar to this, in folk narrative collected by Valentin Vodnik, the *vejdamec* is related to the *orko* and the *podlegaj*.

Vejdamec

Half man and half bear, it can stretch, grow, or shrink at will. In order to find out the most hidden secrets it can transform into various animals. Some people subjugate it to learn secrets from him.[154]

Like wizards and the *kresniks*, the *vedomci* could move with special speed. Neither mountains nor precipices constituted a barrier for them. Some were able to change into vapour or haze; thus invisible, they could discover secrets with greater ease.

It was believed that not unlike the *kresniks,* the *vedomci* were carried in their mother's womb for seven or nine years. But unlike the *kresniks*, they were evil and could destroy an entire family.

When the *vedomec* turned seven, his older peers came for him in the evening. Together they went to fight with poles at crossroads. They butted into each other like goats. They also fought under an old oak or walnut tree, transformed into a red or a black ox, hog, lion, stag, bear, or half bear. They were believed to fight each night; on Midsummer Day; or during quarter weeks. Those who beheld them were torn to pieces. The *vedomci* pelted each other with the victim's bones, which is a well-known narrative motif in the lore on witches and wizards (The Wooden Rib, mot. N 452) and finally put together the victim, replacing the lost rib with the wooden one (Matičetov 1956). Those who betrayed them were equally torn to pieces.

Transformed into giants, the *vedomci* or the *false kresniks* uprooted old trees. Like the *kresniks*, they walked very far at night and returned very tired in the morning.

Well known are the stories of two farmhands fighting each other, transformed into a white and a black dog, at the crossroads at nighttime. The master comes to help his farmhand with his sword. Sometimes it is one of the farmhands who helped his master by striking his opponent (Šašelj 1906: 216). But he can strike only once or else the hostile *vedomec* would regain his power. If the *false kresnik* wins the fight, he carries the entire harvest with him (Kelemina 1930: no. 2, 3).

As atmospheric and weather elements, the *vedomci* were believed to cause solar eclipses (Kelemina 1930: no. 35) and whirlwinds, and move clouds.

[154] Valentin Vodnik, manuscript, NUK: MS 540, no. 12/2.

As indicated by Valentin Vodnik, oral tradition linked the *vedomci* with the incubus (nightmare) and other scourges. According to popular belief, they crawled from house to house at night, making themselves invisible and throwing children out of their beds, or else smother a sleeping baby in its crib. In death, such children turned completely black. As the incubus, the *vedomci* oppressed people at night. In the morning, the family members of such a person recognized the traces of the incubus in the bites and swellings on the victim's body. The *vedomci* were also able to bewitch a person with their gaze; put a curse on the cows' milk, on foals, and on piglets; and were believed to strangle animals.

Yet they could be redeemed as well. The child *vedomec* was passed, feet forward, through a window or through the crotch of a vine (the vine had to dry up afterwards). It also helped if the party returning home after their baby's baptismal ceremony took a different route, keeping silent throughout the journey; if the baby, or the animals that have been afflicted by the *vedomec*, were briefly placed in the baker's oven in which bread was baking; or if a strangely-growing tooth was pulled from the child's mouth; or if his peers, when they first came to fetch him, were told he was not there. A *vedomec* could also be "returned" if he was addressed by those who met him on his way to a gathering with his peers, or if he was thrice stricken at the gathering place with a rosary or with year-old hazel switches.

People tried to protect themselves from the *vedomci* in various ways. They hung garlic in their rooms, poured garlic water after them, spread salt, or sprinkled holy water around them. A magic circle drawn in front of the house compelled the *vedomec* to keep running in circles. Iron nails or knives were placed in bed, or else a long knife was hidden under the head of the bed. A long knife was put through the bedroom door keyhole or thrust into the door. A pentagram was drawn on a side of the bed or cradle. It would also help if the one oppressed by the *vedomec* made the sign of the cross across his or her chest, or shouted: "Return tomorrow for the salt!" The person who first came to the house the following day to borrow something was believed to be the oppressor.

According to popular belief, the *vedomci* remain alive after death like the vampires and consequently could be done away with by the same apotropaic deeds.

PASJEGLAVEC – CYNOCEPHALUS

Reports of dog-headed beings (*cynocephali*) appeared in the texts of ancient writers. They were mentioned by Strabo, Pliny the Elder, and Ktesias, all of whom used this term to describe various peoples alien to them. Representations of cynocephalic beings are known from Egypt and Mesopotamia. In Christian iconography, St. Christopheros is sometimes depicted with a dog's head.[155] According to Slovenian tradition, St. Hieronymus had a dog's head which was, according to folktales, due to his beauty.[156] People sometimes believed that the cynocephali were mythical creatures, and the giant Christopheros, depicted on clay icons from the 6th century that have been preserved in Vinica, Macedonia, is represented with the head of a dog. The possible connection between the lore of the cynocephalic beings with the myth of the totemistic wolf ancestor was closely examined by Milko Matičetov (1949). The tradition of these dog-headed creatures shares some elements with the mythical tradition of the people of Gog and Magog as well as the Apocrypha about the end of the world.[157]

The cynocephalus of the Slovenian lore is often referred to as *pasjeglavec*, *pesjan*, *pesoglav*, *pesoglavec*, or *pasjedlan*. People depicted him as a degenerate human being with a dog's head; with eyes turned toward the floor or with one eye in the front of his head and the other on the back; with only one leg and a single eye in the middle of the forehead; a creature with the upper body of a human and the lower of a dog; or as a creature with a dog's head, human torso, and goat legs. Like the cyclops, the cynocephali were believed to be bloodthirsty persecutors of Christians.

There is very likely a link between the tradition on the cynocephali and the tradition of werewolves. This is also reflected in the Slovene folk narrative where folktales about the werewolves often intertwine with the lore on the cynocephali and use similar motifs.

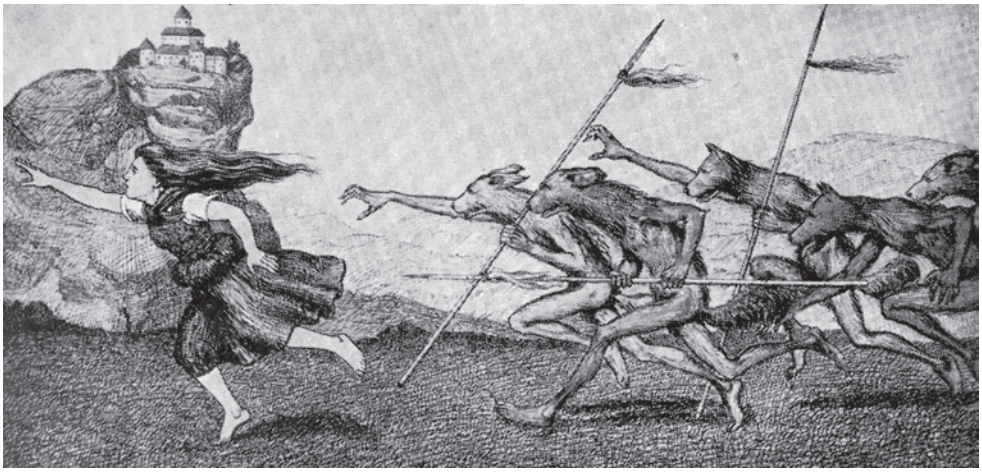
The bloodthirsty character of the cynocephals is reflected in numerous Slovene folktales that describe how the cynocephals destroyed the heathen (*ajdi*) and killed Christians. People believed that they killed and devoured people.

According to Jakob Kelemina, the memory about the *pečenegs* and *besenjaks* is preserved in the tales about escaped prisoners that flee their pursuers (Kelemina 1930: 28–29), for example in the story about a girl who cuts off the heads of her pursuers in her father's cabin (ATU 956); like in the novel *Mlinarjeva Jerica* (Miller's Jerica) written by Josip Jurčič.

[155] More about this see: Kretzenbacher 1968.

[156] More about this see: Glonar 1914.

[157] More about this see: Šmitek 1992.



The girl and the dog-heads, Hinko Smrekar, 1905 (Dobida 1957)

Even more numerous are stories that describe the Huns as cynocephali. Particularly fearsome was their commander Attila, the terror of all European nations. In Slovenian lore, Attila is represented as the commander of the cynocephalic people. The tradition of Attila's birth is linked with the Italian tradition of *Pulican* who was born from the union between a Cappadocian woman and a dog; this motif was later transferred to the Slovene lore on the dog-headed creatures.[158]

The lore about the cynocephali became contaminated with the lore about *Marko the Dog*, also referred to as *Marko Pes* or *Prince Marko the Dog*. Linking this character with the lion (*St. Mark of Venice*), which was perceived also as a dog, is reported from the coastal Slovenian region and from Slavia Veneta. Like Attila the Hun or Attila the king of the cynocephals, Marko the Dog was believed to be the child of a king's daughter whose father permitted only a dog to keep her company in her castle tower. The offspring was named Prince Marko the Dog. When he grew up he fled his home and later returned to his native land as the leader of the cynocephals, and devastated it.[159] His astrological and mythological origin is allegedly confirmed by the popular term *kuzljak* that refers to the star Sirius, the Dog Star, or the hunter dog of Orion. When looking for a parallel in history, Sergej Vilfan found the most likely candidate in Marx Sittich von Ems, a hired commander of Austrian archduke Maximilian's army, who fought against the Venetians at the end of the 15th and the beginning of the 16th centuries. However, Vilfan (1955) also allowed for the possibility of the origin of the popular antihero Marko the Dog in Marko Klis. Mentioned in historic sources, Klis was killed in Brežice in 1515 during a peasant revolt.

[158] More about this see: Vilfan 1955 and Šašel Kos 2012.

[159] More about this see: Šašel Kos 2012.

Just as they did with the days of the week, time, thunderstorm, wind, bad weather, and the like, people also personified death, the plague, *mrak* (dusk) and other diseases, nightmares and different nuisances, predictors of death; hunger, and many other woes.[160] Those that have been preserved almost to the present day should be examined more closely, because they had the most impact on human life. Death certainly holds the first place.

DEATH (SMRT)

In the Slovene conceptual world, Death, called *Smrt* or *Smrtnica*, was depicted as an old fearsome woman clad in white or as a tall, bony white woman with a scythe in her hand or a basket on her shoulders. Only a very few saw Death in the form of a skeleton. Death was also represented as an angel of death and was occasionally depicted as male rather than the more typical female. As a male character, Death was referred to as *Smrtnek* or *Smrtec* and denoted the male creature that accompanies Death or the Plague on their rounds.[161] In some places, particularly in Štajersko, Death was depicted as a young girl, the *Smrtnica*; the local people used the same term for the *Desetnica*, the tenth daughter.

The Death, Hinko Smrekar, 1911 (Dobida 1957)

According to the people of Prekmurje, Death prefers to appear at nighttime, just before dawn (Kühar 1911, no. 49). Widespread was the belief that he comes into the house at night, looking for sparks that would provide some warmth. If he could not find any, he would murder the lady of the house or even the rest of the family. It was believed that Death calls a person, and if that person answers, Death takes him or her away.[162]

There were numerous stories about Death. People were certain that Death

[160] Compare: Röhrich 1967.

[161] More about this see: Grafenauer 1958: 182–186.

[162] More about this see: Valjavec 1868; Kelemina 1930: no. 196.

has burning candles in his residence, which are a metaphor of human life. As the candle burns low, Death sets off to fetch the person whose candle is about to go out (Kelemina 1930: 260–265).

Death features in many fairy tales and legends, for example in the fairy tale "Godfather Death" (ATU 332); "The Smith and the Devil" (AaTh 330); and in "Death in the Basket". As late as in the 1970s, Milko Matičetov heard in Val Resia and in Val Natisone two related fairy tales: the tale "About Death" and the story "Godmother Death". In the latter, Death acts as the godmother to a poor man's son. As a baptismal gift, she gives the child the ability to heal the sick with her help. The story was told by Tina Vajtova, the famed storyteller from Stolvizza/Stolbica in Val Resia (Matičetov 1968).

According to popular belief, death was announced if a rooster barked like a dog; if a hen crowed like a rooster; if an owl hooted; or if meowing was heard near the house (Orel 1944: 304). Personified messengers of death, called *roki* (terms) or *spomini* (memories) generally appeared in the form of an animal such as a cat, owl, the bird *smrtnica*, or Marant the dog whose barking around the house announced an impending death.[163] Matevž Ravnikar-Poženčan described such messengers of death as follows:

VROK, ROK OR SPOMIN (MEMORY)

Vrok, Rok or Spomin, is a personified omen of the Latin peoples. They imagine it as a spirit that usually predicts death. Every person has his or her own ok. If a person falls ill and something is suddenly heard but nobody is able to identify the cause of that sound, the sick person usually says: "Maybe my Rok is walking about." "Vroki" is also the term used by the common people for diseases whose cause is unknown to them (sunstroke, for example). To cure this affection, a piece of glowing charcoal is extinguished in a water-filled container that is placed above the sick person's crown. That person should also drink some of that water. It was also believed that some people's gaze causes this disease.[164]

Inhabitants of Val Resia believe that death is announced by the *Planet*, a fiery ray that announces death wherever it falls. A similar tradition of the shooting star announcing death was widespread almost in the entire Slovene territory. To some extent, the Planet from Resia is reminiscent of the *Škopnik*.

[163] Trstenjak 1859, 46; Kelemina 1930: no. 92.

[164] Matevž Ravnikar-Poženčan, manuscript, NUK: MS 483, XI, no. 8.

PLAGUE

Among a wide range of diseases that were personified by the common people. the best preserved in the Slovene folk narrative is the memory of the most terrible of them all: the plague. The *Black Death*, as it was also called, was widespread in the 14th century and had a high death toll. According to stories, the plague appears in yards in the form of a multi-coloured calf. Even more widespread was the notion that it appears as a fearsome old woman. This shuddering image from a folktale inspired poet Anton Aškerc to write his ballad "Ponočna potnica" (Night Passenger), and through this literary adaptation it has been preserved to the present day.[165]

The villagers of Povirk, whose congregation of the local St. Jakob's church also worshipped St. Fabian and St. Boštjan (Sebastian), saw the plague, disguised as a black girl, standing on a hilltop, calling. "Fabjan, Boštjan, you are so strong, you prohibit me from entering the village of Povirk!"

It was also believed that a comet appearing in the sky brought famine, war, or the plague.

In Prekmurje, people still say that the plague is the punishment of God, roaming around the world, from village to village, from house to house. The plague killed livestock in the barn and chickens in the henhouse. In ancient times, it also killed people, and to ward it off they shut themselves in their houses and tried to drive it away with prayer and superstitions (Rešek 1995: 91, no. 35).

DUSK (MRAK)

Like the Plague, *Mrak* (Dusk), referred to also as *Mrak*, *Mračnik*, *Somrak*, or *divjina*, personifies disease. This supernatural being generally appearing as a large woman or man with a rotting face and large fiery eyes, is especially dangerous to children as it brings disease (Kelemina 1930: 114, no. 64). A child with cramps, gripes or green stool, who cannot sleep and wails through the night, allegedly "has the dusks".

At the beginning of the 20th century, the people of Prekmurje still believed that the *Mraki* were three young boys.

In Bela Krajina, *Mračnjak* was a large, black, and hairy man with a wide-brimmed hat that vexed a person night after night, and could even take the victim away with him. To ward him off, people threw a slipper that was turned inside out at him.

A child afflicted with mrak was exposed to the fumes of dusk grass. Mrak was also "burned". After lighting three chips of wood, the mother thrice shifted the

[165] More about this see: Grafenauer 1958.

troubled child over them, each time repeating "I am burning Dusk." The child was then carried to bed and the chips thrown into fire.

Until the mother went to church for the first time after giving birth, no man was allowed to enter the house with an uncovered head, so as not to afflict the infant with dusk. A person entering the house at dusk could likewise be Mrak. Janez Trdina preserved the tradition that allegedly originated on the island of Krk, whose inhabitants believed that Mrak was a terrifying monster that wages war with the sun. The sun is winning during the day and Mrak at night.

INCUBUS (MORA)

The *Incubus*, referred to as *Mora*, *Truta*, *Trota-mora*, *Šnjava*, *Skišnjava*, *Kripijavka*, or *Chalchut* in Friuli[166], is the most recognizable and well-known creature among personified troubles.

The Incubus was believed to be a mythical being in human, animal, or supernatural form that could change its form at will. As a piece of straw, it was even able to crawl through a keyhole or a crack in the door to oppress, smother, or suck on a sleeping human or animal.

People interpreted the Incubus to be a person whose soul escapes at night, also believing that like the *vedomci* and the werewolves, a child born at the wrong time or at an inauspicious moment shall turn into an incubus. According to notions widespread throughout Europe, the seventh daughter or the seventh son, born after siblings of the same sex, may become an incubus. The Incubus was occasionally perceived as the cursed spirit of sinful deceased people, particularly of women who murdered their child or caused their infertility by artificial means.

The Incubus was also interpreted as an evil spirit creeping at night as an old woman with long talons and fiery eyes; a dishevelled woman with bloody eyes and broad feet; a shrivelled old man resembling an elf; a five-legged cat; or a dog, cow, chicken, or black shadow, that crawls to the sleeping person and oppresses or smothers him or her, or else suck on that person until his or her breasts swell or until milk starts to drip from them in the morning. For this reason as well as for its nightly visits the Incubus, like the vampire, was also attributed sexual harassment.

It was difficult to identify the Incubus. It was generally recognized as a woman who seemingly had magical abilities. The first person who comes to borrow something to a house that had been visited by the incubus the previous night was also recognized as the Incubus. The Incubus was additionally identified by its urine that allegedly punctured stones. Such rocks were then used to drive it away.

[166] Mailly, Matičetov 1989: 66, no. 16.

Matevž Ravnikar-Poženčan presents the Incubus in the following manner:

> *A tormentor in different forms, especially that of a cat, which tortures people, mostly children. This bugbear is driven away if the oppressed is called by name or if a piece of cloth is thrown over him. A means of defending against the Incubus is the paw of the Incubus, the signium Pythagoricum, which is also called "the Incubus" and should be drawn on bedsteads and cradles. The urine of the Incubus can pierce stones that can then be used as to ward it off.*[167]

There were many methods to drive away the Incubus. A knife was placed in bed or stuck through a keyhole, or a knife or a fork could be stuck in the door. It was believed that the injuries inflicted by these objects should be visible the following day on the person who has come to the house at night. In Slavia Veneta, an uncorked empty bottle was placed in the room for the Incubus to be captured in, after which the bottle was swiftly closed.

On the door of the bedroom or a side of the bed or cradle of the child whose chest was swollen, and who had milk dripping from his nipples, a sign was drawn that wards off the Incubus and evil spirits. It was called the sign or the paw of the Incubus, the burning arm, or Solomon's Cross. The sign was in the form of a pentagram, a five-pointed star drawn in an interrupted line, and also in the form of a six-pointed star or the cross of St. Andrew. In the hills around Škofja Loka, five St. Andrew's crosses were carved on the doorposts of entrances to pigpens (XXXXX). Three such signs were usually drawn on doors in Porabje.

If the Incubus sign was drawn on the door and the window, and leaning against the bed was a broom with which the Incubus had to be hit thrice, the Incubus would leap into its drawing and collapse on the floor, dead. Another method was to lean a sheaf of straw and a club against the bed, and if the Incubus came at night the club was used to thrash the straw. It would also help if a person lying in bed crossed his or her arms and legs.

A sack filled with the bracken fern was placed underneath the child who was repeatedly oppressed by the Incubus. Children could also receive amulets that were placed around their necks; their shirts were blessed; they were given bread that had been blessed; etc. In Porabje, a safety pin, a pipe, or a cigarette was placed in children's cradles.

To keep the Incubus away from the cattle, a mirror was stuck to the trough, and when the Incubus beheld itself in the mirror it fled. Sows' teats were smeared with mud or switched. Another form of protection was an incantation or charm.

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[167] Matevž Ravnikar-Poženčan, manuscript, NUK: MS 483, XI, no. 5.

Folk beliefs about the Nightmare or Incubus are wide spread all over Europe as well as in other continents. A nightmare in the Slovenian narrative tradition was referred to by the names, *mahr*, *mahrt*, *marra*, *zmora*, *trut* and *drud*. It was influenced by Germanic folk beliefs where it was called the *Alp*, as well as by the Italian and French, who named it *cauchemar*. The belief in the Incubus is one of the most widespread religious concepts of humankind and as such has an important place in the creation of myths. Since antiquity, nightmares have been interpreted by physicians as physiologically conditioned, while psychoanalysts believed that they were also caused by psychological factors.

PREGLAVICA – THE BOTHER

It is interesting that even bother or worry was personified. People would say: "Whoever is very happy one day but has a misfortune the following day obviously encountered the Bother." It was imagined as a mythical being or as a white headless woman who appears to people on the road and fields, and leads them astray.

Represented also as a black headless woman appearing at midday, the Bother was thus reminiscent of the cursed souls of sinners. Those who avoided it were spared but those who neared her, or crossed her path, would be blinded, had their arms broken, or would be led astray (Kelemina 1930: 195).

People also believed that the Bother could predict death in seven years' time. Davorin Trstenjak wrote that in Štajersko, people told of the Bother riding around in grey mist and bringing the plague (Pajek 1884: 174; Kelemina 1930: no. 195).

KRIVDA – THE GUILT

The supernatural being Krivda (Guilt) is walking behind the godfathers who have not given right answers at the baptism of the child. This folk belief has been preserved in the Alpine town of Bovec in Primorska.[168]

NETEK

In the folklore of Slovenia, the *Netek*, *Natek*, or *Matek*, either a small man or a man of immense stature with an old-looking face, or even a creature that is neither human nor animal, was presented as an insatiable creature that roamed

[168] Collected by Barbara Ivančič Kutin, preserved in the Archives of ISN ZRC SAZU.

the world, stopping at farms and asking for food. But whatever he ate he was never full. His arrival either announced hunger or eliminated it. When given plenty of food without expecting any payment in return, he generally caused no harm and even restored prosperity. But woe to those who unwittingly cursed him, gave him no food, or even bragged about their prosperity! On the very same day, the master of the house died of hunger while his family was stricken with poverty and famine.

Since the Netek took over the position of Šentjanž in the home people believed that "wherever the Netek is under the table people get up from the table still hungry". According to a tale from Koroška, the words "Thank you, Lord and Šentjanž, I have finally eaten my fill today!" drove the Netek away. He fell from the ceiling in the form of a well-fed pig, and took off through the door (Kelemina 1930: 54, no. 9). The Netek seems to be the negative pole of Šentjanž, or Kresnik, hence his dual nature that may cause hunger or bring prosperity.

Jakob Kelemina (1930: 12) and Josip Mal (1940: 22) suggested that the etymology and the allegorical meaning of the Netek come from the verb 'netiti' (to fuel), which characterizes him as a stoker and therefore a fiery, chthonic being, a good spirit protecting the domestic hearth. This perception was challenged by Ivan Grafenauer in his extensive treatise in which he also compares the Netek with other mythical creatures, especially with the Plague. Grafenauer (1958) noted that the Netek shares many characteristics with the Plague and with Death, particularly with the *Smrtnik* that is presented in some stories as the companion of the plague. He is also related to the glutton from a tale from Vorarlberg titled "The Glutton and the Plague."

The negative nature of the Netek as the bearer of famine and death is evident in, among other things, in the name *netečje* for cranberries that was used in Štajerska. The connection of this plant with the devil, or the *krut*, is also obvious in Koroška, where the cranberry was also referred to as the *devil's plant* or *krut's plant*. The Netek was equated with the devil (*hudič*) also in the vicinity of Celje, where people said that those who used bad words are *netek*-ing or *hudič*-ing[169] (Grafenauer 1958).

It seems, however, that Netek was not an entirely negative being that brought only famine and death. He could also put the end to hunger or, if well fed and regaled, leave the farm without causing any harm. His role was therefore more corrective in that he rewarded hospitality and punished haughtiness and stinginess.

[169] "Netekujejo ali hudičujejo".

With the help of rituals, spells, charms and other magical ceremonies people hoped to influence nature, humans, animals and climatic phenomena around them. The ancient Egyptians and Greeks had a collection of mythical scriptures used by the Egyptian priests of the god *Thoth*. The Greeks called these books "Hermetical Scriptures". Their name originated from the Greek god *Hermes* who was, among other things, the protector of magic.

Interest in the Greek magical scriptures was reawakened during the Italian Renaissance when, in the 15th century, Marsillio Ficino translated the Greek manuscript by Hermes Trismegistos (thrice-great Hermes) into Latin as "Corpus Hermeticum".

Medieval persecution of witches and wizards erupted throughout Europe with numerous legal processes, largely the result of Pope Innocent VIII's declaration in 1484 that legalised such persecution and accused wizards of being connected to evil spirits and the devil.

In some folktales and fairy tales, we can detect not only remnants of these processes, but also initiation rituals for people accepted into a secret cult. The Greek goddess Artemis or the Roman Diana were connected to magic cults. Later, these cults were linked to notions of the goddess of fertility and the leader of the wild hunt – like the Germanic Holda or the Slavic Jaga or Slovenian Pehtra Baba.[170]

According to some older sources, wizards and witches in Slovenian tradition were mythological and demonic creatures just like *kresnik*, *vedomec*, *lamia*, *mokoš*, etc.; different sources, however, maintain that ordinary people could learn witchcraft as a trade. According to the data from Slovenian folk tradition, we may summarize that magic was performed mainly sympathetically, on the analogy, by the rule "pars pro toto", with the help of apotropaic acts. They used water, medicinal herbs, potions and ointments. Witches and wizards used various objects like a wand, bell, horn, whistle or other musical instrument, and sometimes a mirror to perform their magic.

Sorcerers mastered spells and charms, and knew how to conjure and adjure, helping themselves with books on black magic[171] and with various magic objects, sometimes considered as the seat of the helping spirit, such as sticks, goat horns, bells, etc.

Slovenian oral tradition has preserved the memory of some famous wizards, for example the wizard *Vidovin*, the magic marksman *Lampret*, the magician *Jernik* (a

[170] Folktales about this see in: Kropej & Šmitek & Dapit 2010: 109–129.

[171] Popular books on black magic in Slovenia were: "Kolomonov žegen", "Duhova bramba", "Hišni žegen"; for more about this see: Grafenauer 1907; Grafenauer 1943a.

The witches, Maksim Gaspari, 1949

hunter and shepherd from Jezersko), the healer of blindness *Belin*, the warlock *Kržanič* from the village of Gančani in Prekmurje, and the sorcerer Tkavc from Medvedove Peči in Koroška (Kelemina 1930: no. 24, 25). Magic was usually attributed to people with red hair, and to pharmacists, priests and hermits. Wizard traditions have preserved more shamanistic elements which seem to have descended from the folk beliefs regarding kresniks. The shamans or kresniks were usually key personalities in a given society. Slovenian traditions, for instance, mention Kresnik, the protector of a clan, whom God has given to mankind in order to protect humanity against the dragon which threatened its existence.

Kresnik is known in Slovenian mythology as a mythical hero connected with the sun. In Slovenian folklore a kresnik can also be a shaman who fights witches and vedomci to provide a healthy crop for his community (Šmitek 1998). These fights between witches and kresniks, also known as *balavantari* in Slavia Veneta/Venetian Slovenia, occurred most often on the midsummer night or during the Christmas season. According to stories and beliefs, kresniks were said to have been born with a

caul or as a tenth or twelfth brother, or were born with the mark of a horseshoe and other signs. (See the chapter on Kresnik).

The opponent of a kresnik was the *vedomec,* or *bedanec,* or *benandant*. They too could be recognized at birth by body features such as hairiness, connected eyebrows, an extra tooth in their mouths etc. Vedomci supposedly came to get their apprentice when the latter reached seven years of age, and they set out together to fight at crossroads and under trees.

Students of black magic, sorcerer's apprentices, pupils in the eighth level of magical school called also *grabancijaš dijaki* (students from the word *necromantes*=conjurer), supposedly learned their skills in a school called *the black school*, *the thirteenth school* or *the Babylonian school*, directly from the devil or from *Šembilja*, as in the stories of the students of Black Magic. The apprentice sorcerer traditionally sold his soul to the devil. They knew how to drive away snakes and dragons, which they searched for in ponds, to stop them causing harm. Apprentice sorcerers rode dragons, and the dragons as guardians of treasures, obeyed them. When there was severe thunder and lightning, people said that the apprentice sorcerers were riding their dragons; when storms or tornadoes occurred they were supposedly "lifting the lintvern" ("lintvern" being a word for a dragon).

Many stories and fairy tales tell of witches and wizards meeting secretly at night. According to popular narrative, witches rode to the kingdom of the night or of death on brooms, humans, or animals. They held witches' feasts, celebrations and dances. For instance, in the story about a witch with horseshoes on her feet, which is also preserved in verse form (SLP I/1970: no. 30), a witch rides to the nightly meetings upon her husband's back. On these occasions, she always changed him into a horse, until one day he was too quick for her and changed her into a mare, took her to the blacksmith and had her shod. Stories about witches with horseshoes are known in the Celtic, Germanic, Romanic and Slavic worlds.

People believed that witches and wizards flew on Saturdays (the Jewish Sabbath), the days connected with lunar changes, and that they met on a hill called Klek, which became known as the gathering place of witches. The flight of witches can be interpreted as the "travelling of the spirit", which like an "alter ego" can leave the body in the form of an insect or a mouse, travel through other worlds and communicate with spirits of the deceased, while the body remains in a trance.

In numerous stories, spirits or devils helped witches and wizards. They took the form of black cats, crows, goats or goblins. Some supposedly kept their helping spirit at home, stored in a jar or a bottle. They knew how to summon them, usually at midnight in their home, or at a crossroads, under a tree, or from a circle which they drew and then stepped into. When summoning their spirits, they sometimes used books of black magic called *Kolomonov žegen* (Kolomon's Blessing), named after St.

Kolomon (Grafenauer 1907; id. 1943a). They gave the spirits names such as *Crnagel*, *Prokvas*, *Mozrl*, *Gabrijam* etc. According to popular belief, witches and wizards knew about treasures and how to access or unlock them.

People also believed that wizards and witches cast weather spells and created hail, storms, winds and rain. It was said that witches danced in whirlwinds and that the wind carried them in the clouds. Sometimes the wind could drop one into a nearby stream. People tried to protect themselves from such weather disturbances by ringing bells and firing cannons. Often people tried to drive the storm away themselves using sacred objects, such as a blessed bell or holy water.

There was a widespread belief that wizards could prevent cows from giving milk, the earth from bearing crops, and that they could create illnesses in people and animals. They could take the milk from a cow by stealing a rope from a shepherd and "milking" it by pulling both ends while murmuring strange words. Alternatively, they stuck a stick in a tree or into the soil to make the milk flow.

There would also be no crop yield in fields where witches had buried an object. They damaged vineyards by burying quicksilver in the soil. Witches also knew how to move a crop to their own fields by, for example, collecting the morning dew.

Some days in the year were considered especially suitable for witchcraft, and on those days witches and wizards supposedly had special powers. These times included Christmas, the twelve nights around the New Year, the eve of St. George's Day, Easter, the night of the First of May, the summer solstice, Pentecost, the feast days of St. Thomas, St. Urban, St. Bartholomew, St. Margaret, the time following the first Sunday after the new moon, and on Quarter Days. The days related to witchcraft were Thursday, Friday and Saturday. People lit bonfires on Midsummer's Eve and on St. George's Eve which supposedly had great magical powers. It was believed that on the summer solstice witches fought with kresniks and people fired mortars to protect themselves against them. The people from around the town of Pivka believed that on Christmas Eve *Sentjanzevci* fought with *Vedavci,* who drink human blood (Valvasor 1689, XI: 456). On St. George's Day, housewives blew horns at the crack of dawn to chase away *bajanci,* so they would not cause cows to lose milk or harm the crops. Servants from across the River Mura cracked their whips for the same purpose. If the night before Whit Sunday was dewy, witches wrapped in sheets would roam in wheat fields and wring the wet sheet over their own field, thereby transferring the wheat to themselves. Likewise, on Sundays after the new moon they would drag sheets over hedges and pastures before the sunrise, acquiring in that way the property of others. They also knew about treasures and could unearth money where "a treasure bloomed", as they said.

People usually believed that the person who had caused illness, poor crops, bad weather and similar troubles was one of their neighbours; even one of their relatives or

one of the individuals accused of witchcraft in their community.[172] As some stories tell us, a fixed procedure was established on how to recognize wizards. "St. Lucia's stool" was known throughout all of Slovenia and elsewhere across Eastern Europe. This is a footstool whose construction had to begin on St. Lucia's day (13th December) and it had to be completed on Christmas Eve or Christmas day. It had to be constructed from nine, twelve, thirteen or a similar magic number of different kinds of wood; sometimes only from male trees and each day a new kind of wood had to be added. During construction other rules could also apply; for instance, the person making the stool had to work in silence.

People protected themselves against witches with blessed gunpowder, a priest's stole, salt, holy water, clothing turned inside-out etc. As protection they stuck birch or linden tree branches on windows and doors, especially on the feast of Corpus Christi and at Pentecost, and flowers at the time of the summer solstice. They also protected themselves with *Duhovna bramba* (Spiritual Defence) or *Hišna bramba* (House Defence), booklets that protected against all misfortunes.

People often assumed that the causes of their misfortunes or illnesses were spells, which were actions, threats or phrases spoken against people or animals. People believed that a person could also be cast under a spell with an evil eye. Such a spell could be cast unintentionally. It could be caused by a look from a person with black eyebrows that met in the middle, or from curious old women, or from people who had a wonderstruck or astonished expression. Illnesses were treated in various ways by herbalists and healers. Often they would pray over the stricken and pronounce magic spells. Numerous charms for dealing with various sicknesses and curses are still known.[173]

Love spells were varied. People prepared different concoctions from various ingredients so that the chosen person would fall in love with them. Girls would boil a young man's hair in a pot so he would pay them an evening visit. Often various aphrodisiacs were prepared. Frequently girls predicted future love from flowers and believed that an elder tree helped conjure up their future husband. On the night of the summer solstice and during the May night, girls practiced sorcery to see their future husband.

Much has been written on black magic, witches and wizards,[174] but this book discusses supernatural beings, while witches and wizards appear as such mainly in fairy tales.

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[172] More about this see: Mencej 2006.

[173] More about this see: Dolenc, Makarovič 1999; Kropej 2009.

[174] See: Blecourt 1999; Ginzburg 1966; id. 1989; Pócs 1999; Mencej 2006.

DICTIONARY OF SLOVENIAN SUPERNATURAL BEINGS

Acephalous (*brezglávec*), a headless demon. Since antiquity, people believed that demonical spirits or the souls who could not find peace after death, either because they had died a violent death or had committed a crime themselves but went unpunished; or were beheaded, appear without heads. They return in a procession at nighttime, during a night mass, or accompanied by the wild hunt. Slavic lore is also inhabited by headless spirits of nature. In literature on witchcraft, the *aképhalos* was venerated as a god to whom everything is palpable.

Ahasuerus (*Ahasver)*, also called *The Wandering Jew*, *The Eternal Jew*, *The Eternal Cobbler*, *The Forest Shoemaker*, is named after Ahasuerus, a king of ancient Persia who was among those responsible for Haman's persecution of Jews. Ahasuerus first appeared in literature and lore through pilgrims' reports in the 13th century. According to these, Jesus Christ, bearing the heavy cross to the hill of Golgotha, wished to stop by a cobbler's house to rest but was driven away by the cobbler Ahasuerus. As punishment, Ahasuerus is forced to roam the world until the Final Judgement. Written in chronicles and enacted in folk plays, the story has been incorporated into literary folklore as the international narrative type ATU 777 (The Wandering Jew). It has also spread around the Slovenian territory and was recorded by Matevž Ravnikar-Poženčan in the middle of the 19th century (see the *Wild Hunter)*.

Lit.: F. Kotnik: Andreas Shustar Drabosnjakov *Ahasver.* Dom in svet 1922, 391; L. Kretzenbacher: *Ahasver in der Steiermark*. Festschrift für Karl Haiding zu 75 Geburtstag, (Hgg.: V. Hänsen, S. Waltr-Liezen), 1981, 279–289; G. Hasan-Rokem, A. Dundes: *The Wandering Jew. Essays in the Interpretation of a Christian Legend*. Bloomington 1986.

Ajd, *hájd*, *ajdovska déklica* (pagan girl), *grk* (Greek man), *rimska déklica* (Roman girl), *lah* (Italian man), *oger*. Giants: according to folklore, the exceedingly tall *ajdi* were ancient people living in mountains. The name *ajd* is derived from the German *Heide* (pagan). Prehistoric and ancient artefacts and tumuluses were frequently interpreted as the remains of pagan structures whose inhabitants were thought to have often been bewitched to remain in the ruins. According to some tales, the giants were destroyed by the *pasjeglavci* (the dog-headed, see: *pasjeglavec*). One of the many tales about the giants tells of a pagan girl who carried away in her apron several people and animals but was ordered by her father to place them back (ATU 701). In Bela Krajina, the giants were called Greeks. The lore about the *giants* was later combined with the popular notion about the giants. (See also *giant*).

Lit.: N. Županič: *Ime Grk v pomenu »velikana« pri Belokranjcih v Dravski banovini* (The Name Greek in the Sense of "Giant" among the People of Bela Krajina in the Drava Province). Etnolog 7, 1934; K. Hrobat: *Ajdi z Ajdovščine nad Rodikom* (The Giants from Ajdovščina above Rodik). Studia mythologica Slavica 8, 2005.

Angel (*angel*), an intercessor between God and people. Angel images were known in pre-Islamic Iran. In the sense of 'messenger,' the Greek and the Latin word 'angel' corresponds to the Hebrew and the Arab 'malak'. According to Islamic and in Christian beliefs, each person has a guardian angel believed to protect that person from harm. The Old Testament mentions different kinds of angels, for example the cherubim, the seraphim, Nathaniel, and Ariel. The highest hierarchical order of angels was composed of arch-

angels Michael, Raphael, Gabriel, and Uriel. According to Apocryphal lore and occult philosophy, angels presided over the four elements (air, fire, water, and earth). In numerous legends and religious tales, angels appear as astral beings, protectors, and mediators but also as angels of death and fallen angels.

Antichrist (*antikríst*), an eschatological character depicting an autocrat who is going to compete for absolute authority when the end of the world approaches. The notion of the Antichrist comes from the Jewish Book of Daniel, which contains a description of the battle between God and his demonic opponent; it is similar to a Persian and a Babylonian myth about the battle between God and a monster, or a demon. Bishop Irenäus of Lyon (died appr. 202) predicted that the Antichrist shall rise from the sea in the form of a monster trying to persuade people that he was indeed God. According to Jewish lore, the Antichrist will be born in Babylon to a Jewish woman of easy virtue, and his life will initially resemble that of Jesus Christ. But when he will try to conquer heavens he will be sunk into the depths of the earth. He was frequently depicted in folk plays which were very popular until 19th century. There are many legends about the end of the world when the Antichrist shall appear as a fearful antihero fighting God.

Ardina, see *grdina*

Attila, also called *Átila, Átula, Artúlja, Atélija*, King Atilla, Count Attila, Attila the Scourge of God. 1) the leader of Hun tribes whom he united in 445; 2) folk antihero, commander of the Hun army, and the terror of European nations. Slovenian folklore links Attila with apocalyptic prophecies, depicting him as the leader of the cynocephals (see *pasjeglavec*). According to Slovenian lore, Attila conquered and demolished Virunum in present day Kärnten/Koroška, Austria, Vir pri Stični, Cividale del Friuli and Aquileia. The castle of Udine was traditionally built by Attila. In Slovenian folktales, Attila was allegedly born out of a relationship between a woman from Cappadocia and a dog. It has been said that Attila died on the night of his wedding to a young bride, which is a motif known from the Saga of Krimhild. A legend has it that he was buried in a casket made of gold, silver, and copper (or iron) in the area between the River Mura and the River Drava; according to other beliefs he was buried in the surroundings of Tolmin or Novo Mesto and elsewhere.

Lit.: M. Matičetov: *Attila fra Italiani, Croati e Sloveni. Ce fastu?* 24, Udine 1948, 1949; Z. Šmitek: *Primerjalni vidiki slovenskega ljudskega izročila o Atili* (Comparative Aspects of the Slovenian Lore about Attila the Hun). Traditiones 23, 1994.

Balabántar, see *vedomec*

Baláver, see *malavar*

Bartholomew, (*Jernej*) see *Jarnik*

Basilisk, *bazilisk*, *káčec*. An extremely poisonous snake with the wings, head, and feet of a rooster, it was believed to kill with its glance or breath. It was mentioned in the Bible. People believed that the basilisk was hatched from the egg of an old rooster, in mud, and under the protection of a toad, a frog, or a snake. The myth about the basilisk originated in the Orient, and according to Pliny the Elder (23–79) the basilisk lived in Egypt or in Libya. Hildegard von Bingen's "Physica" (VIII, 12) from the 11th century was largely responsible for the spreading of the basilisk tradition in the Middle Ages. People believed that basilisk can hatch from an egg by eleven-year-old rooster. The lore about snakes with a rooster's comb on their heads and a diamond underneath their tongues was also spread among the South Slavs. Amulets in the form of a snake and a rooster, which were found in the Balkans, indicate that the

connection between these animals stems from ancient beliefs. In alchemy, the basilisk symbolized the destructive fire that foretold the transformation of metal. The basilisk was also used in medicine.

Bauc, an evil being with whom adults in Dolenjska frighten children.

Bédanec, see *vedomec*

Béla žéna (white lady), see *fairy*

Belestis, *Beléna*, Beléstis, Beléstis Augústa, Beléstris, *Belínca*. A Celtic goddess who accompanies Belinus. Spread mostly in Noricum and Aquileia, the cult of Belestis was later incorporated in folklore. Two shrines dedicated to Belestis were found in Podljubelj in the Karavanke Alps. Belestis was worshipped as a health-bringing goddess of light who watches over the birth and development of living beings. Since the Podljubelj altar was erected on the mountain pass, the worshippers of Belestis who visited the shrines were generally travellers.

Belinus, *Belín, Belínus, Belénus, St. Belín*, *belíč*. 1) the principal god in Noricum, the god of light, sun, healing powers, and, according to Tertullian (beg. of 3rd cent.), protector from enemy attacks; 2) a fairylike being with healing powers. The cult of Belinus and his consort Belestis was in Iberia, Gaul, and the Eastern Alps. It spread from Noricum to Carnia and Aquileia, and from the latter to Celeia (present day Celje). Shrines dedicated to Belinus were erected mainly on Magdalensberg/Štalenska Gora; by the Zigulln castle near Klagenfurt; in Hochosterwitz by Sankt Veit an der Glan; two shrines were also found in Villach. Belinus was incorporated in Slovenian folklore predominantly in the Gorizia and Tolmin regions, where he was venerated as a powerful healer whose key could cure blindness. Slovenian lore was also inhabited by the *beliči*, fairy-like beings believed to accompany fairies.

Lit.: S. Rutar: *Belinjska opatija* (The Abbey of Belinje). Soča XIII, Gorica 1883, 21; Nikolai Mikhailov: *Appunti su *Belobog e *Černobog*. Ricerche slavistiche 41, 1994; M. Šašel Kos: *Pre-Roman Divinities of the Eastern Alps and Adriatic*, Ljubljana 1999.

Benandant, see *vedomec*

Bérbara, a malevolent supernatural being with which adults in Dolenja Vas by Ribnica in Dolenjska frightened misbehaving children as late as the beginning of the 20th century: "Behave, or Berbara shall take you with her!"

Bérkmandelc, see *goblin*

Bes, see *Veles*, see *devil*

Bewitched soul, *zavdána dúša*, *zdána dúša*, *izdána dúša*, *ukleta duša*, *gréšna dúša*, *vícana dúša*, *vérna dúša*, *révna dúša*, *pánana dúša, ukletnik*. Personified or materialized souls of the impure dead. Finding no peace after death, they keep returning to the world of the living, bound by a vow, an unsettled sin or murder. Frequently returning are also those who had not received their sacraments; had not been buried in hallowed ground or had not been buried at all; or had been bewitched at the moment of their death. They were believed to manifest as participants in a deathly procession; as headless people during night mass; as a shepherd amidst his glowing flock; as the night hunter; and as the night hunt. Murder victims appear to their murderers. Bewitched souls sometimes appear in dreams or assume the form of a burning hand. They may also shoot across the sky as glowing lights or blue flames. They roam around on All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day when the souls from the purgatory return to their homes, wander through cemeteries, or come to churches. The bewitched souls show their gratitude to people who have prayed for them. Transformed into

birds, the souls of unbaptized children sit on willow trees along water, waiting to be shaken off their trees and thus redeemed. Bewitched souls may be saved by prayer, pilgrimage, fasting, fulfilling their plea, providing a correct answer to their lament, for example "Peace be with you!", etc. Also helpful are the use of blessed water; prayer; and settling an injustice. By casting a spell over them, the pope allegedly bewitched such ghosts into rocky masses. (See also: *brezglavljek*, *movje*, *preklesa*).

Blagodéj, a giant supernatural being that helps those discriminated against. Living in the mountains situated between Bohinj and the Vipava valley, he was claimed to appear in various forms. It was believed that Blagodej helped the poor who had been wronged by the rich. Loggers from Idrija, who had been cheated by a wealthy skinflint received payment in wood split by Blagodej. A similar legend, *Kako je Libercun drvaril* (Libercun Logging), was published by Fran Levstik in 1875. The lore of Blagodej originates from notions about supernatural beings inhabiting nature (see giants).

Lit.: A. von Mailly: *Leggende del Friuli e delle Alpi Giulie*. Edizione critica a cura di M. Matičetov, Gorizia 1989.

Blagonič, see *goblin*

Bog, see *God*

Bóžič, see *Svarog*

Bóžja déklica, see *washerwoman*

Brbúč, a supernatural being with which adults in Dolenjska frightened children away from reservoirs, wells, and brooks to prevent them from drowning. In Uršna Sela and in Laze by Novo Mesto people used to say that springs and wells are the abode of the *brbuč* who can pull disobedient children into water.

Lit.: A. Hudoklin, *O frlinkah in Brbučih z Radohe* (On the Water Caves and the *Brbuči* of Radoha). Bilten Jamarskega kluba Novo mesto 1991, 19–20.

Brézec, see *devil*

Brezglávec, see *achephalos*

Brezglávljek (head-less), in Prekmurje, this was the term for a deceased or stillborn child who had not yet been baptized. These souls were believed to appear as lights floating above the ground at nighttime or in dusk, generally near graveyards. Crying, they flew very high and sometimes extremely rapidly, and were headless. They could be chased away by cursing, but were attracted to praying people since prayer could accelerate their redemption (see *movje*).

Lit.: D. Rešek, *Brezglavjeki* (The Brezglavljeki), Ljubljana (Zbirka Glasovi) 1995.

Brgánt, see *Kresnik*

Budekić, in Resia, this was the general term for children who had not been baptized prior to their death (see *movje*).

Centaur, (*polkonj*), a supernatural being with the torso of a human and the lower part of the body of a horse. Centaurs allegedly lived in groups by water or in hills frequently flooded by water. Reports on centaurs have been preserved in Štajerska, Gorenjska, and Slavia Veneta. The Slovenian lore about these beings shares the same origin as the ancient lore on the centaurs whose name, according to Kretschmer, denotes "to whip water." The half-horses personified the churning, frothing water, and thus the wild, untamed forces of nature, particularly of water. According to the later lore from Slavia Veneta, the centaurs were persecuting Christians much like the cynocephals.

Lit.: M. Grošelj: *Konj iz vode in ime Kentavrov* (The Horse from the Water and the Name Centaur), Slovenski etnograf 5, 1952; M. Matičetov: *Ime Kentavrov in konji v robiški pravljici* (The Name Centaur and Horses in a Tale from Robedišče). Slovenski etnograf 6-7, 1953-1954.

Changeling, *podmenek*, *premenk, obran's child*. A creature of unusual appearance, for instance with an enlarged head, black and screaming; with a hearty, impossible-to-satisfy appetite. The *podmenek* is customarily a substitute for a human child taken by a supernatural being, in Slovenian folklore customarily the devil, the wild woman, the *škopnik*, or the water sprite. The exchange can be caused by a curse, by incorrect behaviour of the godparents who were taking the baby to baptism, particularly if they neglected to cross the child at a crossroads, etc. This motif appears in the folk song "The Child changed in the Crib" (SLP I, no. 35) and in the legends "The Devil Takes Away St. Lawrence". The latter originated from the apocryphal legend in which the infant St. Lawrence (sometimes also St. Benedict or St. Stephen) was replaced by the devil. According to lore, the child is returned to his or her parents if the changeling is exposed; given a cup of porridge and a spoon too large for the cup; or beaten with hazel switches until the human child is thrown back. Spread throughout Europe where the substitute is known as *Wechselbalg*, changeling, *bytting* or *odmenik*, the lore about the *podmenek* is also known outside Europe. Its origins are in the belief in an evil spirit that settles among humans; in exorcism; and in folk explanations of the birth of handicapped children who were believed to be the children of supernatural beings.

Lit.: L. Röhrich: *Die Wechselbalg-Ballade*. Festschrift zum 65. Geburtstag Bruno Schiers, Göttingen 1967; M. Matičetov: *Il bimbo rapito dalla culla e sostituito con uno spurio*. Demologia e folklore, Studi in memoria di Giuseppe Cocchiara, Palermo 1974.

Cyclops, (*kiklop*), in Greek mythology, the cyclops are one-eyed giants who are the sons of Uranus and Gaia. A section of Homer's Odyssey, which tells of Odysseus sailing to Sicily where the cyclops lived, has become a part of folklore. A cyclops by the name of Polyphemus devoured six of the crew while the rest managed to save themselves. After blinding him with a red-hot pole, Odysseus bound each of his sailors to the underbelly of a sheep that was then put to pasture by Polyphemus, and they managed to get out of the cave and onto their ship safely. In Slovenia, the cyclops was generally equated with the cynocephals. The one-eyed cynocephalus allegedly living in a mountain near Rogatec had a human torso and was hairy below the waist. He subsisted on people until four out of seven travellers pushed him onto an open jack knife that put his eye out. As late as 1967, M. Matičetov wrote down in Črni Vrh above Idrija a story about a boy who went to a forest. Caught by a cyclops with an eye in the middle of his forehead, the boy was taken to a cave and fed nuts every day while other cynocephali kept coming by to see if he had gained any weight yet. The boy finally blinded the cyclops with a sharpened stake and escaped across a stream which the cynocephali were not able to cross.

Lit.: G. Krek: *Polyfem v narodnej tradiciji slovanskej*. Kres 2, Celovec 1882; M. Matičetov: *La fiaba di Polifemo a Resia*. Festschrift für Robert Wildhaber, Basel 1973.

Cynocephalus, see *pasjeglavec*

Čarostrélec, see *Jarnik*

Čarovnica, see *witch*

Čaróvnik, see *wizard*

Čas, see *time*

Častitka, see *fairy*

Čatež, a mythical creature in human form above the waist and as a male goat below it, complete with horns and beard. According to the tradition from east and west Slovenia, it lives in mountains, forests, and marshy areas. Able to alter its size, the *čatež* brings clear water to loggers, picks berries and cuts switches for shepherds, etc. Sources of drink-

ing water were discovered in places where it was believed to linger. Filling them with panic (from the deity Pan), he posed a threat to travellers and foresters whom he lurked to remote places by imitating familiar voices. When angry, he covered farming homes lying beneath hills with earth.

Lit.: A. von Mailly: *Leggende del Friuli e delle Alpi Giulie. Edizione critica a cura di M. Matičetov, Gorizia 1989.*

Četotek, see *devil*

Četrtka (Thursday woman), see *Torka*

Črnošolec, (sorcerer's apprentice; wizard's apprentice), *osmošolec, grabancijaš dijak, trentarski študent*. Črnošolec is derived from *črn* (black) and *šola* (school, denoting a school for magic), a student who was believed to have learned magical skills in school. Most often mentioned in folklore as snake chaser who drives away snakes after having lured them closer by blowing on a whistle. Sorcerer's apprentices searched water holes for dragons that were causing misfortune. When thunder and lightning were particularly strong, people said that sorcerer's apprentices were riding dragons; when tempests and whirlwinds occurred it was believed that they were driving away the dragons. They appeared as sows, cows, or horses. The name *grabancijaš* is derived from the Latin *necromantes* and Italian *negromanzia*, *gramanzia*.

Lit.: V. Jagić: Die Südslavischen Volkssagen von dem Grabancijaš dijak und ihre Erklärung. Archiv für slavische Philologie 2, Berlin 1877.

Črt, see *Veles*, see *devil*

Dagana, a mythical being, a mermaid believed to take white or golden sheep to mountain pastures early in the morning (see *mermaid*).

Dahovina see *duhovin*

Dardaj, *Dardak*. In Resia in Italy, and particularly in Solbica/Stolvizza, people tell of the enormous Dardaj who has protected them from strangers trying to take possession of their mountain horse pasture by driving their horses over a rocky overhang; consequently, the overhang has been named Konjski Plaz (Horse Landslide). Dardaj was believed to have lived with his sister (or daughter) *Lina* on Sart Mountain. Immediately after giving birth to them, *Lina* allegedly threw their children over cliffs, for which she was punished (see *giant*).

Death, *smrt*, *smrtnica*, *smrtnjak*. A personified death, that manifests as a tall, gaunt white woman with a scythe or with a basket on her shoulders; as a thin, pale woman clad in white; or as a skeleton. She was also imagined as the angel of death. In Štajerska, death was depicted as a young girl and named, among other things, the tenth daughter. It was believed that the freezing death comes into houses at night to seek sparks in the hearth and keep warm. If no sparks were found she murdered the lady of the house, occasionally also other residents. Death features in numerous fairy tales and legends, like ATU 332 (Godfather Death) and ATU 330 (The Smith and the Devil). There are many stories about the signs that foretell the death; and about the death beckoning a person to come to her side: if the person answers, death takes him or her away. Death was believed to have burning candles, which represented human lives, in her dwelling. When a person's candle burned down death went to fetch him or her. Those who could predict death and were called the *roki* (terms) or the *spomini* (memories), were generally imagined in the form of certain animals, for example owls, birds, cats or dogs.

Lit.: M. Valjavec: *Narodne stvari: priče, navade, stare vere XVI. Smrt, smrtec, mrtvec, sprevod* (Folk Stuff: Stories, Customs, Old Beliefs XVI. Death, Corpse, Procession). Slovenski glasnik 11, Celovec 1868; Boris Orel: *Smrt in pogreb* (Death and Funeral). Narodopisje Slovencev 1, Ljubljana 1944.

Dedek, see *gospodarček*

Desetnica (tenth daughter). According to Slavic, Baltic, and Irish lore, the ninth, tenth, twelfth, or the thirteenth daughter is, like the tenth brother, 1) a supernatural being; 2) A tithe offered to a deity; 3) a person with supernatural powers. In some poems, she is fetched by a white woman, a fairy, or the Virgin Mary. Upon her return to her native village after many years, nobody recognizes her, which results in disaster, either in her mother's death or in a thunderstorm with conflagration. In the oral tradition of Pohorje, the tenth sister is addressed as *Death* while in Gorenjska, she is called a *Fate*. Taking care of birth and death, the tenth daughter is linked with a person's fate, thus ensuring cyclical renewal. These were the characteristics of deities linked with the fertility cult, such as Hecate, Artemis, and Mokoš in antiquity. The lore of the tenth daughter is partly reminiscent of the Greek myth about Iphigenia. When she was about to be sacrificed to a goddess, Artemis replaced Iphigenia with a hind and took the maiden to Taurus as her priestess.

Lit.: M. Kropej: *The Tenth Child in Folk Tradition*. Studia mythologica Slavica 3, 2000.

Desetnik (tenth brother), *deseti brat, rojenjak*. Like the tenth daughter, the ninth, the tenth, the twelfth, the thirteenth, or the seventh child of the same sex is 1) a supernatural being; 2) A tithe offered to a deity; 3) a soothsayer. In Gorenjska, such a child was called the *rojenjak*. The lore about the tenth brother has been preserved primarily among the Slavs, the Balts, and the Irish. Upon their analysis of Slavic and Baltic folk songs, Katičić and Belaj established that *Zeleni Jurij* was likewise the tenth brother. According to Valjavec, each tenth son was likewise a wolf shepherd. The lore about the tenth son and the tenth daughter has been preserved solely in connection with the tithe and with a person endowed with powers of divination.

Lit.: N. Kuret: *Desetništvo v irskem izročilu* (The Irish Lore of the Tenth Brother and Sister). Glasnik Inštituta za slovensko narodopisje 1, 1956; D. Ludvik, *Izvor desetništva* (The Origin of the Lore of the Tenth Brother and Sister). Slovenski etnograf 13, 1960; V. Nartnik, *Od lika desetega brata do lika hlapca Jerneja* (From the Character of the Tenth Brother to the Character of Jernej the Farmhand), Zbornik Slavističnega društva Slovenije, Vrhnika 1996.

Deva, see *Mokoš*

Devil, *vrag*, *hudič*, *hudóba*, *hudóbec*, *zlódej*, *čótasti*, *četotek*, *brézen*, *brezec*, *zelénec*, *črt*, *bes*. Sources cite different names for the devil, i.e. Beelzebub, Lucifer, Asmodeus, Meridian, and Zabulan. The devil from folk narratives hardly resembles theological depictions of Satan or a fallen angel. Older depictions portray him as a beaked monster with wings and talons. Under the influence of the ancient lore about Pan, this image morphed into a creature with horns, hooves, and a tail. During the era of witch hunts, it was believed that the devil may appear in the form of any animal except a pigeon or a lamb, and also in anthropomorphic form, generally as a hunter, well-dressed gentleman, or a hopeful lover. The devil took over the role of some other mythical beings or demons, i.e. the giants, the wild hunter, the goblin, the wolf shepherd, the dragon, etc. The devil of folktales builds a church or a bridge; makes a contract involving a still unborn baby; exchanges a baby; writes the names of sinners on parchment; carries off a bride; shepherds dormice; grazes animals; dries money on a piece of canvas; brings or grinds money; hires himself out as an assistant; and invents brandy, vine, and weed. Several explanatory tales describe how the devil created the horse, the sheep, the Devil's Rock, and the Devil's Cave. Folk songs depict St. Nicholas throwing the devil into the sea.

Lit.: L. Radenković: *Predstave o đavolu u verovanjima i folkloru balkanskih Slovena*. Zbornik Matice Srpske za slavistiku 53, Beograd 1997.

Divja jaga, see *wild hunt*

Divji lovec, see *wild hunter*

Divji mož, see *wild man*

Divja žena, see *wild woman*

Dragon, *zmaj*, *zmij*, *zmin*, *drak*, *íza*, *víza*, *prémog*, *líntver*, *líntvurm*, *pozój*. A mythical animal with bird, snake, and lizard characteristics. Generally depicted with several fire-spouting heads, the dragon is the symbol of the ruling and life forces and is connected with thunder and fertility. The dragon may function as a mythical ancestor, a giver, a guardian of hidden treasures (see *snake*) and, in ancient myths, the guardian of the Golden Fleece. It is believed that the dragon appears at the beginning and at the end of the world. In Christianity, the dragon was an allegory of the devil. Swimming in a lake or in the sea, the dragon may cause terrible accidents by flicking its tail (see *Faronika*). Its movement underground or in mountain interiors causes landslides, flash floods, and earthquakes. When a dragon leaves its hiding place and soars in the air, a heavy storm ensues. The dragon can be chased away, or summoned from a swamp, by the sorcerer's apprentice (see *črnošolec*). The dragon requires an offering such as cattle or people, usually young women. A girl abducted by the dragon is saved by the hero. According to the apocrypha, St. George is the most noted dragon slayer. In folklore, the dragon may evolve from a crab or from a snake. When it is one hundred years old, the snake grows wings, paws, and a tail. It was once widely believed that the dragon is hatched from an egg laid by a seven-year-old black or multi-coloured rooster (see *basilisk*); this belief was linked by Grafenauer to the lore on the mythical rooster's egg from which gushed seven rivers.

Lit.: I. Grafenauer: *Zmaj iz petelinjega jajca* (The Dragon from the Rooster's Egg). Razprave SAZU II. razr. 2, Ljubljana 1956; G. Makarovič: *Notions of Dragons and Their Significance in Slovenia*. Traditiones 30/2, 2001.

Drak, see *dragon*

Duh, see *ghost*

Duhovin, *dahovina*. In the lore of Istria and the Karst, a child born in the form of a snake was called the *duhovin*. According to Matičetov, its origin is in the tradition of the Čiči living in Čičerija in Primorska, which indicates the area of its distribution. As in folktale types about a hero with the body of a snake, hedgehog, raven, etc. (ATU 400), the snake form of the *duhovin* represents its supernatural character. Born as a mythical ancestor, the *duhovin* is the chosen one with special abilities and qualities. According to reports by Baučer (1689) and Valvasor (1689), immediately after its birth the snake was persuaded, by way of certain actions and words, to change into a child. The *duhovin* gradually acquired the meaning of a bewitched child who could be saved by striking him or her with a hazel switch; by baptizing him or her; or simply by letting the child drink milk without being driven away from the house. Giving birth to a snake was also believed to be a form of punishment for an unjust or quarrelsome wife, or an explanation for pathological pregnancy. Slovenian authors used the term *duhovin* to designate an evil spirit; the devil (Levstik, Pregelj); a witch (Debeljak); and an unfortunate person who was carried by nine girls and was the son of the last one (Lovrenčič).

Lit.: M. Matičetov: *Duhovin v Brkinih* (The Duhovin in Brkini). Traditiones 2, 1973.

Dujačesa, see *wild woman*

Dujak, see *wild man*

Dujina, see *dusk*

Dusk, *mrak*, *mračnik*, *mračnják*, *mračnína*, *sómrak*, *divjína*, *dujína*. A supernatural being generally appearing as a large woman or

man, with a rotting face and large fiery eyes, bringing disease mostly to children. A person stepping into a house from the dusk could be the dusk. A child with gripes or green stool, who cannot sleep and wails through the night, allegedly has the dusk. In Bela Krajina, the dusk was a large, black, and hairy man with a wide-brimmed hat that vexed a person night after night, and could even take them with him. To ward him off, people threw at him a slipper that was turned inside out. A child burdened with the dusk was exposed to the fumes of the burned dusk grass. The dusk was also "burned". After lighting three chips of wood, the mother thrice shifted the troubled child over them, each time repeating: *I am burning the dusk*. The child was then carried to bed and the chips thrown into the fire.

Dwarf, *palček, palečnjak, ninek, nendljek, malič*. A supernatural being similar to a sprite but with a more pleasant disposition. The thumb-sized young boy features in international tale types, one of which is *The Adventures of Tom Thumb* ATU 700 (Thumbling). Dwarfs who dig for gold and jewels appear in the fairy tale ATU 709 (Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs). Contrary to the generally unkind *sprites* or *goblins*, dwarfs have a milder disposition and at night often help people with their chores. Folk prophecies predict that in the future, people will be no taller than dwarfs. While our ancestors were the *giants*, we will be succeeded by people no larger than our thumbs.

Džiler, see *meraš*

Enc, see *goblin*

Fairy, *vila, nymph, bela žena* (white lady), *častitka, častitljiva žena, sveta žena* (holy lady). A supernatural being with long fair hair. Fairies are believed to live in trees, crevices, and rocky mountain caves, or near sources of water, in springs, wells, lakes, and rivers. Nymphs in particular allegedly gather in clear nights among the reeds on river banks, bathe, sing, and dance in circles on meadows. According to tales, people would leave for them in fields and pastures offerings such as milk, dumplings, and other foods. In return, fairies took over their chores; took care of their cattle; presented them with yarn that had no end until someone actually mentioned the word "end". Fairies kept cattle as well. Sometimes they would abduct a young boy who would become a shepherd but was able to escape if he climbed through a forked branch. Those who did a good deed for a fairy, such as untangle her hair or provide shade for her child, were rewarded. In some tales, a fairy grants a young man's wish and takes him for her husband. As a seer, she allows to live only those of her children whom she perceives to be honest in the future. Conjugal happiness with a fairy lasts until her husband breaks the taboo (*Melusine*). Fairies may also be disguised as enchantresses, as phantoms leading to ruin, like *Fata Morgana*.

Farca, see *krivopeta*, see *witch*

Faronika, a mythical animal, a fish swimming in water. When it moves the earth shakes to produce floods, geographical disasters, the end of the world. The name of the fish is possibly linked with the belief that upon being swallowed by the Red Sea, the pharaoh's warriors turned into fish that at a particular moment assume human form. Folk narrative and folk songs depicting the "fish that carries the world", or a pair of fish, reflect ancient cosmological notions of numerous peoples. According to Stele, "Faronika" has become a term for mermaid in Slovenian art history. In Slovenia, the lore about Faronika amalgamated with the tradition on Veronika the bewitched girl.

Lit.: K. Štrekelj: *Zum Volksglaube, daß die Erde auf einem Fisch ruhe*. Archiv für slavische Philologie 12, 1890; I. Grafenauer:

Prakulturne bajke pri Slovencih (Cosmological Belief Tales among Slovenes). Etnolog 14, 1942; L. Kretzenbacher: *Ein Fisch trägt die Erde. Neue Chronik zur Geschichte und Volkskunde der innenoesterreichischen Alpenlaender*, 1954; E. Cevc: *Veronika z malega gradu* (Veronika from Mali Grad). Kamniški zbornik 4, 1958; Z. Šmitek: *Slovenian Mythological Tradition*. Svetinje preteklosti. Ljubljana 2004.

Fate, *rojnica*, *rajnica*, *sojenica*, *jesenica*. The future of a baby lying in a cradle was predicted by three slim, beautiful women. *Clotho* spun the thread of life from her distaff onto her spindle, *Lachesis* measured and spun the thread, and *Atropos* cut it when death approached. Their characteristic attributes were the distaff, the spinning wheel, and the thread. In order to elicit a propitious life for their child, people placed food and beverages upon a festively set table to appease the fates. The fates' prediction is irrevocable and can be altered solely by an advice of those initiated into cosmic secrets, for example the *desetnik*, a soothsayer, or a hermit. In the 6th century, Procopius reported that the Slavs did not believe that the Fates could determine a human's fate. Nevertheless, it seems that the Slavic belief in the *Parcae*, the *Moirae*, or the *Norns* blended with the notions of Old Slavic deities of birth and a person's destiny, *Rod* and *Rožděnicy*. In literary folklore, the lore about the fates became frequently contaminated with the lore about other female mythical beings such as fairies, the white women, nymphs, etc.

Lit.: V. F. Klun: *Rojenice. Die Schicksalsgöttinnen der Slowenen*. Österr. Blätter für Literatur und Kunst, Wien 1857; M. Valjavec: *O Rojenicah* (On the Fates). Novice 16, 1858; I. Grafenauer: *Slovensko-kajkavske bajke o Rojenicah-Sojenicah* (Slovenian and Kaj-Croatian Belief Tales about the Fates). Etnolog 17, 1944; R. W. Brednich: *Volkserzählungen und Volksglaube von den Schicksalsfrauen*. FF Communications 193, Helsinki 1964.

Fear, see *Berbara*, *Bauc*, *Kosobrin*, *Brbuč*, *Sumper*, *Teleba*, *zlati škorenjci*, *ghost*

Forest man (*gozdni mož*)**,** see *wild man*

Garbus, see *wind*

Gejd, see *giant*

Gestrin, see *water sprite*

Ghost, *duh*, *špiritavi*, apparition, phantom. A bodiless creature generally assuming human form; a white ethereal appearance; or the appearance of a deceased person. Ghosts allegedly appear as light or as small lights floating through the air, mostly at noon or midnight. Their resemblance to the dead indicates that the concept of ghosts partly evolved from notions about those who return from the dead or about the restless dead (the impure dead) such as the dead aligned in a procession, or the punished souls; on the other hand, their origin may be found in animistic beliefs. Tales about ghosts, haunted places, and spirit rapping are among the most frequent themes of modern story-telling and urban legends. Many ghosts have been invented to scare children away, among them: *Berbera*, *Kosobrin*, *Brbuč*, *Sumper*, *Teleba* and the "straw eyes".

Lit.: C. Lecouteux: Geschichte der Gespenster und Wiedergänger im Mittelalter. Köln, Wien 1987.

Giant, *velikán*, *orják*, *orjáš*, *oger*, *hrust*, *dóvjež*, *stramór*. A clumsy supernatural being of superhuman size that lives in rocky caves on mountaintops and hilltops. It is believed that giants build castles by breaking up rocks and uprooting trees, and throw tools to each other across hilltops. Originally indigenous only on the Golden Mountain, they gradually settled other mountaintops. They may be kind to people, teach them numerous skills, and help them with arduous work, particularly with ploughing, cutting timber, and construction. Yet they may also be troublesome, and people often try to get rid of them, which could be done only by trickery. Slovenian oral tradition contains international narrative types, for

example about a giant competing with the hero in stone throwing, stone squeezing, or in consuming as much food as possible. *The Man from Krim*, *the Giant from Lubnik*, and *the Hulk from Šmarna Gora*, among others, have all been preserved in Slovenian lore. A giant was also called *the pagan*, *the Greek*, *the Hungarian*, *the Roman girl*, *ajd*, all of which signify a member of the indigenous population (see *ajd*).

Goblin, *škrat*, *škret*, *škrátelj*, *škrátljec*, *škráčec*, *škrábec*, *škrétle*, *škarífić*, *šetek*, *kápič*, *bérkmandeljc* (mountain dwarf), *pérkmandelj*, *skúbərl*, *gospodárček*, *kránjček*, *blagonič*, *lesník*, *polesnjak*, *gugljáj*, *laber*, *labus*. A diminutive supernatural being with an old-looking face, a long white beard, and a pointy red hat (called *kapa* in Slovene). It is because of this hat that in Goriško/the surroundings of Gorizia the goblin is called *kapič*. Living in caves and digging for ore, goblins were believed to be guardians of earthly treasures. Valvasor speaks of the *bergmandeljci* who lived in the mine of Idrija, and mentions that the local miners were leaving food and little red coats for them in the mine. In Rož na Koroškem/Rosental in Koroška people called mountain dwarf *skúbərl*. A mountain goblin had allegedly been leading a miner along a shaft for three hundred years. Stories from eastern Slovenia and Notranjska mention water goblins. The *lesniki* were tree spirits that lived in trees and forbade people to cut down their tree. In Dolenjska, they were called the *gugljaji*. The people of Rož told stories about a goblin who was watching over wild animals: *šqrat*. A goblin could also be a house spirit, in Slovenian lore, called the *gospodarček* (the guardian of the house). As Kobold, a Teutonic house spirit, the goblin was believed to bring money to people provided that they made a contract with him. He would come flying in the form of a glowing broom, or would offer his services as a black cat.

God, *Bog*. The creator of everything, and the almighty eternal being. The origin of the Pre-Slavic **bogъ* is the same as of the Persian *bay* and the Old-Indian *bhaga* in the sense of god who distributes wealth and destiny. The term *Bog* is also derived from the root of *bogat* (one who has many parts, rich) and *ubog* (one who has no parts, poor). Based on this etymology, Grafenauer defined the supreme Slavic deity as God the Immolator, the Giver, and determined his primary role principally from cosmological myths. According to him, *Perun*, *Svarog*, and *Dažbog* are younger personifications of the supreme God. In the 6th century, Procopius noted in his *History of Gothic Wars* that Slavs and Antes believed in one God – the master of lightning and the creator of the whole world – and offered him cattle and other offerings. Veneration of the thunder god among the Slavs was also confirmed by Russian semioticians Ivanov and Toporov. They have reconstructed the principal Slavic myth in which Perun, the god of thunder, defeats his adversary Veles; the third pole of the tri-partite ideological system is represented by a female character, presumably named *Mokoš*.

Lit.: I. Grafenauer: *Bog-daritelj, praslovansko najvišje bitje v slovenskih kosmoloških bajkah* (God the Immolator. The Supreme Pre-Slavic Being in Slovenian Cosmological Belief Tales). Bogoslovni vestnik 24, 1944, pp. 57–97; V. V. Ivanov, V. N. Toporov, *Issledovanije v oblasti slavjanskih drevnosti*, Moscow 1974.

Godovčičaci, see *time*

Golden boots, *zlati škorenjci*, *škornjce*. A spooky apparition. According to the people of Bohinj, phantom boots roam around by themselves, frightening people much like the bloody leg.

Lit.: M. Cvetek, *Naš voča so včas zapodval* (Our Father Used to Tell Us Stories), Ljubljana (*Glasovi* Book Collection) 1993.

Golden calf, (zlato tele). A fearsome supernatural being from Slavia Veneta, par-

ticularly from Alta Val Tore, that appears in an almost inaccessible place where chance passersby have to redeem themselves to be able to proceed.

Goldenhorn, see *Zlatorog*

Gorjek, see *wind*

Gorni mož (mountain man), *pogorni mož*. A strong supernatural being who knows the whereabouts of treasures and ore. Similarly to the wild man, the mountain man of folklore wrestles with a bear, thinking that the bear is a 'fierce kitten' (see *wild man*).

Lit.: I. Grafenauer: *Slovenska pripovedka o 'hudi muci' in njena inačica v srbskem slovstvu* (Slovenian Tale of the 'Fierce Kitten' and Its Variant in Serbian Literary folklore). Slovenski jezik 3, 1940.

Gospodarček (guardian of the home), *dedek* (grandpa), house spirit. An ancestor's spirit whose place was by the hearth, according to some traditions under the doorstep. In Slovenian folklore, the gospodarček frequently appeared as a white snake. In the lore of the South and the East Slavs also as a white wolf or a sprite (see *ghost*, *snake*).

Grdina, *grdinica*, *ardina*, *hardina, muja*, *muja Karótova*. This mythical animal, an undefined beast from Resian folklore, features also in the fable ATU 155 (The Ungrateful Snake Returned to Captivity). Frequently appropriating the den or the lair of others, it chases them away and threatens to devour them. It is defeated by a devious ant that crawls unseen up to the beast and stings it, or else by a cunning fox. While Baudouin de Courtenay perceived it as a dragon, Matičetov identified it as a chamois, dog, snake, or dragon. Ludvik derived the term *muia* from *lam(m)ia* in the sense of monster similar to a woman or a witch. According to Ciceri, the *grdina* is a treacherous, fast, and dangerous animal similar to a fox; or a witch of some kind. The term *muja* denotes a hornless goat. The nickname "Karotova" is derived from an old house name in Liščaci/Lischiazze in Resia. This makes it similar to the tale about banishing a little goat (Valjavec) or a little ram (Kovačič) from the grandma's house.

Lit.: D. Ludvik: *Rezijanska muja – grdina. Pojav in etimologija* (The *Muja* of Resia – the Grdina. The Phenomenon and Etymology. Traditiones 10–12, 1984.

Greek, see *giant*

Gromovnik (Thunder God), see *Perun*

Gugljaj, see *goblin*

Hostnik (forest man), see *wild man*

Hudamos. Trdina writes about a count magically transformed into a huge, terrifying-looking dog who barked so fiercely on top of Šumbrek Mountain each evening that nobody dared to near it. Unlike other such cursed people, the dog did not expect to be saved. On a cold winter evening, when farmer Mihel was returning home drunk, he invited the dog to come to his home with him to get warm. Hudamos repaid his kindness with wealth. Mihel's farm continued to prosper until Hudamos, disgusted because of Mihel's lack of gratitude, eventually left. But when Mihel's son Jurček once again found the dog, it showed him a mountain stream with drops of silver, and prosperity returned to the farm. Even though Trdina revised the story artistically it is nevertheless based on folklore.

Hudič, see *devil*

Hudoba, see *devil*

Hudobač, the goblin, with whom the inhabitants of Bohinj in Gorenjska used to frighten children.

Hudournik (torrent), *hüdovürnik*. In Jarenina in Štajersko, the name denotes a deceased child or a stillborn baby who had not yet been baptized. Gathered in flocks at twilight, the *hudourniki* were believed to fly around like birds, making strange noises akin to whistling. If shepherds or others imitated them they destroyed their fires and scratched out their eyes (see *ghosts*).

Hulk (hrust), see *giant*

Hunter (jager), see *wild hunter*

Incubus see *mora*

Inčesa, see *snake*

Iza, see *dragon*

Jaga Baba, see *Pehtra Baba*

Jager, see *wild hunter*

Jarilo, see *Zeleni Jurij*

Jarnik, *Jérnik* (Bartholomew), *Perk*, *Jurij s pušo* (George with a Gun). A supernatural being, a shooter, or a hunter. Like the wild hunter who shot Zlatorog (Goldenhorn), Jarnik (*jar* denotes irascible, short-tempered) allegedly insidiously killed *Vesnik* (hence the name George with a Gun). In Slovenian and Slavic lore, the role of the mythical shooter was taken over by St. Bartholomew (the Uskoki from Gorjanci have named St. Bartholomew *Jarnik*). Of the same origin is the Bulgarian belief that *if you see a lightning striking, this means that Bartholomew is helping Elijah sharpen his spear.* The act of shooting at a celestial animal in order to attain a desired goal confirms Jarnik as a lunar, winter demon. Jarnik plays an important role in the renewal of life cycle, particularly as the leader of the dead, and in this connection as the demon of thunderstorms. Notions about Jarnik merged with the ones about the wild hunter (see *wild hunter*).

Jebek žena, see *žalik žena*

Jesenica, see *fate*

Jezernik, see *water sprite*

Ježi Baba, see *Pehtra Baba*

Jug, see *wind*

Jutrman. Announces the arrival of morning and scatters morning dew on meadows before sunrise. When haymakers set to work they said: *Let's hasten to work as long as Jutrman is still scattering dew*!

Lit.: D. Trstenjak, Slovenski glasnik 4, 1859; Kelemina 1930, št. 10.

Kača, see *snake*

Kačec, see *basilisk*

Kambal, see *Kresnik*

Kanih. As short as a boy, but an extremely strong man. Living close to human dwellings, he was believed to come to people's houses to brew unusual potions on the hearth. He persuaded people to perform good deeds but would punish them if they irritated him. The kanih is mentioned in one of the oldest Slovenian charms against sprains (from Gabrje pri Gorici), according to which he was the son of St. Blas. According to the lore of Solčava, the kanih, whose pants had been ripped by a bear, still sits on a ridge and sews the pants with thread that has been twice wrapped around a house.

Kapič, see *goblin*

Kiklop, see *cyclops*

Kodlak, see *werewolf*

Kodkodeka, Korkodeka, a wild woman from Stolvizza/Stolbica in Val Resia (see *wild woman*).

Kombal, see *Kresnik*

Koreta, see *Kurent*

Kosobrin, a mythical being that frightens small children in Kranjska Gora and its vicinity, Kosobrin featured in Vandot's book *Kekec nad samotnim breznom* (Kekec above a Secluded Chasm, 1924). In the 19th century, the term *kosobrin* denoted a clumsy person.

Kozmoč, a mythical being in Alta Val Tore/Terska dolina whose upper body is human while the lower part is that of a billy goat.

Kralj Matjaž (King Matthias). The folk hero Kralj Matjaž got his name from the Hungarian King Matthias Corvinus (1443–1490), who was famous for being a just and benevolent ruler. Slovenian folk songs sing how Kralj Matjaž fought against Turks or saved his wife Alenčica from the Turkish jail. Slovenian stories often of a mighty Kralj Matjaž and his army sleeping in an underground cave or in the cellars of an old castle, for instance under the mountains Peca, Postojnska Jama, Sveta Gora na Štajerskem, Dobrač pod Krimom, Donačka Gora, Triglav, or in Sorško Polje, Pliberško Polje, etc. It was predicted that Kralj Matjaž and his army would rise up and come to the aid of the people when their country would be in danger. According to other predictions, Kralj Matjaž will not appear before the end of the world and will bring peace, justice and prosperity. This shows the expectations, shared by many cultures, of a saviour and/or a new predicted golden era. In folktales, he was sometimes connected with *Šembilja*.

Lit.: Kotnik, France: *Bukelce od Matjaža* Andreja Šusterja-Drabosnjaka. Čas 1923/1924; Grafenauer, Ivan: *Slovenske pripovedke o Kralju Matjažu*. Opera SAZU, Classis II, 4, Ljubljana 1951; Matičetov, Milko: *Kralj Matjaž v luči novega slovenskega gradiva in novih raziskovanj*. Dissertationes SAZU, Classis II, 4, Ljubljana 1958.

Kranjček, see *goblin*

Kresnica (Midsummer Day girl), *ladarica*. Clad in white and adorned with flowers, these girls went carolling on Midsummer Day and collecting donations. They set up a Midsummer Day bouquet or a maypole and adorned a crucifix, a village pillar, or a village chapel. On Midsummer Eve (June 23), they organized a large feast with Ivanova svatba (St. John's wedding) which a *Pentecostal couple* recreates the sacred wedding, thus trying to influence general fertility. In some areas, and particularly in Croatia, the *kresnice* were called *lade* while in Serbia they were referred to as *kraljice* (queens).

Kresnik, *Krsník*, *Krstník*, *Skrstník*, *šentjánževec*, *vésnik*, *vedogónja*, *obílnjak*, *kambál*, bergant, benandant. 1) A solar deity; 2) a person with supernatural abilities. According to lore, his mother carried him in her womb for nine years before he was born as the tenth or the twelfth son. The central figure in the Slovenian lore about this deity is the Kresnik of Vurberk. Initially appearing as a tribal god, Prince Kresnik, or earthly ruler fighting with the *false kresnik* for a bountiful harvest for his land, Kresnik gradually lost his mythical character. Lightening in beautiful autumn evenings, on Midsummer Day, or on Christmas were attributed to the *vedavci* and the *šentjanževci* allegedly fighting each other in the form of red oxen (or dogs) against black ones. Valvasor mentioned such fights in 1689.

Lit.: M. Bošković Stulli: *Kresnik-Krsnik, ein Wesen aus der kroatischen und slovenischen Volksüberlieferung*. Fabula 3, Berlin 1960; N. Mikhailov: *Kr(e)snik, eine Figur der Slowenischen Version des urslawischen Hauptmythos. Baltische und slawische Mythologie*, Madrid 1998; Z. Šmitek: Kresnik. *An Attempt at a Mythological Reconstruction*. Studia mythologica Slavica 1, 1998.

Krimski mož (Man from Mt. Krim), see *giant*

Krivda (guilt), personified trouble from the surroundings of Bovec in the western Alps. It walks behind the godfathers who have not given right answers at the baptism of a child.

Krivec, see *wind*

Krivopeta, *krivapéta*, *krivopétnica*, *dúga žéna*, *dujačesa*, *patölka*, *farca*. The lore about these mostly evil female mythical beings with long, rumpled hair and feet and hands bent backwards has been preserved in western Slovenia. Believed to live in caves, they allegedly appear most frequently just before stormy weather. In Špeter/San Piertro Al Natisone in Italy, people thought that the *krivopete* could be chased away by ringing bells. Predicting weather from the top of high mountains, they occasionally helped farmers with farming chores but took away their children as payment (see *wild woman*).

Lit.: I. Trinko: *Divje žene ali Krivjopete* (Wild Women, or the Krivjopete). Ljubljanski zvon IV, Ljubljana 1884.

Krutoglav, see *Veles*

Krvavo stegno, (bloody leg) see *zlati škorenjci* (golden boots)

Krvoses, see *vampir*

Kuga, see *plague*

Kurent, *Kórant*, *Kórent*, *Karánt*, *Kórat*, *Kúret*, *Kúre*, *Kóre*, *Koréta*, *St. Kórent*, *St. Pust* (Carnival). A mythical fertility and lunar being and, according to Bezlaj, a deity of totemistic cults denoting the one who creates and devises. When linked to the legend about a being living in the moon, which was widespread in Europe and elsewhere, this explanation seems quite plausible. On Earth, the *kurent* celebrates his name day on Shrove Tuesday when men dressed up as the *kurenti* plow around people's houses "to make the turnips in their fields grow fat". Kurent allegedly presented the people of Kranjska with buckwheat and vine, which were the plants that he clung to during the Flood (Trdina). Many researchers explained Kurent as the god of unbridled pleasure, a Slavic Dionysus, or Bacchus. While Trstenjak likened him to Indian Shiva and Ravnika-Poženčan to Priamus of antiquity, Grafenauer perceived him as the Slavic deity of wine and joy, a lunar primogenitor, and a vicious higher deity with origins in the pre-Slavic culture of nomadic shepherds. Although Matičetov and Kretzenbacher disproved the mythical origin of Kresnik, the recent archaeological findings of Ciglenečki indicate a connection between Kurent and the ancient cult of Cybele.

Lit.: I. Grafenauer, *Prakulturne bajke pri Slovencih* (Precultural Belief Tales of Slovenes), Etnolog 14, 1942; M. Matičetov, *O bajnih bitjih Slovencev s pristavkom o Kurentu* (On Mythical Beings of Slovenes, with an Addition on Kurent) Traditiones 14, Ljubljana 1985; S. Ciglenečki, *Late Traces of the Cults of Cybele and Attis. The Origins of the Kurenti and of the Pinewood Marriages* ("Borovo gostuvanje"), Studia mythologica Slavica 2, 1999.

Kuret, see *Kurent*

Kvatra (Ember Day woman), *Kvátrna bába*, *Kvátrnica*. This is generally female mythical being, with the exception of Gorenjska, where she has a male counterpart called the *Kvatrnik*. The *Kvatra* usually appeared in the form of a frightening creature. Like *Pehtra Baba*, *Torka* (Tuesday), *Četrtka* (Thursday), etc., she ensured that Ember Weeks, or the pagan *feriae*, were properly observed. These were the days in March, June, September, and December that commenced with the first Wednesday after Ash Wednesday, Pentecost, the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on September 19, and on St. Lucia's Day on December 13. Watching over people, the *Kvatre* made certain that people observed fasting and did not visit their sweethearts at night time,

perform women's chores, bake bread, etc. Particularly on Saturday evenings, it was not advisable to venture out of the house, and those who disobeyed beheld screeching apparitions with tousled hair and aggressive gazes. According to popular belief, the *Kvatrnica* came at night to houses in which women continued to perform their typically female chores and punished them by cooking them or else reducing them to shreds. They brought a thousand misfortunes to the houses of the young men and women who disobeyed the ban on working and Ember Days rules.

Kvatrnik, see *Kvatra*

Laber, see *goblin*

Labus, see *goblin*

Lada, *ládarica*, *ládavica*, *ladekarica*, *líla*, *olálija*. A girl adorned with flowers who goes carol-singing (*gnat lado*) from door to door on Midsummer Day (see *kresnica*) with other young women.

Largo borgo, see *orko*

Lesnik, see *goblin*

Linčeza, see *snake*

Lintvern, see *dragon*

Lorgo, see *orko*

Lucia (Lucy), *Licija*, *Luca*, *Lucka*. Mid-winter female apparition. This female supernatural being appears in Southeast European folklore on December 13, which, according to the Julian calendar is the beginning of winter. During their rounds in Štajersko, Prekmurje, and the Porabje, Lucias threaten children to put out their eyes but occasionally they also bring them gifts. Like *Pehtra Baba*, Lucia brings light, helping the sun to shine more brightly during the dark and cold winter months. Under the influence of Benedictine monasteries, the original mid-winter deity was later Christianized into St. Lucia. The veneration of St. Lucia was particularly widespread during the Middle Ages and in the Baroque period.

Lit: L. Kretzenbacher: *Santa Lucia und die Lutzelfrau. Volksglauben und Hochreligion im Spannungsfield Mittel- und Südosteuropass*, Südeuropäische Arbeiten 53, München 1959.

Lucifer, see *Satan*

Malabant, see *vedomec*

Malavar, *molávr*, *molávar*, *baláver*, a mythical animal similar to a large black lizard with a cock's comb on its head and a diamond beneath the comb. The *malavar* was so poisonous that his breath alone could kill a human. In this, it resembles not only the basilisk but even more the mythical fiery salamander, which in Tyrol is called Tattermandl. The *malavar* lore has been preserved in Primorsko to this day.

Malič, see *dwarf*

Mamalič, see *water sprite*

Marant, Marant the Dog, an apparition in the shape of a dog that in the area of Pohorje announces the approaching death by barking around houses. The lore about the dog who announces death has also been preserved in Kozjak. In other places, death could be preceded by a dog's howling, the barking of a rooster, the hooting of an owl, meowing sounds around a house, if a chicken crowed like a rooster, and so on.

Matek, see *netek*
Matica, see *mermaid*

Matoha, see *Mokoš*

Mavje, see *movje*

Meglenščak, see *salamander*

Meraš, *mérar*, *džíler*, *džílejr*, *engineer*. A restless ghost roaming at night, waiting for redemption, whose lore has been preserved particularly in Prekmurje and Koroška. Sometimes holding a lantern, it appears during night time as a large headless man. He measures the fields or pushes a wheelbarrow loaded with soil that he had stolen, trying to return it. He has been punished for having ploughed under the boundary stone in the field. According to popular belief, he can be redeemed if a person answers his question "Where can I place it?" with "Wherever you had taken it!" This motif inspired Aškerc to write his famed ballad *Mejnik* (Boundary Stone).

Lit.: D. Rešek: *Brezglavjeki* (The Headless) Ljubljana 1995.

Mermaid, nymph, *mática*, *povodkinja*, *povodnica*, *sirena*, *agane* (in Friuli, *age* denotes water). An eternally beautiful maiden with a fishtail, or clad in green or blue, living in deep, clear waters. Mermaids were believed to swim to the banks on clear nights, dance, sing, and bathe. *Sirens* sing on moonlit nights, between eleven and twelve, to lure humans in water. Like some other female fairy beings, mermaids could marry a human (like the French *Melusine*) and bear children. When anticipating that such a child would turn bad later in life, the mermaid mother murdered her baby immediately after birth. Offering advice or helping with chores, mermaids could bring prosperity to a household. When offended by someone, or if people whistled, screamed, or cracked whips at night, they would leave.

Mital, see *water sprite*

Modras (horned viper, adder). According to the lore from Soča Valley and Kras, the viper cools down the water. *Modras* lives in all cold springs but before they climb into water they leave their poison on a rock, which is why they do not bite in water. In Bohinj and its vicinity, any snake was called "viper".

Mokoš, *Mokóška*, *Mátoha*, *Mátoga*. A Slavic deity of fertility, guardian of female chores, particularly spinning, weaving, and laundering. The root *mok-* denotes wet, damp, and *mot-* to wind up or to spin; *motok* denotes a spindle. *Mokoška*, or *mlakoš*, is also the term used for the wader. Water and spinning played the central role in the fertility cult and in the cyclic renewal of this female deity who might come to a house at night time to spin. Typologically, the deity resembles archaic goddesses of Iran. The memory of Mokoš has been preserved in mid-winter deities, for example the Pehtra Baba. Typical offerings to Mokoš included a tuft of wool, a sheaf of flax, and doilies. Female spinners and weavers were forbidden to work on days dedicated to these chores, particularly on Ember Days and at night time. According to lore, *Torka* (Tuesday woman), *Petka* (Paraskeva), *Kvatra* (Ember Day woman), and after Christianization also St. Gertrude, assumed the role of the protectors of spinning, weaving, and laundering. There was a saying that a mouse helped St. Gertrude by biting off the thread, which signified the arrival of spring and the end of the spinning period.

Lit.: V. V. Ivanov, V. N. Toporov, *K rekonstrukciji Mokoši kak ženskogo personaža v slavjanskoj versii osnovnogo mifa.* Balto-slavjanskie issledovanija, Moskva 1983, 175–197.

Molavar, see *malavar*

Monoceros, see *unicorn*

Mora (*mare*, *nightmare*, *incubus*), *múra*, *trúta*, *tróta-móra*, *šnjáva*, *krípijavka*, *ozin*, *vuzin*. An apparition in human-, animal-, or supernatural form. Able to change form and even crawl through a keyhole or a crack. It

oppresses, smothers, or sucks on a sleeping human or animal. An incubus is allegedly the seventh daughter or son born at an ill-starred time or ill-fated moment. It was believed that the first person who comes to borrow something from a house that had been visited by the incubus the previous night is the one who caused nightmare. At night, the incubus creeps in the form of an old woman with long talons and fiery eyes; as a shrivelled old grandfather; a five-legged cat; a dog, cow, chicken, black shadow; etc. There were many methods to drive away the incubus. A knife was placed in bed or through a keyhole, or a knife or a fork could be stuck in a door. An "incubus paw" (*morina taca*) in the form of a pentagram was drawn upon a side of a cradle or a bed. A sack filled with fern leaves was placed underneath the child who was repeatedly oppressed by the incubus. The child's shirt was blessed to prevent the *mora* from coming. Children could also receive an amulet that was placed around their necks. A mirror was fastened on a trough to keep the incubus from oppressing animals.

Morlak, see *wizard*

Morska deklica, see *mermaid*

Morski konj, see *sea horse*

Motovilec, see *water sprite*

Mountain man, see *gorni mož*

Movje, *mávje*, *mav*, *mórje*, *návje*, *žíve*. Souls of children who died before being baptized, or the souls of stillborn babies. As small lights or as black birds with exceedingly curved beaks, long hairy legs, and fiery brown eyes, they fly around at night, looking for redemption and peace. The term *nav* denoted the departed or the after world in Slavic languages. Called the *žive* in the area of Pohorje, they were believed to fly around at dusk, wailing sadly. They cannot stand fire and lamps, which remind them of hellfire. According to the lore in Bela Krajina, they may take revenge upon their mothers. If a person saves them by baptizing them or by sprinkling them with water, the *movje* thank them in the form of a white dove or an angel, and then fly to heaven.

Mračina, see *dusk*

Mrak, see *dusk*

Muja, see *grdina*

Muk, see *water sprite*

Navje, see *movje*

Nedelja, see *St Domenica*

Nendljek, see *dwarf*

Netek, *naték*, *maték*. Neither human nor animal; a tall, heavily built with an aged face; an eternally hungry being roaming the world and stopping at farms. His appearance either announces, or ends, a period of hunger. If he is given enough nourishment without expecting anything in return, the *netek* generally does not cause harm and may even restore prosperity. But woe to those who unwittingly curse him, do not serve him, or even boast about their wealth, for the master of the house will die of hunger on that very day. In Koroška, uttering the words "Thank you Lord and St. Janž, today I have finally eaten my fill!" drives the *netek* away. It would fall in the form of a fat pig from the ceiling and run away through the door. In Štajersko, people called cranberry shrubs *netečje* and in Koroška *the herb of the devil*.

Lit.: I. Grafenauer: *Netek in »Ponočna potnica« v ljudski pripovedki* (The Netek and the "Nocturnal Traveller" in Folktales). Razprave SAZU II. raz. 4, Ljubljana 1958.

Nymph, see *mermaid*

Ninek, see *dwarf*

Obilnjak, see *Kresnik*

Ogre, see *giant*

Orjaš, see *giant*

Orko, *órkul*, *órkljič*, *óspel*, *lórgo*, *lárgo bórgo*. A ghost of the wild, a scary creature that frightens people in wooded, alpine, and solitary places. He lures travellers into unknown places where they are left to roam until they find themselves exactly where they had started the previous day. Leaving a smelly trace behind, the *orko* is able to change his appearance. Assuming the form of a small ball, he positions himself on the footpath, and as soon as a traveller steps across it the ball instantly grows to the sky. In Resian Stolbica/Stolvizza, the *orko* is known as a small man called *lorgo*, while the people of Bila/San Giorgio call him *largo borgo*. In Friuli-Venezia Giulia, people believe that the *orkul* quenches his thirst in the Soča by stepping on Sveta Gora with one foot and on Mount Sabotin with the other; the lore from Nadiške Doline/Valli del Natisone is quite similar. The name spread from the west, across the Slovene/Italian border, and to the east. The people of Solkan know of the *orkljič*, and the inhabitants of Ilirska Bistrica of *vuorek* that is also called the *podlegaj*. A fearsome creature, the *orko* is also known in the Karst and in the vicinity of Sežana.

Ospel, see *orko*

Ozin, see *incubusž*

Ož, *gož*. Guardian of the home (see *snake* and *gospodarček*).

Palček, see *dwarf*

Pasjeglavec (cynocephalus, dog-head), *pesjan, pesoglav, pesoglavec, psajnar, pesajnar, pesjanik, peslajnar, pasjedlan*. 1) A human with a canine head. His eyes are either turned toward the floor or one eye is in the front of his head and the other on the back. He can also have but one leg and a single eye in the middle of his forehead; 2) A creature with the upper body of a human and the lower of a dog. 3) A demonic creature with a canine head, human torso, and in some cases also goat's feet. In some places, the lore about the cynocephalus has been blended with the lore on Attila the Hun and *Pes Marko* (Marko the Dog), thus preserving the memory of the Huns, Calvinists, Turks, etc. It is also linked with the mythic tradition about the people called Gog and Magog, in apocryphal writings about the end of the world, and about the Cyclopes. Dogheads were believed to kill and eat people. There are numerous tales about escaped captives fleeing from their capturers, for example the tale about a girl who beheads her pursuers in her father's cabin, ATU 956 (The Hot Chamber in the House of Robbers), like in the novel *Mlinarjeva Jerica* (Miller's Jerica) by Jurčič. Reports of dog-headed people can be traced to ancient writings. Representations of dog-heads from Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia have been preserved, and St. Christopher was depicted with the head of a dog as well. There is likely a link between the lore about the dog-heads and werewolves.

Lit.: L. Kretzenbacher: *Kynokephale Dämonen südosteuropäischer Volksdichtung*. Beiträge zur Kenntnis Südosteuropas und des nahen Orients 5, München 1968; Z. Šmitek: *Gog, Magog in legenda o kitajskem* zidu (Gog, Magog, and the Legend about the Chinese Wall). Traditiones 21, 1992.

Patolka, see *krivopeta*

Pedenjčlovek, see *dwarf*

Pehta, see *Pehtra Baba*

Pehtra Baba (Percht), *Pehtra*, *Pehta, Pehtrna, Pjehtrna, Pjerta, Pirta, Pjahtra Baba, Pehta krulja, Vehtra Baba, Zlata Baba* (golden hag), *Jaga Baba, Ježi Baba*. A female mythical being of an ambivalent nature. As a bearer of light, Pehtra Baba is a kind and beautiful apparition (Old German *perahtun* = bright, glittering) while as the leader of the souls of the dead and as the thunder goddess with the iron nose and other attributes, she is a terrifying creature that causes snow and thunderstorms. She was besought for rain. Processions in which people masked as *Pehta*, enacted *Pehtra Baba* on the Eve before the Epiphany (January 6) in time of the "Twelve Nights", are believed to bring fertility to plant and animal life. The *Pehtas* visit people's houses or they chase around the village. In literary folklore, Pehtra Baba appears as the leader of the Wild Hunt or as a strict guardian of female chores, particularly spinning, weaving, and washing laundry. During Ember days, she ensures strict observation of days dedicated to her. According to the studies of Kuret, the midwinter deities of Indo-European nations were based on the character of Magna Mater, a numen of the female principle believed to have originated thousands of years ago in social structures dominated by women. Under the influence of new social circumstances, the nature of this being was increasingly demonized and eventually Christianized (St. Lucia). Finally it was secularized and transformed into a being from a fairytale.

Lit: L. Kretzenbacher: *Santa Lucia und die Lutzelfrau, Volksglauben und Hochreligion im Spannungsfield Mittel- und Südosteuropass*. Südeuropäische Arbeiten 53, München 1959; N. Kuret: *Maske slovenskih pokrajin* (Masks of Slovenian Regions), Ljubljana 1984.

Percht, *see Pehtra Baba*

Perica, see *washerwoman*

Perkmandelj, see *goblin*

Perun, (the Thunder God), *Elija*, *Ilija*, *Trot*. The Slavic god of thunder, of lightning, of war, the storm god, and the Creator. Mentioned in an 11th century manuscript from Kiev. The most frequently mentioned deity in folk heritage and written sources, Perun is the supreme Slavic god. He had been named the Thunder God because he used lightning and thunder for punishment; according to most etymologists, the term Perun denotes "the one who strikes." The tree consecrated to Perun, along with other Indo-European deities of the thunder like Zeus, Jupiter, Thor, Perkun, etc., was the oak. *Perundan*, or Thursday in Polabian, was named after Perun. Like the Germanic Thor, who was depicted with the Myolnir, the golden axe, Perun was depicted with an ax or a hammer, the symbol of thunder. The central Slavic myth describes the battle between Perun, the deity of heavens, and Veles, who is a chthonic god; the memory of this myth has been preserved in Slovenian lore as well. Perun was Christianized into St. Elias or St. Matthias. Juniper bush, which is called houseleek (*netresk*) is also associated with Perun.

Lit.: V. V. Ivanov, V. N. Toporov, *Issledovanija v oblasti slavjanskih drevnostej*, Moscow 1974.

Pesjan see *pasjeglavec* (cynocephalus)

Pes Marko (Marko the Dog). 1) the leader of the pasjeglavci (cynocephales), 2) Attila, the commander of the ferocious Hun army, whom reports from Primorska and Slavia Veneta equated to a dog. Like Attila, also Marko the Dog was believed to be the child of a king's daughter whose father permitted only a dog to keep her company in her castle tower. The child was named Prince Marko the Dog. When he grew up he fled from his home, then returned to his native land as the leader of the cynocephali, and ravaged it. According to the lore, his name is linked with the constellation Canis Major and its brightest star Sirius, the Dog Star (*kuzljak*), or the hunter dog of Orion. When looking for

a parallel in history, Vilfan found two possible candidates for the nickname *Pes Marko*: Marx Sittich von Ems, a hired commander of Austrian archduke Maximilian's army who fought against the Venetians at the end of the 15th and the beginning of the 16th centuries; and Marko Klis, who was mentioned in historic sources and was killed in Brežice in 1515 during a peasant revolt.

Lit.: S. Vilfan, *Pes Marko* (Marko the Dog). Slovenski etnograf VIII, Ljubljana 1955.

Pesoglavec, see pasjeglavec (cynocephalus)

Petka (Friday), *St. Petka*, *Pantelija*, *Petkovica*. A female supernatural being named after the day consecrated to her (Friday, *petek* in Slovene). A protector of female chores, particularly spinning, she punished women who violated the ban on spinning, washing, weaving, etc. on a certain time on Fridays. She was venerated particularly by South Slavs, where some tribes worshipped her as their clan's guardian and built churches of St. Parasceve in her honour. Like St. Sabida (Saturday) and St. Domenica (Sunday), St. Petka's origin derives from traditions based on the Eurasian deity of the female principle (see Mokoš). Through centuries, her character was gradually demonized and was ultimately transformed into a fairy tale being.

Plague (*kuga*). Personified notorious disease. Believed to appear in yards as a multi-coloured calf or in villages, disguised as an old woman or a black girl. The villagers of Povirk, whose congregation of the local St. Jakob's church also worshipped St. Fabian and St. Sebastian (Boštjan), repeatedly saw her standing on a hilltop, calling: "Fabjan, Boštjan, you are so strong, you prohibit me from entering the village of Povirk!" It was also believed that a comet appearing in the sky brought famine, war, or the plague. Similarly to a folktale in which an old woman brings the plague to a village, the ferryman of Aškerc's poem *Polnočna potnica* (Midnight Traveller) ferries the plague, disguised as a scary old woman, across the river at night time.

Lit.: I. Grafenauer: *Neték in "Ponočna potnica" v ljudski pripovedki* (The Netek and the "Nighttime Traveller" in Folktales). Razprave SAZU II. razr. 4, Ljubljana 1958.

Plent, see *devil*

Podlegaj, *vuorek*. A mythical being similar to the *orko*, preserved in the lore in the vicinity of Ilirska Bistrica and appearing in the shape of a donkey. If a person mounted him, he grew to reach the stars, dropping the human off his back but catching him or her close to the ground unharmed. *Podlegaj* could be tamed if a person brought with them a rope or reigns.

Podlesnjak, see *wild man*

Podmenek, see *changeling*

Pogorkinja, see *wild woman*

Pogorni mož, see *wild man*

Polesnjak, see *goblin*

Polkonj, see *centaur*

Potoglav, see *Veles*

Povodkinja, see *mermaid*

Povodni mož, see *water sprite*

Povratnik, see *returning dead*

Pozoj, see *dragon*

Preglavica (trouble), a troublemaking ghost, a headless apparition. The people of Štajersko believed it assumed the form of a headless white or black woman who appeared around midday. She blinded those who encountered

it, broke their arms, or led them astray. She could foretell the death of a person during the next seven-year period (see *acephalos*).

Preklesa, 1) the cursed soul of a woman who had murdered her baby, returning to her home sobbing; 2) the soul of a dead person who had wronged others and returns home crying, begging the living to pray for it. Such a soul leaves traces, for example of hands. The house in which crying is heard is believed to be suffering a misfortune very shortly.

Premog, see *dragon*

Premrl, see *vampire*

Prilog, see *vampire*

Rabolj, Rebolj. A supernatural being, the opponent of *Zeleni Jurij* (Green George) and a representative of winter and the chthonic world. The lore about the *Rabolj* has been preserved in Štajersko. The customs celebrating St. George's Day (April 23 or 24) depict him as a young man clad in straw or in a fur coat fighting the *Vesnik* or *Zeleni Jurij*, thus symbolizing the struggle between winter and spring.

Rarašek, see *wind*

Repoštev (*Rübezahl*), a gigantic creature that helped farmers store firewood and gave presents to their children. The Slovenian lore about Repoštev was influenced by Johannes Praetorious's work "Demonologia Rubinzalii Silesii" from 1662. It became widespread due to the German "Legenden von Rübezahl" by Musäus (1782–1787). When these stories were translated to Slovenian in 1857 Rübezahl became *Repoštev*. In his story "Kako je Libercun drvaril" (How Libercun Was Cutting Wood) Fran Levstik translated a Bohemian legend and published it in the journal *Vrtec* in 1875.

Lit.: K. de Wyl: ***Rübezahl-Forschungen***. Breslau 1909.

Returning dead, *povratnik*. A deceased person who appears as a demonic corpse, usually talking and moaning, in places he or she had visited when alive. They occasionally even kill people. Recent studies distinguish between: 1) those who exhibit signs of life, particularly of moving and speaking, soon after dying, for example during the wake; 2) those who punish people who desecrated their graves; and 3) those who are dead but appear alive, manifesting themselves in order to take revenge; to settle a wrong; or to remind the living of a missed obligation. Stemming from the fear of the dead, the belief in the departed returning to the world of the living is as old as the humanity itself, and was further enhanced by unexplainable clinical phenomena, such as the clinically dead (see *vampire*, *vedomec*, *werewolf*).

Lit.: L. C. Lecouteux: Geschichte der Gespenster und Wiedergänger im Mittelalter, Köln, Wien 1987.

Ris, see *vampire*

Rogatec, see *wind*

Rojenica, see *fate*, see *desetnica*

Sabida, *Sobota* (Saturday), *Sv. Sobota* (St Sabath, St. Sabida), *Šebida*. A female supernatural being; a saint who ensures that the day Saturday dedicated to her is properly observed. The origin of Sabida is presumably in the cult of a prominent female deity of fertility, cyclical renewal, and female chores. According to Biasutti, the numerous churches dedicated to this saint in the area of Aquileia possibly indicate that St. Sabida succeeded the Celtic goddess *Belastis*, the companion of god *Belinus*. St. Sabida was venerated predominantly in Friuli, to a smaller extent also in the western part of Slovenia (comp. *Sabotin*), and in Poljanska Dolina where a church consecrated to her was erected in Bukov Vrh by Škofja Loka. Possibly due to the influence of the Jewish Sabbath, St. Sobota was later

replaced by *Sv. Nedelja* (St. Domenica). Since its name relates to a day of the week, there may be parallels with *Sv. Petka* (St. Friday) and with other personified days.

Lit.: G. Biasutti: *Sante Sábide*, Udine 1956; R. Bratož: *Krščanstvo v Ogleju in na vzhodnem vplivnem območju oglejske cerkve od začetkov do nastopa verske svobode* (Christianity in Aquileia and in the Eastern Area under the Sway of the Aquileian Church from Its Beginnings to the Onset of Religious Freedom). Acta ecclesiastica Sloveniae 8, Ljubljana 1986.

Salamander, *meglenščak*, *viper*. An extremely poisonous mythical animal hatched by a snake, with a short, stout body covered in short brownish hair. There is no cure for its bite. It was believed in Kras that a salamander grows from a viper whose head had not been crushed but merely severed from its body, and that the viper's head becomes similar to a cat's head. When angry, the salamander whistles loudly to summon vipers. If it was enraged, it may become so wild that it could peel the bark from trees. Salamanders live in swamps overgrown with shrubbery.

Salmsonar, see *water sprite*

Samorog, see *unicorn*

Satan, *Belial*, *Beelzebub*, *Lucifer*. A personification of the evil principle, very distinct in ancient Persian beliefs (*Ahriman*). From there it was adopted by Judaism as the fallen angel who became the leader of evil ghosts and demons, or the devils in hell. In the Old Testament, the term *satan* denoted an adversary. According to the Gospel of Luke (10:18) and Christian tradition, Satan is an angel who due to his insubordination to God was plunged into hell by Michael the Archangel. The Bible presents Satan as the snake that seduced the first human, or as the snake whose head was crushed by the Virgin Mary's heel, or as the dragon defeated by Michael the Archangel. According to popular belief, Satan was equated with personified evil and with the devil.

Sea horse (morski konj). People living in the vicinity of Turjak in Dolenjska believed that under the church of St. Ahac was a void filled with water. It was allegedly inhabited by sea horses (see centaur).

Ses, see *snake*

Sever, see *wind*

Shaman, see *witch doctor*

Silvan, Silvanus, Salvan, Salvanel, Deus Silvanus. The Italic god of forests. In the Roman province of Illyria, Sylvanus was an important deity associated with Mars; in Istria it was linked to Pan. In Slavic folklore, Silvan has been preserved as the man of the forest, the wild man (see *wild man*). A similar tradition is still alive among the Ladin-speaking inhabitants of the Dolomite region in Friuli as well as among the Rhaeto-Romanic population; naming it *Salvan*, the latter imagine him as a very hairy wild man, sometimes short and at other times tall, who is capable of becoming invisible. Having preserved certain characteristics of the god Silvanus, Silvan is believed to be the protector of farmers and their herds.

Lit.: Aleksandar Stipčevič: *Iliri*. Zagreb 1974; M. Šašel Kos*: Pre-Roman Divinities of the Eastern Alps and Adriatic*. Situla: dissertationes Musei nationalis Sloveniae 38, Ljubljana 1999.

Sirena, see *mermaid*

Skok, a mythical animal that rises from a snake whose tail has been cut off, and which grows four paws afterward. The skok is allegedly strong enough to be able to break even the sturdiest door.

Skrstnik, see *Kresnik*

Skuberl, see *goblin*

Slamene oči (straw eyes), see *ghost*

Smrt, see *Death*

Smrtnjak, *smrtnek*, *smrtec*, companion of the death.

Snake (káča),ož, vož, inčésa, linčésa, ses, vípera. One of the oldest and most widespread archetypes, the mythical snake is large and dangerous, white or black. Since people perceived the rainbow as a multi-coloured snake, the mythical snake may also have the colours of the rainbow. The snake queen has a crown upon its head and a diamond or a golden apple under its tongue. The leader of all snakes, it is also the mistress of earthly riches, which is why people tried to seize its crown, the golden apple, or the žilštajn (snake stone), each of which represented the key to riches. The viper from the area of Gorizia was thought to have a crest on its head and could whistle beautifully. The multi-headed sea serpent is the mistress of the waters. In ancient cosmologies, the snake appears as the cosmic snake, the Creator, or the mythical ancestor, and a cosmological hero. As the carrier of the world whose movements may destroy it, the snake appears not only at the beginning but also at the end of cosmogeneses as an apocalyptic, destructive force. The ouroboros, the snake eating its tale, symbolizes life and death and an eternal cycle of the time and world. As the keeper of treasures, the snake is the bestower of goods and fertility, which is why the snake is an attribute of every great goddess. The snake also symbolizes the soul of a deceased ancestor. As the guardian of the house, the ož, the vož, the white snake, and the inčesa, it protects the home. In the Bible, the snake is an allegory of evil. According to folklore, snakes were set upon the humans as punishment but could be driven away by a wizard's apprentice (črnošolec). Certain saints, particularly St. George and St. Margaret, allegedly protected people from the snakes.

Lit.: M. Šašel Kos: *Draco and the Survival of the Serpent Cult in the Central Balkans*. Tyche, Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte, Papyrologie und Epigraphik 6, Wien 1991.

Sobota, see *Sabida*

Sojenica, see *Fate*

Somrak (twilight), see *dusk*

Soul, *duša*. In folklore, the soul is a person's double who at the time of death separates from the body, leaving it in the form of wind, vapour, smoke, butterfly, fly, bird, etc. The soul was imagined as a tiny person with a transparent body or as a winged child. The soul can leave the body of a living person only during sleep or in the state of ecstasy. If a person is connected with an impure force, the soul will commit evil deeds after leaving the body. If a sleeping person, whose soul has flown through his or her mouth, is moved the soul will be unable to find its way back and will long circle around the body in different forms. The soul of a sinner was punished by roaming the world as an apparition, a dog, a cat, a moth circling around a burning candle, etc. (see *zavdana duša*, *sinning soul*). Beliefs that the soul assumes the form of a mouse, cat, or dolphin stem from antiquity. When a person died, the family opened windows or doors to help the soul depart. But it was believed that for the next forty days, the soul would continue to visit the places it had once been familiar with, and would also linger at the cemetery, which is why food was placed on the grave. Since it was widely believed that it was very difficult for the soul to cross a body of water, particularly among the East Slavs, it was believed that St. Nicholas regularly ferried souls to the netherworld.

Spodnjek, see *wind*

Srebrnokrilec (Silverwing), see *Zlatorog*

St Domenica (St. Sunday), *Sv. Nedelja*, *Nedelja*. Often depicted in medieval Christian iconography. Frescos associated with St. Nedelja were generally painted on church facades, particularly on exterior side walls, for example on the pilgrimage church of St. Nedelja in Crngrob. There are also place names named after this saint, for instance Velika Nedelja and Mala Nedelja in Prekmurje. People believed that St. Nedelja punished those who violated the ban on hunting on Sundays. The popular belief that those who spin on Sundays go mad is connected with Mokoš and with other personified days (see *Mokoš*). Like St. Sobota (St. Saturday, see *Sabida*), St. Nedelja was a significant saint in early Christianity, which is further indicated by the fact that in Serbia she was entreated for help and protection.

Lit.: L. Kretzenbacher: Sveta Nedelja - Santa Domenica - Die hl. Frau Sonntag. *Südslawische Bild- und Wortüberlieferungen zur Allegorie-Personifikation der Sonntagsheiligung mit* Arbeitstabu, Die Welt der Slawen 27 (NF 6), München 1982.

Straw eyes (*slamene oči*), see *ghost*

Sumper, supernatural being (in Bavaria known as Semper) with whom mothers in Štajersko frightened their naughty children saying: *May the Sumper be off with you!*

Svarog, *Svarožič*, *Božič* (Christmas). The god of fire and the sun was mentioned in the 12th century as the father of Dažbog. Navratil (1888) wrote that the term *božič* denoted a small god. According to Kuret, Svarog's origin may date as far back as the period of the Old Slavs when Božič denoted Svarog, Svarožič, the small god who was reborn each winter solstice. The term *Božič* presumably comes from *svaro*, an old Slavic word for the moving sky.

Lit.: A. Pleterski: *Božič naših prednikov* (The Christmas of Our Ancestors). Naši razgledi 38, 1989; N. Čausidis: *Slovenskite panteoni vo likovniot medium: Svarog.* Studia mythologica Slavica 1, 1998.

Svečar, see *svečnik*, see the *vedomec*

Svečnik (candlestick), *svečar*, *vedomec* (Pomurje), a ghost appearing with a burning candle instead of its head. The inhabitants of Medžimurje say that the *svečniki* are the souls of the sinning monks; In Varaždin they were purported to be the people who were moving boundary markers in fields in order to wrongfully gain more land. The *svečniki* appear particularly during Advent days and before All Hallows. If they collide with each other, their candles emit sparks. The *svečniki*, who flee from people who utter profanities, may be saved by prayer, which is why they gather around those who, upon beholding them, start to pray.

Sveta žena (sacred woman), see *fairy*

Svetovit, *Svantovit*, *Svjantovid*, *Sventovit*, *Svetovid*. A Balto-Polabian and a Slavic god of the sun; the god of light; the celestial god. He was venerated as the protector of vegetation, trade, and war. He was depicted as a deity with four heads, each looking in its own direction (omnipresence), and holding a bow and a horn. The symbol of Svetovit was a white horse. He was riding a white horse that was returning from a night ride, covered in sweat. A temple consecrated to Svetovit was built in the Balto-Slavic town of Arkona. According to some authors, the "golden-haired deity with golden hands, the son of the celestial ruler Svetovit", was *Kresnik*. He was later Christianized into Saint Vitus whose name day, according to the Julian calendar, falls on the day of the summer solstice. He was one of the Fourteen Holy Helpers of the Roman Catholic Church and was frequently depicted with a black rooster.

Svinsek, see *wind*

Sybil, *Šembilja*, *Šimbilja*, *Šimbile*, *Sibila*, *Švila, prerokila*. A supernatural being known in

Slovenian lore as a seer; as the sister of *Kralj Matjaž* (King Matthias) or of *King Salomon*. As an enormous woman standing with one foot in Hell and the other on Earth, and a tempestuous being, she leaves traces on rocks and footpaths. In Ancient Greece, the term *sybilla* indicated women who foretold future events when in rapture. Originally there was merely one Sybil but in the Middle Ages, when interest in prophecies about one's future increased, the sources indicate that there were as many as twelve. Corroborated by 15th-century art, this number corresponds to the number of prophets in the Old Testament. The thirteenth Sybil was included in literary folklore as *Makeda* (or *Maqueda*), the Queen of Sheba. In 14th-century Germany, the most important sybil was the Tiburtine Sybil who was depicted in the period of Charles IV (1316-1378) in a German poem, known as the poem of the thirteenth Sybil, whose many variants were widely known. In the second half of the 19th century, it spread throughout the monarchy and was known in the territory of present-day Slovenia as the Books of the Prophet Sybil (*Bukle Švile Prerokile*), written in 1892 by Lapusch from Koroška. There are many different stories about Sybil. One of them recounts how Šimbilja tricked her brother King Matthias so that she could be the first to drink from the fountain of wisdom and become omniscient. In 19th century lore, Šembilja was mentioned as King Salomon's sister who was much wiser than the king himself. The people of Karst told stories of how Šembilja taught blacksmiths to forge iron.

Lit.: U. Jarnik: *Die slovenischen Sibyllen*. Koroška 1813; H. Lausegger: Švile Prerokile. Celovec 1985; Katja Hrobat: *Šembilja na rimskih cestah. O mitološkem prežitku in arheološkem indikatorju na Krasu in v Brkinih* (Šembilja on the Roads of Rome: Mythological Remains and Archaeological Indicators in the Karst and in Brkini). Annales 15/2, 2005.

Šembilja, see *Sybil*

Šent, see *Wolf-Shepherd*, *devil*

Šentjánževec, see *Kresnik*

Šentjurij, see *Zeleni Jurij*, *Wolf-Shepherd*

Šetek, see *goblin*

Škarifič, see *goblin*

Škopnik, *škopnjak*, *škopnjek*, *škopnek*, *škompnik*, *zmin*. A supernatural being that appears in the form of a burning sheaf; straw; a birch tree broom flying through the sky; a burning bird; a radiant being; a small man with bristling hairs; or a burning man who flies through the air, usually at night, and scorches fir trees and roofs by sitting on them. It was believed that a person died wherever the *škopnik* fell on the ground, or that spot would be afflicted with hail. The *škopnik* could also smother children in their sleep. He would sit on them and peck at them, or replace them with changelings. If somebody pointed at *škopnik* behind its back that person's arm would wither. The tradition about the *škopnik* merged with the lore about the goblin, and according to some stories the former would even bring riches to people. He was popularly depicted as a *comet's tail*, or as a *shooting star from the nest of škopnjek*. Matičetov emphasized the astral nature of this mythical being that could be equated with a meteor. Nests of the *škopniki* were believed to be points that scattered shooting stars called the radiants by astronomers. The *škopnik* was also believed to be represented by the so-called St. Elmo's fire (Eražmov ogenj), sparks that can be observed during thunderstorms; the Alpine Germans call them the *Perchtenfeuer*.

Lit.: V. Geramb: *Der "glühende Schab"*. Blätter für Heimatkunde 2, Graz,1924; M. Matičetov: *Koroško zvezdno ime "Škopnjekovo gnezdo"* ("The Nest of the *Škopnjek*", a Koroškan Term for a Star Constellation). Traditiones 1, 1972.

Škrábec, see *goblin*

Škrat, see *goblin*

Škretle, see *dwarf*

Šotek, see *dwarf*

Špiritavi, see *ghost*

Štorka, see *Torka*

Štriga, see *witch*

Šuštar, see *Ahasuerus*

Taltoš, see *Kresnik*

Tantava, *tanta*, *tantasmota* in Friuli, *temptation*. A supernatural being from western Slovenia and from Slavia Veneta who, in the form of an apparition or as temptation, entices people so that they no longer know their whereabouts. It may also appear as a malicious creature tormenting people.

Taterman, *tatrman*. 1) a water sprite (in Slavia Veneta); 2) a stream. In Koroška, also a term for the upper side of an elaborate fountain spout in the form of a human head.

Teleba, a terrifying supernatural being appearing in vineyards in the villages beneath Bohor in Dolenjska. The Teleba lurks after grape thieves. Children believed that the Teleba could pull them with its long arms in the middle of the vineyard and suck their blood or devour them.

Lit.: I. Rožman: *Teleba – bajeslovno bitje iz vasi pod Bohorjem* (Teleba – A Mythical Creature from the Villages beneath Bohor). Traditiones 24, 1995.

Tenth brother, see *desetnik*

Tenth sister, see *desetnica*

Thunderstorm (*huda ura*), see *time*

Time (*čas*). A mythical representation of time (*Chronos*) in the form of shadow, wild man (the *dujak*), young boy, twelve men (twelve months), etc. It appears most frequently in connection with the prohibition of performing women's chores, for example when a woman, still spinning at midnight, hears a voice telling her to "Go to bed for yours is the day and mine is the night!". While the *godovčičaci*, and the *dujak* were personifications of time primarily in Resia in Italy, elsewhere time was personified in the form of the men presenting months, seasons, and days. See also: *Torka* (Tuesday), *Petka* (Friday), and the *Sabida* (Saturday).

Lit.: M. Matičetov: *Un essere mitico dalla Val Resia*. Ethnologia Slavica VII, Bratislava 1975; M. Matičetov: *Godovčičaci. Zur Deutung slowenischer Varianten vom Typ 480. Dona Ethnologica*. Beiträge zur vergleichenden Volkskunde, Leopold Kretzenbacher zum 60. Geburtstag, München 1973; M. Kropej, *Slovene Midwinter Deities and Personifications of Days in the Yearly, Work and Life Cycles*. In: Mirjam Mencej (Ed), Space and Time in Europe: East and West, Past and Present. Ljubljana 2008.

Toplek, see *wind*

Torek, see *torka*

Torka (Tuesday woman), *tvorka*, *torek*, *orkla*, *štorklja*, *glodež*. Like other mid-winter deities and personifications of the days, that have been named after days of the week, like *Četrtka* (Thursday woman), this mythical being enforces the ban on spinning and on other female chores on late Tuesday nights. Had the ban not been observed, the *torka* would have appeared at the door in the form of a white woman who could stretch to the ceiling; turn off lights; make the spinning wheels start by themselves and spin until morning; leave the yarn ripped to pieces or knotted up; and break the spinning wheels. The yarn had to be taken off the spinning wheel in the evening and a cross had to be made over it. If not, the *torka* would come to spin at night, run the spinning wheel by her hand transformed in dog paw, and terrify

people. It was equally dangerous to fetch yarn from the attic in late evening. If a spinner did so, the *torka* could chew her to her bones and throw the bones at the spinners spinning in her house. According to stories from the area of Goriško, the *torkas* would appear in the evening and ask the house maker: *Shall we garden?* (meaning to bleach yarn). If the reply was positive, the house maker was thrown into a cauldron, boiled, and eaten by the *torkas*. According to popular belief, the *torka* brings to children teeth of iron (see Pehtra Baba).

Lit.: N. Kuret: *Mid-Winter Deity among the Slovenes* / Pehtra Baba, torka. Opuscula selecta, Ljubljana 1997.

Trdoglav, see *Veles*

Trentarski student, see *wizard*

Triglav (*Troglav*, *Triglaus*, *Trigelawus*, *Trajan*, *Trojan*), an ancient Slavic, and particularly Baltic, three-headed deity believed to govern the earth, the sky, and the underworld. According to sources, its cult was practiced in Szczecin, where the middle, and the largest, of the three hills that blocked access to the town was dedicated to it. Traditional Serbian songs mention Triglav as an old deity and as the god of war. After the death of the Roman Emperor Trajan in 117 A.D., the similarity of names Triglav and Trajan resulted in the transfer of this tradition that eventually amalgamated into the name Trojan.

Trot (*trut*), a mythical being traditionally appearing as a hero, a fighter wielding a golden axe and driven in a coach pulled by white or green horses. While some sources perceive him as the brother of Kresnik; others believe that Trot is really Perun who used a golden axe to fight snakes and dragons. The memory of Trot has been preserved in local place names such as the hamlets Trot in Koroška and Trotkovo in Štajerska.

Lit.: G. Krek: *The Czech Trut and the Slovenian Trot*. Kres 6, Celovec 1886.

Trota, see *incubus*

Trut, see *Trot*

Truta, see *incubus*

Tuhinc, an exceptionally strong man who, according to the lore of Prekmurje, was able to singlehandedly thresh the millet set aside for orphans (see giant).

Lit.: Š. Kühar: *Narodno blágo vogrskij Slovencov* (The Lore of the People Living in Prekmurje). Časopis za zgodovino in narodopisje 8, Maribor 1910.

Ukletnik, see *bewitched soul*

Unicorn, *samorog*, *enorog*, *enorožec*, *monoceros*. A mythical animal with a pointed, spiralled horn and the body of a bull, a horse, or a goat. Its first representations, depicted on seals found in Mohenjo Daro and Harappa in the Indus Valley, originated in the 3rd millennium B.C. The unicorn is mentioned in the myth about the Flood in "Atharva-Veda" and in "Mahabharata". The first to mention the healing powers of the unicorn horn in antiquity was Ktesias (approx. 410 B.C.). The horn is known in folk medicine as a healing substance and a strong antidote. "Physiologus" from the 2nd century A.D. mentions that this wild, furious animal may be captured only by trickery. When a virgin is brought to the forest in which the unicorn is grazing, the unicorn becomes docile, runs to the maiden, jumps into her lap, and falls asleep. Hunters are then able to capture it and take it to the royal palace as a curiosity. In medieval mystical texts and in Christian symbolism, the unicorn personifies the incarnation of Christ (see mythical animals).

Lit.: J. Glonar: *"Monoceros" in "Diptamus"* ("Monoceros" and "Diptamus"). Časopis za zgodovino in narodopisje 7, Maribor 1910; L. Kretzenbacher: *Mystische Einhornjagd*. München 1978.

Vampire, premrl, prilog, ris (lynx). A deceased person whose heavy sins prevent his or her corpse from decaying in the grave, i.e.

remains premrl (stiff, rigid). At night, the vampire leaves the grave to disturb the living and suck their blood. While vampires are particularly dangerous to the unprotected, they lose their powers in front of a church, crucifix, and fire. If a cauldron was left suspended over the hearth overnight, the vampire could disgorge the sucked blood into the cauldron and boil it; the blood was believed to have the healing power. Vampires were allegedly guilty of sexual abuse, and the deceased husband could continue to visit his wife at night and father a child. Similar lore has been preserved in Novigrad, Obrov, and Ložane. In order to prevent the vampire from retuning, a hawthorn stick had to be impaled through its heart; or its head cut off and placed by its feet; or the vampire should be burned. Vampires were buried facing the ground or with a nail thrust through their body. The belief in vampires was later contaminated with the lore of werewolves and the vedomci. This tradition, which was particularly widespread in the Balkans and among Slavic peoples, is based on the belief in the returned dead. It was known throughout Europe and also among many non-European peoples.

Lit.: D. Sturm, K. Völker: *Von den Vampiren und Menschensäugern*, München 1968.

Vancaš, see water sprite

Vedavec, see *vedomec*

Vedogonja, see *Kresnik*

Vedomec, *védamec*, *véjdamec*, *védavec*, *védanc*, *vedúnec*, *videnc*, *ujédemec*, *bédanec*, *bédou'nk*, *benandant*, *balabántar*, *vermánte*, *vidovina*, *védavk*, *véšča*. 1) Assuming different forms, this mythical being fights the *kresniks* during the nights around Christmas, Midsummer Day, and Ember Days. 2) The soul of an unbaptized child that appears as a small bright light. Carried by his mother for seven or nine years. People believed that the *vedomec* would murder his entire family after his birth. He can be recognized by the absence of hair, dim eyes, a unibrow, an unusual tooth, etc. His peers traditionally come to fetch him when he is seven. Together they fight at crossroads and under trees. They can tear a passer-by apart, throw his or her bones at each other, and then reassemble the victim. They can cause solar eclipses. They carry off harvests. The *vedomec* gradually assumed the role of sorcerer. As an incubus, the *vedomec* descends upon sleeping persons, throw babies from their cradles, or smother them in their sleep. As a ghostly light, he can lure people into swamps at night time. In Slovenian folktales, the *vedomec* traditionally appears as the master of souls on the glass mountain.

Lit.: M. Matičetov: *La costola di legno.* Alpes Orientales I, Ljubljana 1956; C. Ginzburg: I Benandanti, Torino 1966; Franco Nardon: *Benandanti e inquisitori nel Friuli del seicento*, Trst 1999.

Vehtra Baba, see *Pehtra Baba*

Veles, *Vólos*, *Vólvel*, *Vóuvel*, *Bábilon*, *báron Bálon*, *Bés*, *Črt*, *Krutoglav*, *Potoglav*, *Trdoglav*. A Slavic god of the underworld, cattle, and riches. While shrines devoted to Perun were erected on mountains, the ones honouring Veles, who was the traditional enemy of Perun, were built in valleys. This indicates that Veles was also venerated as the ruler of the chthonic after world and may appear also as a dragon or a snake. According to Slovenian narrative tradition, the giant *Vouvel* keeps hidden in his mountain cattle, treasures, and other goods that can be accessed by means of the *vouvelica* (or *kounertnica*), grass that blooms on Midsummer Night between midnight and one o'clock. After the advent of Christianity, the role of Veles, the protector of cattle, was taken over by St. Blasius.

Lit.: G. Krek: *Beiträge zur slavischen Mythologie I. Veles, Volos und Blasius*, Archiv für slavische Philologie 1, Berlin 1875; R. Jakobson, *The Slavic God Veles and his Indo-European Cognates*. Studi linguistici in onore di Vittore Pisani, Torino 1969.

Velikan, see *giant*

Vermante, see *vedomec*

Veronika, *from Mali Grad above Kamnik; the snake virgin*. The heathen princess; a Christianized heathen girl who breaks off her engagement to a heathen knight; a stingy castle maiden who refuses to contribute money toward a new church; a noblewoman who refuses to embrace the Christian faith; etc. Bewitched into a snake or a dragon, she watches over treasures and waits for redemption. Occasionally, she appears as a beautiful maiden. She can be rescued by a seven-year-old boy or by an honest young man who would thrice strike her with a year-old hazel switch; kiss her thrice; answer her riddles correctly; by a hero who would cut off the head of the evil demon who is guarding her. If all this fails, Veronika has to wait for her rescuer who has not yet been born; he will lie in a cradle made from an oak tree that has not yet sprouted. In the territory of present-day Slovenia, Veronika has become a parable for a heroine bewitched into a snake, a character that has many parallels in other European folk narratives. The lore is based on the ancient snake cult, or on ancestral cults.

Lit.: E. Cevc: *Veronika z Malega gradu* (Veronika of Mali Grad). Kamniški zbornik 4, 1958.

Vesna, a supernatural being similar to fairies and the wild hunt. According to popular belief, the vesnas gather particularly in the month of February that has been named the vesnar after them, typically during the days close to the name day of St. Matthias. According to the lore from Krn, groups of the vesnas rush around, awake nature, and bring fertility. Woe to those who would be run over by them or noticed following them.

Vesnik, see *Kresnik, Zeleni Jurij*

Vešča, see *witch*

Veter, see *wind*

Veternik, see *wind*

Vetrih, see *wind*

Vidovina, see *vedomec*

Vila, see *fairy*

Vilenjak, see *wild man*

Vipera, see *snake*

Viza, see *dragon*

Volčji pastir, see *Wolf-Shepherd*

Volčko, see *Wolf-Shepherd*

Vouvel, see *Veles*

Vož, see *snake*

Vrag, see *devil*

Vuórek, see *podlegaj*

Wandering Jew, see *Ahasuerus*

Washerwoman, *perica*, *nočna baba*, *nočna gospa*, *božja deklica*. A beautiful female mythical being with long hair covered with a white bonnet, dressed in white. She quietly washes the laundry by ponds, waterholes, and springs but may turn upon a chance passer-by, striking him or her in the face with her iron hand. She punishes girls who have left their laundry outside during the night; tears the thread left on the spinning wheel overnight; comes to people's homes at night and bakes a cake in their hearth; etc. She may replace a baby asleep in the cradle with her own child or pull careless children who come too near a body of water into it. *Fal Pulicic*, a brook in Friuli, Italy, was named after the washerwoman.

Water sprite, *povodni mož*, *povodnjak*, *jezernik*, *vodovnik*, *muk*, *gestrin*, *salemsonar*, *motovilec*, *mital*, *vancaš*, *mamalić*. A supernatural being, the water sprite may be a large, green, and scaly or hairy man or a young man; he may also have a fishtail. The water sprite was believed to inhabit the sea, lakes, rivers, springs, brooks, water holes and puddles. People living in the vicinity of Gorica/Gorizia believed that the *salemsonarji* navigated waters in a barrel, looking for those who had drowned, who in turn became new water sprites. In Štajersko, children were warned to beware of the *muk* who could pull them underwater. The *gestrin* living in the Drava was thought to be young, with fins instead of legs. The lake beneath Kum was inhabited by the *mital* that manifested himself in the form of a dog and, when angry, caused thunderstorms and gusts of wind. The water sprite can be driven from his original dwelling by cracking whips, whistling, and bell ringing. In that case, he changes location overnight by appropriating a farmer's ox-driven wagon, and leaves as payment a heap of rubbish, charcoal, nails, scales, etc., which are subsequently transformed into gold; occasionally he fills an ox's horn with gold. The water sprite may also kidnap people, particularly children and young women. A familiar motif in literary folklore is the kidnapping of a female dancer. Similar to the guardian of the home, water sprites (i.e. the *mamalič*) punish those who eat the food that has been prepared for them. In Štajerska, it was believed that those looking for water could find it if they gave the *vancaš* an *ofer* (offering); in this context, the verb *vancati* allegedly denoted to look for water.

Werewolf, *volkodlak*, *vukodlák*, *okodlák*, *kódlak*, *verkodlák*. 1) A supernatural being in the shape of a wolf; or a being with the front part of its body in human shape and with the back of a wolf. 2) A human transforming into a wolf, marked as such from birth; possessing wolfish characteristics. 3) A human bewitched into a wolf because of his sins, bewitchment caused by his mother, or other magic. The birth of a werewolf is foretold when an expectant mother sees a wolf after the moon has set, or when the baby is born with its legs first, or still in the placenta. The werewolf can be rescued by sewing a part of the placenta in his shoulder or by turning him around at birth. A bewitched werewolf may be saved if thrown a piece of bread in God's name. When he dies, he needs to be placed face down or have a nail placed under his tongue. If manure is left on the field over Christmas, a werewolf is expected to appear in that spot to attack the *kresnik* with sticks. In Friuli, werewolves are depicted as people clad in wolf skins who suck blood from those who are asleep or dead. They may suck on the children whose mother cursed them during the day. A legend tells about a werewolf disguised as a human who had courted a young woman, begot twins, one of which was white and the other hairy, and killed the white one. The stories about werewolves, mentioned in antiquity (Herod's accounts of the Neurs), have often merged with the lore on the *vedomci*, *vampires*, and *wolf shepherds*.

Lit.: F. Wiesthaler: *The Werewolf and the Vampire in Slavic Mythology*. Ljubljanski zvon 3, 1883.

Wild hunt, *divja jaga*, *divji lov*, *divja plav*, *dulja jaga*, *vraži lov* (devil's hunt), *divja vojska* (wild army). A thunderous galloping of mysterious horses beneath the firmament; a nightly rush of demons, of dead souls believed to rage during the Advent and during Ember Week; during eight days, before and after New Year's, when demons take possession and people are required to thank them for the bounties of nature. According to a legend from Tržič, this is the time when the golden hag (*Zlata Baba*) drives eagles, snakes, and any other kind of animal under the sky. The wild hunt tears apart anybody it overtakes, and people can escape only by

throwing themselves in the right wheel rut on a road, or by stepping aside and remaining motionless. The Hunt may also throw an axe into a passerby, pulling it out in the same location a year later, thus delivering the sufferer from pain and feebleness. A roasted shoulder of a Fate would come flying at those who dared to mimic the rushing sounds of the wild hunt, as if to say: *If you hunted with us you may as well feast with us*! This folklore is based on the belief in the souls of the dead who were led either by the wild hunter or by Pehtra Baba, a female mythical being.

Wild hunter, *divji lovec*, *jager*, *divji jager*, *nočni lovec*, *nočni jager*, *črni lovec*, *ponočni mož*, *šent*. A mythical being condemned to hunt eternally for breaking the ban on hunting on the first Sunday after the new moon and during Ember weeks; or for shooting at a crucifix. In the lore of Koroška, the *ponočni mož* (midnight man) is large enough to step over mountains. In Gorenjska, a large pack of dogs is followed by a limping man carrying an axe. In southwest Pohorje, the lame devil (*šent*) comes to his farm and leads his servants away. After they have swum across the water dividing the world of the living and the world of the dead, he turns them into wolves. According to some legends, the wild hunter pursues a Fate and the wild man; if his victims are captured, he kills them. He throws a part of the killed victim at those who deign to mimic the wild hunt. Similar stories are known from literature, the most famous being Boccaccio's adaptation in the form of a short story. Comparison can be traced also to classical Greek astro-mythology with Orion a giant hunter who pursued the Pleiades.

Wild man, *dujak*, *gozdni mož* (forest man), *hostnik*, *silvan*, *pogorni mož*, *podlesni mož*, *podlesnjak*, *lesnik*, *vilenjak*. A mythical being who is knowledgeable about earthly riches, animal and plant worlds. It can control weather and other natural phenomena. May be kind and benevolent to people, offering his advice (i.e. on when to plant fava beans) but also hostile and harmful. The wild man, who likes bread and milk, has a huge stature covered in hair or moss. If people give him food he repays their kindness but punishes their stinginess when food is denied. He helps with fieldwork; offers advice on when and what to sow and plant; brings back any lost animals to shepherds and game to hunters; teaches people how to make cheese; shows them the location of ore. Yet he never discloses all his secrets. In some stories, he figures as a kidnapper so he is hunted down, tied with grape vines twisted in a wrong manner, and sometimes killed, for example with an axe with an inverted blade.

Lit.: I. Grafenauer: *Slovenska pripovedka o ujetem divjem možu* (A SlovenianTale of the Captured Wild Man). Zgodovinski časopis 6–7, 1952–53; I. Grafenauer: *Dostavek k 'Slovenskim pripovedkam o ujetem divjem možu'* (An Appendix to "SlovenianLegends about the Captured Wild Man"). Zgodovinski časopis 8. 1954; I. Grafenauer: *Zveza slovenskih ljudskih pripovedk z retijski*mi (The Connection between SlovenianFolktales with Tales from Rhaetia) IV-B: *Divji mož sirar – ujeti divji mož* (Wild Man the Cheesemaker – the Captured Wild Man). Slovenski etnograf 11, 1958; L. Röhrich: *Europäische Wildgeistersagen, Sage und Märchen, Erzählforschung heute*. Freiburg, Basel, Wien 1976.

Wild woman, *divja žena*, *divja baba*, *divja dekla*, *divjačesa*, *dujačesa*, *pogorna žena*, *črna žena* (black woman), *krivopeta*. 1) Companion of the wild man; 2) A mythical creature similar to fairies and the Fates. Knowledgeable about natural phenomena that could either benefit or harm farming life, she could advise on when to plant and when to reap. A seer, favourably disposed to those who left food for her to find, she would protect their homes and children, help with chores, and offer advice. She could also cause damage, replace people's children with her own, and so on. In some stories, the wild women lure a person to perform chores for them. In doing this, that person would learn certain secrets but woe to those who would dare disclose them.

Wind, *veter, véternik, vétrnik, vetrónvnik, vétrih, vijar, krívec, rogátec, rogájšek, rarášek, górjek, górnjek, zagórščak, zgórec, spódnjek, zdólec, škrátec, svínsek, jug, tóplek, séver, gárbus*. Personified wind; a whirlwind; a being that rules, and causes, strong winds and hurricanes. The people of Vipavsko imagined it as a raggedy, scratched man. Whenever the old woman/mother of the winds becomes enraged she lets the winds out of a hole. Rarašek, the servant of Pehtra Baba, keeps the winds imprisoned in a barrel. It was believed in Bela Krajina that every time a storm breaks out this means that the giants are howling. Above Čemšenik, the vetrniki (whirlwinds) emerge from holes with the same name. In Goriško, the veternik is a human, born at a certain time, who is lifted in the air by gale and transported around the underground. In Ptujsko Polje, a goblin named škratec or svinšek dances in the whirlwind. In Resia, whirlwinds were personified by the vijarji. In Brežice, the southern wind allegedly comes from Turkey and the northern one from the North Pole from where it drags its mother, the winter. In Štajersko, the southern wind was called the toplek (warm) while the northern wind was named the garbus. Although brothers, the winds quarrel so fiercely that St. Elias has to intervene occasionally.

Lit.: M. Matičetov: *Pitanje vetra pri Slovencih, Narodno stvaralaštvo folklor* 15/16, Beograd 1965; Tanja Petrovič: *Vetrovi kao mitološka bića u predstavama južnih Slovena u istočnom delu Balkana*. Studia mythologica Slavica 7, 2004.

Witch, *čarovnica, cóprnica*, *véšča*, *veša*, *vráčnica*, *štríga*, *bajánca*, *klékarca*, *svéta bába*, *bosarúna*, *bába vída*, *švíla prerokvíla*, *lámia*, *fúria*. 1) A demon with magical eyes such as a spirit, a fairy, or an incubus; 2) a woman who can perform magic, a skill that is either innate or acquired. The magic is done by way of apotropaic acts, medicinal herbs, potions, spells, incantations, prayers, books on black magic, a wand (inhabited by an ancestor spirit), a bell, holy water, and also spirits. Witches, whose spirits were believed to be able to leave their body and roam the underworld where they came into contact with the ghosts and the souls of the dead, could also fly. Gathering on Sabbath days, witches headed to certain mountains (Grintovec, Rogaška Gora, Klek, Slivnica) to dance in the magic circle. To ward them off, people used blessed gunpowder, salt, holy water, clothes that had been turned inside out; or stick, linden or birch branches in windows and doors, particularly on Pentecost and Corpus Christi Day, and Midsummer flowers on Midsummer Day. In Ziljska Dolina/Gailtal in Koroška/Kärnten, the crime committed by a woman accused of witchcraft was called the crime of *Péhtra bába*.

Lit.: M. Mencej: *Coprnice so me nosile. Raziskave vaškega čarovništva v vzhodni Sloveniji na prelomu tisočletja* (I was Possessed by Hags. A Study of Village Witchcraft in Eastern Slovenia at the Turn of the Millennium), Ljubljana 2006.

Witch doctor, *vrač*, *vráčnik*, *vráčarica*, *uróčen*, *báli*, *bájavec*, *bógovec*, *bogínja* (goddess), *šamán* (shaman), *léčnik* (healer), *lékar*, *árcat*, *pádar*, *bukovnik*. A person with acquired knowledge and innate skills that exceed the realm of reality. A healer of people and animals, the witch doctor employs medicinal herbs, potions, enchantments, and magic. People believed in the magical power of blessed salt, water, bread, herbs, amulets, and of apotropaic objects such as glass or crystals. This knowledge was also handed down to the next generation by means of books on magic and on medicinal plants.

Wizard, (*čarovnik*, *čárnik*, *čarovniški mójster*, *črni gospód*, *mag*, *vrač*, *štrigón*, *štregón*, *strupenják*, *vilenják*, *vilovnják*, *védomec*, *védavec*, *vidovína*, *zduháč*, *mésečnik*, *morlak*). 1) A supernatural creature like the kresnik and the vedomec. 2) A person whose ability to

perform magic is either innate or acquired in school of black magic, or from the fairies, or the devil. As is the case with the kresnik and the vedomec, two opposing wizards fight each other transformed into bulls, oxen, or boars. Wizards could traditionally fly or overcome large distances with lightning speed. After their death, they could manifest themselves as riders on a black horse. They could perform similar magic as witches. Several renowned wizards have been preserved in Slovenian folklore: Vidovin, Jarnik, the wizard of Ganče, the wizard Tkavec from Medvedove Peči in Koroška; and Lampert the shooter. Sorcery was often ascribed to people with red hair, pharmacists, priests, or hermits. Acting as shamans, wizards initially played an important role in village community; in time, their magic became limited to healing powers (see witch doctor); to casting spells over natural phenomena and the weather or to clairvoyance.

Wolf-Shepherd, *volčji pastir, Master of the Wolves (gospodar volkov), vólčko, béli volk, šent, večni pastir (eternal shepherd)*. 1) A supernatural chthonic being, the Master of Wolves, protector of sheep and cattle. 2) A human transformed into a wolf or a human who occasionally changes into a wolf. His arrival is predicted by the unusual manner of his birth. When bewitched, he could be saved if he consumed blessed meat. The wolf shepherd rides on a wolf or appears as a horseman; lame, blind on one eye, and as an eternal wanderer. He is believed to generally appear during the nights following Christmas, the so-called wolf nights. According to some researchers, the legend about the wolf shepherd who distributes prey to wolves, allotting the man who had climbed an oak tree to the last wolf, perpetuates the memory of human sacrifice. The wolf shepherd succeeded the mythical protector of herds and flocks, a forest and chthonic deity. Wolves were believed to be the dogs of St. George who, according to Frazer, assumed the position of the ancient Asian deity Pales. Polka believed that the original master of wolves was Leis, the forest master of animals. According to Mencej, the Master of Wolves in the Slavic lore originates in pagan beliefs and possesses characteristics of Veles, the pre-Slavic god of death and the afterlife. The role of the wolf shepherd was later assumed by a number of saints, i.e. St. Sava, St. Nicolas, St. Martin, St. Jovan, St. Peter, and St. Triune.

Lit.: J. Polka:, *Volči pastyr. Sbornik praci venovanych profesoru Dru Vaclavu Tillovi k šedesatym narozeninam* 1867–1927, Praha 1927; Mirjam Mencej: *Gospodar volkov v slovanski mitologiji* (The Master of the Wolves in Slavic Mythology). Ljubljana 2001.

Zagórščak, see *wind*

Zála žéna, see *žalik žena*

Zavdána dúša, see *bewitched soul*

Zdolščak, see *wind*

Zduhač, see *bewitched souls*

Zeleni Jurij, (Green George), *Šentjurij* (St. George), *Juraj*, *Jurek*, *Jarilo*, *Vesnik*. A supernatural being riding a green (if vegetation has already turned green) or a white (if there is still snow on the ground) horse. Celebrated on April 23 or 24. St. George personifies the power of the sun that awakens the soil and vegetation in spring, hence the name *Jarilo* in the sense of "vernal, young". In addition to being the protector of cattle and horses, he protects people from snakes, evokes fertility, and victoriously duels winter and evil. The fight between these two opposite forces represents the central act of the cosmological and fertility myth. Just as the struggle between Indra and Vritra represents the fundamental myth of Vedic mythology, the fight between Perun and Veles denotes the basic myth in

Balto-Slavic mythology. According to the findings of Russian philologists Ivanov and Toporov, in Slavic folk songs Zeleni Jurij personifies Perun (see *Kresnik*).

Lit.: F. V.V. Ivanov, V. N. Toporov: *Slavjanskie modelirujuõčie semiotičeskie sistemi.* Moskva 1965; ista: *Issledovanija v oblasti slavjanskih drevnostej*, Moskva 1974.

Zlata Baba, see *Pehtra Baba*

Zlati škorenjci, see *golden boots*

Zlatorog, (Goldenhorn), a white chamois with golden horns; a mythical animal; the leader of white wild goats in the Triglav Mountain Range. According to a tale recorded by Dežman in 1868, a hunter from Trenta shot Zlatorog from whose blood grew the flower of Triglav. Restored by the plant, Zlatorog thrusts the hunter into an abyss and digs up the miraculous garden. Preserved in ancient sources and European lore, the belief in the mythical golden, or white animal with golden horns; with a single horn (see unicorn); with golden hooves; etc. is of Indo-European origin. Preserved are the legends about St. Hubert; St. Eustace; St. Felix of Valois; or St. Julian the Hospitaler, each pursuing a white stag. When the stag turns around a cross appears between its antlers and the voice of Jesus Christ speaks from the cross. The miraculous animal personifies a celestial deity that brings life and possesses the key to earthly riches. Zlatorog is protected by fairies. According to Matičetov, the tale recorded by Dežman is a late Romantic mystification that inspired Baumbach, Funtek, and Aškerc. Far from being extinct, the lore has been preserved in the tales about the chamois with golden hooves and about the wild hunter who fires at the chamois with a golden cross on its brow, etc. Similar to Zlatorog is the *Srebrnokrilec* (Silverwing), a black chamois with silver wings.

Lit.: T. Cevc: *Pripovedno izročilo o gamsih z zlatimi parklji iz Kamniških Alp* (Oral Tradition about the Chamois with Golden Hooves in the Kamnik Alps). Traditiones 2, 1973; R. Wildhaber: *Das Tier mit den goldenen Hörnern.* Alpes orientales 7, Monachii 1975.

Zlato tele, see *golden calf*

Zmaj see *dragon*

Zmin see *škopnik*, see *dragon*

Žálik žéna, *žal-žéna, žálka, zála žéna, žár žéna, jébek žéna, zavdána žena.* A female supernatural being similar to fairies, whose lore frequently blends with the lore on the Fates, and wild women. The term *žalik žena* has probably been borrowed from the Germanic the *Seligen Fräulein* (sacred maiden). Also the name *jebek žena* probably derives from German, *ewig* meaning eternal. As those of the *krivopete*, the feet of the *žalke* in Rož/Rosental in Koroška were also turned backwards. The lore on the *žalik žena* was particularly widespread in Koroška, where people told stories about the *žalik žene* who could foretell the destiny of children; offered helpful advice to farmers; slept with the farmers; brought prosperity to farmsteads; or presented the housewife with a ball of endless yarn that came to an end only after the housewife has cursed the eternal yarn.

ABBREVIATIONS

ATU: Hans-Jörg Uther, *The Types of International Folktales. A Classification and Bibliography Based on the System of Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson I–III*. (FF Communications 284-186), Helsinki, 2004.

Breckerfeld: Franc Anton Breckerfeld, Seznam slovenskih in slovanskih bajnih bitij. Arhiv Slovenije, Dolski arhiv, fasc. 125, fol. 556.

HDA 1932-1933: E. Hoffmann-Krayer, H. Bächtold-Stäubli (Ed.), *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens I*. Berlin-Leipzig.

HNP 6: *Hrvatske narodne pjesme 6*. Zagreb, 1914.

ISN: Inštitut za slovensko narodopisje (Institute of Slovenian Ethnology)

NUK: Narodna in univerzitetna knjižnica (National and University Library) in Ljubljana

ÖUMWB: *Die Österreichisch-Ungarische Monarchie in Wort und Bild I–XXIV,* 1887–1902.

SEM: Slovenski etnografski muzej (Slovenian Ethnographical Museum) in Ljubljana

SLP: *Slovenske ljudske pesmi 1*. Ed.: Zmaga Kumer, Milko Matičetov, Boris Merhar, Valens Vodušek. Ljubljana: Slovenska matica 1970.

Š: Karol Štrekelj, *Slovenske narodne pesmi* I (1895-1898); II (1900-1903); III (1904-1907); Karel Štrekelj, Jože Glonar 4 (1908-1923). Ljubljana: Slovenska matica.

ŠZ: Štrekljeva zapuščina (K. Štrekelj's Legacy)

ZRC SAZU: Znanstvenoraziskovalni center Slovenske akademije znanosti in umetnosti (Scientific Researche Centre of Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts) in Ljubljana

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Notranjska (Inner Carniola)

Prekmurje (Eastern Slovenia)

Primorska (the Litoral part of Slovenia)

Štajerska/Steiermark (Styria)

Focusing on Slovenian mythology, the book contains a review of Slovenian mythological, historical, and narrative material. Over 150 supernatural beings are presented, both lexically and according to the role that they have in Slovenian folklore. They are classified by type, characteristic features, and by the message conveyed in their motifs and contents. The material has been analysed in the context of European and some non-European mythological concepts, and the author deals with theory and interpretations as well as the conclusions of domestic and foreign researchers. The book forms new starting points and a classification of supernatural beings within a frame of a number of sources, some of which have been published for the first time in this book.

Monika Kropej is a Research Advisor of the Institute of Slovenian Ethnology at the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, where she works in the section for folk narrative research. She is the author of the books Pravljica in stvarnost (Folk Tale and Reality), Od ajda do zlatoroga – Slovenska bajeslovna bitja (From Ajd to Goldenhorn – Slovenian Supernatural Beings) and A Treasury of Slovenian Folk Tales. She is co-editor of the journal Studia mythologica Slavica, and a recipient of the 1996 Golden Emblem of the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

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