

## PREFACE

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### **An Arabesque for the Black Arab, Bolen Dojcin and White Angelina**

Our research into the subject of *The Black Arab as a (Balkan, Mediterranean) Figure of Memory*, conducted within the framework of the European project *Interpretations* managed by the Macedonian Academy of Arts and Sciences, was aimed at initiating a new mode of thinking and perception of Slavic and non-Slavic Balkan cultures. This mode of thinking might not be completely new in the general sense of the word, but it is new within the framework of the contemporary Balkan social constellation. For this constellation has long been characterised by mutual negations; animosities; exclusive interpretations of the past; immoderate appropriations of the spiritual legacy of neighbouring cultures; denials of the right of others to partake in a shared cultural and historical heritage; indicative explications of ethnic cultural identity through the application of historical paradigms; a fixation on history; adoration of ancient 'scripts' of culture; the politicization of our shared spiritual heritage; revision and negation of identities; cultural xeno-skepsis; and the increased prevalence of ethnic or bi-ethnic principles in the constitution and functioning of states.

Our mode of thinking starts from the belief that, at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in an atmosphere of global crisis and threatened prosperity, the peoples of the Balkans are in need of a scientifically based, multi-focal interpretative methodology which will observe history as an intersection of autochthonous and shared constituents. The contemporary hermeneutics of history should be founded upon a comparative and inclusive epistemological model. To a great extent, the

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cultural heritage of various peoples and states is understood in this model as a shared spiritual legacy. This shared legacy is imprinted in the memory of plural ethnicities (it is of a dual, or, more commonly, multiple affiliation) and cannot be the exclusive right of only one culture, nor an exclusively ethnic category. Cultural heritage exceeds ethnic differentiations; our spiritual legacy is a matrix that includes Balkan, Mediterranean, European and universal aspects. Some figures of memory are socio-cultural actualizations of ancient universal patterns (archetypes) or substitutes for some older figures of remembering. Our spiritual legacy, strongly characterised by collective interests, is not the exclusive possession of any single nation; it belongs to contemporary nations and cultures to the extent to which it has been preserved in their collective memories. Through its multiple affiliation, this legacy delineates the space of the shared contemporary culture and the general cultural substrate of all Balkan peoples—and not only of theirs but also as a cultural treasure of all humanity.

The practice of policies exercising a non-exclusive (shared) right to the communication, commemoration, identification and celebration of existing historical facts is a legitimate priority in the resolution of disputed issues in the Balkans. This new mode of perception of the past will operate as a guarantee of an unbiased and non-conflictual perception of contemporary reality, which is a prerequisite for the painless integration of Balkan states within the European Union. Such an unbiased attitude towards historical reality will resolve, on a scientific basis, the misunderstandings and the conflicts continually generated in the more recent history of Balkan states. It will serve as a response to arbitrary appropriations and mythicizations of our spiritual legacy. It is the role of humanistic, societal and culturological discourses to offer an interpretative key which will serve to permanently thwart the factors that generate zones of irresolvable interpretative conflict, xenophobic anxiety and widen the gap between dominant and minority cultures, integrated and non-integrated states.

The project *The Black Arab as a (Balkan, Mediterranean) Figure of Memory* aims primarily: (1) to be a symbolic forewarning highlighting resistant conflict zones in the Balkans which are supported by a certain appropriative consciousness through markedly invasive cultural politics; (2) to provide an additional method of argumentation in the interpretation of cultural-historic artefacts and ethnic-identity dominants; and, finally, (3) to announce the transcending of ethnocentric and ethnocentric interpretative strategies. By doing so, it will create a gener-

ally acceptable, systemic prerequisite for the revision of ethnologic and exclusivist interpretations of the present/future through the past and will rebuild spiritual bridges between the peoples of the Balkans.

Our project starts from the belief that, even at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, strategies of interpretation of the mythical, folkloric and historical cultural heritage which obstruct communication between peoples are still practiced within Balkan states. These interpretative models have become institutionalized models in the course of the last two centuries; as such, they cannot be treated as accidental and transient collective misconceptions, but as the outcome of conceptualized and instrumentalized cultural policies with implications for relations between states. A diabolic vicious circle of mutual negations, appropriations and manipulations of our spiritual legacy has been generated and history has been interpreted from the angle of current (political and institutional) interests, whereby ethnocentric historical truths have been constructed which frequently 'divorce' history from truth.

With regards to this appropriative ethnoculturalism in the Balkans, a series of questions have been raised whose interest is focused on the *possessive perspective* in the interpretation of cultural history. Unfortunately, they have been left with no relevant scientific response. We will cite only some of them: Why is it necessary to negate the right of the other/neighbour to recognize themselves as part of the Balkan cultural-historical heritage and to communicate it in their own specific way? Why is it necessary to erase (both from collective awareness and science) the fact that the peoples of the Balkans were, from Antiquity to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, integrated within shared empires and that, consequently, they share the same right to the memories of certain notable cultural-historical facts? Is historiocentrism the only legitimate approach to reality and the sole argument in favour of national constructs? Is *ethnocentric historicism*, as a variant of *ethnophobic historicism*, the only perspective from which to observe Balkan history? Has it been forgotten that there exist historical distances and historical differences (interpretative distances and interpretative differences)? Is an objective evaluation of the greatness of an ancient cultural system possible through the exclusive employment of the parameters of a completely different system (that of the contemporary nation-state)? Is there nothing which can be identified as a *Balkan spiritual heritage* which does not recognize rigid ethnic divisions? If there exists a shared spiritual heritage, why should that not become the subject of detailed multidisciplinary and comparative research? Why should there not be

a comparative hermeneutics of Balkan cultural history? Is it not true that science is immanently and morally obliged to participate in the explication of the shared pragma and figures of memory of the Balkan peoples, thus becoming a certain kind of corrective to radicalized and slanted interpretations of our cultural heritage?

Offering a scientifically-based methodological pattern for the interpretation of cultural history and spiritual heritage, the project *The Black Arab as a Figure of Memory* can be perceived as a response to open questions concerning appropriative Balkan historiographies and as an attempt to reconstitute a positive stereotype of the Balkans. The actualization of a stereotype of the Balkans as a centre of civilization can function as a reference for substantiated interpretation of shared events, places and figures of memory (mythical and historical). In this manner, those zones which amount to a hypersensitive Balkan Achilles' heel could be transformed—for the very reason that they are an inherited locus communi of Balkan cultures—into a substrate of a trans-ethnic strategy of interpretation of cultural histories at local, European and international level.

It cannot be denied that these motives for initiating a scientific research project also involve certain social-cultural implications. Nevertheless, cultural hermeneutics is immanently interdisciplinary and inter-discursive. For this reason, the *Interpretations* project is focused on an area of interest which goes beyond the limits of literary hermeneutics. This is the area of shared mythical, folkloric and historical figures of memory, figures/constructs which exist in the cultural memory of the Balkan peoples and which have their analogues among Mediterranean peoples, among Slavic peoples, and other cultures of the contemporary world. At the very onset of this project, one issue imposed itself as a priority: that of the three enigmatic figures of the Black Arab, Bolen Dojčin and Lepa Angelina as a tripartite structure of figures of memory which has undergone stages of mythicization, historicization and mystification.

Memory practices in the Balkans (languages, myths, legends, folklore, art, history) demonstrate that specific, nationally-defined Balkan cultures bear their own internal and particular characteristics, as well as supranational, regional and even universal anthropological dimensions. In this sense, we can distinguish a certain recognizable *Balkan system of cultures*, a certain Balkan 'alliance' of ethnicized memories, founded upon a shared memory substrate. Higher than divergent collective memories, there exists something that transcends them and

unites them within one *Balkan cultural idiom*. Differences and similarities of memory are constituents of Balkan cultures. This research into the topic of the Black Arab has a dual intention: to document the differences and indicate the similarities between Balkan cultures.

Through our research on the topic of the Black Arab, yet another Balkan paradox has been genuinely demystified. This concerns the commemoration and idolatry of the defeat of one's enemy. The system of ethnocentric values which prefers the concept of ethnic antagonisms actually enthrones Evil as a value, as a central anthropological notion in a polarized vision of the world. Thus we arrive at an ironic civilization which performs metatheses and alterations of values by driving to the periphery the personification of *its own good* (the saviour, epic hero, defender), while setting in the foreground 'its own' simulated personification of evil (chthonian energy, darkness, plague, disease, death, black man, antihero, destruction of the bridge/city, peril, siege, slavery). For this reason, the memory of the Black Arab (the symbolic foreigner) is more alive than that of Bolen Dojčin (the symbolic fellow man). This kind of memory undoubtedly instigates corresponding political and cultural practices which not only affect the reduced pre-Great Flood, pre-ethical perception of the world abstractly and metaphysically, but also influence the current social reality of the Balkan peoples and states. This is an influence which stimulates negative drives and energies and promotes pathetic xenophobic rhetoric and conflict practices (threats, obstructions). This influence generates new ethnic and religious isolations, alterations of borders, fragmentations (so-called Balkanization) and new conversions. In such circumstances, the one who suffers is the smaller, disorientated and unprotected party, the one who lies outside the protection of legitimate integrative institutions of an international character.

The research carried out within the project *The Black Arab as a Figure of Memory* confirms that it is possible for a seemingly (politically) innocent mythical-folkloric figure to operate as an evocation of the driving forces behind cultural trends. In this sense, it has been demonstrated that the figure of the Black Arab is a figure of an *immanent vision of the world* and the prototype of a dominant Balkan interpretation of the historical reality. This is sufficient reason to perceive the figure of the Black Arab as a metaphor for the contemporary Balkans confronted with the abyss of its own misconceptions, obsessions and fixations. Emancipation from this obsessive fixations is a prerequisite for progressing to a culturally higher form of consciousness and

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self-awareness. Comparative hermeneutic analyses (in the sphere of history, the history of art, history of literature, archaeology, ethnology, regional linguistics, folkloristic, mythology, history of religions, cultural studies and poetics) become legitimate tools for overcoming crises and for establishing the foundations of a new worldview and consequently, a new reality.

I have no intention of producing in this preface a meta-summary or some kind of super-summary of the summaries of all the studies published in this book. The concept of *Interpretations* is such that it offers an opportunity for a concise reading of the key findings of its authors by publishing summaries of their papers both in English and in Macedonian, together with a glossary of the most important concepts employed by the authors. I would like only to stress that all research is complementary, both when it indicates similarities and when it highlights differences in perceptions and interpretations of the controversial polysemic figures of memory of the Black Arab, Bolen Dojčin and Lepa Angelina. The semantic polyvalence of the figure of the Black Arab indicates its palimpsest-like memory quality and discursively syncretic form. It also reveals this figure's relational quality and the historicity of its values, which demonstrates that the ritual, archetypal, mythical, epic and historical constructs of collective memory are susceptible to revalorization in different socio-cultural constellations—showing that they are still influential and operative factors/instruments in contemporary culture and art and that, as such, they remain a legitimate subject for new research.

The memory complex of the Black Arab confirms the paradoxical finding that collective stereotypes are not only constructs which perform significant social functions and have great cultural capacity, but also that, as bearers of deep and not always transparent but always fascinating collective memory, they have the power to redefine development strategies at regional and international level. Consequently, the stereotypes of the Black Arab, Bolen Dojčin and White Angelina are imagological projections of the dominant ideologemes of a society. Observed from a historical perspective, they are variables of several universal constants (cosmic and cultural). The contemporary Balkans enjoy optimal cultural freedom to select which stereotype to actualize and which development strategies to employ. Figures of memory forewarn us that human civilization is not one-dimensional but always multi-dimensional and that it cannot be reduced to a single function or a single value, whether archetypal, mythical, epic-folkloric, aesthetic,

or historical. Aesthetics cannot function without history; nor history without aesthetics. Values are constituted in particular social-cultural circumstances and, for this reason, circumstances should sometimes be recomposed in order to reconstitute true cultural, anthropological and aesthetic values.

At this point we should stress that the project *Interpretations*, through its research into the topos of the *Black Arab as a Figure of Memory*, demonstrates that the process of humanization is a process of permanent humanization of all humanity (of the individual, of the citizen, of the intellectual and, especially, of political and business leaders). Humanity cannot be humanized once and for all, but undergoes a continual process of humanization. Violation of this process can disturb the stability of civilization. This justifies our hope that the European research project *Interpretations* can be a factor in the restoration of the Balkans into a contemporary cultural centre instead of a periphery.

This MANU publication, supported by the UNESCO Program for participation of 2008/9, as well as by the National Commission of UNESCO for Macedonia, published under the final title *The Black Arab as a Figure of Memory*, contains important studies by eminent European scholars. Some are internationally renowned experts in their fields. Others are less well-known, younger researchers in the field of folkloristics, Balkan studies, Oriental studies and linguistics, mythology, ethnology and history of art, literature and theatre. However, it is for certain that the research of all these authors, without exception, is of exceptional importance for the project and its intentions. All authors involved in the third volume of *Interpretations* have studied, each in their own manner, and for the first time in a collective work, the diverse aspects of the figure of the Black Arab as a figure of linguistic and cultural memory par excellence among the Slavic, Balkan and Mediterranean peoples. Around one shared figure of memory, this project has united authors/researchers from several states and many research centres: Albania, Bulgaria, Germany, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Turkey, Croatia and France. The following authors were involved: Tatjana Civjan, Rade Božović, Gabriela Schubert, Gjacumu Tier, Hande Birkalan Gedik, Nikos Čausidis, Tomislav Oroz, Lidija Stojanović Lafazanovska, Ljiljana Stošić, Nikolai Vukov, Rigels Halili, Joana Ruxandra Fruntelata, Sonja Zogović and Radmilo Petrović.

The project included researchers from a number of institutes for folklore and Balkan Studies within the academies of science of Russia, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Romania, and Croatia, as well as from univer-

sity research centres in Belgrade, Zagreb, Istanbul, Corte, London, Skopje, Sofia, and Tirana. The research performed within this project employed different methods, starting with linguistic and literary theoretical, then semiotic and narratological, mythopoetic and folkloristic, as well as ethnological, teatrological and anthropological, and concluding with comparative Balkan, Southern Slavic and Mediterranean cultural and hermeneutic studies. This project has produced significant findings and additional useful results with permanent effects can realistically be expected as a result of this project.

The project *Interpretations* does not aim at an ultimate interpretation of the hermetisms of polyvalent figures of memory such as the Black Arab, White Angelina and Bolen Dojčin. Its intention is rather to create an ambiance for non-stereotypical and (ethnically) unbiased research and to build an acceptable orientational model of interpretation of mythical, aesthetic and historical legacies within the Balkan, Mediterranean, Slavic and the broader European context. The findings publicized in this volume are scientifically legitimate; hence our confidence that they will be invaluable to future research within Balkan studies and that they will be referenced in expert, university, educational, creative and intellectual circles.

Finally, as a leader of this project in my capacity as editor of the publication *The Black Arab as a Figure of Memory*, I would like to express my gratitude to UNESCO and the National Commission of UNESCO for their moral and material support for this project. I would also like to express my gratitude to all contributors to this project and their institutions for their direct and indirect support of the research realized in this project of the Macedonian Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2008 and early 2009. In this context, I would also like to express my gratitude to the Macedonian painter Vladimir Georgievski who, especially for this project, produced a drawing inspired by the thematic complex of Black. Without the support of the authors, contributors and institutions, the will and qualities of the initiator of this project would not have been articulated as well as they are now articulated in this book.







**Kata KULAVKOVA (Skopje)**

**From a Black God to a Black Arab:  
different mythical and historical actualizations of  
the universal matrix of Black**

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The memory figures of the Black Arab, Lepa (White) Angelina and Bolen Dojčin are a paradigm of shared figures of memory with Slavic, Balkan, Mediterranean, and perhaps, universal connotations. The variations in their names, embodiments and personifications only serve to confirm the perception of these figures as universal archetypes adopted in the Balkan-Mediterranean regions as early as ancient times and which, since then, have undergone several different appropriations (Robert S. Nelson 2004, 208-224). This implies that, in different social-cultural circumstances, these figures of memory have undergone various re-figurations. Each new social-cultural contextualization of universal archetypes is a form of actualization. If we perceive Black as a universal archetype (proto-pattern), then we may presume that, in each new set of social and cultural circumstances, this archetype will have been submitted to a new interpretation within the predominant cultural and linguistic code. Each new interpretation of the archetype of Black constructs a specific vision of Black within the given local historical set of circumstances. These interpretations can be predominantly mythical at some times, or markedly historical at another, while at times they can fade into the silence of collective oblivion; yet they always legitimize a new actualization of the archetype. Actualization is a form of appropriation and naturalization of an already semi-forgotten archetype into linguistic signs that are cultur-

**Key words:**

- actualization
- mythicization
- historization
- theatralization
- archetype of Black
- archetype of the White
- GoodEvil
- prefiguration
- antagonisms
- personifications of otherness
- figures of memory
- BlackGod
- Black Arab
- Bolen Dojčin
- Lepa Angelina
- Balkan
- Mediterranean
- Macedonia

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ally recognizable. In the course of time, the readability of the linguistic representations of the archetype of Black may again be reduced to a minimum. This eventual minimum, which every culture anticipates and upon which all research is based, functions as a foundation for the constitution of the trans-historical palimpsest of Black, perceived as a series of vestiges of its linguistic, mythical, ritual, aesthetic and historical actualizations. A careful reading of these palimpsest vestiges would reveal the exceptionally complex semiotics (semantics, syntax, praxis) of Black. This entails a delicate interpretation of Black and its particular social-cultural appropriations, involving the application of several complementary interpretative strategies (mytho-poetic, historicist, folklorist, comparative, anthropological, philosophical, culturological).

Perceived as such, the actualizations of Black in the figure of the Black Arab cannot be analyzed in an isolated manner, but always in correlation with the other two, or at least one of the figures of the triad consisting of the Black Arab, Lepa Angelina and Bolen Dojčin. The archetype of Black has the archetypal textures of White inscribed within itself, actualized either in the figure of Lepa Angelina, or Bolen Dojčin. Lepa Angelina and Bolen Dojčin are different, even though complementary appropriations of White. This White is a fragile synthesis of several dualized perceptions of Black—from the perspective of light and day; from the perspective of the male and female principle; from the perspective of the healthy and sick, powerful and powerless; or from the perspective of the familiar and distant; of this world and the underworld; of death and life; of chaos and cosmos; and finally, from the perspective of domestic and foreign (the racial, ethnic, religious and cultural other). On the basis of these two principles of Black and White (Dark and Light), which are initially constituted as concrete linguistic visualizations of Night and Day, many other corresponding references with a polarized value connotation are later generated, frequently of ethical character, delimiting good from evil, defensive from conquering, just from wrong, friendly from unfriendly...

Despite all these polarizations of the energy principles of existence, epitomized in the infinity of birth and death, we can still note traces of the opposite figure in the other, traces of black in white, of male in female, of animal in human, of sick in healthy, of powerful in powerless, of good in evil, of divinized in demonized ! Therefore, the ethical polarizations of White against Black are a symptom of the enthronement of later, historicized, interpretations which introduced the codex of good and evil, of good-for-me and evil-for-me, and which de-



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lineated the boundary between the good Bolen Dojčin or King Marko and the bad Black Arab, Turk or Arnaut. These historicized perceptions of Black and White are the ones which install on the cultural scene a controversial ethical differentiation of good and evil along the lines of ours and foreign—a differentiation which codifies into a stereotype and becomes a template for all later polarizations in the world, especially those concerning the issue of war and peace (the distinctions between just and unjust war, acceptable and unacceptable terror, legitimate and illegitimate intervention, capitalism and communism)... This is where we locate historical shifts in the definition of the boundaries between primitive and developed civilizations, between the barbarous and civilized world—boundaries which still stigmatize humanity and generate numerous distorted imagologies of the other, dubious constructions of the truth and closely controlled conflicts, and which ultimately generate the tragic hubris of contemporary humanity, generally hurled as an anathema upon the back of non-integrated states with potentially ample energy and human resources—that is, with potential power!

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Collective figures of memory, however much aestheticized, always retain vestiges of their pre-aesthetic existence. Their cultural function is related to their aesthetic function, even though it is not fully identified with it. It is so because these figures of memory penetrate deeply into all spheres of society—from ethnic and racial, to religious, gender, familial, custom, political and pragmatic spheres... This is a sufficient inducement for the development of a special hermeneutics of the figures of the Black Arab, Bolen Dojčin and Lepa Angelina. The three figures submitted to interpretation (the Black Arab, Bolen Dojčin and White/Lepa Angelina) are referred to in accordance with the dominant ethnological and cultural-memory terminology of Slavia Balcanica in the last three centuries. An excellent representative of this mythical-historical triad is undoubtedly the Black Arab and it is for this reason that the functions of this *formulaic character* (Rade Božović) occupy the central position in this research, even, symbolically, in its title. The name of the central figure of otherness—the Black Arab—is a parable of an original function whose name is not fully known to us, and its confirmation with definitive arguments is difficult. The question as to whether this is in truth the name of Black or the name of Death or Chaos will long remain open, however much we deem it probable, possible and logical! At a certain moment in the interpretation of the Black Arab as a Balkanized

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variant of actualization of the universal archetype, we are left with the impression that it is ultimately irrelevant what the real name of the original was because, whatever it was, it will always retain a certain 'local' connotation! As soon as a name is established, it acquires a certain historical connotation. The being of Black on the other hand, will remain in the sphere of pre-cognitive knowledge and beyond nominalisation. It is important, therefore, to identify the essence (ontos) which precedes the personifications, whether they are codified as the Black Arab, Black God, or as a Three-headed Lamja...

Names have changed frequently throughout history in dependence on the cultural code of the subject who named the phenomena; thus they cannot be considered an indisputable scientific foundation, even though they can serve as a useful orientation for research. They prove that the ontos/essence of the world, perceived as a matrix (function, actant), constantly transforms within the structure of current social-cultural circumstances and is continually personified in new figures (characters, actors), more ritualized at times, at others predominantly mythicized or historicized. These frequent transformations create an illusion that the function (the role, actant) is disintegrated; in fact, however, the systemic essence of Black/White is an indivisible universal substrate. This great capacity for transformation, characteristic of the archetype Black, signalizes that the archetype survives only through its own re-figurations and that its essence is dual: systemic (constitutive, functional) and historical (variable, adaptable, substantial). The essence of Black/White is fundamentally contradictory: it is faithful to its essence (hence we can recognize its identity), but simultaneously it deviates from that essence, adopting various phenomenological and imagological forms in different epochs and civilizations. For this reason, the name Black Arab does not refer to some concrete, even less to some contemporary African or Arab world; it does not imply Arabophobia, but is simply considered to be one of the most symptomatic preserved names of the phenomenon 'Black Arab'. The other two names—those of Bolen Dojčin and Lepa Angelina (White)—are referred to in the same manner. We use them principally as paradigms and only later as names of characters with a recognizable historical identity. In some of their variant forms, these archetypal figures obtain the names of some historical persons; but even in such cases, they still retain the power to connote their original archetypal matrix. Every symbolical name is in actual fact semantically plural and ambiguous. The archetype indicates its historical variants, and the variants

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imply their archetypal constant. This duality is of essential importance in understanding the phenomenon of Black/White (Evil/Good), a phenomenon which we also recognize as an oxymoron 'EvilGood'.

To reiterate: we do not know the true, original and real name of the Black Arab, as we do not know the original and real name of Bolen Dojčin and Lepa Angelina. They are figures with many names; they are functions personified in many characters and persons in different constellations of tradition, cultural memory, myth and history. Each new contextualization constitutes new concrete names which, in the course of time, transform into symbolic names and enter history and the phenomenology of EvilGood. Each radical change in the image of the world and its system of values instigates a change in the nominal and semantic repertoire. In this system of changes, in this process of exchange of evil with good, in the process of transformation of Good-now into Evil-tomorrow, in the process of re-installing (dethroning and enthroning) new governments and rulers, new values, new social orders, new sources of evil, the vestiges preserved in the cultural memory are modified as well.

At this point, there arises the need for a certain clarification of the referential and value span between the matrix and the form (the actant and actor)—the span which marked the figures of the Black Arab, Lepa Angelina and Bolen Dojčin. They constitute a triad of figures belonging to the cosmic, mythical, historical and aesthetic memory of humanity. What would be a reasonable assumption as to the final destination in our going back in time and civilization as far as this 'holy trinity' of figures remembered by both Slavic and non-Slavic peoples of the Balkans is concerned? What are the most indicative transformations which this original threesome has undergone in different constellations of a cultural character acquiring mythical, historical, metaphysical and aesthetic dimensions? Have all three figures existed in a tripartite structure of relations from beginning to end? Or was there also a binary structure of opposites? Is it a valid thesis that the tragic dramatic situation of human civilization is created by this very inclusion of a third figure in the existing dual structure? Is it true that the aesthetic configurations of these three figures are those which bring us closest to the archetype of *black darkness* and *white light*?

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The unbiased and multi-disciplinary interpretations of the phenomenon of 'the Black Arab' realized within the *Interpretations* project dem-

onstrate that this figure of memory is not an ordinary ethnic and historical figure—that this is not only a regional, Balkan or Mediterranean figure but a universal figure of collective memory which, in the given social, cultural, folklore and linguistic circumstances, was shaped in a specific Southern Slavic, Balkan and Mediterranean manner, in a specific Macedonian, Bulgarian, Serbian, Croatian, Romanian, Russian, Corsican and Turkish manner. We shall highlight here several of the most frequent interpretations and definitions of the Black Arab:

- The figure of the Black Arab contains both universal and local characteristics. However, since this figure simultaneously remembers and forgets, it evokes different contents in different epochs. This figure is not only a palimpsest record of inscribed and erased texts of cultural history. It does not only include vestiges of older systems of thinking and worldviews from the perspective of racial, religious, ethnic and cultural otherness. It does not only contain traces of the pre-notional interpretation of the world through concrete colours, forms and images. It also continually shifts the impregnated marks of cultural memory from the foreground to the background and, by doing so, it continually reevaluates them, actualizes and de-actualizes them. It is a figure which naturalizes forgotten, perhaps even degraded, signs and meanings, transferring them from a universal into a local context, from a mythical into a historical context, from a chthonian into an earthly context, from a celestial into a profane context.
- The Black Arab is a slippery phenomenological variable, a discreet representative of *evilgood* and an indiscreet representative of evil (in this particular case, appearing later in history as a personification of the Arab-Byzantine wars and the Turkish invasions in the Balkans). It is only one of the manifestations and only one of the names of the transcendental subject of *evilgood*, of the constitutive cosmic forces, of the immanent drive for *radical changes in the system of the world* (of humanity, society, values).
- The figure of the Black Arab can incarnate in contradictory forms: those of a tyrant, enemy and foreigner (of a man from a different race and continent, from a different country, from overseas); those of an unbridled libido and violence, of the concrete but dark energies of the human being; but also those of the good deities and time (actualization of Khronos, Chronos). For this very reason, the figure of the Black Arab should not be satanized. It is not



a simplified actualization of ancient imagological practices of the racial, ethnic and religious other, but rather a testimony to different parameters in the evaluation of differences and an indicator that nothing should be interpreted as black or white or stereotypical. As a figure of *necessary evil*, the Black Arab forewarns that in the human, far-from-ideal world, a highly developed awareness, culture and practice of ethical-humanistic values, accompanied with a system of individual and collective priorities, is indispensable to prevent the advent of irreparable chaos and to avoid the domination of destructive chthonian forces.

- The figure of the Black Arab is one of the historical and social-cultural actualizations (appropriations, naturalizations and visualizations) of the *archetypal proto-pattern of evilgood/the archetype of beyond evil and beyond good* (agon, unity of oppositions, evil, disease, plague, violence, daemons, darkness, nothingness, chaos, entropy, destruction, death, terror, underworld, dissimilarity, foreignness, tyranny, invasion, pillage, war, conflict, duel, decisive battle of life and death, jet-black horse<sup>1</sup>). For this very reason, the Black Arab functions as a double of a much older mytheme, the mytheme of Black, death. The Black Arab is one of the characters of this mytheme of Black, perceived primarily as a counterbalance to White (light, life) and devoid of differentiated moral semantics. We find it difficult to understand the meta-ethical notions of life and death, perceived as whiteness and blackness (light against dark, visible against invisible). However, the probability is high that in different cultural circumstances with different perceptual parameters, the image of the world was not constructed on the basis of the dualism between good and evil.
- The Black Arab is, therefore, a character of the function of BLACK and exists only in correlation with WHITE. Both black and white are relational, structural categories, constituted one against the other and obtaining their semantic importance and value, and subsequently their ethical importance, only through mutual relationship. Thus the Black Arab is dependent on Bolen Dojčin. The Black Arab cannot be understood if not observed in correlation with Bolen Dojčin (Dažbog, Milky Way). Nor can the figure of the Black Arab be understood without insight into the figure of White Angelina. Angelina is the semanteme of original whiteness and light, of the angel (Angelina), of the female principle of home, of the self, of the first notions about one's own country, of the first notions about a

1. The syntagm **Black Arab** is today widely used to refer to a markedly black breed of horses.

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native land (motherland, later fatherland) ... It is not unfounded to believe that the ancient pair of opposites was that consisting of the Black Arab and White Angelina. Bolen Dojčin becomes a hero-saviour of the native land/home when urged by Lepa Angelina, at the moment when she becomes aware that it is her turn to be raped by the Black Arab, to be conquered by the Black Arab, to be estranged by the Black Arab...

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The attributes black and white, as well as the determinants ours/foreign/alien, fellow man/foreigner, are deictic with a minimal immanent meaning, with many more semantic functions than semantic characters, as they semanticize and define their referential content only after having been placed within some concrete historical and communication context and consequently converted into their concrete mythical and historical transformations/masks—into the characters (personae) of Time, Chronos, Saturn, Ares, the Three-headed Dragon, the Devil, the Plague, the Negro, the Persian emperor Darius, the Arab, the Moor, the Semite, the Turk, the Arnaut, a person of a different faith, etc., as personifications of Black while, when White is personified, it assumes the form of the white man, initially only pictorially and symbolically white but later assuming the physical form of the white man. *White light* is personified in conformity with the dominant cultural codes (the theocentric or anthropocentric view of the world, orthodox or catholic ...) into the form of an angel, holy man or saint—that is, in the shape of a beautiful young woman, Lepa (White) Angelina, additionally accorded the role of a mother, sister, wife, progeny, native land, possession). The white light is probably one of the oldest cultural perceptions of the original light-seeing light whose presence has been preserved alive in the languages of the Slavic peoples to the present day. A logical antithesis of Black God is White God, as the antithesis of the Black Arab is White Angelina. In this context, the Black Arab and White Angelina re-construct the original pair of opposites (Dažbog and Crnbog) and corroborate one pre-historic worldview (cosmic, eschatological, and then mythical) not as yet fraught with ethical, racial, ethnic and ideological stereotypes.

The image of light and dark, originating from the universe but residing on the earth in full view of humanity and in the universal chronotopic structure, seems most primeval. Light and darkness ARE in the beginning. The birth of Man inscribes in the structure of the world the need to

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watch and see; it is as 'clear as day' that nothing is visible without light, that there is no beauty without light, that light is immanent to human culture, which syllogistically suggests that light—seeing light—is worth dying for. With the very introduction of light as a value of civilization, the earliest system of ethical and religious (pagan/polytheist, and later Christian) values is introduced. The semantics of light are transferred in the notion of daylight/seeing light, whereby an additional meaning of awareness of light, of sense and discernment, is introduced. The category of seeing is brought into play as a significant cultural step forward. The perception of light as awareness instigates the next step forward when awareness is understood as a form of beauty. Beauty in sight is experienced as beauty for the soul. The multiplication of White Angelina's (white angel's) attributes as a mother, sister, wife, probably occurred later as a variant which introduced more marked and differentiated ethical notional elements (incest). While the correlation of Lepa Angelina with collective values such as community, people, native land, native town, was introduced in additional layers in the meaning of the original figure of the white light, of Lepa Angelina.

Thus, in the course of time, ever more new semantic layers are added to the same substrate of light, marked mythically, historically, ethnically, religiously, linguistically and culturally. This elaboration of the perceptual, cognitive, communicational and ethical context instigated a radical change of a mythical character, and later of an epic-historical character, which introduced the figure of the hero, the national hero, the figure which, in this case, we will call Bolen Dojčin. There is no doubt that Bolen Dojčin is a mythical-historical personification of the ancient role of a saviour, a role which introduces onto the stage of human civilization the category of tragic drama, a cultural structure of existence which requires at least three dramatis personae, three roles accorded to three characters. The stage of the initial cosmic duality incarnated in the binary pair the Black Arab and White Angelina was not sufficient for civilization to produce tragic dramatic situations. They require another, third role/figure, established through the introduction of a whole series of semi-mythical, semi-legendary and historical characters (Bolen Dojčin, St. George, St. Demetrios, King Marko). In this expansion of the dual into a tripartite structure, numerous deviations from the original matrix were effected: meanings were transferred, values were substituted, depending on the stance and the actions of the subjects, on their motifs and positions (conqueror or defender, loser or victor, the one who is menaced or the one who menaces). This kind of

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historical or cultural context began differentiating positive and negative heroes, justified and unjustified evil, heroic murder and criminal murder, institutional and individual terror.

We would like to refer briefly to a symptomatic phraseological combination which has survived to the present day in Macedonian and other Slavic languages, the syntagm *bela videlina*, *belo videlo* (white light or white seeing light) which generated the anthropomorphic perception of the world in the character of White Angelina. Therefore, it appears that the third key figure, the figure of the White Woman in the Southern Slavic triad—and within this context, in the Macedonian triad—composed of the Black Arab, Bolen Dojčin and Lepa Angelina, is in fact the key principal figure of the archetype of the pre-notional dualistic worldview. White Angelina is a personification of the archetype of Light/Holiness, of Day, of feeding and nourishing rain, of everything visible, of this world, and consequently ours, everything that in the course of time becomes identified with our home, our land, our world, our possession. White Angelina is the female principle opposed to the male principle, even though there later occurred a reversal in the personification of the two cosmic principles in the genders, and it is more frequent now that the female principle is dark and the male principle incarnates light. However, the matriarchal mind had many reasons to characterize light as a bright, white woman - mother (home, this world), and darkness as a black-skinned, dark man (foreigner - destroyer of the home and of established harmony, the energy that devours everything, synonymous with the upheaval and overthrow of authority, the son killing his father and taking over the throne, new Time, new cultural code). It is highly likely that the initial basic pair of binary opposition which reflected the cosmic in earthly relations consisted of a white woman and a black man, the basic figures of cultural upsurge. The Black Arab and Bolen Dojčin are two sides of the same cultural coin, two ends and two directions of the same line/road, two cheeks of one head (mythology encompasses such heads/figures, Janus's, for instance). It might not be a matter of mere chance that oral literary and linguistic tradition has preserved the image of the two-headed, that is, the three-headed dragon.

This is corroborated by numerous elements of earlier metamorphoses of the Balkan Bolen Dojčin and the Black Arab containing undifferentiated elements which led towards mutual semantic contamination and mixing of attributes (characteristics, colours, functions). In retrospect, we can observe that over long periods of time some im-

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portant traits of the figure of the Black Arab were transferred upon the figure of Bolen Dojčin and vice versa. Thus, Dojčin, as an epic-heroic substitute of White Angelina, becomes sick, that is, assumes the traits of black, of death, 'rising from the dead' to enact his famous heroic deed, to defeat in a duel the assailant and conqueror personified in the figure of the Black Arab. Both figures are figures of war (incarnations of the mythical Ares/Mars), but the difference in the concrete historical situations was already drawn in accordance with the ethical system of values of the historical cultures resulting in a strict distinction between the hero and the anti-hero: between the hero as saviour of a city, territory and people, and the figure of the anti-hero, the conqueror. The mythical Bolen Dojčin and the legendary-historical King Marko are epic heroes who transform war into a feat because they rescue people/territory from invasion, while the legendary-historical figures of the Black Arab and the historical figure of the Turk are negative epic counterparts of those anti-heroes, observed from the perspective of the subject who is conquered, enslaved, tortured, destroyed (demolished, if it is a city, or a building). This is the actual perspective created by the epic-heroic tradition of the Southern Slavic and other Balkan peoples, the perspective which realizes—that is, linguistically-artistically performs—the actualization of the hero-saviour. In this historical context, the roles are already split, in line with moral notions and values, into a positive and a negative hero, into a saviour and a tyrant, into a friend and an enemy, into ours and foreign, into a defensive and aggressive war, into a creator and a destroyer... However, in the background of this agon/duel between Bolen Dojčin and the Black Arab, between King Marko and the Ottoman, we can discern the figure of White Angelina, the parable of the *light and holy ideal*, the reason for the battle between the two heroes, the parable of one's own territory, that is, fatherland, the metaphor of freedom and peaceful 'beautiful life', preserved in the idiom 'to be oneself on one's own'. This proves that the duel/agon between Bolen Dojčin and the Black Arab is not an end in itself, a war for war's sake, but a war whose purpose is a recognizable motif with two sides: one that desires to conquer the foreign land and enslave its foreign people (to convert/assimilate them as one's own); the other summoned to defend the land and the people (to preserve the identity).

All that was once a synonym of light is retained in the character of White Angelina for whom it is worth waging a war and dying. Bolen Dojčin is only a defender of light; light itself is represented by the figure of White Angelina, the ideal, the higher worth, formerly pre-ethical, and

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subsequently ethical and ethnic. In this context we should draw attention to the fact that the triad of characters creates a dramatic situation, an intensive tragic dramatic situation conveyed in Balkan memories and cultures. In order for a tragic dramatic situation to be established, the existence of two opposed heroes is insufficient; the inclusion of a third person is necessary, a character who will incarnate a higher superhuman goal—the ideals of freedom, of love, of faith, something for the sake of which it is worth dying. Hence, it appears that the Balkan appropriation of the archetype of light and dark introduces the factor of the ideal, motivation, justification—something else which lies on the boundary between human and divine values, between the worldly and the holy, between the banal and sacral... This triple structure of personified roles of hero, negative hero and superior power (ideal) is where the tragic struggle takes place in which the notion for a superior collective interest is formed beyond the boundaries of individual drive. For this reason, the majority of epic poems concerning the subject of Bolen Dojčin/the Black Arab are of a balladic-dramatic structure and resemble a transformed old drama, the drama of humanity, the drama in which the superior ideal is the basic principle of the collective ethical code. In this context, it appears that the incarnation of Light, Lepa Angelina, is simultaneously an incarnation of the new cultural ideal (of the new Time, of the Spirit of the Times), that is, of collective identity, ethnic identity closely associated with territory (one's own city, one's own house, one's own field).

The role of Bolen Dojčin is played in different cultural circumstances by the figures of Zeus, Jupiter, Alexander the Great, St. George, St. Demetrios, Gjergj Kastrioti and others. In this sense, the personification of White in the White Man is also of a later date, one formed in particular social-historical circumstances when notions about racial, and later ethnic, and often religious (cultural) differences were formed. The Southern Slavic epic, for instance, depicts Bolen Dojčin and the Black Arab as prototypes of a Christian and a Muslim, and the battle between them is a symbolic representation of the conflict between Christendom and Islam.

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As figures of collective memory and oblivion, the Black Arab, Bolen Dojčin and White/Lepa Angelina position the topos of Black in a sophisticated and dramatic triad of cosmic and cultural antagonisms. Black is the colour of proto-matter, of the primordial unity, the colour

of night, of the original chaos, of death, of the instincts and the female principle (Jean Chevalier, Alain Gheerbrant 1969). White is not always in opposition to black: in some traditions this place is occupied by red or yellow (solar energy, symbol of life). The blackness of the Black Arab in Macedonian folk ballads is described as a 'charred log' (Brothers Miladinov, poem no. 154, p 226), unlike Bolen Dojčin's yellowness indicating his illness and death. However, in some inherited semantic layers, it evokes the colour of life-giving energy (fire). In Macedonian oral literature, as well as in some southern Macedonian dialects (Kukuš, Voden), expressions are preserved which describe the Black Arab with an antithetical opposing of attributes: 'the blond head of the Black Arab', 'the golden Arab' (Kosta Peev 2008, Brothers Miladinov). The use of constant epithets implies a process of stylization and these expressions should thus be interpreted symbolically since they often express an emotional approach to the subject of the poem or represent meta-textual expressions about poetry itself. Negroid iconography conveys an awareness of a certain essential cosmic or cultural difference (racial and ethnic, but also moral and religious) and, to an even greater extent, a collective segregational attitude towards that difference. In this sense, otherness in the Balkan-Mediterranean region is conspicuously marked by *obscurantism* whenever the characters described are of different origins (Arabic, Moorish, Turkish, Arnaut, African, Semitic, even Slavic), different religions (pagans, godless, non-Christian, Muslims), or are ethically/culturally different (honour, valor, loyalty, avarice, violence, alcoholism, reaching for what is not yours, customs).

In the paradigm of the Black Arab in the Slavic- and non-Slavic Balkan and Mediterranean context, several analogues of these three figures of memory are inscribed—linguistically and culturally distinct, but complementary in their essence. This is the case with the analogue of the Black Arab, the Black Moor, Moors (in Croatian, Slovenian, Italian and Corsican linguistic and cultural memories), the analogue of Bolen Dojčin - Gjergj Elez Ali (within the Albanian linguistic context), as well as the problematic analogue of Lepa Angelina - Lepa Vida (established in the Serbian, Croatian and Slovenian context, especially when the motif is the 'abduction of a woman').

Explicitly under the same names or in several variations of the names with cultural-historical connotations, this triad of characters can be located in the folklore heritage of all Balkan peoples (Bosnian, Bulgarian, Macedonian, Serbian, Croatian, Montenegrin, Albanian, Romanian, Turkish, Greek traditions), as well in that of the

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Mediterranean peoples (Italian, Corsican, French); and beyond that, it is reflected in the linguistic and collective memory of other European peoples (Russian, Georgian, Ukrainian). Hence, the most frequently researched discourses of the Black Arab topic within this project were epic poems, ballads, folktales, magical tales and other types of narrative folklore, as well as some lyrical genres with lascivious and comic content, the folk village theatre or the *Karagyož shadows theatre*, the Moorish shadow theatre from Corsica, the Sicilian puppet theatre, etc. However, the scientific research of the *Interpretations* project for 2008 did not exclude pre-literary and bordering discourses such as mythical discourse; nor could memory practices and vestiges in the language itself and the general cultural symbolism be ignored. It is these linguistic and cultural symbols that function as evidence of collective memory and their content is enigmatic but indicative, indispensable in the exploration of subtleties in the figures of the Black Arab, Bolen Dojčin and Lepa Angelina. These subtleties direct the research interest towards the ancient cultural matrices of a markedly pre-ethical, pre-ethnic and pre-religious constitution. They forewarn that various issues, which at present and in more recent cultural history are perceived in ethnic, religious or ethical light, were previously devoid of such semantics or were of more universal, not only anthropological but also cosmogonic and eschatological significance. Revisiting long-gone epochs reintroduces the interpretation of the mythological principles of thinking the world. These principles demonstrate that the mythical worldview is spontaneous and integral (matter, space and time are not set apart), that Man and the world are not split into subjects and objects (an observing subject and an observed object), that there is no formal-logical causality in linguistic images. Within this World, time is observed as if it is matter, so figuratively real that it appears unreal (fantastic). Metaphor in myth is fairly concrete; symbolism is unknown to the myth-creating mind—the mind that creates images, art, folklore, and even history. For this very reason, mythical stories are read as a version of history (O. Freydenberg 1987, 39-40). Mythical thinking/interpreting of the world does not recognize abstract notions and speculations; it employs images devoid of religious and ethical connotations. This type of thinking is characteristic of the epochs preceding Antiquity. Antiquity was a period that introduced notional thinking. In this context, it is not excluded that images of the Black Arab have mythical pre-history; that is, that they were once completely concrete or *aesthetic* (of the senses) representations of space, time, life, death, light, darkness...



Observed from this perspective, the semantics of Black are beyond moral laws and beyond the polarization of evil against good. The initial system of binary oppositions between the constitutive forces of the cosmos depict the world as a functioning structure of two principles: the principle of creation and the principle of destruction, of life and death, of war and peace. The cultural duality between evil and good is a variation of the two constitutive cosmic forces. The oxymoronic figure of evilgood implies that the identification of evil and good is a question of interest, perspective and an observing subject. Things become good or evil in certain cultural circumstances; they are not such in their essence. Vestiges of undivided and integrated evilgood can be located in some rituals in which the personifications of the principle of good themselves (Bolen Dojčin) assume characteristics of the principle of Satan/evil (the Black Arab)—dark, black faces, figures of the monstrously other.

Through this shift back in space-time, the three currently distinguishable figures, the three differentiated functions—the function of the folk hero saviour (Bolen Dojčin), the function of the foreigner/enslaver (the Arab, Moor, Turk, Arnaut), and the function of threatened honour (people, home) personified in the character of the wife, mother, sister or ‘blood sister’ Angelina—emerge emancipated of the shadow of racial, ethnic, religious, cultural and social divisions. Research reveals semantic layers in the figures of Bolen Dojčin, Lepa Angelina and the Black Arab which take us back to the undivided world of pre-ethical thinking in which opposites cohabit for the very reason that they are immanent to the cosmos, where Man and Man’s world are inseparable parts of the cosmos and the unity of opposites is a moving force of evolution. In this world there is a certain harmony between the world and the visual, linguistic and other semiotic-symbolic representations of the world, a harmony between the earthly human and the celestial cosmic worlds. This harmony of representation is a constitutive principle of human civilization. The human spirit comprehends things concretely with the senses and intuitively; consequently, the visualization of the world is not yet confined by the dualism of good and evil. This cognitive return in time-space thrusts to the foreground memory practices of ritual provenance which contain vestiges of the archetypal visions of the world (the energy structure of the universe, the male and female principle), as well as vestiges of archaic imagologies of the other man and the other world (the black man as the other from the perspective of the white man, the black world/underworld as otherness from the point

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of view of the white world/this world). Thus, the project *The Black Arab as a Figure of Memory* entails not only precise folklorist, historical, archaeological and linguistic-semantic studies, but also interpretative, mythopoetic and semiotic analyses.

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Judging by the relevant indicators, the figures of the Black Arab, Bolen Dojčin and White Angelina are symbolic, syncretic and acting roles (*functions* in Propp's terminology, *actants* in Greimas's terminology). They are composed of a fascinating multiplicity of ingredients which have left traces in both the material and non-material cultural heritage of the Balkan and Mediterranean peoples (in literature, folklore, theatre, visual arts, language and collective memory). Their syncretism encompasses elements of different discursive provenance, different genesis, even different connotations. Hande Bircalan Gedik perceives this syncretism as a combination of fictional and projected realities characteristic of narrative and dramatic-theatrical forms.

This syncretic structure involves the presence of diverse elements in the same place at the same time. At this point in time, in the preserved textures of the figures of the Black Arab, Bolen Dojčin and Lepa Angelina, the presence of their earlier forms is obvious and thus makes their (current) syncretism unquestionable. Traces of their earlier discursive textures (cosmological, chthonian, ritual, mythical, theatrical, epic, fairy-tale like/fantastic, historical, religious, ethnic-cultural) are inscribed in their syncretism, demonstrated as appropriations of these figures in actual social-cultural circumstances.

However, the current syncretism of these figures of memory is not mechanically adopted from earlier epochs and their actualizations of these same figures. In other words, it is highly probable that the syncretic intensity of the figures of the Black Arab, Bolen Dojčin and Lepa Angelina were reduced in certain concrete, localized (in time, space and tradition) social-cultural constellations. The more they were 'localized', the more the meaning of the figures of the Black Arab, Bolen Dojčin and Lepa Angelina was narrowed and their syncretism reduced. In such cases, only one of their dimensions was separated and emphasized as dominant; that is, one singular reception and interpretation of the topos of Black was, for instance, replaced by another, whereby cultural conventions were shifted from the foreground to the background of history. For these very reasons, in ancient periods when these figures were not yet historicized they cannot be perceived as mythically-

historically syncretic. As we move closer to more recent history and to the 21st century, the syncretism of these three figures of memory becomes more marked. It is not by chance that the contemporary mind raises the question of the genesis, structure, semiosis and functions of these three figures of memory and considers relevant the need for their hermeneutic and archetypological deconstruction and reconstruction.

The positioning of the three figures of the Black Arab, Bolen Dojčin and White Angelina in different structural combinations implies a different genesis each time and a genesis which constitutes different semantics of the same figures. It is a matter of several distinct contexts in which the meaning and significance (role) of these figures is constituted, whereby a distinction is made between their inherited/basic *meaning* and their concrete thematic values or *purpose*. At this point, we would like to note some specific instances of the contextualization of these memory figures and their pertinent semanticizations and stylizations:

1. When the binary coupling *Black Arab* < > *White Angelina* is constituted, the mytheme of the universal agon/antagonism of existence is dominant and the probability is high that this is a case of evocation of an archaic perceptive position which highlights the primary cosmic oppositions in a constant process of disintegration and integration. This is the agon between light and darkness, between the visible and invisible world, between day and night, between life and death, between the male and female (active and passive) principle, between the animus and the anima. This configuration preserves the tendency towards the unity, integration and indivisibility of cosmic principles: differences already exist manifestly, they have been here forever, but associated with a paradoxical drive for reuniting, even if that be violent (abduction, fertilization, hybridization). It is a paradigm of the ritual performance and ritualized memory related to primordial violence and sacrifice. Therefore, we will refer to this configuration as cosmogonical, eschatological and chthonian, and we will associate it with ritual culture and mythical thinking.
2. The shift from ritual and mythical to folkloric and religious perception of the world is projected in the construction of the antagonized and masculinized figures of the Black Arab and Bolen Dojčin. It is dominated by a polarity which is partially historical and partially mythical, reflected in the numerous Byzantine visualizations of the agon between the Lamja and the figure of the Saviour/Saint

(George, Demetrios). This configuration indicates ethical notions of the world in which confessional, ethnic and social values are introduced. It is characteristic of narrative and theatrical practices in the folk culture of the Balkans, which initiate a distinction between sacral and profane forms of existence. Introducing the cult of religious-ethnic identity/alterity, this configuration actualizes the topos of the duel (the heroic interpretation of salvation from the personification of Satan, whether real-historical or metaphysical-mythical).

3. The configuration which unites the figures of Bolen Dojčin and Lepa Angelina against the Black Arab is an attempt to open the new ethnic-social appropriation of the figure of the hero-saviour to the memories of earlier linguistic and visual interpretations of the agon of genesis and survival. Memory is porous and leaks images from the past into new constructs. Through the integration of a third figure, memory is dramatized. Mythical and ritual stories are theatricalized. An explicit category is introduced of the ethics of the ethnicity, of a collective ideal (territory, borders, freedom, honour), which generates conditions for the constitution of the image of the religious, ethnic and cultural other. In this context, we may raise the question of the symbolism of Lepa Angelina, who is the closest to the ethos of the ideal and purpose of sacrifice. Woman is a symbolic image of humankind, of one's genus in general, and she is worth dying for and waging a battle which goes beyond the notions of a human measure. In this sense, Lepa Angelina emerges as a generator of the ethic code of humanity. She is the boundary stone between pre-notional (mythical) and notional-ethical thinking. She introduces drama into events and supplies conflicts with a higher purpose, transforming violence into feats, battlefields into heroic duels, battles into the salvation of nations or humanity as a whole... This is why her acting role is related to the ritual-tragic and narrative-epic folkloric and literary discourses. The figure of Lepa Angelina is a kind of a substitute for the 'chorus' and the voice of the collective, which implies a value of moral duty devoid of which there would be no superhuman duels or self-sacrifice (for protection of the honour of the loved one, or of the family, fatherland, freedom). This higher purpose is situated on the very threshold of the ethics of the conflict between the Black Arab and Bolen Dojčin (there are some indications that Dojčin's name is a hermetic anamnesis of the Milky Way, of the galaxy, of milk, light and life, of breastfeeding (doenje) understood as being, especially since in

some Macedonian folk songs he is referred to as 'A Little Child', 'Barebellied Child', an orphaned child, all of which are substitutes of ancient epic-mythical figures).<sup>2</sup>

In this context it emerges that, for the purposes of an orientational chronology and typology of the figures of the Black Arab, Bolen Dojčin and Lepa Angelina, it is possible to produce a provisional scheme of their evolution determined by the dominant functions they performed in particular social-cultural circumstances. Aware of the risk of such an undertaking, I will offer a scheme which simultaneously refers to the development of the genre forms in which the topos of Black has been inscribed throughout the history of the Slavic-Balkan-Mediterranean cultural sphere and to the changes in the dominant identifications of Black. This scheme is an attempt at an account of the series of interpretative variants of the topos of Black, which are replicas both of the archetype of Black and of the inherited dominant cultural construct of Black, which supplies the topos of Black with a historical dimension. The scheme can also be indicative of the elements which, in the course of time, composed the syncretism of the figures of the Black Arab, Bolen Dojčin and Lepa Angelina, these figures being only one of the more recent appropriations of the topos-matrix of Black/White (Dark/Light). Finally, the scheme of the evolution of the topos of Black can be read as a parable for the evolution and the priorities of human civilization, which only serves as an additional motivation to come forth with such a scheme:

Cosmological > chthonian > ritual > linguistic > mythical > folkloric theatrical (performative) > folkloric-literary (heroic epic, balladic, lyrical, fictional-narrative, fairytale-like or fantastic) > religious (Christian, Muslim) > historical (Neolithic migrations, Mediterranean migrations, pirate raids, Macedonian-Hellenistic conquests in the Middle East, Byzantine-Arab wars, Moorish migrations, Ottoman conquests, Muslim conquests, Arnaut terror) > religious > ethnic-cultural (cultural other) appropriations

Notions about the mythical 'black man' and social-cultural positioning with respect to this figure go far back in Macedonian and Balkan history. In the light of this information, the presence of the black man on European soil—that is, on the territory of ancient Haemus (the old name for the Balkan peninsula)—is not only mythical/imaginary, but also historical/concrete. Archaeological artifacts concerning the black man and his artistic representations have been excavated and doc-

2. In the epic poem 'The Little Child and the Black Arab', the role of Bolen Dojčin is played by a little, weakly, and seemingly powerless child-orphan.

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umented on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia, dating from the Neolithic period (5-4th millennium BC) and from Antiquity (Nikos Čausidis, Tatjana Civjan, Radmilo Petrović).

Obscured by the historically differentiated binary pair consisting of the Black Arab and Bolen Dojčin is the memory of the Slavic pagan nomenclature in its background consisting of the White God and the Black God (Belobog and Crnobog, Dažbog and Triglav), as well as the ancient Greek and Roman matrix (Ares/Mars and Hades/Pluto - diurnal and nocturnal deities of war). Delving deeper into the lethargic memory of humanity, we can discern figures divest of any ethnic affiliation and neutral. These figures are of no ethnic-cultural provenance, even though humanity has remembered them through a certain, that is, someone's linguistic angle. We refer to the anthropomorphic and theriomorphic personifications of Darkness and Light, of Time and Death, of degeneration and regeneration, as well as to the pre-Great Flood images of the uroborus (the snake-dragon eating its own tail, ουροβόρος όφις in Ancient Greek), the Horned Ram - the Prince of Darkness, Cronus who eats his own children, Zeus who dethrones Cronus, and the Plague that reaps the living...

Hence we can conclude that, as mythical time is replaced by history, historical times are also sometimes replaced by mythical time; that is, mythical and historical thinking alternate and leave traces in each other. In some historical periods marked by a lack of prosperous historical processes, it is highly probable for a *mythic turn* to occur. This mythic turn within a certain historical epoch denotes a radical epistemological break which actualizes a mythical interpretation of the world in circumstances of previously expended historical interpretations. This mythic break portrays historical figures from a mythical angle and hybridizes mythical and historical figures. It introduces a certain degree of historical/hermeneutical aporia and enigma leading to multiple interpretations and even misapprehensions.

Conversely, in periods of more stable historical circumstances, the historical code of the Black Arab's story is depleted. This depletion is then compensated for by a renewal of the mythical code of the Black Arab, or by the introduction of other, folkloric, neo-mythical and fantastic re-compositions of the Black Arab's stereotype within the folk cultures of the Mediterranean, and the figure of the Black Arab is profaned in keeping with the carnival, satirical and eroticized image of reality characteristic of medieval folk culture.

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The studies employing folkloristic-historicist, ethnological and cultural methodology (Rade Božović, Lidija Stojanović Lafazanovska, Sonja Zogović) note the fact that the figure of the Black Arab was structured in folk culture and folk literature during the period of Byzantine-Arab conflicts between the 8th and 12th centuries (780-1180), way before the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans. This figure was revitalized in the time of the Ottoman Empire (14th–19th centuries), when the Arab was actualized in the character of the Turk and later on the Aranut (in epic poetry, the character of Gino Arnaut emerges as an antagonist of King Marko) and his antagonist was recognized in the historically hyperbolized figure of King Marko.

Despite this actualization of Black in the character of the Ottoman Turk, the earlier term 'Black Arab' remains much more frequent in the cultural memory of the Balkan peoples. This resistance of collective memory to localize the topos of Black-White antagonism in the historical symbolizations of the Turk and King Marko indicates that ancient mythic symbolism is more influential than the historical and that it possesses the power to transcend concrete historical traumas. This adds to our certainty that, in the last few centuries, the name of the Black Arab has gained the value of a symbolic name of a symbolic figure which is more detached from historical than from mythical Time.

In principle, the establishment of a certain social-cultural stance towards the Arab world was probable in Antiquity—that is, much earlier in history than the Byzantine-Arab conflicts. Many visual representations of the fateful battle between Alexander the Great and the Persian king Darius are structured as variations on the same pattern which we can trace in subsequent Byzantine and Ottoman social-cultural constellations. Byzantine visual representations of the Christianized figures of the saviour of Thessalonica and many other cities (St Demetrios, St George) can also be interpreted as variations on the same archetypal matrix. They actualize the religious-historical superhuman battle of the saint with every possible incarnation of the dark forces and Satan - the Lamja, the three-headed dragon, the sea monster, the Plague, the Turk...

These representations permeated the ethic-centric and ethnocentric world (whose central principle is the *moral law*, as immanently human, against the cosmic law which is immanently amoral, indifferent to moral axiology). This moral law places the representatives of evil and good—the friend and the enemy, the ethnic/religious fellow man

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and the foreigner, the good and the bad hero and the protector and the conqueror—in explicit opposition. Within this ethically divided world, evil itself is dual and divided into good and bad (evil/violence), which concludes with the dual image of the good and bad hero, of justified (defensive) and unjustifiable (aggressive, expansionist, colonialist, imperialist) violence.

What becomes conspicuous is that the figure of the Black Arab is historicized in one period and de-historicized in another. In this process it is mythicized and de-mythicized, mystified and demystified. (The historical variations of the Black Arab appear as a form of mystification when observed from the perspective of the original figure of the archetype of black.) When de-historicized, the figure of the Black Arab restores the mythic matrix, referring back to the forgotten images of ancient civilizations. When mythicized, the figure of the Black Arab revisits archaic (Manichean) visualizations and notions of cosmic and chthonian energies (diabolical figures, monsters, three-headed dragons, three-headed totems, three-headed deities, daemons of death, black underworld deities). When historicized, this figure retreats from mythical visual representations and constitutes new, historically recognizable embodiments which can vary socially/culturally in relation to the archetypal pattern and which contemporize the figure of the Black Arab in the characters of a black African man, a black Moor, an Asiatic Arab (Persian), Turk, Arnaut. At a certain historical moment, the figure is fixed in the textualized memory of folklore and oral cultural heritage as a symbolic Black Arab, irrespective of whether the concrete historical enemy is Negroid or not.

Socio-cultural and historical appropriations of the notion of *the Black Arab* vary to such an extent that we could truly refer to this notion as an *arabesque of variegated references*. The mythic appropriations tend towards a return to the archaic imagological representations with a cosmical or other universal anthropological meaning which interprets the Black Arab as a figure of sexual power (Gabriela Schubert), as a figure with a sorcerer's power, or as a figure which is not necessarily negative but simply a borderline figure of the human subconscious, a figure of suppressed impulsive and propulsive energy, a figure of radical upheavals in space and time, a figure of power... In actualizations of the symbolic Black Arab we can note variations in the intensity of interest in the antithetical personification of the archetype of black and the archetype of white (dark and light, day and night, visible and invisible world, old and new time, good and bad god, black and white sun,



Crnobog and Belobog, Black Goddess and White Goddess). At times this interest is higher, at others lower, and this affects the complementary personification of Bolen Dojčin in the culturally, racially, ethnically and religiously marked figures of the White Man (Bolen Dojčin, King Marko, St George, St Demetrios, Gjergj Elez Ali). By contrasting the differences between the black and the white figures, these variations actually refer us back to the initial unity of dark and light which can be comprehended only within the framework of the pre-ethical worldview which does not recognize a division of the principles into positive and negative, only *a dramatic act of movement of memory and energy in space and time*.

The evolution of this mythic-historical symbolism of 'the Black Arab' is reviewed and presented in the scheme of mythic-historical transformations put forward by Professor Rade Božović. This scheme is corroborated (explicitly and implicitly) by the majority of the studies in the third volume of *Interpretations: Dragon/Lamja/Monster/Karagjoz > Crnobog/Troglav/Triglav > the Black Arab > the Moor > the Turk > the Arnaut* (and less frequent versions with a Slav or a Gipsy). The dragon appears here as an initial model of the Black Arab, as one of the earliest incarnations of the cosmological topos of Black and the Black Man. A similar scheme could be drawn analogously with respect to the figure of Bolen Dojčin (White, the White Man). It could be presented as follows: Horseman/Child/Man/Hero > Belobog/Dažbog/Zeus > Saviour/St George/St Demetrios > Bolen Dojčin > King Marko.

Thus the figures of the Black Arab, Bolen Dojčin and Lepa Angelina persist in a rhythmical-schematic process of development in which their interpretation shifts between cosmic-mythic and historical memory practices. This renders the amplitudes between the magical-fantastic and realistic-historical perception of the world (reality, time, masculinity, heroism, fighting duels, female beauty, war, foreigner, saviour, family, people) symptomatic and compels any interpretation to respect the historicization of the figures of the Black Arab, Bolen Dojčin and Lepa Angelina, as well as their archaization and mythicization.

Neither the process of historicization nor the process of repeated mythicization are completely finalized. In interpreting the semantic revisions of these figures of memory, the logic of two (philosophical) codes of memory and perception are followed: the code of historicization and the code of mythicization (de-historicization), so that a cycle of new historicization of the mythicized figures should start and thus continue the historical process of development—a process which in-

volves shifting values from the foreground to the background of history and vice versa. This can best be observed in the examples of the Black Arab and Bolen Dojčin, figures susceptible to historical and epic corrections and transformations with historical and ethnic-cultural connotations. These figures are only examples of the numerous variations of enigmatic archetypes from distant pre-histories, from the periods of the birth of civilization. In the course of time, these historicized variants, even though relatively recent in the historical sense of the word, started being used—from a lack of generally accepted terms for their archetypal equivalents—as synonyms of archetypal figures.

In this sense, it appears that the 20th century was a century of subtle mythicization (de-historicization) in the absence of a new historical actualization of the archetypal figures of the Black and White deity into some historically recognizable configurations. Perhaps the most recent wars in the Balkans will renew this dualism, but it will most likely be marked by the particular and fragmented perspectives of specific Balkan ethnic experiences, taking into account the new demarcations along the line of ours/foreign. The boundaries of otherness have been shifted and accentuated, at least temporarily. However, on this occasion there is no room for speculation and prejudgment in this direction. In studies of Balkan folklore and culture from the 20th century, these figures were most commonly interpreted from the aspect of their recent historical actualization within the context of the Ottoman conquests in the Balkans. The Black Arab in the context of traditional and already conservative studies of folklore is perceived as a stereotypical epic representation of the conquering Turk, while Bolen Dojčin is perceived as a personification of King Marko in the Macedonian and Southern Slavic heroic epic. It is a certain fact that these figures of cultural memory should be perceived as actualizations of archetypal matrices, that is to say that they function as new imagological constructs. On the one hand, they are social-cultural appropriations (naturalizations) of the archetypal matrix (mythic, epic or historical); on the other hand, they epitomize the matrix as such. They evoke the matrix itself, however much this memory is fragile, hybridized, palimpsest and deformed. When they function within actual historical constellations, they might retreat from the matrix, but they cannot forget it entirely (oblivio, amnesia). When they remember the initial matrix actively, they replicate it, modify it, parody it or perform some (more or less impertinent) intertextual remake. In this context, the figures of the Black Arab, Bolen Dojčin and Lepa Angelina function as an eminent mythic and oral intertext in

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Slavic, Balkan and Mediterranean literary, theatrical and artistic practices.

It has become common knowledge that the more Balkan memory is historicized, the more it becomes antagonized, so that in the end it becomes obsessively focused on the adversary, on the subject of the antagonism, translated in historical consciousness into an ethnic-cultural enemy. This ethnic-cultural alien in the Balkans, this otherness which changes its name according to the viewpoint, can be the immediate neighbour (this is most commonly the case, because either the others threaten the borders, or rule the country of the natives), but it can also be a foreigner from a far away world, from overseas ('the Arab from overseas'). This alien foreigner is subjected in certain historical circumstances (especially in more recent history) to xenophobic interpretations and becomes a synonym of a Satanized figure of memory, even though numerous arguments substantiate the fact that the representative figures of the cultural other, the neighbour, are not absolutely negative figures. In some constellations they evoke neutral and even positive collective emotions of a more profound (totemistic) derivation in memory—the figure of a saviour, personification of existential and metaphysical yearning, adornment, toy, tested enemy who turns into a friend).<sup>3</sup>

Imagological perceptions of the other among Balkan peoples enthrone the figure of the Black Arab as the figure of a foreigner, which in some settings is interpreted as a figure of the cultural other or a symbolic foreigner who is not necessarily from abroad (Nikolai Vukov, Gjacoumou Tier), but who shares the same space and epitomizes 'our close/distant neighbour'. The Black Arab becomes a synonym of Balkan Orientalism, of the Balkans perceived as representative of European otherness against the Occidentalism enthroned as early as the division of the Roman Empire into East and West and with the establishment of Byzantium as the *Oriental face of European culture*. The Black Arab actually shifts the boundaries of the Oriental foreign in the being of European culture perceived as synonymous with the Occidental paradigm as such. As perceptions of the Black Arab shift, so do the perceptions of the confines of Orientalism: they were once associated with the cultures of the Far East; then with those of the Middle East and the Arab world; later with the European representative of Orientalism projected in the Turk; and, most recently, there have been attempts to describe the Balkans as an exponent of Orientalism, or as an area of a non-European character. In certain periods (the end

3. Olga Freydenberg, 1987, 91.

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of the 20th century), the Balkans became a synonym of European otherness—and the other, from the position of ruling Western European and EU standards, is a synonym for cultural identities and alterities.

The more the antagonized Balkan memory is fragmented and ethnicized, the more it becomes markedly ethnophobic (and religiophobic). In this complex context of polarizations of Balkan ethnicities, religions and cultures, the Black Arab imposes himself as a synecdoche of the ancient Balkan triad (based on the principle of *pars pro toto*). In Macedonian culture, this role of symbolic representation of the triple figure was conferred at a certain time upon Bolen Dojčin as semantically characteristic for the auto-perception of the Macedonians as heroes-sufferers who mobilize at the last hour to defeat the historical incarnation of evil.<sup>4</sup> In these new focalizations of the representatives of the triple figure, there occur various re-interpretations of the individual figures of the threesome.

In more recent actualizations of Balkan otherness/alterities, it is the antagonism between the Black Arab and Bolen Dojčin that is most explicitly highlighted; less commonly, the lover's agon of the Black Arab towards Lepa Angelina; and even less frequently, the incestuous relationship between Bolen Dojčin and the enigmatic Lepa Angelina. Historical actualizations are always semantically pragmatic and focused on the dominant social and collective interest. Hence, the ethnic-historical reception of the topos of Black suppresses in the background the narratives about love and incest and constitutes the figure of the other (the foreigner) in the Balkan area. The code of the cultural other in the Balkans is marked by the polarity between the two heroes and by the cult of the duel which has become a historical paraphrase of Karmic finality. For this reason, the other in the Balkan cultural space has a shared heroic fundament (the mytheme of the negative hero) and specific historical and ethnic-cultural personifications in different narrative and other constellations of memory.

4. It should be noted that Macedonian contemporary literature produced important works inspired by the subject of Bolen Dojčin and his historical substitute, King Marko. Among the most eminent certainly are Blaže Koneski's poems (*Bolen Dojčin*, the cycle of poems about King Marko), Georgi Stalev's plays *Bolen Dojčin* and *Angelina*, Blagoja Risteski Platnar's play *Lepa Angelina* (1996) and Slobodan Micković's multifocal novel *King Marko* (2003). We should also add Nina Apostolova Škrinjarić's book *King Marko Cycle - One Step Away from an Epopee* (2007), which is concurrently a study of Macedonian heroic epic and a selection of texts from Macedonian classical epic poetry (Dimitrija and Konstantin Miladinov, Marko Cepenkov, Kuzman Šapkarev, Vasil Ikonov, Panajot Gjinoski, Kiril Penušliski, Tome Sazdov, Marko Kitevski and others).

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From a Black God to a Black Arab:  
different mythical and historical actualizations of the universal matrix of Black

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### **From a Black God to a Black Arab: different mythical and historical actualizations of the universal matrix of Black**

*The memory figures of the Black Arab, Lepa Angelina and Bolen Dojčin are a paradigm of shared figures of memory with Slavic, Balkan, Mediterranean and perhaps universal connotations. The variations in their names and personifications only confirm the perception of these figures as universal archetypes adopted in the Balkan-Mediterranean regions as early as ancient times and which, since then, have been actualized in several different personifications. These figures are found in antagonized binary pairs or in theatricalized triads. Each actualization shifts an aspect of these figures to the foreground, an aspect with the power to express the dominant worldview (dueling, abduction of a woman, heroism, sacrifice). The figures of the Black Arab, Lepa Angelina and Bolen Dojčin are at present a synthesis of their earlier encodings and cultural interpretations in accordance with the conventions of the discourse which they represented (ritual, mythic, religious, historical, folkloric and aesthetic). Some epochs are marked by a tendency towards the mythicization of figures of memory; others are marked by a tendency towards their historicization. In this process there occurs a certain variation in the degree of their universality, that is, locality. The more historical they are, the more local they become. Still, even in the circumstances of rigid historical identification of archaic figures of memory, they manage to preserve, in hermetic form at least, their original semantic substrata.*





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European Research Project for Poetics & Hermeneutics

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Black Arab  
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Part I

**Mythic  
contextualization**



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## On the Russian Hypostasys of The Black Arab and Its Evolution

In this paper we would like to start from certain characteristics which have modeled the figure of the *Black Arab* in the European and, above all, perhaps, the Balkan—picture/model of the world. The Black Arab constitutes a representative of the *other (lower) world* which is by definition adverse to *this (upper), our world*. *The Arab* is always an outsider (metaphorically, from the other world; literally, from a country far away). In the dichotomy *good/evil, life/death*, etc., he represents the negative side of the opposition. To whomever this black giant is close in a folkloric/mythological sense, whether to the Dragon or to some real historical character—the latter role having been occupied by the Turk in the Balkans at a certain period of time—he falls within the category of *adversaries* and, in the wider sense of the word, the category of *foreigners*. (There are enough writings on the universal semiotic opposition *ours/foreign* in the picture/model of the world to make repetition here unnecessary.) The colour of the Arab's skin unequivocally accentuates his *strangeness to our world*: he is *black* among whites, a fact which successfully blends into another universal opposition, *white/black*, carrying all the corresponding connotations (*darkness, death, danger*, etc.).

These are the characteristics the Arab carries with him into Russian folklore, although he is not as vivid as in the Balkan region: his responsibilities were partially transferred to Tugarin Zmejevich, Idolische, Zmej Gorynych, Solovej Razboinik and, at a certain period of time, the *evil Tartars*.<sup>1</sup> It seems that the position of the Arab is at its most stable in folk plays (above all, in the Petrushka plays, but not exclusively) and

### Key words:

- cultural anthropology
- model of the world
- universal semiotic oppositions (white/black, this world/other world, life/death, good/evil, etc)
- Arab as word
- symbol
- Russian language
- Russian literature and culture
- Pushkin as Russian Arab

1. In order to avoid the wide corpus of writings dedicated to the Black Arab, we will have to restrict ourselves only to the following lengthy

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'summary' by J. I. Smirnov, taken from the foreword to his anthology of South Slavic epic songs: '... The Black Arab is the earliest epic adversary, right after the Dragon. Among his attributes we can identify ones which were earlier dedicated to the Dragon: his voracious appetite, his ability to spew fire, etc. But the Black Arab is not just a mythological being anymore. He is depicted as a powerful but slightly dumb giant, not unlike *Idolische*. It is suggested that the external impulse for the creation of this character originated in the impressions of Southern Slavs from their contacts with Arabs and Africans even before the epoch of Turkish conquests. We are inclined to assume that these impressions were the last covering layers on the already existing character of a giant with the attributes of a Dragon. The basis for this assumption can be seen in the numerous stories about common, i.e. faceless giants, noted by Slavs, as well as in the distinctive similarity between the character of the Black Arab and *Tugarin-Zmievich* and *Idolische* from *bylinas*. In songs the Black Arab often appears as an epical heir of the Dragon: he blocks roads, not allowing travellers to pass by, he abducts maids, eats cattle, etc. The character of the Black Arab became especially popular

in ritual plays coinciding with the calendar holidays: on the occasions mentioned, soot-smearred faces looked most effective against a background of typically Russian characters.

However, we will not dwell on the Black Arab's relation to Russian folklore, which in this case is merely a shadow of his relation to Balkan folklore: the adoption of the character of the Arab is obvious. We prefer to take a culturological perspective: from our standpoint, there are some interesting and at times extremely surprising evolutions in the development of *Arab* as a word, character, and symbol in the 'Russian view' of language and literature (in the framework of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century).

The lexical definition of *Arap* according to Vladimir Dal's glossary, which reflects the most common cultural context, gives us the meanings of the word as follows:

ARAP [АРАП] (m). Арапка [арапка] (f). In nature, in the tribe is a black-skinned, black-bodied human being from warm countries, especially from Africa: the Moor, the Negro. In the Court it is a position which can be occupied by a white servant as well: door-keeper, threshold-keeper. Arabchonok [арапчонок] (m). Арапчонка [арапчонка] (f) an Arab child. Арапчик [арапчик] (dem) Arab; | Dutch money, *puchkovyi* [пучковый] (from *puchok strel* [пучка стрел], arrow-shaft); | (low) type of small, hard, dark-green apples; | in pigeon-breeding: a pigeon with a black head; | a breed of short-haired dark-skinned dogs. Арапов [арапов], Арапкин [арапкин], which belongs to a certain Arab. Арапский [арапский], characteristic of Arabs. Араповатыи [араповатый], dark-skinned, very tanned, similar to Arab. Арап [арап] cannot be substituted by Arab [араб], Arabian [аравитянин], as well as derivatives: арапски [арапский], арабски [арабский] and so on.

[Dal, s.v.]

The last indication of Dal is of extreme importance: in speech, *Arab* [араб] and *Arap* [арап] coincide, which leads to the necessity of differentiation (in common speech) between the *White Arab* and the *Black Arab*; this situation is played with in the 'daily-life' pieces of A. N. Ostrovsky, but not only by him (compare, for example, the folklore cliché about the *white hands of an Arab*):

*White Arab, White Arabia* [Белый арап, Белая Арапия]. In the comedy by Ostrovsky 'Festive Dream before Lunch' [Праздничный сон до обеда] (Act II, scene 3), among other news, the matchmaker Krasavina tells the merchant-woman Nichkina that: '... they say that the White Arab is com-

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ing after us, bringing with him two hundred million soldiers.' To Nichkina's question, 'Where does he come from, this White Arab?', Krasavina answers: 'From White Arabia'. In 'Virgin Soil' [Ночь] by Turgenev (Chapter XIX), the old nurse Vasil'evna is depicted as 'talking of different stories in the news: about Napoleon, about the year 1812, about the Antichrist and the *White Arabs*'. 'White Arabia' in Ostrovsky and others, which is commonly regarded as the writing of ignorant fantasy, in reality is a term from a common folk geography, which is sufficiently comprehended and defined. This term can be found not only in Ostrovsky and Turgenev. The same term, perhaps not well-phrased, perhaps a little exaggerated in the depiction of common reality, is used by Raeshnik at Levitov: 'This, gentlemen, is the city of Kitai in White Arabian country, situated high in the skies.' ('Scenes and Characters from the Village Fair', Chapter III. Coll. Works, V. I, p. 16, 1884.)

in the period of Turkish rule: without fear of retribution, a Southern Slavic singer could sing songs about the Black Arab and the cunning listener could easily recognize the Turks in this generalized character.' (Smirnov, 1976)

In folk literature of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, in the works of both Russian and Southern Slavic folklore, we often encounter the term Black Arab, which depicts a representative of the Negro population. Russian people of letters and people of the world who were introduced to ethnology and geography by travellers and who were more mobile than us were able to make a distinction between black Arabs and white-skinned representatives of Arab countries. The traveller from the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, F. A. Kotov, clearly speaks of people living in the Arabian countries as 'non-black Arabs' ['Izv. ORJAS', 1907, book. 1, 119].

In the book by G. G. 'A Presentation of Strange and Curious Marital Rituals' [Позорище странных и смешных обрядов при бракосочетаниях] (SPb, 1797, p. 41), it is stated that Arab Bedouins are a white-skinned people. All this explains and rectifies the terms White Arab and White Arabia, which most likely were heard by Ostrovsky and other writers from the common people and translated by them objectively.

Chernyshev 1970

It is natural to assume that the semantics of the colour *black* as mostly negative could have helped in the development of the negative meanings of the word *Arab* (now without the colour differentiation or with the neutralization of the same, for priority is given to the Arab per se, first of all in different argots, then in common usage.

Arab [АРА'П] (common). 1. Negro, black person in general. 2. Rascal, liar, sly person (thieves' argot). *To make/build an Arab* [строить арапа] (common speech of thieves' argot) — to lie, to cheat in order to deceive

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2. This term became popular due to the poem 'Thief' by Il'ja Sel'vinskij, who paid tribute to underworld romantics and jargon: *Arab way*. The bourgeois is passing by... (the fashion for the underworld, dating from the 1930s, is blooming now in the urban chanson). However, the author of 'The Kolyma Tales', V. Shalamov, who mastered underworld jargon in the course of his long-term labour camp experience, criticised Sel'vinskij for misuse of the terms (Mihajlov 2000).

3. Although, justly speaking, it is worth mentioning that in the poem by A. P. Sumarokov "Arab" (1769) the main character is depicted as an embodiment of incorrigible evil=blackness which cannot be washed away (not in a mythological, but in a gnomic sense).  
 Whose heart is evil  
 He cannot be reformed by  
 any means <...>  
 I cannot transform him by  
 my morality;  
 In the evil soul, you cannot  
 reduce evil <...>  
 A person worked in a sauna,  
 handy at bathing.  
 He bathed the Arab day  
 and night, but the Arab  
 stayed black.  
 The other day that person  
 took the Arab  
 Under the roof;  
 He fries the Arab,  
 Or to speak plainly, he boils  
 the Arab  
 Trying to remove his black-

somebody. *In the Arab way* [на арапа] (common speech of thieves' argot) — at random, by deception.<sup>2</sup> *To play like an Arab* [Играть на арапа] (avoiding paying when losing the game because out of money).  
 (Ushakov 1940 s.v.)

It is noteworthy that in this item from a Russian dictionary, which has nothing to do with semiotics and even less with cultural anthropology, the two independent meanings of *black* and *liar* have been pressured together and both terms in the dictionary of the model of the world are connected by a causal-consecutive link: *black*=bad, which means that a person may be a rascal, liar, etc. Thus the conclusion (although an assumption) that in Russian tradition the Arab, from having been the mythological Dragon—the adversary of the Thunderer and, in general, the 'chief villain'—was transformed into a **trickster**, i.e. transformed into a *weakened villain* (although shades of the *Arab's* trickiness are present in Balkan folklore as well).<sup>3</sup> For example, the most independent and defined role of the Russian 'trickster' Arab is to be found in the world of professional card-playing: here we have in mind a 'troupe' of professional gamblers, whose characters (to some extent reminiscent of the masks from commedia dell'arte) were developed during the 19<sup>th</sup> century:

The formation of the terminological group 'names of the participants in the gambling game' dates from 1810-1820. Separate terms from the group emerged in the late 1820s (*father-in-law, partner, banker*), in the period 1840-1860 (*master, artist, liar, thief, swindler, card-cutter*, etc.) The term *shuler* [шупер] gained generative capabilities: from the 1860s, the derivatives *shulerok, shuleriha* [шуперок, шупериха]; in the 1890s: *shulerishki* [шуперушки]. The formation ends in the period 1890-1910 (player, guest player, arab). This terminological group comprises 18 terms.  
 (Kataeva 2008, 15)

V.: On the gambling Arab in more details:

Arab – 1. (*swindler*.) In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in Russia, during the most productive period of club card games, persons called Arabs were those who, in the guise of offering help to inexperienced gamblers, would swindle them using a wide arsenal of different methods. Arabs were considered something between a professional gambler and a swindler. 'Helping' the bank, Arabs watched bets and settled bets with the winners. When the bank was winning, they hid the bets made by their companions. If the bank was losing, they doubled the bets of their companions. Among other things, they worked on the 'prisypka' [присыпка], adding money to

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closed bets in case the bank was loosing. Making a bet with a bundle of bank notes, they folded the larger banknotes in half, tying them with woman's hair and, in case of losing, when giving money to the bank, they managed to pull out the bank notes of 100 and 500 roubles. Sometimes Arabs were simply those cheating the bank or even stealing gold from the bank, hiding the coins between their fingers and slipping the coins down their backs while scratching their heads. The Russian language gained different expressions from the gamblers' argot: Arab speak [арапа заправлять] – to tell stories, Arab way [брать (взять) на арапа] – to achieve something by guesswork, counting on a sudden strike of luck. Examples of the usage of these expressions include: *Among those unknown people, often you can see some suspicious elements, who are close to the swindlers and who can justly wear the nickname 'Arab'* (The Secrets of Card Games. A Description of the Rules); *The bank is dealing. There is a lot of money on the table. The Arab is starting to move. He is counting the bets, checking the signs* (The Secrets of Card Games. Sensational Exposures); ... somebody named Vasen'ka Shtolder, either an Arab or a swindler, but in any case a man with an enormous and dubious past. (Kuprin, Oxygen).

2. liar, swindler, crook

3. (*underworld.*) crook, fraudulent person, impudent, insolent person

Arab speak [АРАПА ГНАТЬ] – (*gamb.*) to tell lies, to be hypocritical in a daring way, having a profit as an aim, to tell rude lies. V.: Arab (1-3).

To do as an Arab [АРАПА ЗАПРАВЛЯТЬ] – 1. (*gambling*) to lie, to tangle, to muddle. The term is ambiguous. An Arab is a liar, a helper to a swindler, the person who lures the victim, a person without conscience who is prepared to say that white is black for money. The verb [заправлять] is also ambiguous and most often used to denote the gaining of something by means of deception. The expression in general means: to palm off something without honour or conscience. V. Arab. Examples: • Why you are doing the Arab to me? (always with a perky and disapproving voice. Nobody would use this expression about himself; nobody would do the Arab to himself – that would be calumny). • Hey! Lower your tone for a half-note! Stop doing the Arab! (from a song).

2. (*gamb.*) to avoid paying for a lost game.

3. (*gamb.*) to lose intentionally in order to involve the victim in the game.

4. (*gamb.*) to persuade somebody of implausible things.

5. (*gamb.*) to lie small-time, to lie in general.

(A Dictionary of Card Terms)

The inherent ambiguity of the trickster character allows us to imagine the character in different tonalities, even in different hypostases. Examples from Russian literature of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century are most

ness.  
The Arab is boiling  
The Arab is sweating  
And even his skin is smoldering:  
The Arab lives black and he will die black.  
The satire and critique is the same as a sauna:  
When a person is marked, he cannot wash himself;  
Who was born black, he will stay black,  
The evil person has no honour, nor is there reason in the dumb.

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4. The topic of Arab, used by the great hoaxer Alexei Remizov (especially in the theatre) deserves a special attention.

interesting (among other things, it is indicative that the literature mentioned is either avant-garde or close to it),<sup>4</sup> with the participation of a swindling Arab playing an important, but not innocuous role. These examples are not numerous, but they are highly indicative. We will point out those which, in our opinion, are most connected with the Arab cliché and, at the same time, have dramatic nuances in the *Russian context* (the real as well as the metaphorical one) and perhaps in the Russian mentality (in terms of the model of the world).

In the Romantic short story (with gothic elements) 'The Arab from the Club' (1918) by Alexandar Grin, the author best known for 'The Scarlet Sails', the topic of which is a card-game with a life as a bet (this well-known European plot can be seen, among other things, in the allusion of 'The Queen of Spades' by Pushkin), the main character, Jung, having lost everything in a card-game falls to the level of becoming the Arab in the club—as an indicator of the lowest level to which it is possible to fall. Being an Arab leads the character to further moral degeneration and ultimately his physical death. The function of being Arab is described in detail. In essence, this is the key moment in the novel, after which the main character is condemned (similar to the German in Pushkin's work who discovered the values of the 'three cards' at the cost of the Duchess's life):

The transition from restrained to compulsory gaming, and from the last to Arabism is imperceptible, as it is everywhere when passion plays the main role. Losing everything or being in a situation where he has no means to find any money, the player usually starts to collect debts. This person owes him, that person owes him, the other one owes him. These sums can serve him for a while. The game for such a person became a passion, its itch is deeply stuck in the soul like the itch of a gum when people are chewing lime or nibbling on sunflowers seeds. But here we are: all the debts are collected and lost. It is possible in this period that there might be some strokes of luck—which makes the situation even worse. The player regards that money not as his own but as free money. His nerves look for soothing. He drinks, falls into debauchery, plays without making any connection between the bets and the means available, and in a short time he starts to make debts of his own. In the beginning he can borrow, but lenders soon start to wrinkle their noses at him and make excuses about their own losses; later, they begin cursing and making rude jokes about his whining; eventually they stop lending him any money at all. All the regulars know him and his habits—even the circle of Arabs, united by unwritten laws, are not interested in knowing about his life, his real name or his surname. This is the oddity of the profession which swallows

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its children! The face value here is only the visual figure<sup>5</sup>; this figure means less to this society than a trump hand.

When all so-called moral grounds have been shattered, when the whole of life is being sucked out by the game, and the centers stop paying any attention to trifles like humiliation and offense, then the Arab is done for. He is made from begging, opportunism and an ability to seize the moment, buffoonery, persuasion and small crookery...

*Jung became an Arab.* [Emphasis by T. C.]

Vladimir Majakovsky in his poem 'About That' (1923) introduced a card-playing Arab into a scene in which the main character of the poem is standing in front of the windows of his beloved's house. The windows appear as cards marked by a villain—an impudent Arab. The scene turns out to be tragic because the bet is on the life of the main character:

Covering his mouth with the edge of his palm  
Window-pane after window-pane was pulled out from the side.  
The whole life  
Fell down to the cards of the windows —  
The trump of the glass —  
And, I will lose.  
The Arab —  
The swindler of mirages —  
Placed his markings  
On the windows with joy.  
The deck of glass  
Like luminous festivity  
Is shining brightly in the night at the paws.<sup>6</sup>

The Russian Arab is also a trickster (not only in card games), combining the evil and dangerous (together with some comical actions) could be related to drama. This is put in the limelight in Stravinsky's well-known ballet 'Petrouchka' (libretto by Stravinsky and Benoit, first performance in Diaghilev's 1911 season in Paris) in which the plot from the folk play 'Petrouchka' is fundamentally changed. In the folk play, the competition and battles between Petrushka and the Arab are always won by Petrushka, who also beats his adversary with a stick. In the play, the classic triangle *Pierrot – Colombine – Harlequin* is exchanged for the figures: *Petrushka – Ballerina – Arab*, where the Arab is not only the lucky rival of Petrushka but his murderer as well (compare the allusions to the Blok poem 'Balaganchik' with the dying Petrushka).<sup>7</sup> This is the depiction of the Arab as a lazy and dumb savage in the key scene

5. 'Visual figure'! An established cliché which makes it possible to incorporate the Arab in the characters' dictionary of the Russian model of the world.

6. In the poem "The Night" another Arab appears to Mayakovsky, an African with savage manners: Feeling the paws of the suit which calls me,  
I squeezed a smile in their eyes; frightening them  
By strikes in the tin, the Arabs were laughing,  
Above the forehead painting the cockatoo wing.  
M. V. Lomonosov ('Ode on the Usage of Glass'), almost two centuries earlier, depicted an Arab, not in feathers but in glass:  
In the beads the Glass is similar to pearls,  
Being loved by anyone on Earth.

The people from the northern steppes decorate themselves with it  
As well as Arabs from the southern shores.  
Cp.: 'The Peasant Poet' of the 20th century, N. Kl'ujev, about the other, mythological key: 'On Skopchestvo – the Arab on a Fire Horse'.

7. In Blok, the doll bleeds only doll sap – but Stravinsky's Petrushka is only a marionette doll.

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from the ballet:

The room of the Arab, with vivid exotic decorations on the walls. The lazy Arab is lying down on the sofa playing with a large coconut. He likes the fact that something in the coconut is making a noise and he is trying to break it using his large curved sword. He fails and then starts to pray. The coconut contains a supernatural power—a god for a dumb Arab. The door opens suddenly and the Ballerina appears. She plays a jolly melody on the cornet. The Arab is not pleased with her appearance but the Ballerina conquers him by flirting. The Arab tries to hug her. Suddenly the door is opened and Petrushka runs in. He runs around the room in circles. The Arab pushes Petrushka out. The Ballerina is enchanted by the brute force of the Arab. The sound of a grenadier's drums.

At the end of the ballet, the evil Arab chases poor Petrushka and kills him using his *scimitar* (the last detail corresponds with the classic folklore character of the *Arab*).

Special interest lies in the depiction of the another hypostasis of the Arab's character in post-revolution political pamphlets of the 1920s by Zamjatin (the fable 'Arabs') and Bulgakov (the feuilleton 'The Crimson Island'), 1924 as well as the play of the same name staged in 1928). We will cite a longer extract from the 'Bulgakov's Encyclopedia':

'The Crimson Island' is a feuilleton with the subtitle: 'A novel by comrade Jules Verne. Translated from French to Aesopian by Mikhail A. Bulgakov'... 'The Crimson Island' presents the history of the February and October Revolutions of 1917 in parodical form, as well as of the Civil War and possible future intervention against the USSR as seen through the eyes of Russian emigrants - Smenovekhovcy... Smenovekhovtsy had recognized the Soviet regime, had called for emigrants to support it and to join the Red Army in the case of attack by foreign powers on the USSR. Many characters in the feuilleton have obvious historical prototypes. The leader and the sovereign of the White Arabs, Sizi-Buzi, is the last Russian Tsar, Nikolai II (1868-1918). 'The Blatant Arab', the drunkard and idler Kiri-Kuki, is the head of the Provisional Government Kerensky (1881-1970). The February Revolution is depicted as a volcanic eruption, i.e. as a faceless natural phenomena.

Foreign interventionists in Russia are depicted as the heroes of the novels written by the French science fiction writer Jules Verne...

Far more complex is the genealogy of the General of the Arabs, Rikki-Tikki-Tavi. His name is the title of the story by English writer and Nobel laureate Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) about a pet mongoose of the same name. Rikki-Tikki-Tavi in Bulgakov's text is a parody of a certain generalised character of a White General who finds himself in exile. Subsequently, when Bulgakov wrote a play in 1927 based on the feuilleton 'The Crimson

Island', this character became General Likki-Tikki and was given the features of the biography of White Army General Y. A. Slashchev, who served as the prototype for Khludov in the play 'Flee' [Бег].

In relation to this transformation of character, the murder of Rikki-Tikki-Tavi in 'Crimson Island' acquired unexpected prophetic sense, and in many details repeated the episode of the murdering of Iuda from Kiriaph in 'Master and Margarita'. In 'Crimson Island', Liki-Tiki, as well as his prototype Y. A. Slashchev, joins the red-skinned Ethiopians and serves in their army, i.e. behaves like Judas correlated to the white Arabs. In January 1929, Y. A. Slashchev was killed in a manner echoing the destiny of the feuilleton character who receives his biography in this play.

One of the most important sources for 'Crimson Island' was the short story by Bulgakov's friend, the writer Evgenij Ivanovitch Zam'jatin (1844-1937) 'The Arabs' (1920), which mocks the hypocritical morality of the Bolsheviks in their attitude to and use of violence in the years of the Civil War. Zam'jatin's plot is told by red-skinned persons, who are at war with the Arabs despite sharing the same island of Bujan with them: 'Yesterday morning we got one of those Arabs in the river. He was so good—so fleshy! We made a soup, fried cutlets, with onions, with mustard, with pickles... We were fed: God sent him to us!' When the Arabs make skewered cutlets from the redskin, it causes a very different reaction: 'What's wrong with you? Are you not Christians? You are eating a man—a redskin. Do you have any conscience at all?'

– But didn't you make fried cutlets out of our man? Whose bones are those lying down there?

– You are utterly brainless! We were eating your Arab, and you were eating our man, a redskin. Is that a possible thing to do? Just wait, and you will be fried by devils in the other world!

Readers of Zamjatin's short story would have recognized the Communist state's implanted myth about the necessity and even beneficial properties of the Red Terror as being a response to the White Terror that deserved full condemnation. Zamjatin, as well as Bulgakov, was aware of the falsity of this myth. 'The Crimson Island' carries indirect hints of 'The Arabs' and of the problem of justification of Red Terror through the demonstration of the laughableness of the pro-Soviet version of the history of the Revolution and the Civil War.

(The Bulgakov Encyclopedia)

We will not stop at the completely predictable official reaction: the informers' critique pointed out the anti-Soviet intentions of the writers and destroyed both works; within a short period of time the play of the Chamber Theatre 'The Crimson Island' was forbidden by authorities.

In these texts we are interested in the choice of the character of the *Arab* sub specie semioticae, in his counteraction with 'opponents'.

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It is clear that we are dealing with a 'lowered' meaning of Arab. He is not a trickster anymore, but a character/'collective hero' introduced on the basis of an array of properties—above all, his colour. The colour opposition is in the basis of both texts, and red is especially marked (and underlined once again in Bulgakov's text, where *Red Island* is renamed *Crimson Island*). Zamjatin, who was working on his novel 'We' [Мы] in 1920-1921, thus preceding Orwell's '1984' by almost three decades, the opposition is between *Arabs* (obviously, *black*) and *redskins*. Bulgakov, in his feuilleton 'The Crimson Island' has a more complex distribution of main characters, names and colours (in the play 'Crimson Island', *white Arabs* and *red natives* appear, although the palette of colours leads towards *black*):<sup>8</sup>

8. Both the Zamjatin and Bulgakov texts take place on an island, i.e. a place surrounded by water and distant from our world (in the Zamjatin text, this is a mythological island called Bujan).

In the shoreless spaces of the ocean—the ocean named by some jokers, most likely on account of its constant storms and high waves, *The Pacific*—at ... degrees longitude and ... degrees latitude, there lies a large inhabited island. Time passed and the island was slowly settled by glorious tribes related to each other tribes—red Ethiops, so-called White Moors, and some Moors of unknown colour, either black with a bit of yellow or yellow with a bit of black. Anyway, the drunken sailors from the rare boats visiting the island took no trouble to recognize all the hues of the aboriginal skins and called all the island's inhabitants black-arses.

It is obvious that the colour opposition per se was dictated by the opposition of the colours red/white which was formulated and legalized after the October Revolution, with special attention being given to red (the colour of the flag, the colour of the blood heroically spilt by the Reds—the colour of the new order in general). To this, the 'common' (if we may say so) connotations of the word and character of the *Arab* in Russian folklore were added: those of a *black savage*, who lives in a far off land, in a *foreign* world.

Here we could end our short but hopefully representative review of the character of the Arab in Russian language and literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. We can conclude the review as follows: the Arab is separated from the 'heroic' role of the Thunderer's adversary (as in Balkan folklore) and changed to fulfil the role of a sly trickster and, later, that of a comical character who remains foreign mostly on account of his black colour.

As we know, however, the foreigner can become our (expected) guest, as is shown in the enantiosemsis of the Greek ξένος. In this regard, the Russian cultural model does have a very positive role for

the Arab, but this Arab is unique in kind—the national pride of Russia; ‘our everything’ (the expression introduced by Dostoevskij, which now has a slightly jocular, albeit positive meaning): Alexander Sergejevich Pushkin.

It is well known that Pushkin's great-grandfather was an Arab (African), Ibrahim (Abram Petrovich), who was taken to Russia from Constantinople as a very young boy by Peter the Great. His wife, Christina Regina Siöberg, Pushkin's great-grandmother, was of German origin. Thus Pushkin was eighth-part ‘Arab’, eighth-part German, and three-quarters Russian. In the Russian ‘cultural image’, however, Pushkin—the first face of our literature (accepted from a very young age), the epitome of Russianism—appears only as an Arab who accepted the Russian language and traditions from his governess Arina Rodionovna (in all fairness, Pushkin's main ‘Russian’ governess was his grandmother Marija Aleksejevna Gannibal, the wife of Osip Petrovich Gannibal). It will suffice to cite several constant epithets of Pushkin in the Russian cultural dictionary (most of them are described so oxymoronically): the great Arab, the Great Russian Arab, the Russian Moor, the doyen of Russian poetry, Arab Pushkin, the mysterious Russian soul of the Arab Pushkin, the Arab in Russia is more than an Arab (a play on Evtushenko's phrase: ‘the poet in Russia is more than a poet’), etc. V.: the item Pushkin in the contemporary dictionary ‘Self-made Word’ [Самовитое слово]: ‘PUSHKIN [Aleksandr Sergejevich (1799-1837) – great Russian poet, v. also ALEKSANDR, ARAB, LITTLE ARAB, ATHLETE, AFRICANS].

Interest in the personality of Gannibal and, through him, in the Russian tradition of the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards of having *Arabs* (*little Arabs*) at court (and on landed estates) in the Russian cultural recognition was induced primarily, if not exclusively, by the personality of Pushkin: ‘There is only one Arab left in our recognition – Abram Petrovich Gannibal, popular not for his wonderful biography nor for his service as a general, but for the fact that he was a grandfather of the national poet of Russia.’ (Dorfman) The history of the little Ibrahim in Russia has been reconstructed in countless works: his origin, the colour of his skin (was he a white Arab?), his place of birth and the causes of his arrival to Constantinople, his genealogy, etc. In the impossibility of finding an unambiguous solution to these issues, the situation reminds us of the dispute of ‘Seven Cities’ about the birthplace of Homer and, even with all the significance of the ‘Gannibal case’, interest in it is somewhat exaggerated.

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9. It is possible that this began in the childhood of Pushkin, as is suggested by the classic episode with the poet I. I. Dmitriev: "The well-known Russian writer, Ivan Ivanovich Dmitriev, visited the house of Pushkin's parents when the poet was a child.

Making jokes about the unusual face of the child and his curly hair, Dmitriev said: What an Arab! [Какой арапчик!] In response, the ten-year-old grandson of Gannibal unexpectedly retorted: At least I am not роckmarked [Да зато не рябчик!] One can just imagine the disconcertion and the embarrassment of the people present who understood that the boy Pushkin had made a joke about Dmitrov's face being роckmarked by illness.

10. <http://www.trud.ru/issue/article.php?id=200504280752101>; the same myth is flourishing in other areas connected to the Gannibals (and, above all, Mihajlovskoe).

11. In the popular movie 'How Tsar Peter Married the Arab', the director A. Mitta gave the role of Gannibal to the famous actor and singer Vladimir Vysockij. On being questioned about finding a black person for this role, he answered that "This role was written for him especially. I wanted to present the Arab as an intelligent man similar to Pushkin's predecessor." The reverse chronology here is interesting: the

In all fairness, this interest was first promoted by Pushkin himself: 'The destiny and character of an exotic predecessor were close to the poet's heart from early childhood' (Yakubovich, 1979, 266) and he put a lot of effort into studies of this branch of his genealogy. In 'Eugene Onegin' he speaks about the skies of my Africa (and in one remark he explains the sudden appearance of the African sky) in 'My Genealogy', and in other poetical works he is proud of his Arab origins; but his main aim in his unfinished novel 'The Arab of Peter the Great' is that of reconstructing the biography of his famous predecessor. Pushkin persistently points out hereditary lines and facial similarities, among other things. This line was gladly accepted and carried on by his contemporaries and it flourishes to the present day, finding its way into mass culture.<sup>9</sup> For instance, one article of special interest is an internet article about an unusual occurrence in a village in the Lipetsk area: from time to time (but stable) dark-skinned and curly-haired (i.e. *black*) children were born there, looking like Negros and Pushkin at the same time. This is being explained by the opinion that in past times the grandfather of Pushkin, Osip Gannibal, used to pass through the area.<sup>10</sup>

Nevertheless, Pushkin's appearance was not especially African (in the Lyceum he was called a *Frenchman*, and in 'Arzamas' he carried the nickname *The Cricket*). The poet M. V. Yuzevich remembers: 'I can see him right now, alive, simple in communication, an easy smile, very jovial, with wonderful big, clean and shiny eyes in which, it seems, everything wonderful in the whole of nature is reflected; white shiny teeth—like Byron, he took great care of his teeth. He was neither dark-skinned nor black-haired as some people seek to assure us, but fair-skinned with slightly curled light brown hair. In his youth he was blond, just like his brother Lev. In his appearance there was something similar to African types, but nothing which would justify his line: 'The ugly heir of Negros'. On the contrary, his face was very pleasant and its general expression was most sympathetic. His portrait, painted by Kiprenskij, is flawless.' (Yuzefovich. 1880, 434) Every memory is subjective; other polemical memoirs of Pushkin's contemporaries speak differently about his appearance and built up the principle *Arab/non-Arab*. In any case, our goal is not to determine Pushkin's anthropological type.

Among other things, the genesis, development and flourishing of the mythologem 'The Russian poet, Arab Pushkin' is astonishing; this mythologem has rigidly taken its place in the secularized Russian model of the world, and not only at the level of mass culture.<sup>11</sup> One can produce a 'Pushkin Arab Anthology' which would contain di maiores and

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di minores of Russian literature, again inclined towards 20th century.<sup>12</sup> Having no opportunities to represent this anthology in a wider manner, we will restrict ourselves only to several examples. Among them is the poem 'On Jubilee' by Majakovskij, dedicated to Pushkin, where in Pushkin is called an African and an Arab challenging Derzhavin; a dark-skinned child wandering the Tsarskoe Selo alleys by Ahmatova,<sup>13</sup> and, a bit later, Behind the chair of Peter the Great / Will stand / The grey-haired Arab Gannibal / the negative image of the older Pushkin by David Samojlov, etc. Let us scrutinize the fragment of a poem dedicated to Pushkin and written in 1924 by a lesser known émigré poet Konstantin Olen'in (1881–1939). This fragment is characteristic in its precise formulations of our mythologem:

It happened suddenly at the beginning...  
The young heir of the Arab Gannibal  
Jokingly crossing the marked lines  
Became the first of singers, a god of beauty  
And, dark-skinned fidgeter, blue-eyed joker  
Conquered Russia and made it happy.  
(Olen'in 1939, 8)

There is no doubt that the primary role in temperamental persistence in creating the image of *black Pushkin* belongs to Marina Tsvetaeva. Even more important than her poetry (where the African temperament of Pushkin is predictably accentuated), in our opinion, is her short piece of 1937: 'My Pushkin'. Through her childish impressions—above all, her impressions of a portrait of Pushkin as a child as well as of the famous Moscow monument of Pushkin—of the *first poet*, the domination of Negro, Arab, African prevails, and, in turn, the domination of *black*.<sup>14</sup> A short version of '*The Arab (African) topic*' in Tsvetaeva's work is given as follows. Tsvetaeva speaks about her understanding of the *Arabic* in Pushkin as the basis of his poetic personality, together with stories from her mother, secret readings of Pushkin's poetry and the *black Pushkin Monument*:

... bringing back Pushkin to his native Africa, a place of revenge and passion;

Pushkin was a Negro. Pushkin had whiskers (NB! Only Negroes and old generals have whiskers), Pushkin had hair pointed upwards and fat lips, and black (with bluish-white) eyes – black even against all his portraits depicting him with light eyes (Because he is a Negro – they are black. *Pushkin was of fair hair and light-coloured eyes* (N. by Tsvetaeva))

shadow of Gannibal is not cast over Pushkin; rather, Pushkin's shadow makes Gannibal more noble.

12. The topic of Gannibal in the novel 'Pushkin' by Jurij Tyn'janov should be taken into account separately.

13. The frequent use of the epithet 'dark-skinned' before Pushkin as an euphemism in marking his skin colour.

14. 'The constant symbolic colour of Pushkin in Tsvetaeva is black ("black thought, black destiny, black life... my native darkness.' (Sedakova 1996).

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Pushkin was a Negro as was a Negro in Aleksandrovskij passage... Russian poet – a Negro, poet – Negro, and the poet was killed.

(Lord, it had happened! Which poet from the former ones was *not* a Negro, which poet wasn't killed?)

I liked the Pushkin monument because of its blackness... Even if nobody had told me that Pushkin was a Negro, I would know that Pushkin was a Negro;

In every Negro I love Pushkin and I recognize Pushkin – the black monument of Pushkin of my pre-literal youth and of all Russia;

The Pushkin monument is a monument of a black blood streamed into white, a monument of blood mixing as the rivers mix; a live monument of blood mixing, of the nations' souls mixing – far away nations which, at first glance, would seem the least acceptable to mix;

Such an interesting thought of Ibrahim, to make his grandson black. To cast him in iron, the same as the nature cast the grandfather in black body. The black Pushkin is a symbol. Such a thought, through the blackness of the monument to give a piece of Abyssinian skies to Moscow;

In this Pushkin, I liked only the Negro child.<sup>15</sup> By the way, I consider this childish Negro portrait as the best of the Pushkin's portraits, a portrait of his distant African soul, which is still sleeping—the poetic one. A portrait with two perspectives, forwards and backwards, a portrait of the blood of his future genius. This is a child who would be chosen by Peter, this is a child who was chosen.

(Tsvetaeva 1980, 2, passim)

15. 'A Negro boy propping up his head': a well-known portrait of Pushkin as a child (E. I. Gejtman, gravure on copper, 1822).

In a certain sense, this text could be seen as the explanation of a 1931 poem from the cycle 'To Pushkin', which includes a stable Russian cultural cliché: 'A great Russian poet of African (Arab) origin, which made him a great Russian poet.'

The poems of the cycle 'To Pushkin' preceded the prose piece (written in 1931) and were built on the same accentuation of *black*, *Arabic*, *African* ('Africanation' [афричённость]=condemnation to Africa, the expression of Tsvetaeva's son Mur) as the basis of the rebellious primacy of Pushkin—the terms free and rebellious are mentioned by Tsvetaeva herself:

African insubordinate  
A joker for our grandfathers...  
You cannot repaint black  
into white – it's incorrigible!  
The Russian classic is not bad,  
Who called the African skies  
his own...

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and, with the barred teeth of a Negro...  
(Tsvetaeva 1980,1, 293 – 294)

Tsvetaeva allows her inspiration to carry her away even further, and in her poem 'Peter and Pushkin' she states that the main achievement of Peter in Russia was not the creation of a fleet, not victory over the Swedes, not the creation of Petersburg, but the fact that he brought Gannibal to Russia (!):

More would be less  
(God's will, a man is not a burden!)  
If he hadn't brought Gannibal  
The Arab to white Russia.  
This little African kid  
He took, making an example  
For Russians – from the grandson  
Of a Negro – the light is shining on Russia!

In the background of this pathetic celebration of Arab Pushkin, as a conclusion we would like to stress a completely different 'musical harmony': the parody and caricature which 'turns out' the logic and chronology of events. But, as we know, true glory is verified by the parody and caricature!

*(Radio Echo of Moscow [Радио Эхо Москвы], 2007)*

A march is in progress in Saint Petersburg to preserve the historical look of the city. The action is being organized by the party 'Apple' [Яблоко]. There are about five thousand participants in the march calling for changes to be made in the city's building policies. Is it known that the building plan most reviled by the general public is the Gazprom skyscraper.

Leading the column is Grigorij Yavlinskij (the leader of 'Apple') followed by African students. They are wearing false whiskers and top hats and their shirts are stenciled with the text: '*The descendants of Pushkin are for old Peter*'.

(Italics added by T. C.).

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## The Russian Hypostasis of The Black Arab and its Evolution

*This paper deals with the image of Arap as it is reflected in the European/Balkan picture/model of the world, wherein it represents the other (under)world, dangerous to our (upper)world. Connected with the mythological Dragon as well as with the real enemy (i.e. the Turks in the Balkans), the Arap is always hostile and/or a stranger. A stranger because black among whites (black with all the negative semiotic connotations of his colour: darkness, death, danger, evil, etc.). The Russian ethno-cultural tradition transforms the Arap from the mythological Dragon, the adversary of the Thunderer, and generally from the “main villain” into a trickster—i.e. into the “weak villain”, a cheat, cardsharpener, comic (though insidious) figure.*

*The evolution of Arap as a lexeme, personage, and symbol is analysed sub specie in Russian language and Russian Literature from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> to the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Remizov, Grin, Majakovsky, Zamjatin, Bulgakov, etc.). The appearance of a new and very peculiar Russian mythologeme of the positive arap is marked. It regards as “the greatest Russian poet, Arap Pushkin”, whose great grandfather was an African (Arap of Peter the Great). The conviction that it was precisely his African origins that made Pushkin the better Russian poet belongs to the secularized model of Russian culture and not only to mass culture.*

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**Nikos CHAUSIDIS** (Skopje)

## The Black Man in Mythical Traditions in Macedonia

The concept of binary oppositions, very similar to the concept applied in contemporary computer systems, is fundamental to human thinking. Within this concept, a certain category is defined through its contrast and comparison with another category which is its opposite: male – female, life – death, left – right, white – black, one's own – foreign, etc. (Ivanov 1998). In this context, the white man and black man represent a pair of opposing elements which, manifestly and independently, appears in various parts of the world. It is clear that in the cultural areas of the white race, the white man operates as the real/actual basis, while the black man assumes the role of his mytho-symbolic opposite in order to determine and reinforce the semiotic status of the actual man. Conversely, in the cultural areas of other races, this role is most commonly played by the white man himself.

Our topic raises a fundamental question: Did the black man appear in Europe as a result of the concept of binary oppositions or as a result of the real existence of members of the black race on this continent? Certain historical and archaeological facts indicate that, in certain parts of Europe, the Balkans for example, members of this race could be found as early as the Neolithic period. Still, when observing this issue from a semiotic perspective, we believe that the mythical black man would have emerged in this area even if he had not existed in reality. As it is, his real presence (directly or indirectly through the reports of eyewitnesses) could only have had a greater impact on the shaping of his mytho-symbolic profile.

### Key words:

- black man
- black god
- Kabiri
- Cadmus
- pygmies
- Crnobog
- Belobog
- Ahriman
- Negroid earrings
- Negroid lamps
- St. John
- dualism
- Macedonia

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The very emergence of the mythical black man would attract upon himself other components within the very same concept of binary opposition. This entire process could be reduced to the following logical constructions: We – **the ordinary people (our folks)** – live in **this world – the white world – the world of light**, because we are white ourselves. Apart from us, there are others: different people (**foreigners**) who come from other places. They are black, which means by analogy that they come from the **black world**, which is opposite to ours and which is situated **somewhere there, down, under our world** and represents a certain kind of **underworld, a world of darkness, a world of death**. Therefore, these people are the opposite of us: they are **bad, unclean, unfathomable**, but also **powerful and capable** in a certain mystical-negative sense. Ultimately, in relation to the white man, these black people are determined as **non-human**, which in principle categorizes them as belonging to the **sphere of the dead as demons or gods**.

*white people – white world – this world – above – life – good – clean – human*

*black people – black world – other world – below – death – bad – unclean – non-human*

## 1. NEOLITHIC

### a) A vessel with an appendix shaped as a Negroid head (5<sup>th</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC)

One of the oldest pictorial representations of a black person comes from Macedonia. This is a fragment from a ceramic object—most probably a part of some kind of vessel (Čausidis 1995, 32)—discovered in the locality of **Cerje** in the village of **Govrlevo**, near Skopje (Pl.I: 1-4). The realistic depiction of the face (especially of the fleshy and protruding lips) indicates that it resulted from direct observation of actual members of this race. Still, it must be said this face demonstrates certain similarities to the face of an ape. Even though, to date, there has been no direct parallel of this object, it seems very likely that this is a fragment from a luxurious vessel used in a cult (Pl.I: 3). In the following epochs, a face with Negroid characteristics would often be applied to various vessels of sacred character (see Pl.IV: 1-4; Pl.V: 4-6). In this context, the face from Govrlevo dates the initial stages in the process



of symbolization and mythologization of members of the black race to as early as the Neolithic cultures of Europe.<sup>1</sup>

There are several other examples from prehistoric Balkan cultures where a similar concept of composition and proportions was applied in the modelling of the features of the face. Of especial significance are two examples from Stara and Nova Zagora, Bulgaria (Pl.I: 5,6). With respect to its Negroid characteristics, comparable to the fragment from Govrlevo, is another Neolithic figurine from Bulgaria (Ruse), whose head demonstrates obvious features of the black race: fleshy lips, a wide nose and rounded forehead (Pl.I: 7,8).<sup>2</sup> Researchers have also attempted to detect features of the Negroid racial type in some Neolithic figurines from Butmir, Bosnia and Herzegovina (*Praistorija Jugoslovenskih Zemalja*, Pl.II: 437,438).

The fragment from Govrlevo, together with the figurine from Ruse, raise serious questions with regards to the early presence (5<sup>th</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC) of people of the black race in the Balkans. This in turn raises further questions regarding the character, reasons and motivation behind such a presence, as well as regarding the mechanisms through which it was realized. As far as the Neolithic period is concerned, we cannot claim any exact facts with regards to this issue due to the absence of written records, but such information is available from later periods. According to some writers from Antiquity, Negroid peoples inhabited the valley of the river Strymon (Struma). Some of them report that in the land of the Thracians there lived Pigmy people who abandoned this region shortly before the arrival of the Romans. In support of the veracity of these sources are certain toponyms, theonyms and legends from the Struma region relating to herons, the inseparable companions of the mythical Pigmies (Pl.IV: 1-3).<sup>3</sup>

## 2. HELLENISTIC PERIOD

### a) Earrings with Negroid heads (3<sup>rd</sup>–1<sup>st</sup> century BC)

A specific category of earrings adorned with Negroid heads has been discovered in several necropoleis from the Hellenistic period located in the region surrounding the Ohrid Lake (Pl.II:1-3, 5, 7). The entire composition of the earrings leaves the impression of a schematized rhyton with a protruding Negroid head. Earrings of this type have been discovered in graves, thus leading to the assumption that they were placed on the bodies of the dead during the burial ritual or

1. The aforementioned apelike features do not disqualify this, bearing in mind that the relations between Negroid mythical characters and apes are common in myths (Marazov, 1999a, 38,39).

2. Some researchers interpret the appearance of the statuette with a manifestation of illness, specifically with Down's Syndrome (Radunčeva 2003, 147).

3. Marazov 1992, 150; Srejšević/Cermanović 1987, 340; Marazov 1999, 30.

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placed in the graves as offerings. Their relatively fragile construction indicates that this jewellery might not have been intended for everyday use but primarily or exclusively for use in funerary ceremonies. Judging by the findings to date, this type of earring is most probably a local feature, most typical of the aforementioned region and its wider surroundings: Deboj, Činarot, Opejnca and Trebeništa (Ohrid), Delgožda (Struga) and Selce (on the Ohrid Lake in Albania). Sporadic examples have also been discovered in neighbouring areas such as Povardarie (Marvinci), as well as in Montenegro, Herzegovina, and some areas in Greece, Italy and Asia Minor (Pl.II: 4, 7, 8). This jewellery is dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup>–1<sup>st</sup> century BC. Negroid heads are also present in necklaces from this period, accompanying the clasp mechanism in pairs.<sup>4</sup>

4. Rendić-Miočević 1959, 15, 16, 25, 26; Bitrakova Grozdanova 1987, 71-73; Ivanovski 2006, 176-178.

#### b) Interpretation

How should this presence of Negroid heads in the described earrings be interpreted? Should it be deduced that they were applied only as artistic motifs inspired by current trends or by the actual presence of Negroes in the local region? To date, this jewellery has mostly been considered a manifestation of the artistic style of the city of Alexandria, or more generally as a product in the spirit of the Hellenistic culture of the post-Alexander period.<sup>5</sup> However, certain facts indicate that this ‘attractive look’ and ‘exotic style’ might have been inspired by certain mythological-religious models concentrated in the central characteristic of the earrings—the Negroid heads embedded in their corpus shaped like a rhyton.

A possible explanation for the presence of the Negroid heads can be provided if they are related to the Pygmies who are represented in sources from Antiquity as a mythical people of short stature with black skin and Negroid facial features, extended phalluses and prolific hair (Pl.IV:1-3). Initially, it was believed that they lived on the southern coast of the Ocean (the mythical river which surrounded the Earth) in the black fertile layer of the soil where the plants grow (Kataoudaioi = ‘those who live underground’) or in caves. Later, they are recorded as people who inhabited the land south of Egypt surrounded by desert, or as people who inhabited some other, typically remote parts of the world.<sup>6</sup> Their black colour and their habitat symbolize their affiliation to the ‘other world’, understood as being underground, as a world of darkness and death. At the same time, however, the Pygmies include a resurrection aspect, the aspect of rebirth. This aspect is encoded in their **small stature**, likening them to children, as symbols of new life,

5. For some interpretations and references concerning this issue, see: Rendić-Miočević 1959, 32-37; Bitrakova Grozdanova 1987, 73.

6. In a certain sense, the equivalent of the Pygmies are the Ethiopians. For basic data on these mythical people, see: Srejšević/ Cermanović 1987, 340; *Мифы народов мира*. Vol. 2, 312; Marazov 1999a, 36-43; Petrović (Petruševski) 1940, 41-43.

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of new birth, as well as in their **relatedness to vegetation** (they live in the humus layer of the soil, in caves, and they are agriculturalists). Despite their colour symbolizing the end and death, in this very same context it also heralds the new beginning which unavoidably follows every ending.<sup>7</sup> The life-giving aspect of these mythical characters is presented in their overemphasized phalluses.

We believe that these meanings are expressed in the iconography of these earrings. Researchers to date have believed that they actually represent a rhyton, a cornucopia, with the Negroid heads protruding from inside (Pl.II).<sup>8</sup> Agreeing with this interpretation, we can summarize that, besides its other meanings, the rhyton (and within this framework 'the cornucopia') contains a symbolic layer related to the female principle: creation, birth and conception of life, food, fertility, wealth and abundance. These meanings are based on the fact that the rhyton is one of the first vessels which, as early as the Palaeolithic, was used for storing food and liquids. These meanings are also implied by its conical shape which, with a gradual widening from its tip to its opening, alludes to the principle of growth, expansion and progress.<sup>9</sup> We can trace an indirect parallel of this relation 'Negro-rhyton-vessel' in a description from Antiquity portraying the goddess Nemesis of Rhamnous who held a libation vessel (phiale) in her right hand decorated with depictions of Negroes (Pausan. I.33.3).<sup>10</sup>

Thus, by associating the aforementioned meanings of the rhyton with the Negroid head protruding from its opening, we arrive at the symbolism of revival and rebirth of the character it represents. The meaning of growth and rebirth can be identified in the schematized floral motifs present in these earrings (ivy, spiralling shoots, berries grouped in clusters), but also in the gold itself used as a basic material in the making of this jewellery.<sup>11</sup> Its relation to resurrection is further augmented by the contrast between the gold and the dark colour of the minerals used in the modelling of the Negroid heads.

If we accept the hypothesis that these earrings fall into the category of funerary jewellery and that they were used only, or above all, for funerary purposes, we are presented with the prospect of linking the Negroid heads with funerary beliefs and the cult of the dead. The deceased were sent to the other world with jewellery which encoded their destiny after death (Pl.II: diagram 9): the Pigmy heads symbolized the deceased themselves: their souls which, upon arrival in the other world, would identify with the mythical pre-people located there. The black colour of these people encodes the end of life (black-death),

7. For black as the final stage of regressive and the initial stage of progressive evolution, see: Chevalier/Gheerbrant 1987, 75,76.

8. Rendić-Miočević 1959, 25; Bitrakova Grozdanova 1987, 72.

9. Chevalier/Gheerbrant 1987, 563-565; Marazov 1992, 359-362; Čausidis, 1994, 94-100.

10. Petrović (Petruševski) 1940, 20.

11. For the eschatological symbolism of gold, see Marazov 1999b, 225-249, and for the role of the ivy in mysteries, see 124-125.

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12. Marazov 1999a, 36-43; Marazov 2001, 385-391. The author stresses the phallic symbolism of acorns, which corresponds well with the symbolism we propose here.

13. Marazov 1994, 80-85; Marazov 1999b, 119-133; Marazov 1992, 136-155; Đurić 1987, 40, 41; Venedikov 1992, 187-192. On the epithet 'black' attributed to the three Hellenic deities, see Petrović (Petruševski) 1940, 16, 28.

their dwarfish bodies, revival (dwarf – child), while the protruding of the head out of the rhyton encodes rebirth (rhyton – vessel – womb). A similar semiotic concept can be detected in the golden phiale from Panagjurište (Bulgaria 4<sup>th</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> century BC). At its base, in concentric rings, there are representations of acorns, followed by three rows of Negroid heads, their size increasing in each subsequent ring (detail – Pl.IV: 4). With reference to existing interpretations of both elements as symbols of the 'wild' or 'foreign', we would like to stress yet another aspect of their symbolism.<sup>12</sup> The depicted composition 'grows': starting with the acorns placed in the centre of the vessel (= down), through the small Negroid heads (= children) and the medium heads (= young men), ending with the large heads (= adults) positioned at its periphery (= up). We believe that this gradation encodes the transformation of the vital force from its embryonic-vegetation stage (the acorns located in the 'other world') to its manifested-anthropomorphic forms (the adult Negroes positioned on the edge, that is, on the passage to 'this world').

Our search for concrete manifestations of these models leads us to the traditions and mythical characters related to the **Kabiri** deities. Our rationale behind the association of the jewellery and these deities is the important space that the characters with Negroid features occupied in their cult and iconography. The Kabiri themselves were depicted as black/Negroid dwarves, i.e. Pigmies (Pl.IV:1-3). Researchers explain this through two aspects. On the one hand, we have the foreign, oriental origin of the cult of the Kabiri (Semitic, Phoenician) wherein the colour black clearly defined its bearers as 'foreign'. On the other hand, we have the domination of the chthonian aspects of the cult whereby black emerges as a key symbolic characteristic of this sphere. The names of these deities indicate this explicitly, since the word **axio -**, meaning **black** or **dark**, is included in all three theonyms. In this sense, it is also indicative that they were usually paired with three Hellenic deities of categorically chthonian character as their equivalents who often bore the epithet 'black' themselves (**Axieros = Demeter, Axiokersa = Persephone and Axiokersos = Pluto/Hades**).<sup>13</sup>

We propose an eschatological interpretation of the iconography and symbolism of these earrings, according to which the deceased were equated with Pigmies so that Mother-Earth would accept them inside herself as her own children and later, in a mystic manner, rejuvenate them and revive them as plants through her womb (represented through the rhyton). This interpretation corresponds well with one of the essential concepts of the cult of the Kabiri: the endless transforma-

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tion of life and death encoded in the two hypostases of these deities represented at once as children and as old people. In fact, this is related to one of the key secrets of this cult: the birth of the mysterious child as a paradigm of the new stage which the mystic followers of this cult entered after the act of their induction into the new community.<sup>14</sup> Some arguments point directly to the important role of the rhyton in Kabiri rituals. On the silver vessel discovered in Borovo (Bulgaria), associated by researchers with this cult, the principal deity raises a rhyton in his hand. The function and symbolism of this vessel is derived from, among other sources, the important role of wine in this cult, which was realized mostly by means of such vessels.<sup>15</sup> The other focus of the Kabiri mysteries was on the mystic marriage between the Father-God (Kabir) and the Mother-Goddess (the nymph Kabiro), a sacred act which was again associated with the transformation of the mystic into the one chosen by the Gods (a passage preceded by ritual death).<sup>16</sup> Such content can be recognized in another type of jewellery which in some necropoleis accompanied the Negroid earrings (such as that from Budva, Montenegro). This type of jewellery includes the aforementioned necklaces whose ends were adorned with the head of a Negro man and the head of a Negro woman. These two elements, when the necklace was clasped, could symbolize the marital bond/relationship (a contact of their heads, a kiss) between the two characters representing the Kabiri divine couple.

These types of earrings are not particularly widespread in the region dominated by Hellenistic culture. The findings to date point to their densest concentration in the area of the central Balkans and, above all, around the Ohrid basin and the Montenegrin coast. Accidentally or not, this core area corresponds with the last dwelling-place of the mythical Cadmus, associated by the Kabiri with other components—above all with Phoenicia as their shared original homeland.

The genesis of the mysterial cult of the Kabiri is yet to be fully explained. According to various theories, it is usually linked to the East (Phoenicians, Semites), Asia Minor (Phrygians) and the Balkans (Thracians and Pelasgians). According to sources from Antiquity, it appeared in the Archaic period when it spread to Greece via the Aegean islands from Asia Minor. Its expansion is particularly notable in the Hellenistic period when it grew into a trans-ethnic phenomenon common to the entire Mediterranean world. Its major core areas were on the islands of Imbros, Lemnos, Samothrace and in the city of Thebes.<sup>17</sup> These locations have an important place in Cadmus's mythical biog-

14. On this, see Marazov 1999, 26-42; Marazov 1994, 80-81; Marazov 1999a, 39.

15. Marazov 1999b, 121; Marazov 1994, 84, 85.

16. Marazov 1994, 80-84; Marazov 2003, 241,242.

17. For basic information, see Srejšović/Cermanović 1987, 186. For more profound research and references, see Marazov 1994, 80-85; Marazov 1999, 26-42 (and other works by the same author quoted here).

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18. For basic data on this myth, see Srejšović/Cermanović 1987, 187-189. For more details, see Katičić 1977; and for the relations between the Kabiri and Cadmo, see Marazov 2003, 240.
19. Marazov 1992, 152, 153; Đurić 1987, 41.

20. For more detail on these theories, see Petrova 1996.

raphy. According to the myths, he originated from Phoenicia and, after his arrival in the Balkans, became the ruler of Thebes. One of the four Kabiri deities is called Cadmilus, which is a version of his name. Having left Thebes, Cadmus departed for Lychnidos (present-day Ohrid) and from thence to Butoa (a town on the Adriatic coast near present-day Budva), where he ruled the local Enchelians and Illyrians.<sup>18</sup> The cult of the Kabiri has not been confirmed in these areas yet, but as we can see, the earrings with Negroid heads are represented significantly. The important place of Macedonia in the development of this cult is corroborated by data according to which the Kabiri were hugely respected by the entire dynasty of the ancient Macedonian rulers (including the Ptolemy dynasty in Egypt).<sup>19</sup> This connection gains in interest when we take into account that the original homeland of the ancient Macedonians is usually located in the wider region around Ohrid and Epirus, from whence, some time around 700 BC, they migrated to Lower Macedonia where they created the core of their kingdom. The Phrygian component of the Kabiri corresponds well with this theory; that is, the assumption that the cult of the Kabiri spread to Greece from Phrygia. Here we refer to a theory that has gained in relevance over the last few decades, according to which the Phrygians moved from the Central Balkans to Asia Minor in the course of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 1<sup>st</sup> millennia BC, where their presence is confirmed under the name of Brygi. Written historical records, toponyms and archaeological findings all point to the fact that the core of their old homeland included south-western Macedonia and eastern Albania<sup>20</sup>—the same area, which, several centuries later, would emerge as the ‘epicentre’ of the Negroid earrings. All these components indicate that Macedonia, or the central Balkans, was another transit centre (and perhaps one of the sources) of the cult of the Kabiri.

### 3. The Roman Period

#### a) Lamps shaped as Negroid heads (1<sup>st</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> centuries AD)

Human heads with Negroid characteristics emerged again in the Roman period, this time on oil lamps (*lucernae*) made from bronze and ceramics. Such bronze specimens have been discovered at three sites in the Republic of Macedonia (Stobi, Heraclea Lynkestis and Prilep) (PI.III: 1, 3, 4). They were all cast in such a manner that their hollow corpus represents the Negro head whose face is represented on the

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top side. In some cases (4, 4a), the lower jaw is elongated and deformed so that it suits the design of the lip of the lucerna, while in others a certain segment (a horn?) was placed upon the chin or the open mouth to serve as a burner in whose opening the wick was placed (1, 3, 3a). The specimens from Stobi and Heraclea (1, 3, 3a) date from the first or second century AD and are of good quality. Their style and manner of manufacturing suggests their having been made in Alexandria, a leading centre of arts and crafts which supplied the Mediterranean with various artistically manufactured bronze objects in the Hellenistic and Roman periods. The specimen from Prilep (4, 4a) is of a lesser quality (perhaps manufactured locally) and different researchers have dated it to anytime between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> centuries AD.<sup>21</sup> A similar concept was applied in the manufacturing of ceramic lamps. One such specimen was discovered in the vicinity of Kavadarci (the locality of Gradište near the village of Glišić). It was manufactured locally and rustically in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD (Pl.III: 5).<sup>22</sup> The ceramic lucerna from Stobi (Pl.III: 2, 2a) depicts a child's head with Negroid characteristics. It was discovered as an offering in a grave in the western necropolis of the town, while another fragmented specimen was discovered in the town itself. Such specimens have been recorded in Athens, Split, Viminacium (Serbia), and are dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.<sup>23</sup>

The aforementioned lucernae from Macedonia are by no means exclusive to this region, on the contrary, their type was also widespread in other parts of the Roman Empire.

### b) Interpretation

The presence of Negroid heads in the lamps from Macedonia has until now been considered a manifestation of design rather than of myth and religion.<sup>24</sup> We believe that such modelling was not the result of a random choice of motifs but was based on some older mythological and religious notions. The specimens originated in the Roman period, a time of intense merging of mythological and religious traditions in the Mediterranean, a trend accompanied by their demythologization and desacralization. Craftsmen and artists borrowed motifs from certain religious complexes and used them in a purely formal context as interesting compositions whose decorativeness, exoticism and allure would improve the sales of the craftsmen's production. The essential semiotic-utilitarian moment, present in the iconography of the discussed lucernae, is the representation of a character with a Negroid appearance with a flame coming out of its mouth. The ceramic speci-

21. Jakimovski 2008, 432, 433; Jeličić 1959, 78-80; Maneva 1983/84, 49, 50; Kuzmanov 1992, 54.

22. Janev/ Georgieva 2003; Jakimovski 2008, 416.

23. Mikulčić 1973, 76, 77, 80; Jakimovski 2008, 415-416.

24. Generally, on this issue, see Snowden 1970; Hodza 2006.

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men from Stobi (PI.III: 2, 2a) broadens this attitude with a version of a Negro child spewing flames from its mouth. The search for the identity of these characters brings us back to the Pigmies (PI.IV: 1-3), the mythical people with Negroid features whose habitat (in the underground or behind the Ocean) and black colour endowed them with pronounced chthonian meanings (see above).

The question that imposes itself directly is: what could have induced this connection between fire, these mythical characters and the chthonian spheres which they represent when even for the most primitive peoples it must have been obvious that fire came from the sky? In fact, fire in nature does indeed come from the sky, 'descending' to Earth via sun rays and lightning. For this reason, in the mythologies of the world, fire is most often related to various deities of the sky or with the aforementioned celestial phenomena. Less attention, however, has been paid to the fact that in some parts of the world, fire comes from underground as well. Most explicitly and dramatically, this can be observed in places where there are active volcanoes, and implicitly, on those locations where hot water, various evaporations and inflammable tar (oil) rise from the ground. All these phenomena suggested the presence of powerful fire underground. In the context of the revival and personalization of the subterranean zones of the universe, mythical consciousness exemplified this reality in two basic notions: one about the fire created and then born from the womb of Mother Earth; the other about the fire which resides in the stomach of the male chthonian god and is discharged from there through his mouth. Even though myths do not always elaborate the pre-stage of these states, in the first case it implies a certain stage of **conception** by Mother Earth, while in the second an action of some kind of **swallowing fire** by the chthonian mythical character.<sup>25</sup>

25. On the birth of fire, see Čausidis 1994, 218-231; for a more general concept of spewing out of the mouth as an equivalent of birth, see Čausidis 2005, 226-230.

For the purpose of our research, we certainly find the second concept of greater interest. This concept can be illustrated by several examples from throughout the world in which the chthonian deity appears as a representative, source and patron of fire. Most interesting in this sense are the ancient Italic mythical characters **Vulcan** and **Cacus**. The first functioned as the god of fire (with his own cult sites, priests and rituals), later conflated with the Greek Hephaestus under the influence of Hellenic culture. The character of Cacus is also an ancient deity with functions very similar to those of Vulcan. When his cult died out, the memory of his character was preserved in mythical stories in which he is represented as Vulcan's son who lives in a cave and spews



smoke and fire from his mouth. The Ancient Greek Hephaestus was also related to volcanoes and his smithies were situated at their core. He was worshipped in particular on the volcanic island of Lemnos, replete with thermal springs and subterranean evaporations. The ancient Greek **Typhon** also belongs to this category. According to some myths, Zeus threw him in the underground and crushed him with Mount Etna. For this very reason, this mountain discharges smoke and fire, which in fact are spewed out of angry Typhon's mouth. If we take into account the fact that the mythical dragon is one of the most common hypostases of the chthonian god, then the most obvious and most popular example, recognizable in numerous mythologies of the world, **the fiery dragon spewing flames from its mouth**, can also be incorporated in this category (Pl.IV: 9,10).<sup>26</sup>

Even though all these mythical characters are not explicitly depicted as black by the sources, in many cases this went without saying since, in principle, as chthonian gods they were of black or dark colour. This can lead to the assumption that Negroid heads were fashioned on the lamps from Antiquity to embody this particular hypostasis of the chthonian god, as a **black god – creator of fire**. Should the presence of this mythical character in these particular lucernae be considered purely decorative? Even though this question cannot be answered authoritatively, it is not to be excluded that this appearance was nevertheless supported by certain religious notions, perhaps experienced as some superstition or stories at the time. If we take into account that the Roman Vulcan was a great protector from fires,<sup>27</sup> we can assume that the presence of his representation (or the representation of his chthonian equivalent) on these lamps could have played a part in controlling the fire in them and consequently of protecting the house from fire.

And yet again this relation between **Negro – Negroid child – chthonian – fire – Pigmy** points to the mystical cult of the Kabiri. As we have seen, the dwarfish Pygmies were regular companions to the Kabiri cult and were even identified with these gods. The fire association can be corroborated by numerous traditions related to this complex. The Kabiri are the sons, in some cases the parents, of Hephaestus the god of metallurgy who, like the majority of 'god-smiths', is closely and directly related to fire. We have already cited the theories according to which the Kabiri cult spread throughout the Balkans from the Middle East as a result of the migration of Middle Eastern metallurgists and ironsmiths. This historical event was also manifested on a mythical level by the aforementioned myths concerning the Phoenician Cadmus

26. On Vulcan and Cacus, see Srejšović/Cermanović 1987, 88, 89, 189; *Мифы народов мира*. Vol. 1, 253, 611. On the fiery dragon, see *Славянские древности*. Vol. 2, 332-333; Ivanov/ Toporov 1974, 232-233, 236; *Српски митолошки речник*, 203 ('fiery dragon wolf', which implies a relation between *wolf* / *волк* and *volcano*). On chthonian fire, see Chevalier/Gheerbrant 1987, 738-740. For theories (very exclusive, in our opinion) about the chthonian god as a patron of fire, see Golan 1994, especially 188-221.

27. Srejšović/Cermanović 1987, 88, 89; *Мифы народов мира*. Vol. 1, 253.

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which demonstrate relations to the two spheres—that is, both to the Kabiri and to metallurgy (see above).

One of the ceramic lamps from Stobi is modelled as the head of a child with Negroid features (Pl.III: 2, 2a). As we have seen, the divine child is one of the key aspects of the Kabiri cult, wherein the mythical Pygmies are those who encode the basic idea of this belief in death (black person) as a condition for rebirth (dwarf/child). Mythical metallurgists are typically dwarfish and very often black.<sup>28</sup> However, the colour black appears to have been an important prerequisite for actual metallurgists as well. In Europe and in India, but also elsewhere in the ancient world, metallurgy was a trade predestined for foreigners, usually marked as members of the darker race. In Macedonia and throughout the Balkans these people were the Roma who, as late as the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, represented almost the only category of people who plied these trades. The autochthonous population never took up these trades, considering them a demonic activity related to the devil.<sup>29</sup>

The dwarfish, childlike appearance of the Pygmies follows the basic mythical paradigm of the process for obtaining metal. According to this, mining ore from the ground was equivalent to a premature removal of the foetus from the mother's womb, while the treatment of ore in the metallurgist's furnace gained the meaning of returning this 'aborted foetus' to the womb (artificial, this time) which, at a faster rate, will bring to an end the process of maturation, that is perfection, of the metal.<sup>30</sup> The same concepts were used in interpreting fire. In various cultures, fire was determined as a son of the God-Heavens and Mother-Earth, whereby the act of artificially producing fire (through rubbing soft and hard wood, or through striking flint and steel) was identified with holy matrimony, that is, with the coitus of the aforementioned divine couple.<sup>31</sup> In the myths about Pygmies, fire is also encoded through the herons/cranes which commonly accompany the Pygmies (these people are at war with the herons) (Pl.IV: 1-3). The 'fiery' component of these birds is based upon mythical notions according to which every spring they fly over from the 'other world' (= underground, the land of the Pygmies), bringing with them the vital heat which awakens nature.<sup>32</sup>

Originating from the Roman period, there are also other types of lamps with the same or similar concept in their design: a human head is depicted on their top surface, while the openings for pouring oil, for ventilation, or for placing the wick, are actually the mouth of the represented character (Pl.IV: 7,8). Most often, a bearded face with a wide open mouth is depicted, identified with Dionysus, Silenus or with

28. For instance, the Scandinavian *elves* and *dwarves* (*Мифы народов мира*. Vol. 1, 623, 624).

29. For a condensed discussion with quoted references, see Čausidis 2008, 226-229; *Српски митолошки речник*, 241, 456.

30. This concept is discussed through numerous examples (from Europe, Mesopotamia, China and Sub-Saharan Africa) in Eliade 1983; Chevalier/Gheerbrant 1987, 489, 490; Čausidis/Rahno/Naumov 2008.

31. Čausidis 2008a, 20-24; Čausidis 1994, 218-231.

32. Compare the Macedonian word for this bird, *жерав*, with the Serbian word *жеравица* (=cinders) and *жар-птица* (=phoenix, the bird which combusts by itself and is reborn from its own ashes). For the mythological meaning of herons and storks as their equivalent, see Gura 2005, 484-500; Čausidis 2008, 226-229; And for their relation to the Pygmies, see Marazov 1999b, 125-129.

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a theatrical tragedy-mask (Jakimovski 2008, 415-423). These lamps could provisionally be included in our research if we take into account the arguments which point to the dark colour of the aforementioned characters. In this case, we could claim this directly for Dionysus, recorded in ancient sources with two epithets which belong to the category of 'black' (μελαναιγίς and μελανθιδής).<sup>33</sup> Indirectly, this could also be applied to Silenus as his inevitable companion. The presence of Dionysus and Silenus brings the thread of our analysis back to the Kabiri, bearing in mind that both deities had an important place in this cult. The link between these deities would be reinforced to such an extent that it would lead to syncretism, the merger of the two cults and identification of Dionysus and Silenus with the Kabiri.<sup>34</sup> Starting from this position when referring back to the lamp from Heraclea (Pl.III: 1), we could consider the vine leaf placed at the back of the lamp as an indicator of this symbiosis.

As we have seen, the mouth of the characters represented on the lucernae is in some cases identified with the opening for the wick, while in others with the opening for pouring the oil. In these two concepts of 'utilization' of the iconography of the lamps, we can perceive several ideas close to the mystical religions of Antiquity. The pouring of oil in the mouth of the represented chthonian god can be understood as an offering presented to his jaws, while the burning of the wick in his mouth can be understood as the bringing about of new life or rebirth, realized in consequence of the presented offering.<sup>35</sup> Both acts, put together, encode the mystery of the eternal transposition of life through the body of a deity who simultaneously incorporates the paradigms of an old man and a child, of father and son, of a monster which takes life and a parent that gives it. In this context, the question that arises is whether the presence of objects with such iconography in the graves should be understood as random or as deliberately designating and instigating a positive outcome for the destiny of the deceased in the other world. We have opted for the latter because it corresponds particularly well with the ritual of cremation, giving it the meaning of a mystical process of transposition of the ethereal essence of the deceased (= fire) through the body of the deity (Pl.III: diagram 6).

The form of the lamps discussed here could also be linked to the Kabiri through its function of 'lighting' – 'giving light', which in their cult functions as a mystery metaphor of knowledge (enlightenment). A moment of dramaturgical culmination during mystery séances was the blaze of powerful fire which pierced through the darkness of the night

33. Petrović (Petruševski) 1940, 16, 17.

34. Marazov 1994, 83, 84; Marazov 1999b, 120, 121; Marazov 2003, 241, 244.

35. For the birth of the mystic, represented as lighting fire, see Marazov 1994, 81.

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(Marazov 2002, 12).

The concept of the design of the lamps discussed here could be detected within the global framework in a much older category of objects—the Bronze Age ceramic lamps discovered in Macedonia, but also throughout the Balkans and Europe (examples – Pl.IV: 5, 6). Their hollow spherical corpus can be recognized as the head of a human or an animal, while the two symmetrical round openings which are sometimes positioned on the front side of the corpus could be identified as eyes. In this context, the wide opening where the wick burned could be recognized as an open mouth emitting fire.

#### 4. Middle Ages

##### a) The Slavic Pagan Deities Belobog and Crnobog

Helmold of Bosau, one of the key sources for the pagan religion of the Western Slavs, says that coastal Slavs ‘...perform a strange superstition: that is, at feasts and banquets, they drink a toast one at a time, pronouncing (some) words, not as a prayer, I would say, but more as a curse (addressed) to their gods, to the good and the bad god, professing (a belief) that all that is good is dispensed by the good (god), and all that is evil by the evil (god). Hence, in their language, they call the evil god a devil or **chernobog**, that is ‘black god’ (Helmold, I, cap. 52).<sup>36</sup> The authenticity of this citation and the broader Slavic character of the described custom is supported by a Serbian epic folk song from the cycle dedicated to King Marko which says: ‘When the brave men drank their wine, / they didn’t evoke the one and only God, / but they invoked the hated devil, / ... cursed the one and only God, / you couldn’t hearken God for fear!’<sup>37</sup> The same dual structure is reflected in a passage of the Gustin (Густинская летопись) annals (quotation for year 1070), according to which the wizards of old were convinced that ‘there are two gods: one in the heavens and one in hell’ (Afanasyev 1865, Vol. I, 93).

Helmold does not record the name of the good god, but research on various spheres of Slavic traditions indicate that his name was **Belobog**. This theonym is present in folk phraseology (especially that of the Southern Slavs) where it most often connotes the following meanings: day, light, heavens, great distance and abundance. Some Bulgarian Christmas carols sing about the Mother of God (‘Бужа майка’) giving birth to the white God (‘бял Бог’). Some sources record

36. Translation and commentaries: Loma 2002, 185-187; Михайлов 1995, 89-93.

37. Loma 2002, 185-186 (from Vuk Karadžić’s legacy).

that immigrants from Bessarabia responded to a question concerning their religion with the following answer: 'we worship our true Lord – the **White God**'. The folklore of Byelorussia has preserved a mythical character under the name of **Belun**, related by researchers to **Belobog**.<sup>38</sup>

**Crnobog** too, both explicitly and implicitly, appears in various spheres of Slavic culture. In a document from Bulgaria (dated 1856), the name **Crnobog** refers to a certain negative character coming out of hell, personifying the Ottoman invader. The following curse is recorded in Ukrainian folklore, 'щобъ тебе **чорній богъ** убивъ!', where the black god is again a negative character, that is, a cause of death. The *Gustin* annal cites the following statement of the old wizards: 'Our gods live in an abyss. **They appear black**, winged, with tails, and fly under the sky...'.<sup>39</sup>

This dual structure is corroborated by Slavic toponomastic material which most commonly refers to two close elevations with a river or a dry valley in between. There are examples where one of the elevations is called **Belobog** while the other and opposite bears the name **Crnobog**. The most typical example can be located in **Budyšin** in **Lužice** (populated by **Lužice Serbs** in the past), where on the two opposite banks of the river are situated the hills **Bileboh** and **Čorneboh** which, according to preserved legends, were the sites of a pagan festival (Pl.V: 1). However, most often it is only one of the theonyms in the pair that has remained, the other being replaced with another pagan or Christian equivalent. Thus, **Belobog** is alternated with other representatives of heavens, light and the positive principle (**Perun**, **Vid** and their Christian substitutes **St. Elijah**, **St. Vidus**, etc.), while **Crnobog** is present through different names, epithets, or theonyms of the chthonian god (**Veles / Volos**, **Triglav / Troyan**) or their Christian substitutes (**St. Vlas**, **St. Demetrios**, the devil, etc.).<sup>40</sup>

Two toponyms in Macedonia can be related to **Crnobog**, indicating that he was worshiped in this region in the past. One of them is the name of the village **Crnobuki** in the **Bitola** region (Pl.V: 2) and the other is the name of the locality **Crnoboci**, near the village of **Bajramovci**, **Debar** region (Pl.V: 3). Both toponyms are recorded as the names of villages in Turkish census documents from the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, the one in the **Bitola** region in the form of **Crnoboki**, and the one in the **Debar** region as **Crnobuki** (*Stankovska* 1997, book 2, 328-330). This change indicates a transformation of the original *Crnobog* to *Crnobok*, which later, owing to a prohibition or simply through oblivion of the original meaning, underwent pareymologization, that is, the introduction

38. *Славянские древности*. Vol. 1, 150, 151; *Афанасьев* 1865. Vol. I, 92-95. There is recorded data that the **Kabiri** also were black and white. (*Marazov* 1999a, 37).

39. *Pančovski* 1993, 28; *Afanasyev* 1865. Vol. I, 93-99.

40. *Pilar* 1931, 16 et seq.; *Peisker* 1928, 55 et seq.; *Pančovski* 1993, 28, 29; *Afanasyev* 1865. Vol. I, 93; *Petrović* 2000a, 272, 273; examples from Macedonia: *Čausidis* 1994, 395-402, 441-445.

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of a new meaning: in Crnobuki from the phytonym *crna buka* – *black beech*, that is *crnabuka*. Stankovska does not emphasize this mythical model, but points to a fact which directly indicates it. According to this author, the form Crnoboci was derived as a plural from of Crnobok, understood as a noun of masculine grammatical gender (according to us, the theonym Crnobog). The same dual structure is also manifested in other toponym pairs such as Bela Voda – Crna Voda (White Water – Black Water) and Bel Kamen – Crn Kamen (White Rock – Black Rock).<sup>41</sup>

41. This data is based on topographic maps of Macedonia published by the Military-Geographical Institute in Belgrade and on our personal observations during fieldwork. For numerous examples, see Petrović 2000b.

42. Translation and commentaries: Loma 2002, 192-193; Michailov 1995, 92.

The black god is incorporated in yet another Slavic pagan theonym known to us from a medieval source. This source is a history of the Danish kings from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the *Gesta Danorum*, which cites the name **Tjarnoglofi** (Charnoglav – Black Head), the god of the Ruyan people (Slavic inhabitants of the Baltic island of Rügen – Ruyan), in whose domain, amongst other things, fell victories in military campaigns (*Knytlingasaga* cap. 121).<sup>42</sup> **Chrnoglav** (Черноглавь) is also cited in a Serbian medieval document (Danilo, 112) which describes an attack by a Byzantine army on Serbia in the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Here, the name Chrnoglav refers to a commander of the Tatar formation included in the Byzantine units. He was decapitated after his capture and his head was impaled on a spear. It is believed that this Slavic nomination of the Tatar commander was not due to his real name but to two external components, the first being his Asiatic appearance (with an obviously darker complexion), and the other being the negative attitude of the Serbs towards him. Both components were related to still-existing memories of the mythical namesake of this character (Crnoglav, Crnobog) with his analogous characteristics (black and evil).<sup>43</sup>

43. Loma 2002, 193-195. Such identifications would continue in the following centuries, this time with respect to the Ottomans, who would often be identified with the black mythical character (the Black Arab).

There are several toponyms throughout the Balkans in which the theonym Crnoglav is preserved, such as the village of Crnoglav near Neum (Bosnia and Herzegovina); the mountain peak Crnoglav (764m) on the mountain Stara Planina; the village of Crnoglavci in the region of Shumen (Bulgaria).

#### b) The Black god in medieval dualist heresies

In the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries, several heretical teachings developed in Macedonia and throughout the Balkans (Bogomilism, Messalianism, Paulicianism), all of them to various degrees based upon a dualist concept. According to these teachings, the world is founded on two opposing principles: on the one hand, the principle of good manifested

in light and spirit; on the other, the principle of evil, represented by darkness and the material world. Behind these two principles were two more or less opposed deities who, as the case might be, were named either **Ormuzd (Ahuramazda)** and **Ahriman**, or **God (Lord)** and **Devil (Satan)**.<sup>44</sup> On the basis of findings to date, these teachings had arrived in the Balkans from the East (Asia Minor, Armenia, Syria, Persia) and their genesis can be traced back to Manichaeism (3<sup>rd</sup> century) and Iranian dualist religions from the first millennium BC. As in the previous Slavic example, the colours white and black are incarnated in the two opposing deities as a manifestation of their essence (light and darkness). The meaning of the name of the Iranian representative of the positive principle, Ahuramazda, is interpreted by some as the 'White God', while Ahriman, the god of darkness, was himself envisaged as being of dark colour.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, we should look for the next stage in the presence of the black god in Macedonia within this framework of Bogomil and other similar religious teachings which existed actively on this territory from the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> century for some 500 years until the Ottoman conquest in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Although the predominant theory at present infers that these teachings reached the Balkans through Asia Minor, there are other theses according to which the Slavs played a part in their transference. They migrated to the Balkans from the Northern coast of the Black Sea, a territory which in Antiquity was under significant Iranian influence. The presence of the two opposing gods Belobog and Crnobog in Slavic pagan traditions is considered by some researchers to have been an early Iranian, and even heretical Christian (Manichean) influence. The Slavs might have accepted these traditions directly from the Iranians or through heretical missionaries who preached in the region as early as the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> century. Other researchers believe that Slavic pagan dualism is primeval, universal to a greater part of humanity. According to them, this authentic and autochthonous component induced the Slavs later to accept dualistic heretical teachings (Čausidis 2003, 91-113).

Regardless of which of these versions we adopt, it is a fact that in the medieval culture of the Southern Slavs the phenomenon of syncretism between Slavic pagan traditions and dualistic teachings became increasingly evident. In this symbiosis, pagan mythical structures were utilized as metaphorical and allegorical stories convenient for bringing complex and abstract religious doctrines closer to the ordinary uneducated person. There are indications that, in this symbiosis, Belobog and his other celestial equivalents were identified with Ahuramazda

44. For more recent references on this topic, see Stojanov 2003; Dragojlović 1974; Dragojlović 1982; Angelevska-Panova 2002; Čausidis 2003. On the basis of an analysis of a group of Roman tombstones in the Kavadarci region (The Republic of Macedonia), it is assumed that dualistic heretical (in this case, Manichean) communities existed in Macedonia as early as the 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century (Čausidis 2003, 19-87, 123-132).

45. Lovmjanski 1996, 42; Petrović (Petruševski) 1940, 15.

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or the heretical God, while Crnobog (= Dazhbog) was identified with Ahriman and the Devil (Čausidis 2003, 133-139, 221-231, 327-333). This Slavic-pagan-Bogomil syncretism can be located in some medieval literary works (mostly apocryphal), in the oral folklore of the Southern Slavs (legends, toponyms), and also in the iconography of tombstones, in medieval graffiti and in the pictorial motifs of jewellery. Indirectly, we find it encoded even within the framework of Byzantine fresco-painting (Čausidis 2003, 141-279, 285-322, 327-333, 385, 386).

We believe that the fresco composition 'Descent to Hell' in the church of **St Mary Mother of God Eleusa** in the village of **Veljusa** (Strumica region, the Republic of Macedonia) contains two figures of interest to our research (Pl.VI: 1,2). The fresco (dated to the 11<sup>th</sup> century) contains all the elements standard for this type of composition: Christ stands above the broken gates of Hell and pulls Adam and Eve out of their graves. What makes this painting exceptional in comparison to other common Byzantine examples is the fact that Christ steps over not only one but two devils, each painted in contrasting colours: one black (dark purple-black), the other white (greyish-white). This makes this composition unique in Byzantine iconography (Pl.VI: 1). Taking into account that the black devil is customary in Byzantine fresco-painting, P. Miljković – Pepek focuses the entire enigmatic quality of the composition on the white devil, rightfully finding an iconological justification for this element in the heresies of the time, above all, Bogomilism.<sup>46</sup> Since his research does not encompass a more global aspect, we have made an attempt in this paper to expand it within the context of the Slavic pagan and Bogomil manifestations of the white and black gods.

On the basis of historical sources, we can draw the definite conclusion that towards the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century (the time of the construction and painting of the church in Veljusa), heretical movements in the Balkans had reached their culmination. In response to this, in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the existing Balkan states (Byzantium, Bulgaria and Serbia) would undertake the severest possible legal and repressive measures against them.<sup>47</sup> The Strumica bishop, Manuil, took an active part in this campaign, judging by his Rule (Typikon), and the iconographic program applied in the church under his personal instruction.<sup>48</sup> We believe that he ordered two devils to be painted under Christ's feet as a metaphor of the dualist heresy, that is, of the belief of the heretics that there are two gods in the foundation of the world. In the same context, we can interpret an analogous composition depicted on the casing of

46. Miljković-Peppek 1981, 21, 185-188; Miljković-Peppek 1969, 153, 154, 156.

47. Dragojlović 1982, 150, 151; Angelov 1993, 314, 335, 338, 339; Čausidis 2003, 312-317.

48. Miljković-Peppek 1981, 21, 260. In the second article of his *Typic*, Manuil openly attacks 'the damned and unenlightened dogmas of the heretics', comparing the 'discoverers of such chapters' (anathematized by the heavenly fathers) to 'plague' and 'Arabian wolves'. He then proclaims the eradication of their 'newfangled teachings and dogmas' from 'our holy apostolic church and its theology' (pp. 259, 260, 267).

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an icon from Georgia (Zarzima, 11<sup>th</sup> century), taking into account the closeness of this region to the centres of dualist heretical teachings (Pl.VI: 3). The fact that in our example one of the devils is black and the other is white might be a manifestation of the essence of these mythical characters and their names: one as a master of light, the other as a master of darkness. Bearing in mind that the church in Veljusa was located in an environment with a predominantly Slavic culture (the Strumjani tribe?), we can assume that the depicted devils also represented the Slavic pagan gods Belobog and Crnobog, merged with their appropriate heretical dualist mythical characters.<sup>49</sup>

### c) The black John the Baptist

What captures our attention in medieval frescoes and icons of Macedonia, but also in the broader Orthodox-Byzantine sphere, is St. John the Baptist's remarkably dark incarnation (examples – Pl.VI: 5, 6). It cannot be denied that this characteristic matches the instructions of the erminias (sacred painting handbooks), which recommended that this saint, being a hermit, be painted with a darker tone of skin. However, Southern Slavic folk traditions offer arguments in support of the thesis that this over-accentuation of the dark skin can be understood as indicative of the saint's symbiosis with a pagan black god (Crnobog / Dazhbog) who remained very popular in folk culture as late as the Late Middle Ages. Researching this topic, V. Čajkanović concluded that the traditions of the Slavic (according to him, Serbian) chthonian god were transplanted upon the character of this saint. The reasons why this process was directed on St John he attributed to two main factors: the first is the **winter celebration** of this saint, which coincided with the celebration of the pagan chthonian god; the second is the **function of a godfather**, which was a role apportioned to the chthonian god (as a patron and protector of the people), assumed by St John (the Baptist) through the act of christening Christ.<sup>50</sup> In this sense, it is interesting to note that, in songs from the category of 'The division of wealth among the saints', this saint was apportioned '**ice and snow**' or '**bitter cold**', which are again functions belonging to the sphere of chthonian gods (Loma 2002, 54). Some legends tell of a wolf or other demonic character biting off St. John's foot. This action, in other examples, is inflicted upon the devil and causes his **lameness**, another typical characteristic of chthonian mythical characters.<sup>51</sup> The chthonian character of this saint, and especially his connection to the world of the dead, is manifested in folk traditions about '**John's divine**

49. In this sense, we find it of particular interest that among the typified characters in the traditional carnivals of the Ukrainian ethnographic group of the Guculi, which inhabits the Carpathian region, are 'білий чорт' and 'чорний чорт' (white and black devil) or 'білий дідько' and 'чорний дідько' (Pushik 2000, 139).

50. Čajkanović 1941, 27-33, 34-40; Loma 2002, 156, 157.

51. Српски митолошки речник, 396, 398; Čajkanović 1941, 98-102 (lameness); For Macedonian parallels, see Lafazanovski 2000, 124, 155, 186.

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52. This element deserves comparison with an Eastern Slavic idol described in the 10<sup>th</sup> century by Al Massoudi. He was accompanied by several 'black components': his temple stood on a hill called 'The Black Hill', his figure of an old man was accompanied by ravens (black birds), Negroes (black people) and 'various ants' (probably 'black insects'). In relation to the last, it is indicative that, among the Kashubians (Slavic people in Poland), the theonym Crnobog was preserved in the name of a black insect - *čárni bo(č)k*, to which the Kashubians ascribed some demonic powers. This god held a staff in one of his hands with which he pulled the bones of the dead out of their graves (for all this, see Loma 2002, 192). A very similar character (an old man with a cane in his hand and surrounded by animals) is represented in a relief in Shumen (Bulgaria), dated 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> century (see Čausidis 2003, 256-271). In the composition 'Descent to Hell', Christ also holds a staff in his hand.

53. *Славянские древности*. Vol. 2, 368-370. In this sense, the term 'черни дни' (black days), is also of interest. In Bulgarian folk traditions, this term refers to 'black' saints whose days fall between 6 and 18 January (Marazov 1999a, 41).

**pass'**: a gate located in heaven through which one passes to the 'other world'—that is, either heaven or hell ('All must come to John's pass...'; 'Every soul must come to John's pass after death...'). Such sayings are particularly common in Western Serbia, while similar analogies ('divine gap') have been recorded in the toponymy of Slavic regions in present-day Greece (Plivitsa, Epirus). In a comparative sense, St. John (and probably Crnobog, before him) functions as an equivalent of Haron and Vodan (in the role of a psychopomp), as well as of Hades (the keeper of the gates to the 'other world'). In folk tradition, St. John's attribute is a **staff**, with the crook of which he drives away devils, again an attribute typical of chthonian gods (Čajkanović 1941, 27-32, 87).<sup>52</sup>

The chthonian and black aspect of St. John is present in traditions related to another of his holy days, 'John the Baptist's Beheading' (29.08-11.09). Independently of Christian traditions, in the Orthodox Slavic areas this holiday acquired a certain cosmological – calendar meaning (the end of summer and the beginning of autumn; the 'cutting' of the land and water; a drop in temperature; the return of snakes to their underground retreats; the departure of fairies and other evil spirits from the waters, fields and forests). The chthonian aspect of these features can be established in the global regression of nature. The black component of St. John and his probable relations to Crnobog are reflected in the two Macedonian names of this holiday: 'Blackday' and 'St. John Blackrobed'.<sup>53</sup> Death and chthonian aspects can also be recognized in St. John the Baptist's beheading, which coincides with the myth of the cyclical murder (beheading) of the chthonian god as an act of his sacrifice in favour of the renewal of nature, that is, the universe. Many-headedness is one of the most typical incarnations of chthonian gods (among the Slavs, most commonly represented with three heads, but sometimes only with two).<sup>54</sup> This feature might have merged with pictorial representations of St. John the Baptist in which he was depicted with two heads: one on his shoulders, the other in the plate he held in his hand (examples – Pl.VI: 5, 6).

The importance of St. John's rank can be best understood through various examples in the phraseology of the folk traditions of the Southern Slavs ('I swear to God and the great St. John,; '... to God in Heavens and St John,; '...hallowed is God and St. John,; 'I cannot wage war against God and St. John on my own.').<sup>55</sup> On the one hand, there is an obvious tendency in these examples to equate St. John's rank with that of God, the God in Heaven; on the other hand, there is also an evident tendency to mutually supplement or juxtapose the two

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characters. The evident chthonian character of St. John allows us the opportunity to assume that these structures merged with the old dual matrix of Belobog and Crnobog, whereby the Christian God in Heaven took the place of Belobog, while St. John was attached to Crnobog (compare this with the toasts of the Coastal Slavs and Serbs to both opposing gods). If we take into account the affiliation of the Slavic pagan god Perun to the celestial spheres, and that of the god Volos / Veles to the chthonian sphere, we can cite as a perfect paradigm of these examples the pledges of the Russians taken in 907 and 971 during their official negotiations with the Byzantines: 'и кляшася оружием своим и Перуном богом своим и Волосом скотием богом ...' ('and they swear to their arms and their god Perun and to Volos, the beastly god...'; 'Да имем клятву от бога, в него же веруем и от Перуна и от Волоса скотия бога' ('Let me be cursed by God in whom I believe, both by Perun and by Volos, the beastly god' (Повесть временных лет, year 907, 971).<sup>56</sup>

54. Certain arguments maintain that Crnobog and Crnoglav are actually epithets of the chthonian god Triglav / Troyan (Loma 2002, 187-197). On the two-headed variations, see Čausidis 2003a, 46-53.

55. Čajkanović 1941, 35, 36; Nodilo 1981, 325.

56. For interpretations, see Živančević 1963, 46-48; Рыбаков 1981, 421, 422.

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## CATALOGUE OF ILLUSTRATIONS:

### PL.I

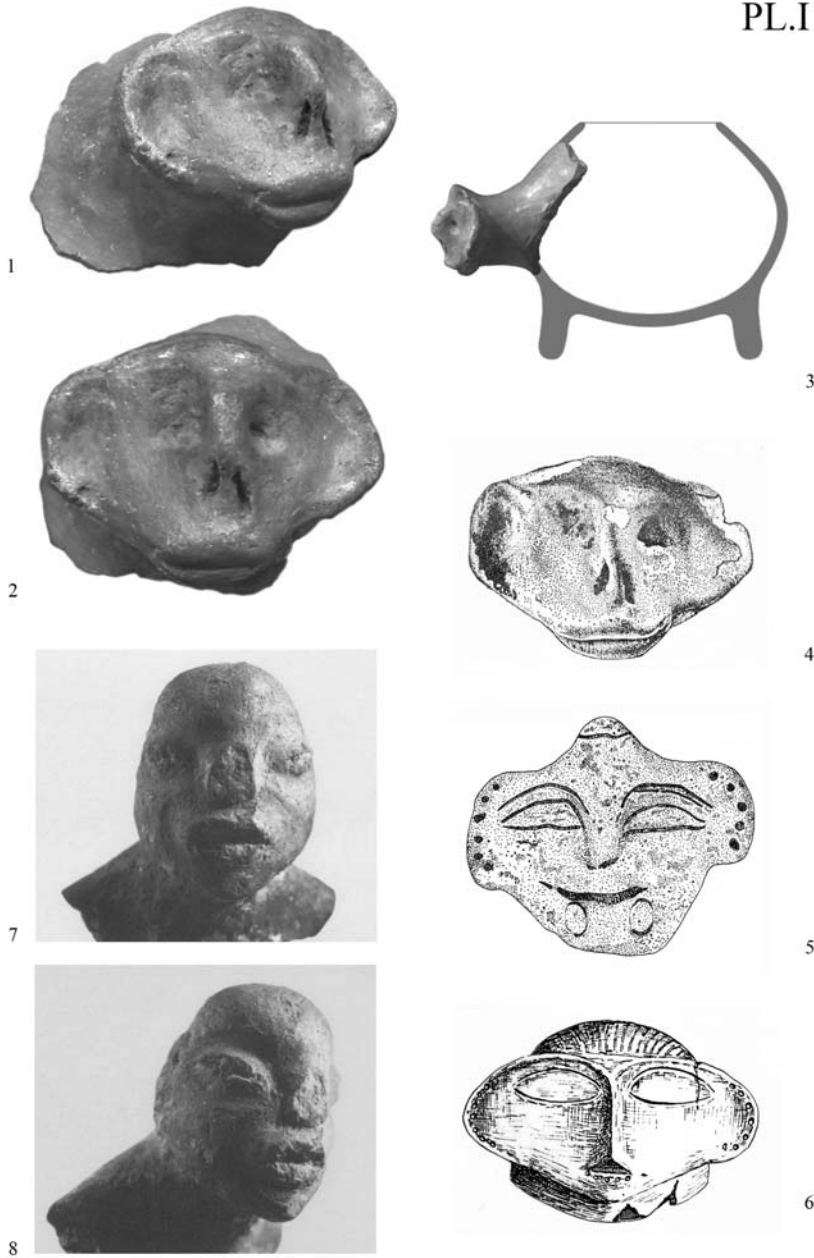
1,2,4. Fragment of a ceramic vessel, Neolith. Cerje, Govrlevo, Skopje, The Republic of Macedonia (Museum of Skopje). 3. Proposed reconstruction (N. Čausidis).

5. Fragment of a ceramic 'mask', Neolith, Karanovo, Nova Zagora, Bulgaria. (Gimbutas 2001, 206 – Fig. 325)

6. Fragment of a ceramic figurine, Neolithic (?), Michailovo, Stara Zagora, Bulgaria (Petkov 1941, 311- Fig. 337)

7,8. Fragment of a ceramic figurine, Neolithic, Ruse, Bulgaria. (Hansen 2007. Pl.I, 240: Abb.139)

PL.I



**PL.II**

Earrings with Negroid heads, 3<sup>rd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> century BC:

1,2. Deboj – Ohrid, 3,5. Crvejnca, Ohrid, the Republic of Macedonia. (Bitrakova/Malenko 1998, XIX, XXII)

6. Marvinci, Valandovo, the Republic of Macedonia (Ivanovski 2006, 176: 4)

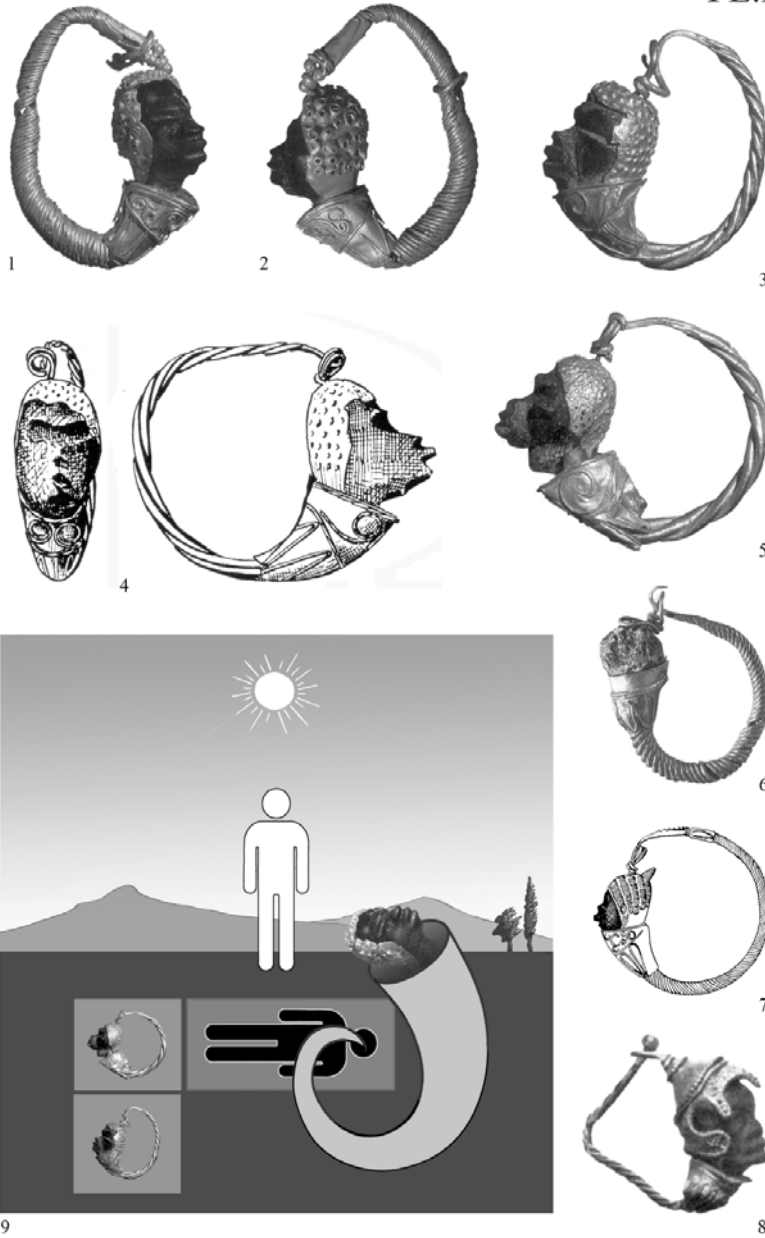
4. Bosnia. 7. Trebeništa, Ohrid. 8. Bettona, Italy (Rendić-Miočević 1959, T.X: 3,6; T.IX: 5).

9. Diagram: The Negroid earrings and the resurrection of the deceased (N. Čausidis)

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PL.II



**PL.III**

Bronze lamps, Roman period, the Republic of Macedonia:

1. Heraclea Lynkestis, Bitola (Georgievska 2007, 78)
- 3, 3a. Stobi, Gradsko. 4, 4a. Prilep (Jeličić 1959, T.IV: 10,13)

Ceramic lamps, Roman period, the Republic of Macedonia:

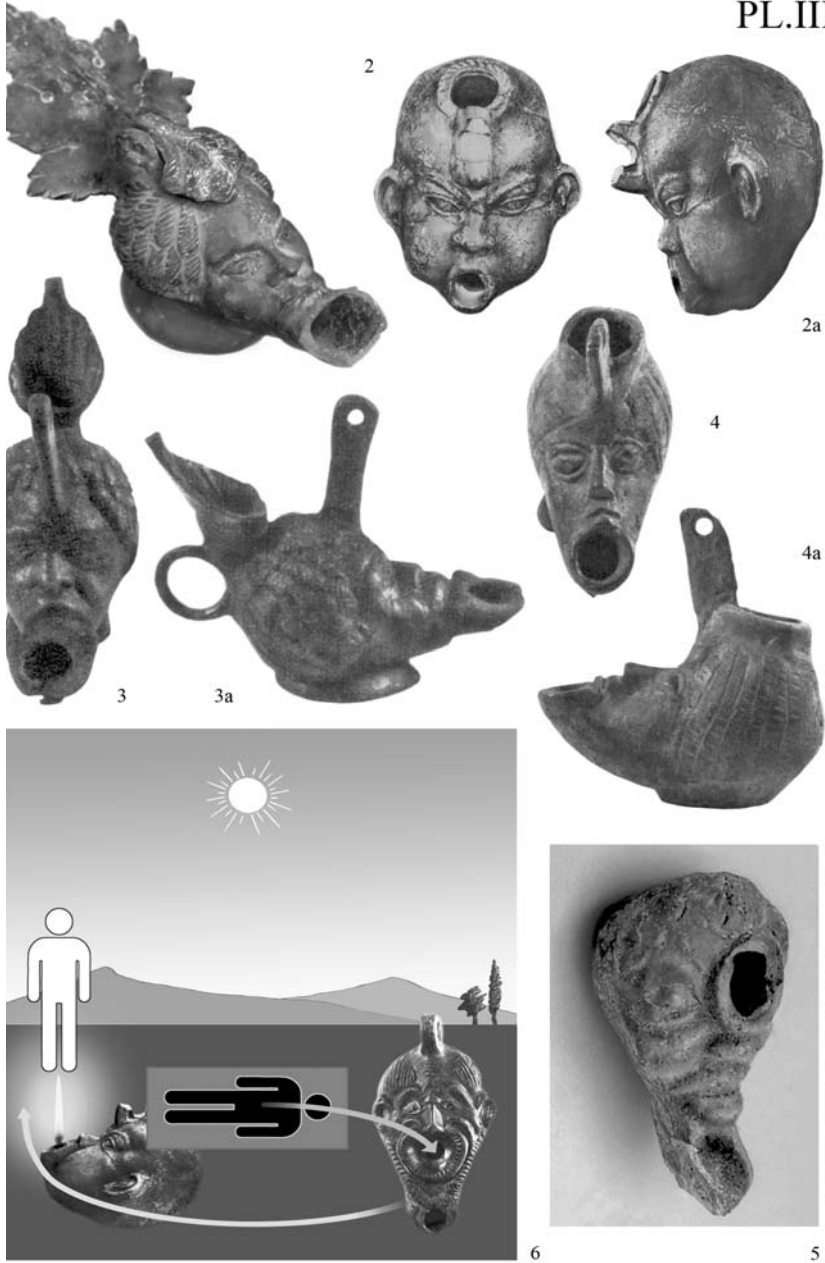
- 2, 2a. Stobi, Gradsko (Mikulčić 1973, 77 – Fig. 50)
5. Glišić, Kavadarci (Janev/Georgieva 2003)

6. Diagram: The lucernae and the resurrection of the deceased

(N. Čausidis)



PL.III



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#### PL.IV

Motifs painted on ceramic vases from Antiquity:

1. Thebes, Greece (Marazov 2003, 244)
2. Thebes, Greece (Marazov 1999, 30)
3. Volterra, Italy (Hodza 2006, 160 – Ris. 3)
4. Motifs from a golden phiale, 4-3 century BC, Panagjurište depot, Bulgaria (*Археологически музей Пловдив*)
- 5, 6. Ceramic lamps, Bronze Age, Lopate, Kumanovo; Radobor, Bitola, the Republic of Macedonia. (*Водич низ археолошката поставка*, 36, 37)
7. Ceramic lamp, Roman period, Stobi, Gradsko, the Republic of Macedonia (*Municipium Stobensium*, Cat. No. 111)
8. Ceramic lucernae, Roman period, Scupi, Skopje, the Republic of Macedonia (*Од археолошкото богатство на СР Македонија*, Cat. No. 447)
- 9, 10. Drawings from the alchemy textbook *Endless Work* by Johan Conrad Barhusen, published in 1718 in Leyden. (*Knjiga o zlatu*, 140, 141)

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## PL.V

1. Topographic diagram, Budyšin, Lužice, Saxony (Pilar 1931, 18)

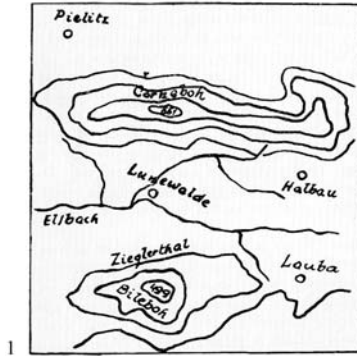
Topographic maps: 2. The village of Crnobuki, Bitola, the Republic of Macedonia; The locality Crnoboci, the village of Vajramovci, Debar, the Republic of Macedonia (*Топографски карти на Р. Македонија, Војно-географскиот институт, Белград*)

4. Fragmented ceramic vessel, Roman period, Stobi, Gradsko, the Republic of Macedonia (Anderson-Stojanović 1992, Pl. 65: 543; Pl. 174: 543)

5. Bronze vessel – balsamarium, 3 century, Moesia. (*Колекција „Васил Божков“, 171: 199*)

6. Ceramic vessel, 6<sup>th</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> century BC, Greece, The National Museum – Athens. (Andronicos 1979, 59: 47).

PL.V



4



5



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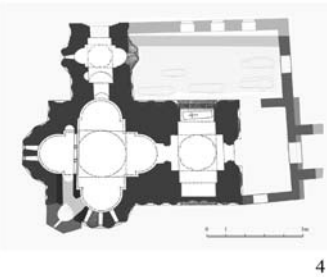
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## PL.VI

Fresco-composition Descent to Hell, end of 11th century, the Church of St. Mary the Mother of God Eleusa, Veljusa, Strumica, the Republic of Macedonia:

1. Sketch; 2. Photograph (Miljković-Peppek 1981, 186; sch. III; fig. 51)
3. Casing of an icon, 11th century, Zarzima, Georgia (Miljković-Peppek 1981, 87: drawing 33)
4. Floorplan of the Church of St. Mary the Mother of God Eleusa (Miljković-Peppek 1981, 87: drawing 10)
5. Icon of St. John with a hagiography, 16th century, The Museum of Macedonia (Popovska-Korobar 2004, fig. 69)
6. Icon of St. John, 1854, St. Spas Church, village of Crešovo, Skopje, the Republic of Macedonia. (Aleksiev, 1997, XV).

PL. VI



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## Nikos CHAUSIDIS

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### The Black Man in the Mythical Traditions of Macedonia

*One of the oldest representations in Europe of a black man originates from Macedonia. Discovered at a site known as ‘Cerje’ in the village of Govrljevo in the region of Skopje, it is a ceramic object representing part of some kind of vessel. The vessel was supplemented with a head which shows a very realistic depiction of a face with Negroid features. This object raises serious questions concerning the early presence of the black race in the Balkans (5<sup>th</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> millennia BC): questions about the reasons, i.e. the motives of that presence, as well as the mechanisms through which it was realized. The probable cult character of this object also raises the question of the early symbolization and mythologization of the man as a representative of the black race.*

*The second focus of our research is the Hellenistic period and a specific type of **ear-rings supplemented with Negroid heads** which are most often discovered as offerings in graves from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BC. Unlike the previous case, these archaeological finds are indirectly connected with written sources which inform us of the presence of black men in the Balkans (**Pygmies** in the area of the River Strymon/Struma). The motives for the immigration of these people are sought for in metallurgy, which came to the Balkan peninsula from the East and was performed by oriental men, i.e. people that had darker skin. An archetype of these incoming metal workers is the mythologized **Cadmus**, the leader of a not so small ‘brotherhood’ of black mythical characters, which included the **Kabiri** and the **Pygmies**. In this period, the conceptual mythologization of the*

*black man was well developed and may be simplified as follows: 'We, the ordinary men (our kind), live in this world – the white world – the world of lightness, thus being ourselves white. But apart from us, there exist different people (strangers) who come from some other place. They are black, which analogously means that they originate from the black world, which is contrary to our world, which is somewhere far beyond, down, below our world, and is some kind of underworld, world of darkness, of death. Within the framework of this binary–oppositional concept, these people are categorized as contrary to us: they are bad, impure, inscrutable, but they are also powerful and capable in a mystical, negative sense'*

*white people - white world - this world - above/up - life - good - pure  
black people - black world - that world/underworld - below/down - death -  
bad – impure*

*Our third focus is on pagan Slavic traditions which, judging from our present knowledge, arrived in the Balkans in the 6<sup>th</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> century AD. Several black mythical characters or deities are well documented in Slavic mythology One of these is **Chernobog/Crnobog** (the Black God), while the other is **Chernoglav/Crnoglav** (the Black-headed one). This theonym is confirmed in two toponyms in the territory of Macedonia: the **village of Crnoboki** near Bitola, and the **location of Crnoboci** near the village of Bajramovci in the region of Debar. According to the sources and later ethnographic traditions, these characters were chthonic and functioned as rivals to the heavenly god, often named in contrast to them as **Belobog** (The White God). This dual structure is confirmed in toponyms where the presence of both gods is related to the names of the two opposite banks of a river. In folklore traditions of the Late Middle Ages and later, the black god was transformed into **Crna Arapina** (The Black Arab), a mythical character of a quasi-historical nature which appears as a negative rival to the mythical hero of epics.*

*Our next approach refers to the presence of the black – dark – obscure mythical character in **dualistic teachings**. Here we have in mind **Bogomilism** and other similar teachings (**Messalianism, Paulicianism, Manichaeism**), which were present in Macedonia during the Middle Ages and possibly even as early as Late Antiquity. Throughout the written sources, the archaeological material, and the traces of these teachings in later folklore, the opposition between the good and the bad gods, i.e. the black god and the white*

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god, is detected (**Ahuramazda**, i.e. **Ormuzd** and **Ahriman**), whose origins lie in Iranian dualism, but also in the analogous tradition originally present in the cultures of the Slavs and the Paleo-Balkan ethnic populations.

The last theme of our research refers to the mytho-symbolic aspects of the black man in Macedonian folklore tradition. Besides the already mentioned **Crna Arapina** (the Black Arab), special attention is given to three activities (utilitarian at first glance, but actually equally mytho-symbolic) which are strongly connected to the **Gypsies**. We refer to **metallurgy**, **drumming**, and some forms of **treating/curing** certain diseases which only a matter of decades ago were the exclusive preserve of this specific ethnic group of people.

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European Research Project for Poetics & Hermeneutics

Volume No. 3

Black Arab  
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Part II

**Historical  
contextualization**



Rade BOZOVIC (Belgrade)

## The Myth and the Black Arab

Some forty years ago, when I began my studies of a very important character who appears in our epic poetry under the somewhat unusual name of the 'Black Arab', I was greatly influenced by Propp's important study *Myth and Reality*.<sup>1</sup> From a present-day perspective, it might appear that to some extent I oversaw and neglected the mythical aspect of the story about the archetype of the folk singer. One reason why I might have proceeded in such a manner is that Čajkanović had long since claimed with considerable confidence that Arabs were substitutes for demons, the gods of the underworld.<sup>2</sup> Some might say that, through the function of the acting hero, I engaged too fervently in proving the origins of the Arabs in our epic memory. I followed the paths of the Russian folklorist school of Borisov and Propp, taking into account the fact that, as early as the 4th century BC, the writer Euhemerus of Messene had argued that the gods were derived from venerated characters from the distant past. This gave rise to the literary term *euhemerism* to describe the rational interpretation of myths—an approach adopted by Olga M. Freidenberg in her valuable work *Myth and Ancient Literature* (Moscow, 1978). Indeed, I could not avoid focusing on myth in the interpretation of a character so multi-layered and syncretic as the (Black) Arab. On this occasion, however, I would like to expand on the interesting and always slightly ambiguous history of the influence of myth on our epic poetry. For we cannot ignore the serious opinion that 'in the relations between myth and history, myth emerges as something absolutely primary, history as something secondary and derivative' (Cassirer). My approach at the time, based, justifiably even

### Key words:

- the Black Arab
- motif
- mythical thinking
- dynamics of myth
- epic wedding songs
- the acting function of the hero
- Slavic mythology

1. Regardless of the fact that Matica Hrvatska, in its monumentally worthwhile effort to publish Croatia's folk poetry legacy, appropriated all the poems of our once shared language as Croatian, in this paper we will consider as 'our poems' all those recorded and published in the language of Vuk Karadžić once referred to as Serbo-Croatian.

2. Čajkanović, V., Мит и религија у Срба, СКЗ, Београд, 1973, pp. 285, 362.

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3. Deretić, J., Историја српске књижевности, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., Sezam book, Београд, 2007, pp. 26-28.

4. B. Božović, R., Arabs in oral folk poetry on the Serbo-Croatian linguistic territory, Monografije Filološkog fakulteta, knj. XLVII, Beograd, 1977.

5. The Arab, for instance, does not have a son, while Marko does. However, M. Milojević records that the Arab has a son whose name is Magdian; but interestingly, the vocative form of his name appears as 'Magdiaše'.

6. Božović, R., The Folk Novel as a Specific Expression of Arab Epic (Oral) Literature, with a Special Reference to Form - Narrative/Poetry, Зборник МЦЈ, бр. 15, Београд, 1986.

with hindsight, on the rules and laws of poetic verbalization or objectivization of the 'bearer of the acting function' as defined by Propp, but also extensively supported by varied historical material, was met with enthusiastic approval by Professor Jovan Deretić in his *History of Serbian Literature*.<sup>3</sup> Still, it is worth bearing in mind that, when we depart from reality, from the context of ordinary and profane life, and especially with regard to our epic poems as an expression of what A. Lord termed so beautifully a 'singing of tales', we enter a world replete with stimulating challenges, but also a world of invisible traps. Therefore, in cases like this, it is worth complying with the simple linguistic rule: all that seems correct at first glance is wrong.

It is well known that the Black Arab is not a marginal hero in our epic poetry and that he is present in the broader Balkan epic space. Moreover, he is one of the major *foreign* heroes in our heroic epic poetry, judging not only by the number of recorded poems (more than 220) in which he appears,<sup>4</sup> but also on the basis that he is the most elaborate literary foreign character whose biography, nonetheless, was not constructed through poetry.<sup>5</sup> One might say that this indicates that there exist elements of polytheism in the biography of the (Black) Arab. The attribute 'Black' itself supports this thesis. It seems that Levi-Strauss was right to claim in his *Morphology* that, when observing myths from the aspect of structuralism, the semantics of an epithet is more important than the story told by the myth. I will attempt to follow this line of reasoning.

It would appear that, at least in this instance, there is no need to waste too many words on the meaning of the epithet 'Black' and that it does not merit a special discussion. Still, it would not be misplaced to mention that the Arabs, as Semites, are not black-skinned in the sense in which this kind of epithet is usually understood. True, in French epic poetry, they are 'blackier than ink' while their teeth are white. The 'dark-skinned' Arab epic heroes from heroic novels about Antarah ibn Shaddad, the Taghribat Bani Hilal, the Sirat Sayf ibn Dhl Yazan and the *Tale of Tāj al-Mulūk and the Princess Dunyā* bore the attribute '*asmar*', which means 'brown' in Arabic but anthropologically matches the connotation of the adjective 'black' in our language. However, their role in these heroic chivalrous works is completely different from the role played by the (Black) Arab in our epic poems and, for that matter, in French epic poetry. The single and only partial congruence can be detected in the character of the black-skinned Sa'dun from the novel about Sayf ibn dhī-Yazan, that is, his mythological variant *Sayf al-Tijan*.

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This Sa'dun lives in a tower (as does the Black Arab in our poems) and if a person wants to win a bride they must bring his head.<sup>6</sup> In Indo-European mythological tradition, the adjective 'black' has a chthonian meaning.<sup>7</sup> It appears that this adjective commands the same connotations in the Semitic mythological tradition as well. With regards to the ethnonym 'Arab', I would prefer not to repeat my earlier exhaustive discussions on the subject.<sup>8</sup> However, in this paper, with regards to the mythological legacy in interpreting, I would like to focus on several structural, attributive elements related to the function of the Arab as the acting character. Firstly, the Arab appears in an exceptionally important, let us say 'biblical', episode about the beginnings of Southern Slavic, or more narrowly defined, Serbian Christian history and culture:

1. He is the terrifying monster<sup>9</sup> killed by the hero, whose death marks the departure from myth and the beginning of history. The Arab is, let us say, like Leviathan, the Babylonian monster of the Old Testament—or, perhaps better said, 'our' monster 'Lamja' (the Dragon), killed by the national hero to mark our admission into the new religion and, ultimately, to history. The Arab, that is, the duel between Marko and the Black Arab, can be understood as our cosmological or cosmogonist story, since it epitomizes the eternal conflict of Good and Evil. For this reason, the small but valuable cycle of poems about the Arab and Marko, or the heroes that assume Marko's acting function, and their clashes and duels, seems to be a narrative of a mythical-historical character. And since the Arab appears in the form of a three-headed monster, he is obviously established as a mythological character, which we will discuss at greater length further on.<sup>10</sup> At times this monster adopts the function of the acting hero, adhering to the function of the dragon in Indo-European mythological tradition: he blackmails young girls, but does not eat them as do, for example, the black hero in the Turkish poems about Ali Gengis<sup>11</sup> or the black heroes in the Arab heroic novel about Antara. This monster ambushes wedding processions in order to abduct the bride, while in some poems<sup>12</sup> he even threatens to kill the king of the Arabs, the Venetian Doge or Emperor Constantine—and moreover, he threatens the Sultan himself.

Our hero is the victor, but in the earliest epic works, the duel is not always fair. This is the case in many works, from Shāhnāmé through the Balkan epics to the romantic novels about knights. And naturally, the folk singer does all this in the positive spirit of the category of literary 'particularity' (Lukacz). Thus, in one of the legends recorded by

7. See, for example, Grincer, P. A., Древнеиндийский эпос, Генезис и типология, Восточная литература, Москва, 1974.

8. Božović, R., The Folk Novel.

9. For example, the poem *The Black Arab*, recorded by the 'controversial' M. Milojević in the language of the Mijaci, for which the name of the informant is not given on account of his being deceased; otherwise, if he were alive some 'calamity' might have befallen him, is sung as follows: Oh, my father, let the *chaush* search the country/ To look for brave men to fight the Arab/But there isn't a brave man in the whole kingdom, so the daughter mentions Marko... (the rest as recorded by Vuk Karadžić.)

10. Sreten Petrović, a philosopher and a devoted historian and collector of folklore, says that in some variations the Arab appears as a three-headed Arab 'who, from a historical point of view, is a substitute for the Turk!' (Српска митологија, Систем српске митологије, књ. 1, Просвета, Београд, 2000, стр. 163). We have demonstrated, by applying Propp's idea about the function of the acting hero, that it is a case of a reverse historical and mythical process: The Turk is a substitute for the Arab (Božović, R., The Folk Novel).

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11. Boratav, P., The Negro in Turkish Folklore, JAF, vol. 64, No. 251, January/March 1951.

12. Anthology of Matica Hrvatska, poem No. 22.

13. See, Božović, R., The Folk Novel. pp. 33.

14. See Grincer, Древнеиндийский эпос, the chapter Похищение и поиск жены в эпическом сюжете is particularly informative.

15. The role of the Arab in lyrical folk poetry should certainly be differentiated, both with regards to its function and its form.

16. On a global level, this motif can best be surveyed in the dictionary of Aarne-Thompson. For the Slavic epic tradition, see Смирнов, Ю.И., Славянские эпические традиции, Наука, Москва, 1974. In a poem from Kosovo, recorded by Jastrebov, Sava kills a dragon to produce rain.

17. See Radenković, Lj., Mythological inhabitants of water, in the anthology Даница, 2000, Београд, pp. 332-341. The author lists all variations of the name and the origins of the myth.

18. Gould, E., Mythical Intentions in Modern Literature, UP, Princeton, 1981.

Savo P. Vuletić,<sup>13</sup> Marko kills the Arab by stealth, not bravery. This can be found in our epic poems as well. The cycle of poems where the Arab has this function is classified by our researchers as heroic poetry as distinct from the narrower designation 'wedding songs' that Russian folkloristics appropriately term 'heroic wedding songs'.<sup>14</sup>

2. This brings us to the Arab's next mythical function, his important role in the aforementioned cycle of epic wedding songs<sup>15</sup> in which he attempts the abduction of a girl or bride. This role is particularly important because it echoes one of the oldest motifs in all epic traditions from Asia to Western Europe—a motif of a distinct mythical nature. And it seems that in these very poems in our legacy we can recognize the acting function of the Arab: the abduction of girls—a function which is nevertheless of a later date than his initial role as a cultural hero. This function can be recognized in the character of the dragon in many fairy tales and folk poems throughout the world, including many Slavic stories and poems (in Serbia, Vuk Karadžić's *The Snake Bridegroom*).<sup>16</sup> Among the Southern Slavs, the name of this monster, Lamja, arrived from Byzantium.<sup>17</sup> It looks as if the mythical story, the epic narrative song about Marko/or another national hero and the Arab is an account of the existence of the world and its future. And on the basis of its optimistic 'narrative' ending in which the national hero wins, it can be classified as an epic fairy tale. In literary theory, the fairy tale is regarded as a mythical epos (‘The fairy tale is the daughter of myth,’ according to Grimm) and its connection to Serbian epic poetry is indisputable. The relation of myth to rituals and cults is another aspect which must not be overlooked. Folklorist studies have been engaged in lengthy discussions as to whether rituals preceded myth or vice versa (Cassirer: cults are the pre-stages of myths). This is an old quandary of the chicken-and-egg type; but in any case the mutual interconnectedness of these two phenomena and archetypes of thought must be taken into account when studying myths and rituals. In this respect, it is not amiss to remember that myth and language have been equated from Plato to, let us say, Lacan and Eric Gould:<sup>18</sup> myth has been regarded as an 'illness of language' (Schelling: language is a faded myth). In a different manner, this is a repetition of the old story about the relation of myth and fairy tales. What is more, when talking about the 'unconscious' in myths, Lacan believes that the unconscious is manifested through discourse. Thus, the unconscious is contained within language itself and consequently it is understandable why Northrop Frye should claim that

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myth and prose have a shared source in archetypes. Nevertheless, we would be dangerously deluded if we ascribed everything concerning creation in folklore to archetypes, as the role of formulaic elements in new creations, in new verbalizations and objectivizations, is of enormous significance—perhaps more important than archetypal memory itself.

The rules governing the interpretation of myth and its complex structure<sup>19</sup> compel us to understand each function of the acting character correctly, and in that respect we must always bear in mind that the event and the meaning are never present in myths simultaneously.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, if the function of the acting character is observed diachronically, horizontally, it would become evident that the (Black) Arab may be a possible representative or substitute of some Slavic god of the underworld—in other words a god of death and evil. His three-headedness<sup>21</sup> is reminiscent of the old Slavic god Triglav who ruled both the upper world and the underworld as well as the heavens, Earth and Hell. This deity may be considered the leader of the Southern Slavic pantheon.<sup>22</sup> Our epic poetry often uses the mythical number three (Strahinja's opponent Vlach Alija, who also appears under different names, has three hearts). However, heteromorphism appears to be a general Slavic feature and the epic singer could have easily transformed this archetypal pattern into a formula. **For, it is worth adding that all times exist in the present in the subconscious** (Vysheslavtsev). It is also worth adding that many other gods from the Slavic pantheon had more than three heads (Rujevit/Rudjevit had seven, and some dragons in Southern Slavic folklore have twelve!). Besides, the Arab's attribute 'black' is not the only feature that indicates his relation to chthonian myths; there is also the fact that he is often accompanied by a horse.<sup>23</sup> In the mythology of many peoples (Greeks, Germanic peoples), the horse represents a symbol of the underworld, and the verbal and symbolic context of the poems in which the Black Arab appears as an acting character is also marked by chthonian traits. What is interesting, and at the same time indicative, is the fact that this hero is ascribed a 'bedevia' (Arabic for mare) and not just a horse; while, within the same poem, the folk singer does not provide the Arab with a Damascene sword, avoiding complete historicism. It would be natural for objects from the material culture of the Arab world to be related within a poem. And yet the folk singer uses this term for a sword in some other poems.

But what we should bear in mind where the *motif of the abduction of a girl* is concerned is that the (Black) Arab usually fails to abduct the

19. As in nature, or for that matter, in building, the structures—or the formulaic elements in our case—tend to maintain themselves even though they might not be organized in the best possible way. The law of 'mythical participation' (Casirer) 'works'.

20. Gould, E., *Mythical Intentions*, p. 7.

21. See Garašanin, M., *The Sculpture of Triglav from Vačan near Bribir, Старинар*, XI, Београд, 1961. This records a legend from Mačva about a three-headed Arab. Three-headedness was recorded by other researchers as well (Čajkanović, S. Petrović).

22. As concluded by S. Petrović in *Српска митологија, Систем српске митологије*, Vol. 1, pp. 180-201.

23. For example, in the poem Janok Ban's Wedding: 'and under him a gray thoroughbred mare'; in the poem Two Brothers in Blood, the horse is a 'forlorn slender mare'; as well as in the poems Janko Sibirjanin's Wedding, Ledjan Ban's Wedding, etc.

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24. It is interesting that in our epic poetry there occurs a substitution of the function of the hero who acts as an abductor of girls, i.e. the (dragon) function of the abductor of girls is changed into the function of an impostor in the wedding procession.

25. In the poem *The Dragon Nikodin and the Princess Milica* (Vukanović), the dragon wants to force himself on Milica, having boasted that he did the same to Miloš's, Relja's and Despot Vuk's mother.

26. See Božović, R., *The Folk Novel*, p. 153.

girls in the epic poems— that is, he is not an abductor of girls in the full sense of this motif.<sup>24</sup> This function of his cannot be considered a 'traveling' one (as understood by Zhirmunski) because while there are similar black heroes present in Arab heroic novels, both in verse and prose, their functions on the 'female' front only partially converge with those of the Black Arab. What interests us here is the powerful eroticism of the abductor of girls, which can also be ascribed to the dragon in folk tradition.<sup>25</sup> This is only partially true of the (Black) Arab, while Antara and the other dark-skinned Arab epic heroes are characterized by a frivolous love life. For this reason, Hippolyte Taine compared Antara to Siegfried, Roland, El Cid, Odysseus, and Rustam, while Rimsky-Korsakov scripted Antara's romantic life as a symphony. Only in the multi-volume novel about this hero do some episodes with black warriors appear who, having abducted and raped the girls, proceed to roast and eat them.<sup>26</sup> Similar episodes also appear in the aforementioned novel about Sayf al-Tijani. This certainly should not be understood as simple cannibalism; it is certainly a case of some kind of ritual or cult. Abductors of women, giants and monsters with the epithet 'black' also appear frequently in the anthology of fantastic tales *One Thousand and One Nights*.

As a failed abductor, the Black Arab appears both in epic poetry and oral prose legends and, at times, in a modified function of the ancient Indo-European dragon who abducts girls for some vague reasons. Since we can also recognize the ancient Slavic three-headed deity in this character, the only question that remains is whether this ancient Slavic deity is of a chthonian character. Nonetheless, I believe that we should not dwell long on the question of whether the syncretic character of Triglav is a solar or chthonian deity. The oldest Slavic deities are evidently syncretic phenomena, just as the Black Arab is in epic poetry. In many ancient and incompletely developed mythological systems, for example that of the Arabs, gods are syncretic with dual characteristics and antinomy. When we take into account the level of creation which the Slavic Olympus had reached in the period when the sparse records on Slavic mythology were made, especially in Northern Europe, and the expansive dispersion of the Slavs in the first ten centuries AD, this is only normal. We should also bear in mind that in primordial societies which had yet to move towards defining their culture, deities were not only inevitably syncretic but also often envisaged as simultaneously male and female. Humans at this level of culture could still confuse good and evil and a firm moral matrix of the community was yet to be

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established; and since there was no coercion in the name of moral values, deities were at the same time creators of both good and evil. All this affects the ethical ambiguity, and for that matter, all other kinds of indistinctness, of the first deities and first tribal heroes. And all this has its origins in the initial unity of myth and culture. **After all, the principle of the concurrence of opposites was not unknown to the earliest Christian culture. During some periods, in the folklore tradition of various peoples, the dragon was ambivalent—simultaneously a symbol of good and evil.** Therefore, if the Arab is next in line after Triglav, who appears as an interceptor of wedding processions rather than an abductor of the bride, it seems more likely that he inherited the acting function of some variant of Volos, that is to say, Vlach Alija, or that Vlach Alija inherited the Arab's.<sup>27</sup>

Propp and Putilov believe that the motif of the abduction of the wife/bride is very old, but they interpret its essence as socio-historical, which is particularly unusual for Propp. They date the origins of this motif to the time of the creation of the monogamous family. This might be correct, but the genesis of the monster who actually seeks to prevent the creation of such a family by abducting the bride remains vaguely enigmatic. Either this monster harbours some other intent or it belongs to some very old wedding ritual characteristic of Indo-European ancient culture. Hence the belief that there are always invisible demons at weddings.<sup>28</sup> Does this epic narrative about the Black Arab cloak some kind of ritual story, a version of the Semitic story about Tobias's Sarah whose seven husbands were all killed by an unknown demon during their first married night? The Arabs, Semitic themselves, believe in heavens inhabited by *houri* untouched by humans or **demons**. Or perhaps the story about the Arab was derived from a ritual similar to that recorded as having been actively practiced in the vicinity of Leskovac until 1952, whereby a black cockerel would be buried underground after a 'silent' procession of two groups of villagers who circled the limits of the village led by two namesakes—two Stojans.<sup>29</sup>

We should not ignore the fact that the folk singer is a real artist (in the Hegelian sense). He never creates with the aim of making his work entirely resemble reality or resemble any existing work with a similar motif as a promoter of the action in all its details. There are many variants to this wedding procession motif. Grincer submits a table of the variants of this motif<sup>30</sup> which does not include the version from our epic poetry with the special role of the Black Arab. This complex elaboration and variation in the elements of the motif seems to confirm Schelling's

27. On the resemblance of the name of the old Slavic deity, Volos, and the name of Vlach Alija and his function in the poem *Banović Strahinja*, as well as that of the Arabic mythical creature *iblis* (the root of the word 'blis' from the Greek Diabolos), see R. Božović, On the syncretic nomination and function of the 'foreign' character in the poem *Banović Strahinja*, Зборник МСЦ, year, XII, No. 46, Београд, 1979.

28. M. Milojević recorded the following verse: 'Do not go to the Black Arab's forest!' This verse is from a short lyrical poem in which plant collectors are advised not to go the Black Arab's forest.

29. Nedeljковић, Mile, Annual customs of the Serbs, Вук Караџић, Београд, 1990, pp. 80.

30. Grincer, P. A., Древнеиндијски епос, p. 259

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statement that Demeter and Isis cannot behave identically at the death of a beloved person. At any rate, Meletinski and Grincer have covered materials of a wide spectrum, from India through Turkish-Mongol traditions to Western chivalric poetry and have argued reasonably that this kind of poetry/narration is a 'leading topic of archaic epic poetry'.<sup>31</sup>

31. See Grincer. For German-Serbian legacy, see T. Frings and M. Braun (Das serbocrotische Heldenlied, Göttingen, 1961.

In conclusion, we could say that the motif is not the simplest or most straightforward unit of formulaic poetry or narration, just as the atom stopped being so in physics long ago. The motif itself confirms this when in one of the poems the three Arab's heads are described as follows:

One of his heads spews fire,  
spews fire, blue flames licking,  
and burning the guests' moustaches,  
their moustaches and their eyebrows,  
The other blows a cold wind,  
and topples the guests from their horses;  
With the third head, the Arab calls.  
(Ivan Crnojević's Wedding)

The description in one Bulgarian poem recorded by the Brothers Miladinov shows a strong resemblance:

As he spews fire out of his mouth,  
he burns the leaves of the forest.

32. See, Смирнов, Ю.И., Славянские эпические традиции, Наука, Москва, 1974).

But let us not forget that fire spews out of the mouth of the Dragon Fiery Wolf as well as out of the mouth of the hero in Russian bilini,<sup>32</sup> and yet there are a significant number of poems where these 'dragon-like' attributes are omitted. Therefore, we could amend Putilov's and Propp's argument by alleging that a lack of women might have been the source and inspiration of this motif where the role of the 'enemy' of the wedding is to abduct the bride. Do we then always try to find a myth behind everything? Certainly not, but a ritual for sure. And as rituals and myths are interconnected, the ritual could easily have been transformed into some kind of poem in which Propp's rule about the hero changing his name but not his role as an acting character seems to operate seamlessly. Research into the myth/ritual relation would certainly reinforce some arguments concerning the change of the name of the bearer of the acting function of the hero/opponent to Marko or other domestic hero and would also provide enhanced explanations of

the attributes of this opponent known as the Black Arab. As early as Frazer, a relation between myth and ritual was established. So, can we discover the ritual behind this cosmogony in which the Black Arab partakes? It seems that, in this mythical story about the struggle between the domestic hero and the Black Arab, we can recognize certain factors appertaining to some obscure (Southern) Slavic cosmological myth and that certain rituals, especially those symbolizing fertility and victory over death, might help us reveal it. It is not disputed that Marko is defined as a solar hero and the very attribute 'black' adjoined to the ethnonym Arab indicates that their duel is about the struggle between light and dark. This is an old Indo-European mythical metaphor. There is also the old dichotomy or binary opposition: the conflict between Good and Evil. In Serbian epic poetry, Good is the habitual winner. In addition to this, the wedding is a sort of arranged chaos achieved through the role of the *chaush* or some other character. However, the encounter of the wedding procession with the abductor of women, the Black Arab, wherein he is defeated by the domestic hero, symbolizes the desire of the community for order to defeat chaos and a new world to replace the old in which Good has defeated Evil. **Chaos is also symbolically and allegorically represented through dragons, monsters and snakes.** But Evil refuses to be defeated; it is persistently reversible, constantly testing the community, relentlessly renewing itself through the character of the Black Arab and his new duels with different heroes. The thesis about a forgotten ritual related to the good/evil dichotomy is further supported by the poem *St. Elijah and Sava Kill Dragons* (Jastrebov), in which the slaying of the dragon brings rain after a drought. We must not overlook all mythical structures within the shorter ritual poems about fertility and the conversion of good and evil that tell of Dragons and which were sung on St. George's Day.<sup>33</sup>

All this leads us to the assumption that the Serbian story of cosmogony could have followed the scheme of Egyptian, Phoenician, Hittite-Hurrian and Greek mythology,<sup>34</sup> as claimed by S. Lazarević.<sup>35</sup>

In our reflection on the relationship between myth and ritual, we must not overlook the role of the *chaush* in some wedding customs and rituals in which he appears unusually dressed and **covered in soot.**<sup>36</sup> His role is not just to entertain the guests but also to introduce disorder and chaos, as is believed in theory.<sup>37</sup> It appears that through entertainment he is to recall suppressed memories of the fatal encounter with the underworld/new other world, or to serve as a talisman against spells.<sup>38</sup> In addition to this, we should draw attention to the fact that

33. See Radenković, Lj., Mythological inhabitants of water. It is interesting that the Dragon is pursued by a hero who manages to accost it in the **mountain**, a location in which the Arab is commonly found. See the very interesting work by L. Stojanović Lafazanovska, quoted in footnote 37.

34. See Eliade, M., Myth and History, in the collection Мит, традиција, савременост, библиографија, Дела-Аргументи. Нолит, Београд.

35. See Lazarević, S., Changing the Mythical Pattern, ЦМС, Крагујевац, 2001, p. 155.

36. In his *Crna Gora and Boka Kotorska*, Vuk Karadžić does not record that the *chaush* is covered with soot!

37. According to Jovanović, B., Camera Obscura of the Wedding Ritual, Савременик, нова серија, No. 7'8, Београд, 1986, see also, Stojanović Lafazanovska, L., Homo Initiatus, Матица македонска, Скопје, 2001.

38. V. Čajkanović resolutely concludes that his being covered in soot, that is, blackness, means that he symbolizes the ancestors! The same role is played by Arabs and Gypsies in similar rituals and on similar occasions. p. 179, p. 14 and 15.

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39. See, Gjorgjević, J., *Celebration and Society*, *Савременик*, No. 7'8, Београд, 1986,

all mass celebrations contain an element of violence<sup>39</sup> and all poems about weddings in which the Black Arab appears are characterized by violence. Death is violence against life.

40. See Gjorgjević, J., *Celebration and Society*, *Савременик*.  
41. See Nodilo, N., *The Old Faith of the Serbs and Croats*, Logos, Split, the chapter *The Religion of the Grave*.

The wedding as a middle stage in the 'rites of passage' between birth and death, during which the Black Arab attempts—albeit always unsuccessfully—the abduction of the bride, resulting in a happy ending for the bride and the parties at the wedding, is, according to us, an attempt to recall the fact that death can be victorious. Namely, in folk beliefs, death is contagious and one should cover one's face with soot to prevent possible spells (thus black emerges again, now with a clear chthonian character!).<sup>40</sup> Underpinning all these stages in human life are magic charms whose purpose is to protect and defend the living from (untimely) death and uncertain life.<sup>41</sup> The abduction of women is an old life story which in the past appears to have been related to certain ritual motifs (i.e. against spells) and was thus convenient for discursive objectivization into the content of any literary form, accompanied by a mixing of the attributes of the motif—that is, by a spontaneous syncretism of the bearers of the acting function and complex semantics. In some regions, including urban areas, the bride still takes a symbolic jump over the threshold of the bridegroom's home or the bride is carried over, which, from a semantic point of view, represents a pre-emptive spell against abduction or an establishment of a connection with ancestors, thus expressing resistance to the **new** in favour of the **old**.

42. S. Petrović is not one of them! Following R. Pešić's example, he accepts the *Book of Veles* as an authoritative source.

43. The poem *The Good Serbian Hero*, poem No. 375 in *Песме и обичаји укупног народа српског*, Vol. 2, Београд, 1870.

What attracts our attention is yet another variation of the motif of abduction whose attributes are usually stable: the Arab attempts an abduction of the bride in order to marry her. (This variation was recorded by M.S. Milojević—considered unreliable by some experts.)<sup>42</sup> He is even willing to pay for the bride.<sup>43</sup> In the poem *The Wedding of Captain Ivan* (Jastrebov), there is no abduction, but Ivan loses his bride when she is proposed to by Ibro, who assumes the function of the acting hero, i.e. the abductor/interceptor of brides. In *Dušan's Wedding*, the wedding ceremony is attended by seven Viziers from seven different regions. They represent the 'Asian side', neither Turkish nor Arabic. This additional complication of syncretism seems to confirm the fact that it is irrelevant whether Marko's opponent is an Arab or a Turk; and yet the folk singers opted for an Arab in the greatest number of poems. Why? We hope that what we have discussed in this paper has contributed towards illumination of this question whose clarification is also aided by an understanding of the historical relations of the

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Balkan people with the Arabs. Another epic poem introduces 'nine naked Arabs',<sup>44</sup> all of them slain by Miloš for one thousand ducats and two glasses of wine. The same collector of folklore recorded a poem in which we come across a new opponent to Marko, Šine the Arnaut, who—like Gjergj Elez—defeats Marko; while in the poem *Marko and Bela of Kostur*, Marko in disguise informs the curious wedding guests that Marko has been killed by the Black Arab somewhere in Anatolia.

All this variety in the actions of the acting character implies that the Black Arab's 'utilization' by folklore is a consequence of the spontaneous functioning of the collective unconscious, as defined in analytical psychology, when coming in contact with historical reality. And only thus could the (Black) Arab live in the eternal present, as long as folk creativity had its audiences and until the advent of some important historical changes. This collective unconscious preserves the past, but through the past one can anticipate the coming future. This is precisely what our folkloristic research lacks—investigation of the predicative.

Our investigation only confirms the complexity of the Arab's character and we could also add that, with regard to the Arab's role discussed under No. 1, in all probability it also indicates an obscured old motif of the conflict between two different cultures: resident and nomadic, whereby the wedding parties and their leaders who partake in our epic poems in a duel with the (Black) Arab as a representative of nomadic culture, are representatives of the resident culture. The attributes which have led us to this conclusion, perhaps not sufficiently expounded within the limits of this paper, are the horse (*bedevia*) as a semantic symbol of the nomadic type of life and the fact that the (Black) Arab usually accosts the wedding ceremony on a mountain. In Turkish-Mongol epic poetry, which might have preserved the old epic situations more accurately, the abductor is a forest creature, a bearman, *luik*, who lives outside civilization.<sup>45</sup>

The mythological-historical key to the Black Arab lies in his complex acting function, in the horizontal line of his acting function; while anthropologically, his actions and their possible consequences can be explained through the reasons for his actions and intentions.

Finally, the horizontal line of the function of the acting character (the Black Arab) could be represented as follows: **Dragon/Lamja - monster > Crnobog/Troglav/Triglav > Black Arab > Turk**,<sup>46</sup> which clearly illustrates how epic singing, slowly but historically incontestably, moves from ritual or myth to history. As myth is concerned with a metaphorical expression of reality, many would like to see in it a secret language as well. In this respect, in everything discussed so far about the

44. In M. Milojević, Vol. 3.

45. Grincer, Древнеиндийский эпос, p. 246.

46. For instance, in the typical wedding poem *The Wedding of Stojan Popović* (Elezović) the function of the interceptor of the wedding procession is assumed by a Turk with no personal name. While in the poem *The Old Man and Uso the Arab* (Vukanović), the latter abduct 'beautiful girls'. (Both poems come from Kosovo).

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Black Arab and his acting function, we could recognize a symbolic or hermeneutic language. Literary language is certainly inclined towards this kind of language and we could say that any poetic language is initially a mysterious language (M. Eliade). We should also refer to the fact that some linguists still equate myth and language, even though as early as Antiquity Plato instituted their philosophical and teleological division by introducing the term *logos* instead of language and in doing so declared myth to be an untrue story. Nonetheless, myth can be a very true story, most often historically founded, if only we delve deep enough and recognize the narrative coordinates through which we can enter the world of reality.

However, we are still at times deeply immersed, as Vysheslavtsev remarks, in collective unconscious—in myths, symbols and archetypes. The character of the Black Arab encompasses all this. He was created by the folk mind in the context of struggle against enemies and invaders. The last opponent of the Black Arab in a duel, substituting Karagjorgje, was Lazar Mutap, a hero of epic poetry of the Uprisings. It appears that myth closed its book with him. It was closed by a historical hero in a duel against a mythical Arab who, at that point, symbolized the entire Ottoman army and its power. Through the words of the defeated Arab, the rebels of the insurrection were granted their acknowledgement: 'your country and your Serbia'. Through this very example we can recognize how one should proceed, on the basis of Schelling's and Cassirer's perspectives on myth, in the interpretation of an entire string of structural elements which sometimes operate rather independently of the symbolism of a myth and are focused on the new meaning of that myth 'adapted' to human consciousness and reality. The Black Arab could live on in the epic consciousness of people as long as Ottoman power existed in this territory. He was the enemy, as much of an enemy as the gods of evil once were. It is here that we recognize the dynamics of mythical consciousness, so important for the survival of any myth in the current life of a community. The intensity with which the god of evil was experienced, his reversible character, accompanied with the continued defeats of the Serbian heroes, appears in the Serbian epic tradition and most likely in the suffering folk mind as an ominous companion of their entire history, leaving a merciless mark on the people and on the generations which followed even after Lazar Mutap. Historical time makes myth irreversible. However, at times, the outcome is reversible: though human memory is fragile, the unconscious is eternal and emerges in situations which are not always under our control.



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## The Myth and the Black Arab

*In this paper, emphasis is placed more on the moral and cultural message implied in the myth of the Black Arab than on interpretation of that myth. When considering the character and acting function of the (Black) Arab from Propp's position, the complex syncretic structure of the character can be seen. This shows the length of its duration as well as the importance of the function of the acting character for the epic and the historical life of Serbian culture. Among several functions performed by the character, however, two functions are distinctly mythical. These are: the interception of the wedding procession and the duel with a local hero arising from that interception; and the function of a kind of evil god belonging to Old Slavic or South Slavic mythological tradition. Black characters, though rare and undeveloped, also appear in other epic traditions. They can be found in Arabic heroic novels as well, but (with one exception only) they appear as knights-heroes with a pronounced libido. Their role in the novels of heroes and chivalry is totally different from the role performed by the (Black) Arab in Serbian epic poems. The first function taken on by the Arab is the function of a kind of a chthonic deity (Triglav) or a dragon/Lamia—a monster who kidnaps wives/brides. The duel with one of the Serbian heroes is the story of the victory over Evil and conversion to a 'new faith', and this would be the Serbian cosmological story. It is precisely in this that we recognize the dynamics of mythical consciousness which is so important for the duration of a myth in the actual life of a community. The intensity of experience of the deity of evil in the Serbian epic tradition*

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*appears as a fatal companion throughout their whole history, leaving a merciless trace in people and generations to come, even after the last hero to fight a duel with the Arab, Lazar Mutap. In the second function, the Arab is a kind of mythical monster one has to conquer, as in a biblical story, in order to convert to the new faith and thus become a part of history. This could be the Serbian story of the cultural hero (Marko Kraljevic) and his triumph over the age of myth.*

*(In this paper, the epithet 'Black' is put in brackets so as to highlight the difference between the mythological and the historical layers.)*

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## Is the mythical-historical emergence of the Black Arab in the Mediterranean related to the Caliphate or to an older matrix?

The human need for knowledge is as ancient as our need to understand the environment, together with other peoples different from us. Therefore, we can agree with the Chinese—and similar Russian—proverb that: *seen once is better than heard a hundred times*. What we see with our own eyes and experience is much more important than what we have heard retold by others, irrespective of the authoritative-ness and truthfulness of the informants with regard to events which they might have witnessed or experienced themselves or heard about from others. Even though neighbours have throughout history been considered foreign, strange, and at certain moments even enemies, regardless of their close proximity or even kinship, still they have always been present in our consciousness as a familiar feature in everyday communication. It is the same with close and related, or different, ethnicities living in neighbouring or in the same geographic areas. It could be said that *enmities*, as they are understood and interpreted by present-day standards and perceptions, were not only unknown but almost alien to ancient peoples since, having become familiarized with their neighbours and their way of life, they accepted them perfectly naturally and with an understanding that led to their being perceived and treated with no contempt or disregard—and the same treatment of understanding and respect was expected in return. For that reason I believe we should raise the question as to how much we know about the Arab world today, about Arabic culture and religion, and vice versa: what and how much do they know about us, since we have known

### Key words:

- Semitic ethnicities
- Mediterranean
- migrations
- Byzantines
- Arabs
- Caliphate
- Slavs
- King Marko
- the Black Arab
- foreigners

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1. The author's examples (Kazanskij N.N.) are very interesting because they come from the area of language; however, the explanations point to the religious life, which was understood and experienced in the same manner by both sides, as can be confirmed by the cited examples from both languages, where the expression *meeting one's destiny*—or *dice*, which semantically signifies *destiny* both in Ancient Greek and Akkadian—can also signify *death*, because *death*, in a metaphoric sense, represent/ed a certain *border* or *end* of a path which concluded human destiny. Schiffmann correctly perceived that the real name of the god *Rashap*, later renamed *Resheph*, was unknown to the believers, which was customary for that period and for the manner in which religion was apprehended and adopted. Not unlike the many forbidden names of other Western Semitic deities which were replaced by special designations or monikers, his name was replaced by a moniker which signified 'flame'. The deity *Rashap*, *Resheph* (*rshp*, 'flame'), according to Schiffmann, was revered in Western Semitic mythology as the god of fire and lightning. Alongside these core attributes, this god, as well as his other hypostases—the Palestinian *Michā'ēl*, the Muslim *Michāl*, the Indo-Arian *Rudra* and the

about each other for a very long time? (Božović 2007, 7-8). What did this knowledge consist of in the past and what characterized the familiarity of ancient Semitic with ancient Indo-European ethnicities? Where should we start with the ancient history of both sides in order to acquire correct knowledge and real insight? Most probably from the first conflicts which were also the first contacts between the Semitic and Indo-European ethnicities.

The first recorded contacts between these two ethnically, linguistically and anthropologically different worlds, the Indo-European Mediterranean and the Western Semitic (consisting of the Canaan-Amorite and Aramaic groups), took place on the Mediterranean coast which itself constituted, and still does, a natural contact zone. These contacts happened between the Ancient Greek and Akkadian dialects/languages and ethnicities. This encounter was, naturally, recorded in many comparative linguistic relics, but has also been complemented by the findings of Akkadian seals in Hellenic regions from the Mycenaean period, as well as by the findings of statuettes of the god *Resheph* in Mycenaean tombs (Kazanskij 2003, 18-19, Schiffmann 1987, 373; Afanasyeva 1988, 647-653; Jarho 1987, 607).<sup>1</sup>

These mythical ties between Balkan-Hellenic and Western-Semitic ethnicities were not sporadic and did not remain on the margins of the mutual cultural-historical events. Therefore, the myth about the voyages of *Cadmus*, the founder of the Theban Cadmean dynasty, is considered the most prominent example. According to Potemkin (Potemkin 2003, 26-31), these contacts were both directly and indirectly recorded as early as the myth about *Cadmus*. In his article, the author observes that the most recent archaeological research conducted on the site of the city of *Thebes* in *Boeotia* indicates that immigrants from the Eastern Mediterranean penetrated this area in the late Helladic period, which can be corroborated by the findings of relics of *Kassite* (14<sup>th</sup> century BC), *Hurrian* and *Ugaritic* cylindrical seals, as well as by local masters' products manufactured from imported materials. The dating of these archaeological findings, according to some scholars, coincides with testimonies by ancient chroniclers concerning the arrival of *Cadmus* and his *Phoenicians* in *Boeotia* (Herodotus 1966, V, 57; 59-61; Strabo 1964, IX, II, 10; IX, II, 3; Jarho 1987, 607; Katičić 1977, 17-33; 56; 80; Papadimitriou 1987, 27-31; 44-47).<sup>2</sup>

Following these indications, Potemkin confirms their existence in language where, as early as in *Homer's* epics, he observes a clear distinction—or more precisely, a clear contrast—between the name of

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the city of Thebes, which was always called *Boeotian Thebes on account of its being* inhabited by representatives of this older tribe in the area, and the name of the fortification *Cadmea* and its inhabitants the *Cadmeans* who represented the more recently arrived tribal groups with their leader Cadmus. 'Such a clear distinction between two ethnonyms is testament to the echoes existing in peripheral areas of the Homeric stories of ancient local images of the Cadmeans, foreign to Thebes, and their legendary progenitor... In later sources, descriptions of Thebans and Cadmeans began to be used synonymously.' (Potemkin 2003, 27) We must not forget, however, that in the perception of ancient ethnicities, as discussed previously, *foreigners* need not always and everywhere have been experienced as *aliens* or *enemies*, since they could be representatives of kindred ethnicities—as was the case during migrations. This is corroborated by numerous examples from world history. The myth about the foundation of ancient Rome is based on similar premises. There the patricians had their own habitats different from those of the plebs, which in time were united into a larger settlement and which gradually gave rise to the city of Rome. In the conclusion of the quoted paragraph, Potemkin also adds that in the course of time the differences between the unrelated ethnicities, or between the kindred ethnicities who perceived each other as foreign, were obliterated through mutual acculturation. In this manner, gradually and imperceptibly, the cultural benefits of two or more ethnicities who lived in neighbouring areas were transferred.

It must be recognized that Potemkin's work follows many new clues that help us gain new knowledge about the migrations of Western-Semitic tribes to the Balkans and which are based on Semitic interpretations of the names of the eponymous heroes who led either their entire ethnicity or smaller bands to new areas, such as Cadmus, the son of the King Agenor of Tyre (or Sidon), who set off on a quest with his brothers to retrieve his sister Europa who had been abducted by Zeus. On the basis of linguistic sources, the author assumes that the ancient Cadmus emerged as a product of mutual acculturation between the old and new populations of the Balkans (Potemkin 2003, 30-31; Jarho 1987, 607).

Judging from available linguistic and archaeological sources, mutual ties between the populations of the Balkans and Asia Minor were even older than these (Ivanov 2003, 8-12). Nevertheless, in addition to the relations of Balkan ethnicities with those from Asia Minor or the Middle East, we must not overlook their ties with Egypt. The first close

Hellenistic Apollo—was also represented as a destroyer who sent epidemics and poverty upon people, causing annihilation among them and throughout the earth. Similar to his related Indo-European Uranian-chthonian deities, Resheph was represented as the god of war, patron of arms and husband of the goddess Anat or Qudshu. He was also revered on Cyprus and in Egypt, which leads us to the conclusion that the mutual religious, commercial, political, military and cultural ties between both related and unrelated ethnicities in the Mediterranean were established in parallel and without any obstacles.

These mutual relations were established gradually, which allowed for their more permanent existence.

The scholar V. N. Jarho observes that, in the myth about the voyages of the mythical hero Cadmus and his duels with various monsters, ancient narrative motifs were preserved as a part of the collective consciousness as early as the Mycenaean epoch and these testify to the earliest ties between Thebes and the ethnicities of Asia Minor.

2. Concerning these events, Herodotus says: The family of the Gephyraeans, to which the murderers of Hipparchus belonged, according to their own account came originally from Eretria. My inquiries, however, have made it clear to me that they are in reality

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Phoenicians, descendants of those who came with Cadmus into the country now called Boeotia. Here they received for their portion the district of Tanagra, in which they afterwards dwelt. On their expulsion from this country by the Boeotians (which happened some time after that of the Cadmeians from the same parts by the Argives), they took refuge in Athens. The Athenians received them among their citizens upon set terms, whereby they were excluded from a number of privileges which are not worth mentioning. (See further: Herodotus, V, 59-61; Strabo (IX, II, 10). On the basis of these reports by Herodotus and Strabo, and regardless of the real ethnic, cultural or anthropological origins of Cadmus and his Phoenicians, we may consider it a fact that there were contacts, intense exchange in fact, between Indo-European and Western-Semitic cultures in the Mediterranean, as well as contacts with other cultures in Asia Minor and the Caucasus (although other theories have been put forward in the meantime: Katičić, 1977, 17-19, footnote 28; 20, footnote 29; 21-33; 56 footnote 86; 80 footnote 125; Papadimitriou 1987, 27-31 footnote 10; 44-47, footnote 22 and others). Then again, the informa-

relations recorded in the sources occurred between the new Indo-European wave of Balkan ethnicities and Egypt in the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC when the new *sea people* appeared in the arena of history, arriving on the African and Middle Eastern shores. The manner in which these new Indo-European arrivals were perceived is recorded in sources from the areas through which they passed. They were experienced as inciters of panic, fear and confusion which, among other things, accelerated the termination of the Bronze Age epoch in the Mediterranean. These Bronze Age civilizations in the Mediterranean had already suffered a serious crisis, and the *sea people* and their activities only hastened the end of the existing agony and the advent of a transitional period which gradually gave rise to the new Iron Age (Braudel 2007, 131-185).

In Egypt and the Middle East, these *sea peoples* came into closer contact with native cultures, beliefs and ways of life whose benefits were gradually, in the course of time, transferred to the Balkans, just as Balkan cultural values were transferred to the East.

For the first time, in these Middle Eastern and North African areas the *sea peoples* came into closer contact with the religious notions of the local inhabitants—and with the deities and daemons marked as black, in particular. Starting from Egypt, we come across the surprising fact that the two primary deities in Egyptian mythology are marked as black: Usiris (Osiris)/Birth, and his faithful wife Isis/Rebirth. (Petrović/Petruševski 1940, 7-11; Antes 1977, 70-91; 100-116; Reder 1987, 568-570; Reder 1988, 267-268; Plutarch 1977, No. 3; Chevalier & Gheerbrant 1983, 54-58; 75-79; 208; 471). To ascertain why these deities were marked as black, it is necessary to explain the role, significance and basic characteristics attributed to them in the mythology and cult of the given time and mythical-historical space. (Petrović/Petruševski 1940, 7; Antes 1977, 100-116; Reder 1987, 568-570; Reder 1988, 267-268; Plutarch 1977, No. 3, 267-268; Herodotus 1966, II, 5; Chevalier & Gheerbrant 1983, 54-58; 75-80; 208; 471). As a god who ruled the productive forces of nature and consequently the world of the dead as well, Osiris was the elder son of the divine couple, the god Geb/ Earth and the goddess Nut/ Heavens, and the brother of Isis (as well as her husband and father of Horus / height, heavens), Nebet het (Nephthys)/ Ruler of the hearth, Seth, Sutekh (Set)/ the god of distant (foreign) lands (himself a foreigner), identified with the Desert, and therefore, the ruler of Nubia (and the husband of Nebet het/ Nephthys). The primary role of this god-demiurge and cultural hero whose cult was widely revered—initially in Egypt and later through-

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out the Mediterranean—consisted in breaking people's customary wild and simple way of life and gradually educating them to make use of the benefits of nature, i.e. to cultivate wheat and vines, make bread, build homes and cities, and a multitude of other skills. But above all, as the god of the productive forces of nature, Osiris, like many similar deities of vegetation, was born and died every year as nature rejuvenated and died in keeping with the seasons. As a son of the God of earth, on the one hand, and as the God of the underworld on the other, Osiris was revered also as the god of the depths of the earth, but in the course of time, as the activities attributed to him expanded, he united both chthonian and Uranian attributes and was gradually promoted from a typical local deity to an ultimate deity of the pharaoh cult—as were, in fact, other similar chthonian-Uranian deities of other ethnicities in this period (Antes 1977, 100-116; Reder 1988, 267-268; Ivanov 2003, 9; Chevalier-Gheerbrant 1983, 471).<sup>3</sup> The activities of his sister and wife Isis were also related to fertility, waters, winds, marital fidelity and the protection of seafaring. Thus the basic attributes of this divine couple were strongly related to fertility, through which they were jointly connected with the earth. And for this reason, in the Book of the Dead, Osiris asserts the following: *I flood the earth with water and my name is the Great Negro*. In another manuscript the god says of himself: *I am the God of flooding and my name is the Great Negro of the Lakes* (Petrović/Petruševski 1940, 8).<sup>4</sup>

Together with Osiris, as the god of the *underworld* and the *master of the dead*, his wife Isis, in the capacity of the *mistress of the underworld*, was also marked as black—as were, in fact, the majority of gods and goddesses whose attributes and activities were related to the *underworld*. We must not forget, however, that this divine couple functioned also as the protectors of vegetation and fertility which in ancient Egypt were also marked with the colour black as the colour of the fertile soil (Petrović/Petruševski 1940, 7-10; 24-25; Plutarch 1977, No. 3, 259, chapter 22; 264, chapter 33; Plutarch 1977, 3, 236-237; Chevalier & Gheerbrant 1983, 54-58; 76-79).<sup>5</sup>

Unlike them, the fratricidal Seth/Sutekh (Set) was black because he was an embodiment of evil and as such was identified with distant (foreign) lands, which implies that he himself was a foreigner. For this reason, Nubia was determined as his realm, through which he was identified with the desert because the enemies of Egypt came through the desert. The myth about the incessant war of the gods ends with the only reasonable suggestion offered by the goddess of wisdom, Neith,

tion we find in Herodotus and other ancient chroniclers indicates the emigration of some Ancient Balkan and Hellenic tribes out of the Balkans and, vice versa, the arrival of some tribes from Asia Minor and the Middle East into the Balkans. Strabo. IX, II, 3, also states that: ... Be that as it may, Boeotia in earlier times was inhabited by barbarians... Then the Phoenicians occupied it,

I mean the Phoenicians with Cadmus, the man who fortified the Cadmeia....., but he does not specify the ethnicity of the barbarians who ruled Boeotia before the arrival of Cadmus and his Phoenicians. The text further describes all ethnicities who invaded and inhabited these Balkan areas throughout ancient history, becoming *domesticated* and *native* in relation to the other ethnicities that followed. This very fact, regardless of these two authors' opinions on the ethnic origins of Cadmus and his Phoenicians, is sufficient to convince us of the constant give and take that occurred between diverse ethnic groups in the Mediterranean and beyond, on the fringes of Asia Minor and the Middle East.

3. Antes explains in detail the procedure of the burial ritual which united the two different traditions and from which a mythical tradition developed later in a form with which we are familiar today: from approximately

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1500 BC we are aware of a funeral rite which expressed the identification of the deceased with the character called Osiris-grain, i.e. with the wet soil and the grain contained in a ceramic form. The germination of the grain symbolized the rebirth of Osiris. This rite is witnessed in the crypts of both kings and of their subjects. It was performed in the last month of the flood season, when the water level would start to decrease.

(p. 105). Further on in the text, the author observes that in this part of the myth there is an obvious political background reflecting the times and events significant at the time: ...which was attributed to the battles between Horus and Seth.

The adversary character of Seth, who ruled the Egyptian desert lands, as well as his similarity to the Asian god of thunder, led to his identification with Apophis (Apep... Hyksos), who conquered Egypt around 1700 BC. Hyksos, together with the Assyrians and Persians who turned Egypt into a province (satrapy), were identified with Seth in retrospect. (p. 107-108). The myth therefore reflects the historical moment of the expulsion of the Asian invaders from Egypt by the god Horus. This indicates that we can arrive through myth at actual historical events hailed as an Egyptian victory over their Asian enemies.

and implemented by Osiris. Skillfully and justly, he divided the world and the rule over it between his son Horus, who was awarded the black country, or Egypt, and his brother Seth/Sutekh (Set), who was awarded the red country, or hostile desert (Petrović/Petruševski 1940, 8-10; MNM 1, 1987, 310-311; 568-570; MNM 2, 1988, 209; 267-268; 429; Chevalier-Gheerbrant 1983, 55; 58; 195; 208; 471).<sup>6</sup>

In addition to Egypt, Asia Minor, the Middle East and other parts of the Mediterranean at a certain level of social and economic development, deities marked as black were also present in the Balkans, both among the Hellenes and other ancient Balkan peoples. Due to their large number, only some will be listed here in order to compare the similarities in their attributes and activities with those of deities belonging to other ethnicities in the Mediterranean basin.

As previously cited, ties between Egypt and the Minoan-Mycenaean world were established as early as the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC. It must not be supposed, however, that close contact between their cultures led to their equation, or to a complete adoption and transfer of mythical outlook and religious awareness. All Mediterranean ethnicities, without exception, achieved their own perception, their own understanding of their own mythical-religious worlds at a certain stage in their social development. This can be corroborated by a series of examples about the activities of black deities in the pre-Hellenic and Hellenic world. These deities were related not only through their shared chthonian nature but also through the cult of the serpent. This chthonian animal, as a successor/follower of the dragon of Delphi, was revered in the grove of Apollo in Epirus until the advent of Christianity. In his initial capacity, however, this lunar deity appears on the one hand as the master of beasts and on the other as a careful shepherd of the flocks and nurturer of crops. This pre-Hellenic lunar-solar god-swan-crow-rat/mouse-wolf-ram was also present in Aegean agricultural cults (Thomson 1958, 112; 796-805; Losev 1987, 92-96; Chevalier and Gheerbrant 1983, 18; 796-805).

In addition to Apollo, Athena, the ancient Aegean-Mycenaean goddess of fertility and wisdom, also appears as a patron of the serpent and as a goddess-serpent. In her cult the serpent appears as an embodiment of the souls of the dead, as a guardian of the hearth; but to date the serpent has also functioned as a mistress and protector of the home in the folklore of both Greece and Macedonia (Thomson 1958, 113-114; Chevalier & Gheerbrants 1983, 18; Losev 1987, 125-129).

Another chthonian black god, who was represented as a rival to

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Apollo on Delphi and as a grandson of Cadmus and son of Zeus, was Dionysus (Bacchus) as god of the fertile powers of the earth, of vegetation, vineyards, a master of trees and a god who was born twice and ruled with the seasonal renewal of nature. This ancient deity was represented in mythology as an outgrowth of Mother Earth, whose essence was always and everywhere expressed in new life, the seed of the future plant and the fruit which emerged from the womb of the earth. In keeping with his activities and duties, Dionysus liberated his mother from the underworld and elevated her to Olympus and was therefore considered a liberator from the Underworld and a chthonian god- psychopomp—the leader of the souls of the dead. His marriage to Ariadne, an ancient Aegean deity of vegetation, especially of trees, implies their pre-Hellenic origins (Petrović/Petruševski 1940, 16; Thomson 1958, 119; 121; 188; 192;216;227;252;276;460; 468; 486-487; 500; Chevalier-Gheerbrant 1983, 121-122; Taho-Godi 1987, 380-384).

Among all these ancient Aegean, Minoan, Cretan-Mycenaean or Hellenic black deities, whether discussed in this paper or not, the indisputable representatives of the other world were Demeter and her daughter Persephone, abducted by the invisible, horrific master of the kingdom of the dead, Hades (Petrović/Petruševski 1940, 15-20; Taho-Godi, 1987, 51-52; 364-367; Losev 1988, 305-306; Thomson, 1958, 123-129; 108; 190; 227; 229-230; Chevalier-Gheerbrant 1983, 112-113; 497; 518-520).

Like the Mediterranean deities previously discussed, Demeter was in Hellenic mythology the representative and protector of agriculture, vegetation and fertility, but at the same time in her attributes we can detect her primeval nature as an ancient Great Goddess Mother. The chthonian origins of this ancient goddess are confirmed by her name, which literally signifies *earth* or *mother-earth*, as well as by her cult appellation as Chloe - *greenery, sowing*; Carpophoros- *giver of fruit*; Thesmophoros - *giver of laws, the one that brings order*; Sito - *bread, flour*. All these designations testify to her patronage of vegetation. In her capacity as a goddess of vegetation, fertility, crops, harvest and storage of grain, she is also an embodiment of the constant and ancient struggle between life and death, or eternal cycle of renewal and rebirth, since vegetation is both subject to the laws of death and those of rebirth. Her chthonian attributes and activities are completed by her wanderings in search of her abducted daughter. When we take into account all her attributes, activities and occupations, it is plausible

Reder and especially Ivanov correctly observe that similar changes caused by analogous historical processes also occurred in the Balkans and Asia Minor and that these events... had an influence on the terminology of the ritual and mythological texts of the Greeks, whose religion was under the influence of Luwian, which is confirmed by the identifications of old Greek Παρνη(α)σ(σ)υς Παρνασσος as a house of gods = hieroglyph. Luw. parnas-as "related to a house" and Πεγασος (who, according to Hesiod's Theogony, carried the bolt of Zeus)= cuneiform. luv. piha{fa}{i}{ "si&q}ij" (the epithet of the new God of Thunder introduced in the new Hittite capital in Luwia by the new Hittite king Muwatalli, who in this regard could be compared with Akhenaten).

4. Both Petrović (Petruševski) and J. Chevalier & Gheerbrant explain that, in ancient Egypt and later, the colour black primarily signified earth, but also space and time. In addition, everything negative, obscure or undeveloped was marked with this colour. It is important, however, to stress that the majority of ethnicities in the Mediterranean experienced darkness as a place where seed germinated and which was the basis of every initial beginning, from changes in the universe to seasonal sowing

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and harvesting. Owing to the natural repetition of the seed's development into an ear of grain and vice versa, this colour represented a kind of symbol of the continual rebirth and rejuvenation of everything natural. In opposition to the colour black, which in this context represents the basis of something positive and is related to Isis and Osiris, to the fertile soil, to the crops and vegetation, is red as the colour of the adversary and murderer of Osiris, the god Set, and this colour was considered fatal, damned and evil. This attitude to these two colours was also held by the Arabs, both before and after their adoption of Islam. For them the colour red represented danger, and therefore it was used to mark the rebellious Persians and all foreigners in general.

5. In chapter 33, Plutarch literally says: 33. But the wiser of the priests call not only the Nile Osiris and the sea Typhon, but they simply give the name of Osiris to the whole source and faculty creative of moisture, believing this to be the cause of generation and the substance of life-producing seed; ... Osiris, on the other hand, according to their legendary tradition, was dark, because water darkens everything, earth and clothes and clouds, when it comes into contact with them. This allows us a clear perception of the basic prerequisites for

that the Eleusinian initiation mysteries were introduced in her honour. They were celebrated over the course of nine days in the month of Boedromion (September), during which time certain religious ceremonies were performed which expressed Demeter's passions and her sorrow for her daughter and her return to her mother. For this reason, both the mother and the daughter were revered together in Eleusis. (Taho-Godi 1987, 364-367; Losev 1988, 305-306; Thomson 1958, 123-129; 190; 227-233; Chevalier-Gheerbrant 1983, 112-113; 497; Petrović/Petruševski 1940, 15-20). Researching all ancient relics concerning these two deities, Thomson (Thomson 1958, 227-233) notes that during the celebrations of Thesmophoros the women participating in the ritual threw the sacrificed animals in a cave called a *mégaron*. In addition to the caves dedicated to these two goddesses, the same name was used for homes, palaces and temples, as well as abysses as entries or thresholds to the Underworld where Hades hid Persephone.

It is known that, as early as the Paleolithic period, natural refuges under rocks and the entrances and corridors of caves were used by ancient peoples as habitats, while the caves themselves served as temples. With the increase of prosperity during the Neolithic period, the majority of ancient peoples ceased using caves only for living and 'the same edifice played the role of a vault, a storage area, and a crypt: grain and the spirits of the dead were placed together from the beginning.' (Thomson 1958, 227). In addition to natural caves and cavities, they continued using artificial holes for the storage of grain, and these can be found throughout the Mediterranean coast, including Italy. These artificial holes/silos were fairly commonly used. In the center of ancient Rome, for instance, a special silo was dug out whose sole purpose was to store the first harvest. This type of silo, widely used throughout the Mediterranean, was called *putei* by the Latin speaking peoples, which means a well/reservoir/basin, but was also used as an underground dungeon for slaves, while similar objects in Rome, dedicated to Dis Pater (Pluto) and Proserpina, were called *mundus - order, universe*. Regardless of the different nominations of these objects—*mégaron* in some places, *mundus* or *putei* in others—all of them were used as *temples and tombs* as well as for *underground grain storage*. In the consciousness of ancient peoples, tombs were considered to be the homes of ancestors who directly influenced the fertilization of seeds and these fertilized seeds contributed to the increased fertility of the crops which affected the general prosperity of the people. (Thomson 1958, 227-233; Chevalier-Gheerbrant 1983, 112-113; 497; 518-520;

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Taho-Godi 1987, 51-52; 364-367; Taho-Godi 1988, 317; Losev 1988, 305-306).

These above-ground and underground deities and protectors and patrons of vegetation, fertility and abundant harvests continued to be worshipped as black, on account of their basic activities, throughout Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. In the context of what we have written to this point, we would like to dedicate some space to similar Slavic black deities.

Unlike developed ancient mythologies corroborated by written records, the sources for Slavic mythologies are sparse, sporadic and most often written by Christian missionaries and church dignitaries with the predetermined purpose of depicting the Slavic pagans as horrible, bloodthirsty and corrupted adversaries of virtuous Christians. In addition to preserved testimonies about ancient Slavic religion, many mythical deities and heroes, mythological notions, ritual and cult activities were preserved in the folk culture of almost all Slavic peoples and they allow us to penetrate the essence of the beliefs of ancient Slavs.

In the works dedicated to Slavic pagan religion, the following deities are referred to as black: Crnobog, Triglav, Crnoglav, Pribiglava, Jarovit and Sventovit. All these deities, without exception, were worshiped by the Baltic Slavs. All completed analyses of the available original material, at the moment when the chroniclers came into contact with it, point to the archaic relationship of these deities with war. This is to be expected, as the Danish, Saxon and other Germanic chroniclers found the Baltic Slavs at a stage of military democracy in which local tribal deities were elevated to supreme deities—as the patrons of princes and their military hordes. Therefore, regardless of the names, attributes and activities of any of the aforementioned deities, ultimately they can all be considered hypostases of the pan-Slavic Thunder-Bearer, Perun, and his eternal rival Veles/Volos, as deities of the fertile powers of nature, vegetation, rain, crops and, simultaneously, representatives of the other world and the kingdom of the deceased ancestors/patrons of earthly prosperity. (Slavjanskaja mifologija 1995, 74; 305-306; 349; 374-375; 391; 399; Slavjanskije drevnosti 1, 1995, 204-215; B'lgarska mitologija 1994, 49-50; 259-263; Pančovski 1993, 50-96; Petrović/Petruševski, 1940, 23; Čajkanović 1994, 63-83; 181-193; 290; 305-306; Lovmyanski 1996, 65-73; 77-79; 84-89; 93-95; 101-120; Ivanov-Toporov 1987, 227; Ivanov-Toporov 1988, 306-307; 420-421; 450-456; 524-525; 625; Loma 2002, 185-209; Zogović, 2002, 25; 53; 118-120; 123; 127-130; 132; 134; 137; 139-170; 184-185; 199; 200;

marking deities with their characteristic colours (267; 39 note 129-131). Elsewhere in his work he stresses again that: ... Isis is the female principle of nature ... While Chevalier and Gheerbrant maintain that black was a symbol of the fertile soil, but at the same time, also of the other world in which the subterranean waters and the rain-bearing clouds helped the sprouting, growing and development of the crops.

6. As already mentioned, the colour **black** in Egypt was a symbol of *rebirth after death* (Osiris), but also of *eternal preservation*, identified with seeds about to germinate (Mina V. Zogović 2002, 131; 146-149). For this reason, Osiris entrusted his son Horus with the rule of **Egypt** or the **black country**. The red colour, on the other hand, was identified by the Egyptians with fierceness, evil and damnation. And for this reason the god Seth/Sutekh (Set) was identified with this colour and was entrusted with rule over the hostile red country, or desert. The same notion about the colour red can be found in the consciousness of pre-Islamic Arabs. Persians were usually represented as red, as were all other foreigners or enemies, as opposed to the Arabs who were identified with the colour **black**. This experience of colours and attitudes towards them seems to be identical to that of ancient Egypt.

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204; 213-214).

Circumstances related to the performance of religious rituals and cult activities were most probably similar amongst the Slavs in the Balkans. Unfortunately, there are no sources to confirm the actual state of affairs during this period of Slavic history. What has survived from the period between 656 and 665 and later refers to military activities between the Sclavinias and the Byzantine Empire, on the one hand, and the Byzantine Empire and the Caliphate on the other. In order to break up the homogenous ethnic Slavic body in the Balkans, Byzantine rulers resorted to tried and tested policies of resettlement. In this manner, the newly created themes in Asia Minor were populated by, among others, large numbers of Slavs whose task was to guard and defend the Byzantine border with the Caliphate. Since the Slavs themselves were undergoing a transformation of their own social and political order at the time, and were displeased by the general policy of the Byzantine Empire towards them, about 5,000 Slavs fled to the Arab side during the Arab raids and were settled around Apamea in Syria (VIINJ I/3, 1955, 221-223). This was just the beginning of large-scale desertion by Slavs to the opponents' side and their active role in civil wars within the Caliphate (VIINJ I/3, 1955, 227-229; 241;248;265;269-272; 275). This was the first close contact between Slavs and Arabs through which the two cultures gradually acquired better mutual knowledge. However, it must not be assumed that only the Slavs were exposed to these influences from the Caliphate. Byzantine culture was also strongly influenced by Arab culture and vice versa. This resulted in a return of transferred stories and legends back to their initial owners, even after the arrival of the Turks; however, these had been altered to such an extent that their original owners accepted them as loans from the transferors, which can only serve as additional proof of the mutual exchange, adaption and assimilation between seemingly diverse Mediterranean cultures. (Ivanov 2003, 53-54).

When the Turks conquered the Balkans, they acted as the rightful and direct successors of Byzantine politics, ideology and culture, continuing it and redirecting it. But they also considered themselves heirs and successors to Persian and Arab culture. They gave rise again to ancient perceptions of the stranger, foreigner or enemy, as descendants of the otherworld, unfriendly and dark—already present in Mediterranean cultures through the character of the three-headed and black Arab, or just the Arab. This was a formulaic character unrelated to any actual historical event (Božović 1977, 28-31). As his opponent in

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Balkan folklore, among many others, emerged the mythical-legendary hero of all heroes, King Marko. The space between these two ancient and always new adversaries was provided for: *...a man who could be a real master of the earth. This is how an ideal and morally perfect man of Islam was created and was to be achieved in the real world. This man had to be... from eastern Persia by origin, with Arabic religion, Iraqi education, Jewish cunning, behaving like Christ's disciple, as god-fearing as a Greek monk, as proficient as a Greek in sciences, as skilful as an Indian in interpreting mysteries, and finally he had to live like a Sufi, an Islamic mystic...* (Božović, 2007, 137). It must be noted that a similar ideal was nurtured among other peoples of the Balkans and the Mediterranean. At the same time, we must not forget that this ideal contains the primeval motif of cohabitation.

Heroic features were added to this ideal composite of man and thinker and thus we obtain the real notion of the eternal cohabitation of the peoples of the Mediterranean, always and everywhere free of any ethnic, ethical and religious prohibitions. This notion was often distorted under the weight of historical events, though cohabitation continued in peace once political fervor subsided, and memories concerning strangers, foreigners or enemies as embodied in the characters of the Arabs, whether three-headed, black, or just Arabs, remained in the collective consciousness of Mediterranean peoples only as memory realms of shared cultural values.

For this reason, and with the aim of recalling this shared Mediterranean cultural heritage, we will attempt to offer a brief account of the Black Arab's activities in folk heroic poems, in which we can trace many ancient Mediterranean, Indo-European and Balkan relics. We have previously explained the semantics of the notion *black* in ancient mythologies. This explanation of the notion *black* remains valid for the emergence of the *Black Arab* in Balkan folklore—with minor digressions and with the additional fact that mythical notions about the Black Arab were intertwined with real perceptions in the consciousness of Balkan peoples. He was experienced both as an imaginary character and as a real representative of the black race, since Negroes from Africa were brought and settled in Ulcinj and its vicinity and over time some of these Ulcinj Arabs/Negroes *became maritime captains and owners of great ships*. As clients of their former masters, they added their masters' names to their own names alongside the already adopted ethnonym Arab, which initially signified a slave and only later a Negro (Svetieva 1-5).

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Among the first and foremost characteristics of the Black Arab in folk epic were the notions of his duels and battles with Balkan heroes, of which we will refer only to those with his most renowned adversary, King Marko. The moral attributes and personal traits of the Black Arab in opposition to King Marko are explained in the poem *Marko Kraljević i Arapin* (Serbian Folk Poems 2, 1976, 277-287; Djurić, 1954, 148-159; Penušliski 2003, 171-260; Penušliski 2005, 7-111). The motifs in the poem are standard: The lonesome hero and renowned duelist, the Black Arab, in the tower he built himself:

By the wide blue sea;

wants:

With a beloved girl to stroll;

and not just any girl but the Sultan's daughter; and if the Sultan refuses the Arab's proposal, he is to face him in a duel. In accordance with ancient mythical rules, the Sultan looks for a suitable substitute for the decisive battle with the Black Arab. Similar to the epic Gilgamesh, where a dream announces the hero Enkidu, the Sultan's wife has a dream which prophesies that Marko is the only one who can rescue them from their misfortune. For this reason she addresses the hero, but is refused as Marko is not reluctant to admit that he is afraid of such a great hero. The Sultan joins in his wife's entreaties, but Marko remains unmoved, citing the same reason:

When he takes my head off my shoulders,  
What need will I have of three loads of riches?

Only when Marko is addressed by the Sultan's daughter as a Christian and in the name of God and St. John does he fail to find any more excuses to refuse, regardless of what he feels:

Poor me, my dear sister!  
It's bad to go, even worse not to:

Marko arrives in Istanbul and arranges with the Sultan's daughter to attack the Black Arab when he is departing with the bride and the wedding procession. That is what transpires, but now:



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When the Black Arab saw  
that Marko would conquer him,  
he turned his springy mare  
and escaped through the market.

But Marko is a braver hero and:

The Arab fell, and Marko accosted him  
and cut off the Arab's head...

which is a regular occurrence in all duels in epic poetry (Božović  
1977, 31-33).

This epic poem includes another motif deserving attention and that  
concerns the Sultan's daughter's disappointment when she believes  
that Marko has not come to her rescue:

There came the Turkish girl.  
.....  
When the bride reached the lake,  
She bowed to its green waters  
And started conversing with it:  
'God help us, green lake!  
God help us, my eternal dwelling!  
The rest of my days will be spent inside you.  
I'd rather have you, than the Arab."

We believe that this ancient motif, present in a series of epic po-  
ems, can be related to the previously discussed beliefs that waters,  
wells, holes, abysses and rocks are the contact zones between *this*  
and *the other world* and entrances which lead to the Underworld  
where Tammuz/Dumuzi/Adonis substitutes the goddess Inanna/  
Ishtar for one half of the year and where Gilgamesh descends first to  
meet Utnapishtim and later Enkidu. From such a place Hades brings  
Persephone to his kingdom and Odysseus descends into the kingdom  
of the dead to meet his mother and also meets Achilles and many other  
heroes who died in battle. This is corroborated by a series of toponyms  
throughout the Balkans which confirm the same mythical matrix (Loma  
2002, 195).

The entire cycle including the poem *Marko Kraljević and 12  
Arabs* (Serbian Folk Poems 2, 1976, 268-270; Božović 1977, 80;

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Penušliski 2003, 171-260; 2005, 7-111) treats the same topic of duels, Marko's bravery and the liberation of the enslaved girl. This motif refers to the battle between light, positive heroes and dark, black forces of evil—a motif also present in the poems dedicated to Bolen Dojčin who, despite being bedridden for years, manages, when the honour of his home is threatened, to recover and gather all his strength to kill the foreigner, the Black Arab (Penušliski 2003, 89-170; 2005, 7-111).

In the aftermath of the Balkan wars, many of the *Arab/Negro* families, who were to be remembered among the people only as Arabs, moved out of the Southern Slavic areas together with the Turks. However, some families stayed for a longer period of time, especially around Thessalonica and Enidze Vardar. Regardless of the length of their inhabitation of these areas, they preserved and continued practicing their old customs. At a designated time of the year, in Thessalonica, they gathered around the great maple tree near Aynar Bahche and performed ritual dances. According to the legends, this was the site of the last duel between Bolen Dojčin and the Black Arab. In Ulcinj, on a site called the Arab Field, the local Negroes/Arabs practiced their old custom in a similar fashion. The authenticity of facts recorded in the legends is corroborated by the name of the village Arapli, which is situated in a close proximity to the site of the last duel between Bolen Dojčin and the Black Arab. A series of appellatives throughout Southern Slavic areas preserved to the present day are valid evidence of their presence in the Balkans (Svetieva, 1-5).

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In this paper I have not contemplated the correlation of the entire Mediterranean ethnic, ethical and cultural heritage sublimated in the character of the Black Arab. Nor have I attempted to collect and unite ancient inbuilt memories and notions about the Arab and by doing so disturb their internal power and efface them or violate their integrity. I have approached the subject with the intention of portraying selected black deities of the Mediterranean through their attributes and activities and as suitable guardians/sustainers of the overall memory and as active factors in its enrichment. Despite our critical approach to the veracity of the available data, we should admit that if we were to analyze them as ancient memories and visions of ancestors, we might prove fortunate in deciphering their essence.

If we start from the fact that, in the beginning, both gods and

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people were equal and mortal, then the Greek proverb clearly conveys ancient memories of that period: *When people were more divine, and gods more human*. And by relying on the ancient cultures of the Mediterranean, on the meaning of black deities in the lives of people at the time, and by transferring their general and still valid messages, we will recognize that their tested experiences facilitate an insight into many contemporary phenomena which we have tried to explain with all the means available to us today, unaware that we need only have looked into the ancient scriptures which explain many of the phenomena which enthuse us today.

By virtue of their Uranian-chthonian nature, the black deities were representatives of both worlds, guardians and patrons of earthly produce and wealth—embodiments of the fertile soil. It can be observed that, regardless of the culture in which they originated, there is no essential difference between them except in their names. Even the colours symbolic of their activities and attributes remain the same throughout diverse Mediterranean cultures, irrespective of the temporal or spatial distance between them. The colour black as a symbol of mother-earth at the same time represents its interior/depth where, according to ancient beliefs, there resided the ancestors/protectors of the same earthly produce and riches ruled over by the ancient gods of vegetation. When social and political circumstances altered, these gods were elevated to the level of supreme deities, Thunder-Bearers and gods of war, which seemingly led to discontinuation with regards to their previous attributes and activities. Not that this was always precisely the case, since the Thunder-Bearer caused rain which was beneficial for the crops and helped continuous renewal.

The other archaic motif related to the journeys of certain gods and heroes to distant lands again leads us to the Black Arab as both an ancient and contemporary agent in their feats. We have only touched upon the myth about Cadmus, but we believe that his feats and transformations are sufficient to clarify the behaviour of the Black Arab in our epic poetry. Cadmus and Harmonia fled to the Enchelians and together they defeated the Illyrians; as Illyrian rulers they transform into serpents. As serpents, they came to Dalmatia and lived in a cleft in the ground near Epidaurus. According to a different version, Cadmus was expelled from Greece and headed for Dalmatia, where he became a powerful and fierce pirate who ambushed sailors and oppressed the powerless. In some of his traits, this Cadmus can certainly be considered a pre-source of the Black Arab.

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Consequently, if we assemble the notions about all ancient deities and heroes, their attributes and activities, we can gradually construct an image of the character who in Balkan epic poetry embodies the eternal foreigner and enemy and his ancient hypostases—the Black Arab.

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### Is the mythical-historical emergence of the Black Arab in the Mediterranean related to the Caliphate or to an older matrix?

*When depressed but also stimulated by everyday events, we often travel back to an imagined or invented heroic past because the present we live in is quasi-heroic and quasi-historical. The arrival of the Arabs in the Byzantine Empire and therefore the Slavic world, as well as their Semitic predecessors, was accepted with no invented prejudices either in war or during negotiations, when trading or living alongside each other. This paper aims to stress the mutual cultural-historical influences of both sides and their mutual benefits. Until the advent of Islam, the greater part of the Arab world and the cultures under their influence lived side by side with the Hellenistic-Roman world, imbibed their culture and utilized the achievements of their civilization, offering theirs in return. The relations of giving and taking and the exchange of cultural goods between the Byzantines and the Arabs did not change after the advent of Islam in the Arab world. On the contrary, with the emergence of the Slavs, their relations only deepened and were enriched, as the Slavs through acculturation introduced their own culture into both of these cultures and accepted and reshaped theirs as their own—and in doing so became a part of the wider Mediterranean culture.*







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Black Arab  
as a Figure of Memory

Part III

**Ritual**  
**contextualization**



Tomislav DROZ (Zadar)

## The Turk on Lastovo – Social Memory Preserved in the Legend of a Catalan Attack on the Island

### INTRODUCTION

Research for this article was conducted in two stages: the first stage on the island of Lastovo during carnival period in February 2008; the second stage during subsequent contact with the literature and the people of Lastovo, which problematized different aspects of the carnival period on the island. In the course of this research, and for the purpose of the *Interpretations* project, my intention was to identify specific social memories of the Catalan attack on the island in the 15<sup>th</sup> century as presented in the narratives of islanders during carnival week.

My informants understood the names given to the doll that is burnt on the Tuesday of the carnival, *Turčin* and *Moro*, as synonyms for all attackers of Muslim confession. In this case, religious denomination was more significant than ethnic affiliation in shaping the profile of the enemy.

The use of the terms *Moro* or *Turk* as epithets for the envoy of the Catalanian pirates indicates a specific understanding of historical periods and events as facts which, while not meaningful in a chronological or historical sense, yet function logically if viewed as folkloristic facts. Accordingly, the intention of this work is to refer to the folklorist facts whose consideration and analysis may indicate the different cultural and civilization influences to which Lastovo has been exposed and which have participated in composing the story that accompanies the sentencing and execution of the Poklad doll.

### Key words:

- Lastovo Poklad
- Turk
- *culjanje*
- social memory
- Catalan attack

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1. Rkp. 340 of the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb. In these legends about the emergence of settlements on the island, dominated by stories of kidnapping, assault or robbery, the main culprits are typically pirates coming from Africa. The comedy *La Turca* by Giambattista della Porta from 1597 or 1606 testifies not only to the representation of the Turkish as the *Other* in their outward appearance, physical characteristics and character, but also provides an interesting account of the frequent pirate attacks on east Adriatic islands under the rule of *La Serrenissima*, where the main victims were typically innocent Christian girls whose fate was at risk, as was the fate of the rest of the population living in constant fear. The action takes place on the island of Lesina (the present-day island of Hvar), where two female victims of kidnapping are later saved by local men disguised in Turkish clothes. The story reflects popular understanding in 16<sup>th</sup> century Venice at a time when accounts of frequent attacks on the island's towns and villages circulated in Venice.

Narratives about attacks on the island, whether they be of Catalan or Turkish attacks or of robberies by pirates, are linked in a meaningful entity that serves as a libretto for the carnival drama that takes place on Carnival Tuesday. Space and time in drama lose their geographical features and time parameters and become a cultural property enrolled in the action which follows the conviction of the *Turk*. An additional goal of this work is to indicate the complexity by which this phenomenon and oral tradition have transferred several stories of the attack into what has become the background to a practice that, over time, has become a tradition and symbol of the island.

### CARNIVAL PERIOD ON LASTOVO – LEGENDS AND PRAXIS

Arriving on Lastovo in the late afternoon, I was anxious to start my research project as soon as possible since time was restricted and my project covered a great number of events. One of my informants told me that Carnival days on Lastovo are like a second Christmas for the inhabitants of the island; any long interviews during my short stay on the island would thus not be possible. How, then, to research social memory in its manifestations and stereotypes as transmitted through legends and embodied in the appearance of the carnival doll and the performance of the *pokladari*?

The specific circumstances in which I was forced to abandon my original plans allowed me to participate in the carnival procession of the *pokladari* and to record what happened in the meantime together with occasional talks with informants who were willing to grant some of their limited time to answer my questions.

Continual repetition of the story of the attack by Turks and Catalan pirates in the past has left its traces in the customs of the carnival period. Tales of danger from foreign invaders, pirate raids, capture and enslavement are present in almost every legend of the origins of settlements on Lastovo.<sup>1</sup> The fate of the remote islands was thus no more favourable in the past than in modern times. As the most remote populated Croatian island, connections with the mainland on a daily basis have always been difficult, and when pirates made the island a target of attack, any help from the mainland always arrived too late. Frequent looting raids shaped the toponymy of the island where even today the highest peaks bear names like *Stražica*, *Glavica*, and *Katalanova Grža* (Watcher's Peak, Small Head, Catalan Rock) (Jurica 2001: 20-21;

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Simunovic 1970: 258-259), which refer to the island's long history of danger and fear.

The legends that circulate on Lastovo today, especially in carnival period, possess almost the form of recent news items and are linked with the siege of the island by Catalan pirates. One of these attacks, confirmed in historiography, has left a special impression in the oral tradition. This siege is associated with the 15<sup>th</sup> century attack by what were actually Aragonese and Neapolitan mercenaries during the war between the Republic of Venice and the Kingdom of Naples for dominance in the Adriatic.

Legend says that Catalan pirates decided to attack the island and sell its residents as captives. The Catalan pirate fleet first sailed to the nearby island of Korcula and besieged the town. At the same time, they sent a messenger to Lastovo to seek the surrender of the island. The inhabitants of Lastovo kept the envoy on the island and refused to come to any agreement. As their envoy did not return, the Catalan pirates headed their ships towards Lastovo. Scouts positioned on the peaks surrounding Lastovo announced the danger. According to legend, a rooster alerted the villagers to the danger from the sea: *Kukuriku Donje selo, kukuriku Gornje selo, eto ide svit Katalani, bit ćete svi poklani* ('Cock-a-doodle-doo! Cock-a-doodle-doo! The Catalans are coming for us and we're all going to be slaughtered!').<sup>2</sup> This chant, which remains in use even today, evokes the long history of uncertainty and danger on this island situated so far from the mainland. The legend says that the men got armed and ready, awaiting invasion, while the women and children and a priest set off on a pilgrimage to the old church of St. George on the highest peak of the island, praying for salvation from slavery and death. According to legend, the day of the attack was St. George's Day. Even today, the name of the hill to which the villagers fled is named *Hum*; as the highest peak on the island, it was also the place where islanders from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards kept watch over a wide open sea to give warning of possible danger (Fisković 2001:48). The people's prayer to St. George was answered and a huge storm suddenly arose and miraculously destroyed most of the enemy ships. The Catalan envoy on the island was captured and the villagers put him on a donkey as a sign of humiliation and led him backwards through the village to degrade him further. After he had been conducted through the village, the villagers set up a rope above the village on the hill which bears the name *Pokladarova Grža* (Poklad's Rock)<sup>3</sup> and stretched the rope all the way down to Lastovo.

2. According to the transcript of a talk with P.S. (1940) from Lastovo, held on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

3. *Pod kostanju* is the name of the place where there once stood a chestnut tree to which a rope was attached for sliding the Poklad. That cultural intervention in the landscape has occurred on Lastovo is testified to by the fact that a small round pillar at the crossroads bears the name *Kolona od poklada* (Poklad's Colon) and the rope down which the *pokladari* slid the *Poklad* to the village was tied around it.

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They then attached the black-faced Catalan pirate to the rope and made him slide three times down to the village. After that, the captured enemy was carried out to be burnt in a place called *Dolac* in front of the church and town hall.

The performance practices which preserve the legend of the attack convey the message that the man to blame for all bad things is the *Poklad*—or *Turčin* (Turk), as the Lastovo inhabitants call him. His trial begins on Monday, the day before he is to be burnt in the main town square. That day begins with the playing of the Lastovo *lyre*, a wooden string instrument played by a man in front of the town hall where all members of the *pokladari* company assemble. In the backyard there is a black donkey whose owner has given it the name *Moro* (on purpose or by chance). The procession, led by *Moro*, proceeds towards the village, the *lira* playing the song about *Alija X.*, and the *pokladari* shouting the word *Uvo!*<sup>4</sup> to announce the arrival of the *pokladari* company with the Turk on a donkey on *Shrove Tuesday*. The last stop is the local cemetery where they collect soil to make the legs of the carnival doll. On their way back to the town hall, people start making the *Turčin*. Seven kilograms of soil from the cemetery and a lead weight are put in each boot so that the *Poklad* will be heavy enough not to fall over while sliding down the rope strung from the top of the hill to the village. Several hours later, once the doll is completed, it is exhibited at the door of the town hall awaiting condemnation for all the sins perpetrated against the people of Lastovo.

4. The shout *Uvo!*, which the *pokladari* chant at every major event, is explained by some ethnologists as having derived from the male name *Ivo*, which is considered to have been the *Poklad*'s name (Bonifacius Rozin 1960). According to archive documents, shouting (or *hakelanje*, as the people from Lastovo call it) would start on the day of Our Lady of Kandelora (Feb. 2), when a group of *pokladari* would meet to arrange the organization of Carnival festivities. After the agreement, members of the company went, accompanied by the lyre, to the *Gornja Luka*, where they stood under the chestnut tree and shouted *Uvo!* three times, exclaiming the final notice to the population that an agreement had been reached that there would be a Carnival (Jurica 2001:480).

## SOCIAL MEMORY AND THE PRACTICES THAT ACCOMPANY IT

The legends that circulate on Lastovo of the dangers that afflicted the island in the 15<sup>th</sup> century are by no means purely historical facts. As Milicevic notes (1965:15), the Lastovo carnival festivities are interesting not only on account of their performance but also in terms of the historical aspects of the show. Above all, in this case, we must understand these facts as folkloristic ones and be aware that they have been formed through the integration of historical elements in poetic expression and the action that accompanies it. Transformed in this way, facts lose their connection with the previous reality, cease to be historical and bear only indirect witness to historical events (transl. T.O.; Perić Polonijo 1989: 91-97). Although these 'facts' are based only on legend,

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not on actual historical events, one should not ignore the reality that in the late 15<sup>th</sup> and throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries Lastovo and Korčula were threatened by two attacks from the sea: in 1483 and in 1571.<sup>5</sup> But the historical relevance of events during carnival time should be seen in the light of the complex interaction between the historical references, social changes, information and symbolic language present in the narration (cf. Agoston-Nikola 1989:21).

Neither my journey to Lastovo and participation in the carnival ceremony, nor my tracking of all that was going on, had the aim of verifying whether or not the carnival alluded to an actual historical event. A subjective attitude towards history and the activities initiated by these narratives about the past reflect an attitude towards the past effectuated in the present, and historical confirmation of the attack is thus by no means crucial for an understanding of this attitude (cf. Connerton 2004:21). The key to understanding the relationship to history in which the narrator has actually played no part lies precisely in what Halbwachs called *historical memory*—or, better, in the image of the past transmitted by written sources, oral tradition, but also through various pageants of the past, such as commemorations and festivals (cf. Halbwachs 1992:23-24). Using the term *social memory*, Nora emphasizes the social conditionality of memories and, accordingly, introduces the perception of the past as a cultural projection into space, thus cultivating the geographical conditionality of space (cf. Nora 1996). In the case of the Lastovo Carnival, social memory can be seen in the narration and layers that have lost any rationality of chronological expression but which, mixed with images of historical motifs, have created a collage of important historical moments for the community that function as an ensemble whole in the performative expression of the Carnival drama.

The question of origins in this research, although highlighted, is not crucial and does not explain the processes that have had an impact on the creation of a specific custom. The concept of origin generally fails to explain the richness of certain phenomena, but rather implies a beginning that is spatially and temporally distanced. The term itself implies irrational urges to seek for beginnings as the earliest source-point which is typically, albeit unjustifiably, considered more important than all other processes which have shaped a particular phenomenon over time (Katicic 1997:149). The intention of this work is not to trace the determination of the Lastovo Carnival and its Turk by specific historical events but to explore the processes that have shaped this phenom-

5. The attack in 1483 as an allusion to the Catalan delegate was far more frequent in the narratives of my collocutors, but also in transcripts of interviews conducted over the last fifty years by other researchers. Another attack, historically confirmed, took place in nearby Lastovo in 1571. This was the attack by Uluz Alija, vice king of Algeria, and his fleet, on the nearby island of Korčula, whose population then fled to hide on Lastovo. (<http://www.korcula.net/history/rozanovic.htm>). To which of these two attacks the legend refers is not clear, but it is for certain that it refers to times of danger for the small island communities, combining several historical episodes into one legend.

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enon in its present form—processes which reflect cultural and social fluxes and the social memory of a sense of danger present in the narration of locals. In this regard, the concept of origin used in this work should be perceived as a process which implies dynamism and flux and does not consider the initial spark a key source for understanding the phenomenon.

**... THERE IS NOTHING LIKE THIS ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD: SLIDING THE TURK DOWN THE ROPE ON SHROVE TUESDAY.**

'*Poklad se culja*', said one of my interviewees. The Turk is sent on a rope from the top of the hill all the way down to the village. A company of carnival men called *pokladari*, with swords and a commander as leader, escorts the Turk through the village to the place called Pod *kostanju*<sup>6</sup> on a black donkey that has to be male. 'So says tradition,' my interviewees told me. *Poklad* is guilty for everything bad. His right arm lies on his waist and his left arm is set on his chest with a finger pointing at himself as if to declare 'guilty as charged'. The costume he wears is 'na tursku'—'in the Turkish style'. He wears a red fez on his head. On his black face there is a black moustache and a cigar called a *španjulet* hangs from his mouth while his body is dressed in a red coat with a white skirt instead of trousers. *Poklad* is slid down the 250 meter-long rope from a place on the hill called *Pokladareva Grža*<sup>7</sup> to a place called Pod *kostanju* in the village. To the feet of the Turk are attached five firecrackers made the day before. When a *pokladar* on the hill shouts 'Uvo!' to his companions in the village, they answer him in the same manner, declaring that it is time to detonate the firecrackers and let the *Poklad*, or Turk, down the rope. This is done three times, each time with more and more bombs exploding at the *Poklad*'s feet. If everything goes well, the company of *pokladari* cry out: 'Eviva nam kumapnija, pošā nam je alavija!' ('Long live our company! His descent went well!').

6. Pod *kostanju* - Under the chestnut tree.

7. *Poklad*'s rock.



Picture 1. The *Pokladari* touring Lastovo with *Poklad* on a donkey. The company of *pokladari* being led by the youngest *pokladari*. Photographed by Suzana Gothardii Pavlovsky.

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Waiting for *Poklad* in the village—after the bombs had exploded and a sword-wielding company had set about the doll, hitting him on the head and jumping around him—I heard many comments from participants about the poor sliding of the doll and its meaning. ‘The grapes will not ripen!’ was just one of the comments from the crowd, for heavy rain had disrupted their plans for the perfect landing of the doll and one of the bombs had not exploded in the air. And yet the good spirit among the masked people was not ruined by the bad weather. After the third landing, the *Poklad* was escorted to the homes of a local family, finally being burnt on *Dolac*, where a sword-dance started up before the act of sentencing the Turk. Slowly getting faster and faster, the sword dance created a sense of tension and anticipation that could not be concealed by the onlookers. The passion with which the dance was performed and the active participation of the audience with frequent cries and announcements of *Poklad*’s imminent death created a heated atmosphere of eager anticipation for burning the black-faced and moustachioed convict who threatened the island. Once the Turk had been stripped of his clothes, he soon disappeared in the flames—the final act to end the carnival days and complete his event-driven execution.<sup>8</sup>



Picture 2. Having descended into the village, the *Poklad* is accosted by *Pokladari* who strike him with swords. Photo by Tomislav Oroz.

*This is an old, old custom ... There is no such thing anywhere else in the world. Only on Lastovo. Others make the Poklad, too, but no one sends it down a rope like we do<sup>9</sup>, a man from the village told me when I asked him why the *Poklad* is sent down a rope. But how did *culjanje* come to Lastovo and where did it come from?*

When consulting historical sources, the first thing to take into account is the historical context and the cultural influences and fluxes that Lastovo has been exposed to. *Culjanje* under this name really does not exist anywhere except on Lastovo. But the centuries-long Venetian influence in the Adriatic direct one to a more detailed analysis of the sources related to that period. The first written data concerning the Lastovo Carnival not only reveal a multitude of influences in this

8. Some of my informants interpreted the beautiful masks as representing Turkish bondwomen who, after the execution of *Poklad*, were ready to rally behind the company of *pokladari*, the army which had saved Lastovo from invasion by the enemies (cf. Bonifacic-Rozin 1962:100).

9. According to the transcript of an interview with I.K. (1928), conducted in Lastovo on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

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custom, but also offer a description of the carnival doll, i.e. the Turk, as the source of the Shrovetide customs on Lastovo.

Written sources on the Lastovo Carnival date back to the period of Ivan Franatica Sorkočević, deputy of the Dubrovnik Duke on Lastovo who ruled the island from 1747–48. His satirical poems *Poklad Lastovski* (*The Lastovo Carnival*) and *Vijeće* (*The Council*) are unfortunately lost, but it is assumed that they may still exist in the archives of the Monastery of the Friars Minor in Dubrovnik (Kombol 1945, Kurelac 1866–68:17, Fisković 2001:104, 2001:483 Jurica, Niemcic 2002:78).

The earliest available accounts of the Lastovo Carnival doll and actions related to this doll are to be found in the Bogišić Library in Cavtat, which has descriptions by two authors.<sup>10</sup> One is that of Melko Lucijanović from 1877, published in the *Slovinac* newspaper in 1881, while the other is by Luka Zore and is associated with the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century period (Lozica 2001:180–181). Although both descriptions are detailed, there are certain differences between them. Lucijanović describes in detail the carnival doll and actions related to the carnival period: how they dressed the doll in the finest garments, struck him on the head after sliding and burnt him, as well as the clothes of the company of the *pokladari* and the figures performed in the dance. Lozica considers the description given by Luka Zore to be of an earlier date, probably from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Zore's account is particularly detailed when it comes to the clothes of the *Poklad*. Zore notes that he is dressed '*na Engležku*', in the English style, perhaps indicating the reaction of the islanders to English influence and occupation of the island from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the redirection of negative feelings about the occupiers towards a carnival doll dressed in an English manner.

The two oldest sources giving detailed descriptions of carnival celebrations on Lastovo in the 19<sup>th</sup> century show certain differences which indicate changes in certain aspects of the carnival celebrations and the dynamics that characterized this custom. Lucijanović mentions that the events in the carnival period are part of an old custom, while Zore further describes the carnival and the *pokladari* company's attitude towards it. But neither Lucijanović nor Zore give their opinion regarding *culjanje*. Nor do either of them describe the legend of an attack on the island which the people of Lastovo specifically associate with the Carnival. Although they describe the events, they do not consider the origins of the custom of sliding the Polkad down the rope or why it takes place on Lastovo. What about *culjanje*? Older archival docu-

10. This is a transcript of a collection of folk tales from the library of Baltazar Bogisic which is located in the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb, under the index-number IEF Rkp. 189.

ments in Croatian do not describe or attempt to address the question of where *culjanje* came from and why precisely the doll is a Turk, or Poklad.

Examining the origins of *culjanje*, Nikola Bonifacic-Rozin cites the editorial board of *Slovinac* (1962:103) which, along with a description of Lucijanović, alleges that the custom has something to do with the Spanish custom of *El Pelele*.<sup>11</sup> I do not believe that *culjanje* has anything to do with the Spanish influence of throwing straw dolls into the air, but rather with influences found in the closer environment. If we assume that the island, as well as most of the eastern Adriatic coast, was exposed to Venetian cultural influences, the question arises as to whether to seek the same custom of lowering a puppet down a rope, or a close variation thereof, in another place where Venetian cultural influences could also have left traces. The most similar case is found in 1715 in Perast in present-day Montenegro where actions similar to *culjanje* occur, albeit not with the same names. Describing the carnival period in Perast in 1715 on the eve of the outbreak of the Venetian-Ottoman war, Marko Martinović recorded the custom which the Venetians called *mormario*.<sup>12</sup> As described by Martinović, this seems to have closely resembled the custom in Lastovo. Josip Lisac and Slobodan Prosperov Novak noted that in the Perast ceremony of 1715 there was also a *highly theatrical carnival and the presence of a massive statue of an infidel with a turban* (transl. T.O.; Lisac and Prosperov Novak 1984:221). Accounts of this ceremony describe a flight from the top of the bell-tower down a rope attached to a boat docked in the port (Martinović, Lisac and Prosperov Novak 1984:222-224). Martinović explicitly shows from the records how the carnival festivities in Perast occurred at the outbreak of war and also how they were closely related to the view of the Ottomans as traitors whom the Venetian subjects would soon have to face. It is not clear what exactly the rope stretched from the top of the bell-tower to a ship in the port was used for, or what exactly descended down the rope to the ship in the port. In addition, shots and rockets were fired from the bell-tower, booming throughout the entire town. The question is whether such an ordinance in Venetian *stato di mar* was practiced only at the outbreak of the war or whether it was practiced every year in the carnival period. Martinović's comprehensive report describes the decapitation of a bull and the participation of groups of men with swords leaping around the bull. The Venetian origin (*mormario*, the cutting off of a bull's head) is evidence that similar festival practices were present in descriptions of

11. This custom is best seen in a painting by Francisco Goya from 1791-92 in the Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain.

12. The *Mormario* name is unclear, but one of the proposed genealogies assumes that perhaps the word is a compound from *mor* - Moro, black, often a name used for Muslims + *morio* - mare, Maris, more, sea. Although the action refers to something that would be similar to *culjanje* and this proposed etymology would explain the custom, the word is still unclear.

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13. Correspondence with Maria Pia Pedani at the Department of Art History in the University of Venice reveals that, up to 2001, the renewed custom was called

*Il volo della Colombina*, and after that *Il volo dell'Angelo*. It involves an acrobat dressed as a white angel with wings who glides down from the top of the bell tower of St Mark's Cathedral, lavishing the crowd with confetti.

14. The end of the 15<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, especially the period from 1490 to 1520, was also a period of Oriental fashions, manifested by increasing number of paintings in private homes and churches in which Osmanlis in costumes dominated the scenes. Most pictures from this period were works from the Bellini workshops, by artists who painted on the basis of imagery and images acquired and based on travel reports and statements. Sometimes they could depict fashions already several centuries old (Brownen 2003, 2005, 2007, Schmidt Arcangeli 2008).

15. Some authors believe that the first performance was associated with Turkish prisoners who gave gifts to the Doge and gained their freedom in return. The whole ceremony was intended to symbolise Venice's superiority over the east Mediterranean. <http://www.bauta.it/history-carnival-venice.asp>

the Venetian carnival. Although the description was mainly focused on the skill with which the decapitation of the bull was accomplished, in *Origine delle Feste Veneziane*, Giustina Renier Micheli describes a moment when an acrobat with wings, representing an angel, glided down to the ship docked in the port and then climbed up to the great bell-tower of St. Mark's (Renier Micheli 1829:65).

In recent times, Venice has restored this custom, now called *Il Volo dell'Angelo* or Flight of Angels.<sup>13</sup> The renewed custom overwhelmingly resembles the event described in the *Origine delle Feste Veneziane* which was practiced in Venice before the fall of the Republic. However, the question is how this flight of the angel might have had any connection with the gliding of the *Poklada*, or Turk.

The most recent research shows that *Il volo dell'Angelo* had its origin in the custom called *Il volo del Turco*. Archival sources show that Venice was acquainted with these customs at the beginning of the 16th century.<sup>14</sup> Specifically, at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, a young Turkish acrobat did something never before seen in Venice: with the ship docked at the port on the square, he climbed all the way

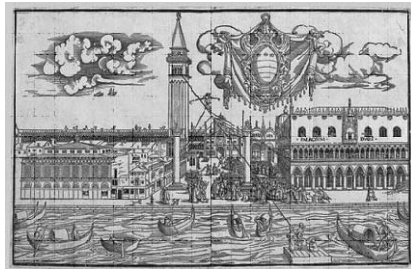


Figure 3. Anonymous: *Il Volo del Turco* (The Flight of the Turk), 1816 (after the original engraving on paper of c.1548), Venice (according to Carboni et al. 2007:317).

to the top of the cathedral bell-tower of St. Mark's. This act was reportedly welcomed with enthusiasm as something never before seen, and from then onwards it was performed each year during the carnival and gained the name *Il volo del Turco*, or Flight of the Turk.<sup>15</sup> Usually beginning on Thursday before Lent, a crowd of residents, aristocrats, diplomats and the Doge himself gathered to watch the whole spectacle. First the acrobat would climb up to the bell-tower from the ship docked in the port then fly down to the Doge and diplomats who would reward him flowers or a card with songs. The Doge initially gave the flying Turk some money in exchange for a gift. Over time, the acrobatics were further elaborated: sometimes acrobats would ascend in a boat or astride a horse. Frequent accidents led to the acrobat being replaced by a wooden dove which scattered flowers and confetti onto the crowd as it flew down.<sup>16</sup>

It is believed that these acrobatic skills became known in Venice

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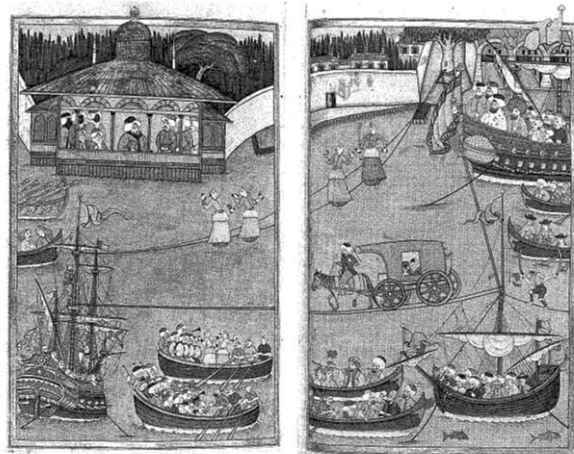
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through the news of travel writers, diplomats and trade emissaries who had attended similar performances in Istanbul. Acrobats were appreciated in Istanbul where they would entertain imperial dignitaries. Over time, good reports of Turkish acrobats came to Venice and the city hired such performers during carnival time for considerable recompense (Muir 1981:171). Figure 4 shows the performance of a Turkish tumbler in a turban with assistants and an acrobat on the rope. That such performances came to Venice from Istanbul is confirmed by research into the festive processions organized by the sultan on various occasions such as weddings, births or circumcisions of his sons and successors, and their depictions include similar events (Atila 1993:181-200, Foroqhi 2005:162 -- 185).

The Venetians' attitudes and opinions about their trading partners from the eastern Mediterranean are best reflected in picture 3. Venetian acrobats, singers, musicians and jugglers were part of a group of professions considered uncivilized and marginal (Kenan Keedar 1992, according to Carboni et al.). The skilfulness of the Turkish acrobats' was not the sole reason for their being hired. By employing Turks to perform acts in the air, the Venetians sought to give the impression of moral superiority over the Ottomans. The picture represents a Turkish acrobat and his helpers wearing turbans, and his position halfway along the rope places him near the place where offenders and criminals were publicly disgraced in Venice (Johnson 2000, according to Carboni et al.). Picture 4 depicts a similar scene in Istanbul where the position of the viewers watching the acrobat and the wooden cart on the rope was determined by their positions of power and superiority. The Sultan follows the acrobatics performed on the Golden Horn from his *Aynahkavak* palace, while the foreigners of European and Asian origin follow the perform-

16. <http://www.carnival-of-venice.com/documento.asp?id=40>.

of power and superiority. The Sultan follows the acrobatics performed on the Golden Horn from his *Aynahkavak* palace, while the foreigners of European and Asian origin follow the perform-



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ance from boats on the water, thus reflecting the superiority of the Ottomans (Atila 1993:190, 192).

The carnival ballad of the *Green Orange* from Lastovo as an oral literary creation can be seen both as a social memory and as a confirmation of communication with some of the main centres of power in the early modern period. The girl in the poem sent one orange to the city of Dubrovnik, one to Venice, and one to Istanbul. From each city she received a gift in return. Whether this ballad testifies to Lastovo's communication with the main centres of power and communication feedback is questionable, but it raises interesting questions regarding the origin of *culjanje*.

### THE LASTOVO CARNIVAL: NARRATIVES AND DYNAMICS OF CUSTOMS IN THE LIGHT OF CULTURAL AND CIVILISATIONAL INFLUENCES

Dancing till late in the evening, a village full of masked locals and visitors to the island, songs from nearby houses... these are common images of the evening of Carnival Tuesday on Lastovo. After the burning of the Poldak and the delirious dance around the Turk, it was as if everything had returned to normal by the following morning. Everything was as usual, and the village slowly began to depopulate. Guests whom one had seen masked and drunk the night before could now be seen dressed in everyday clothes in a queue for the ferry to Split, giving no hint as to what they had been doing the night before.

After my short period of field research, familiarizing myself with carnival customs on Lastovo and identifying the origin of *culjanje*, I could not avoid certain new questions that were arising. How is it possible that a social memory of enemies, dancing with swords, carnival masks and sliding down the rope, are all somehow fused in a unique story performed so stunningly to the eyes of the viewer? How did different legends and different historical episodes find their reflection in the performative expression of the pokladari company on Carnival Tuesday?

Memory of the Arab invaders and the danger that characterises the island's history has unquestionably left a mark on the toponymy of the island, transforming it into a sort of map of historical memory on which the names of certain peaks still warn of possible danger from the sea. Thus, everyday life in Lastovo incorporates a historical sense of place and space of which the residents are part. The specificity of



carnival period on the island, *culjanje*, which arrived on the island from the mainland and was adopted in carnival licentiousness, seems to testify to yet another cultural influence of the festival celebrations of the city of St. Mark's, whose journey appears not to have bypassed even the most remote inhabited island in Dalmatia. The people of Lastovo often refer to the carnival doll as the Turk—and as a stranger on the island who symbolized a past filled with danger, he was never spared. But he was also one of them, as they explained to me. I did not at first conceive his ambivalent position, though I listened again and again to my recorded interviews with my collocutors. However, putting it in the context of a centuries-old performance, the doll really had become a part of Lastovo: he was the reason for their licentiousness at carnivals—almost a local resident who is made and dressed in the Turkish manner each year (Jurica 2001:481).

The question also arises as to why the Catalan messenger is called Turčin (Turk) and why he is dressed in the Turkish manner. Why the fez on his head and the *šanjulet* (cigar) in the mouth? This is also a question that I asked my narrators, but their answers were not quite clear. They would reply to me that it was a dark stranger, a person of Muslim faith, and that the term for such is 'Turk'.<sup>17</sup> Such stereotypes of Turkish invaders, with cigarettes in their mouths, a moustache and a fez, etc., are all present in the body of the carnival doll. The imagery displayed in the preparation of his clothing, which has changed with time, is not only connected to stereotypes and imagery associated with the Turks, but is also a reflection of the understanding and cultural values of communities and their way of physically experiencing strangers and the threat to their values which strangers represent. Stepanov believes that the use of the carnival song about Alija X on Lastovo is somehow associated with the puppet named Poklad that is dressed in a red fez and represents the Turk. *The Turk has had a stronger emotional meaning in history than the old symbolism of "Carnival", so that the killing and burning of an obnoxious enemy had much stronger emotional motivation* (transl. T.O.; Stepanov 1971:658).

There are two other elements important for understanding the functioning of the space and time in which the carnival drama occurs. The language is dominated by toponyms that are directly related to the performance of the play. These are *Pokladarova grža* (Pokladar's rock), *Pod Kostanju* (under the chestnut tree), and *Dolac* (The place in front of the Church and village hall) and they are crucial to understanding the itinerary involved in the execution of the puppet. The time at which

17. Not identifying ethnicity but reaching a conclusion based on religious affiliation coincides simultaneously with the practice known in 16<sup>th</sup> century Venice. An increasing number of traders of Turkish, Bosnian, Albanian, Persian, Anatolian and Asian descent, experienced an increase in the number of attacks made upon them by Venetians, and all were known under the name of *Turks*, where religious affiliation was more important than ethnicity in determining positions and attitudes towards foreigners (transl. T.O.; Wilson 2003:42). A time of great geographical discovery, when large botanical and zoological differences were discovered between different parts of the world, unexpected and surprising, the contours of the human body were been submitted to the same rule. Clothing played an important role in determining the status of foreigners, especially those of Muslim faith because they articulated geographical and therefore cultural, ideological and religious differences and values that become markers of cultural diversity (transl. T.O.; Wilson 2003:38). Dress diversity often was not sufficient for determining the boundaries of civilization affiliation, so that stereotypes and physical as well as personal had an important role in affirming its own identity. Stereotypes circulated not

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only in language, where they were related to the characterization of customs and practices of foreigners. It could often be heard in stereotypes and insults to someone, exulting that he drinks, smokes and swears like a Turk. Parsimony, femininity, corruption, obscenity, delinquency, deadly instinct and debauchery often were the principal characteristics ascribed to Turks, not excepting even the most powerful of their leaders (cf. Wilson 2003:50).

the action takes place on Carnival Tuesday is also related to the intervention of culture in time. On Carnival Tuesday the church bell rings at 11 o'clock as if it were noon. From then onwards, all the preparations for the carnival celebration of the day are intensified. By managing place and time, the Carnival celebrations take place in a space that is not identical to that which existed a few days earlier but significantly different, culturally conditioned by specific narratives which accompany the trial of the Turk.

The fear that has determined attitudes toward any strangers is evident in ethnographies resulting from earlier field research. This is related to the role of the doctor who examines the convict, discovering a lethal disease in the stranger from Africa and warning the other residents that the illness is contagious (Bonifacic-Rozin 1962). The elimination of a sick stranger is extremely important both for the survival of the village and the cohesion of the community. The emblem of Lastovo shows St. Cosmas and Damian with medical utensils and needlework. The oldest decree of health activities on the island bears witness to a prohibition placed upon the arrival on the island of anyone from the suspected area (Jurica 2001:285); it helps to understand how the fear of foreigners as potential carriers of disease into this small community was extremely high in the past after the experiences of plagues, epidemics, smallpox and leprosy. When it comes to culjanje, Bonifacic-Rozin believes that *this custom was introduced as a result of the popular superstition against plague, since the public opinion of old was that, where the Poklad was paraded and beaten, there was no epidemic.* (transl. T.O.; 1962:103). The narratives about strangers from Africa, the pirates who, along with robbery and plunder, bring unknown danger in the shape of disease which can threaten the existence of the island and its inhabitants, may have found their expression in the act of burning any foreigner as a possible danger.

## CONCLUSION

My participation in the carnival celebration performance in February 2008 had the aim of exploring how social memories of the Catalan attack on the island are manifested by the carnival drama in which the Turk or *Poklad* plays the main role. Cultural intervention in space and time in the village of Lastovo prepares the stage on which the trial of the *Poklad* takes place, and ends with the burning of *Poklad* as the

one to be blamed for all bad things and dangers that have happened over the year. Legends of pirate attacks on the island found their offset also in the *liberté* that serves as background for the performance of the Carnival drama and the burning of the enemy with a black face, often understood as *Turčin* (The Turk) or as *Poklad* (Carnival). The main identification symbols of the doll's ethnic and religious background are his black moustaches, his red fez and black face. These kinds of stereotype show how the community identifies a stranger and perceives his affiliation through imagery that builds on narratives of invaders of different religious backgrounds and is embodied in the appearance of the carnival straw doll.

The custom of sliding the doll down the rope, or *culjanje*, characteristic of Lastovo, came into existence under the influence of acrobats from Istanbul who used to come and perform their plays in Venice and who made this performance of sliding down the rope extremely popular. In Venice this custom was known as *Il volo del Turco*. The carnival period on Lastovo and the dance of the *pokladari*, in whose performance the sword dance dominates, was confirmed in archival sources dating as far back as the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The earliest record of the carnival doll appeared in the 18<sup>th</sup> century on Lastovo, but it is not quite clear whether this doll represented the same Catalan messenger with a black face as it does today. *Il volo del Turco*, the custom of *culjanje* or sliding down the rope, established itself on Lastovo in the already existing carnival celebration. The legitimacy of this performance is confirmed by many legends about pirates and Turkish threats, and we can trace the justification of the burning of the Turk back to these legends.

Numerous legends, often non-chronologically mixed into one, have created a fictive narrative in which we can see the community's subjective attitude towards the local past that serves as a background to events on Lastovo in the carnival period. The layers that are evident testify to different cultural influences and historical circumstances and bear witness to the cultural dynamics of this carnival performance and to a community which affirms its own identity against the outer world through this performance.

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## **The Turk on Lastovo – Social Memory Preserved in the Legend of the Catalan Attack on the Island**

*This article analyzes the social memory of a Catalan siege of the island of Lastovo in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and the performative aspects of events during carnival week in which the story of the attack serves as the background to a carnival drama performed by a group of men called pokladari. Manifestations of social memories through commemorations which the author attended during field research, analysis of results and subsequent inspection of the literature reveal different layers to this custom that have been shaped by the various cultural and civilization influences that Lastovo has been exposed to during its history. The author gives special attention to the role and character of the black Turk as a place of social memory and examines the community's attitude towards the Turk along with the imagery that the local community attaches to his appearance.*

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European Research Project for Poetics & Hermeneutics

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Black Arab  
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Part IV

**Epical  
contextualization**



Gabriella SCHUBERT (Jena)

## The Black Arab of South-Slavic epic songs: merely a power-crazed and compulsive lecher?

### INTRODUCTION

One of the most frequently represented figures in the heroic songs of the South Slavs, in particular those of Serbians, Montenegrins, Macedonians and Bulgarians, is the *Black Arab*.<sup>1</sup> He is an antihero, the evil Muslim opponent of a Christian hero—primarily of the ideal hero *Marko Kraljević*, but also of the sick yet honourable *Dojčin* (*Bolen Dojčin*). The Black Arab is a violent criminal located in the Wrong and thus on the same plane with the brigand *Musa Kesedžija* or the mountain-dweller *Đemo Brđanin*. With his behaviour and actions he constantly violates the order in the Sultan's Empire and provokes heroes like *Marko Kraljević* to restore law and order. However, his most prominent marker is that he is a distinct sexual monster and rapist. He requires a pretty girl every night and even presumes to appear before the Sultan demanding that he bestow upon him his daughter in marriage. Is the Black Arab merely a power-crazed, compulsive lecher? This question should be investigated more closely on the basis of the best-known song on this motif, once chanted by the heroic singer **Tešan** Podrugović (1783-1815), 'Marko Kraljević and the Arab' (*Marko Kraljević i Arapin*), which is published in the second volume of the collection of Serbian songs by Vuk Karadžić under No. 65. There are several Bulgarian and Macedonian variants of this song in which a pretty girl on the verge of falling into the hands of the Black Arab implores the hero (*Đete Maleškovo*, *Gruica detence*) for help.

### Key words:

- Belobog
- epic Black Arab
- Bolen Dojčin
- Crnobog
- fairy-tale of dragon-slaughter
- historicity of the Black Arab epic
- Karađorđe
- Marko Kraljević
- 'Marko Kraljević i Arapin'
- Old Testament
- qara
- semantics of 'black' (*crn*, *čeren*)
- St. George and the Dragon

1. As, for instance, in the heroic songs *Marko Kraljević i Arapin* – Vuk II, 65; *Marko Kraljević i Mina od Kostura* – Vuk II, 62; *Marko Kraljević i kći kralja arapskoga* – Vuk II, 63; *Marko Kraljević ukida svadbarinu* – Vuk II, 68; *Bolani Dojčin* – Vuk II, 77; *Jakšićima dvori poharani* – Vuk II, 96. Cf. Vuk Karadžić 1932.

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## WHY IS THE ARAB 'BLACK'?

2. This concept is based on a reconstruction from a West-Slavic source, namely Helmhold's *Chronicle of the Slavs*, which was written in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and where—in the author mentions *Crnobog* in connection with a rite during which charms were invoked in the name of the good and bad fates, the latter being *Crnobog*. *Crnobog*, 'the black divinity', originally represented bad fate and only later became the name of a divinity.

Cf. Alexander Loma's article under *Crnobog* in Tolstoj and Radenković 2001, 573 et seq.

3. We can find it in many popular cosmogonies from all over the world, i.e. mythic interpretations of the origin of the world. According to Zolotarjov (1980, 29-58), the twin myth is characteristic of all archaic mythologies: of the Finno-Ugrian people in the Ural area and in West-Siberia, for example, where two brothers are the creators of the world, one of whom represents the sky, light and skill, while the other represents the earth, darkness and bad luck. Dualistic cosmogonies are also characteristic of the mythologies of the Balkan people—the Russian expert on the Balkans, Tatjana Civ'jan, is even of the opinion that they are of fundamental importance for this region; cf. Civ'jan 1990, in particular, p. 25 et seq.

The epithet 'black' (*crn*, *čeren*) is an inherent part of his name. In scientific literature, the colour 'black' is generally described as a symbol of Evil and the Black Arab is always associated with this context (Tolstoj and Radenković 2001, 573; Kulišić/Petrović/Pantelić 1970, 7). In addition, Čajkanović and others consider the Black Arab, like the numinous guises of *Triglav* and the Dragon, to be a successor to *Crnobog*, the Slavic chthonic divinity of the underworld and darkness—his antipode being *Belobog*, the Slavic divinity of light and heaven, whose Christian successors include St. Elias and St. George (op. cit., Tolstoj 1994, 22 et seq., Ivanov and Toporov 1974). Regardless of whether we are inclined to follow the idea of a dualistic Slavic divinity as predecessor or not,<sup>2</sup> a dualistic concept of the world in the form of the coexistence of good and bad, light and shade, bright and darkness, as well as a dualistic interpretation of white and black, is known throughout the world<sup>3</sup> as it is amongst Slavs. This dualistic concept is quite certainly also present in the characterisation of the Black Arab. However, in interpretations of the colour black it is rarely mentioned that, in addition to its negative meanings (cf. Ajdačić 2007), it also evokes a wide palette of other connotations which range from sad, awful and despicable to elegant and auspicious, even divinely-inspired (Haarmann 2005, 71). In eastern cultures, in particular, positive connotations of the colour black are well-known: amongst the Turks, for instance, on account of the frightening, menacing quality of the colour black (*qara*), some positive meanings have developed such as 'great', 'strong', 'potent' and 'powerful', especially as epithets for people with such qualities. This is how the Turkish dynasty of the Qarahanids that ruled in East and West-Turkestan from 840 to 1212 came to be awarded this name, as was the case, too, with the Serbian farmer's son, *Đorđe Petrović*, who led the First Serbian Uprising in 1804 that led to the eventual expulsion of the Ottomans. Because of his military strength and potency, he was called *Karađorđe* (literally *Black George*) and from his name was derived the name of the Serbian dynasty of the *Karađorđevići* (1812–1941) (Schubert 1989, 347).

In the same way, the colour black in relation to the Arab in the epic songs of the South Slavs symbolises contradictory qualities: on the one hand, the Black Arab represents Evil; on the other, power and potency—both physical and sexual, however destructive and disastrous such potency may be. Sentiments of both rejection and respect are

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activated by him. He is a fearless fighter of great strength and effectiveness with whom only unusual heroes like *Marko Kraljević* or *Bolan (Bolen) Dojčin* can cope.

## THE HISTORICITY OF THE BLACK ARAB

What has made the figure of the Arab familiar in songs? Real historical origins cannot be found for his presence in the Ottoman-ruled Balkans. For while Serbians from the time of the Nemanjići (1167–1355) dynasty to the First Serbian Uprising against the Ottomans (1804) were constantly involved in conflicts and clashes with Ottomans, Hungarians, Greeks, Venetians and others, they had no contact with Arabs. Why is it an Arab that plays the role of a great—even if negative—hero in South Slavic heroic songs of Ottoman times? He is a Muslim like the Ottomans; however, it is not this fact which qualifies him to appear as an antihero, for he is regarded a malefactor and monster in his Muslim environment as well. In the song *Marko Kraljević i Arapin*, the Sultan's daughter feels threatened by him and asks the Christian hero Marko Kraljević for help. What is the historicity of this figure?

In the opinion of Deretić (1995, 175), in the epics in which the Black Arab appears, the songs of the Marko cycle may have been conflated with medieval songs in which the Arab topic was vivid on account of historical circumstances, i.e. the battles between the Byzantines and the Arabs. In favour of this opinion, there exist early variants of this song from Montenegro (cf. Milutinović 1837, 137) and Bulgaria (cf. Kačanovskij 1882, 124) in which, instead of the Turkish Sultan, the Byzantine Emperor Constantine and the city of Constantinople are mentioned. Rade Božović (1988, 77 et seq.), with regard to the figure of the epic Black Arab, assumes a development from a real and historical person to a mythical hero, a mixture of mythical and real motifs. He is also of the opinion that the figure of the Arab in the songs of the South Slavs represents an echo of the earliest times of the South-Slavic presence on the Balkans in which the South Slavs came into contact with the Arab world—in the west, around the Mediterranean and in Spain, as well as in the east. In the east, the South Slavs made direct contacts with Arabs within the Byzantine Empire in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. When a Byzantine army penetrated Asia Minor in 665, some 5,000 Byzantine soldiers of Slavic origin went over to the Arab military leader

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Abdurrahman and were settled in Syria, where they were still mentioned in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. In 692, Emperor Justinian II (685-95, 705-11) with 30,000 Slavic soldiers declared war against the Arabs and marched to Asia Minor. Many of them were also settled in Asia Minor. At the beginning of the third decade of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, Toma Sloven, supported by Caliph Mamun, proclaimed himself king in Syrian Antioch. Slavic-Arab contacts continued in the 10<sup>th</sup> century (Enciklopedija Jugoslavije I, 1955, 149).

On the other hand, the Arabs repeatedly besieged and looted Salonika during the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries. The memory of those sieges is preserved in the song *Bolani Dojčin* (Vuk II, 78). This song relates the story of how the Black Arab sets up camp near Salonika and nobody except the ill hero *Dojčin* dares to take up combat with him (Deretić 1995, 180). Jordanov (1901) supposes that the Arab in the epic is related to the marriage between the Turkish bey Orhan and Theodora, the daughter of Emperor John VI Cantacuzenos in 1353. However that may be, the figure of the Arab in epics which tell of the Balkans under Ottoman rule is an 'out-of-time' hero. Admittedly, we should not forget that the figure of epic Marko is also a conflation of traditions from different times (Božović 1977, 198).

## MYTHICAL AND LEGENDARY ROOTS OF THE FIGURE OF THE BLACK ARAB

Different traditions and narratives, including the motifs of fairy tales and legends, converge in the fictional character of the Black Arab. Ljiljana Stošić (2008) shows the international spread of the Arab-motif in literature and art, while Nada Milošević-Đorđević examines the interference of songs about the Arab with fairy tale and legendary motifs (Milošević-Đorđević 1971, 142-151). The plot of the song, described in more detail below, confirms this view.

Nevertheless, the actual roots of the song lie in the myth about the fight with the dragon and its Christian actualisation, the legend of St. George (cf. also Novaković 1880). It is well known that ancient images of the dragon and the dragon-fight merged with Christian and biblical notions (Bächtold-Stäubli 200, 367 et seq.). In this case, the legendary ruler and his daughter are substituted by the Turkish Sultan and his daughter, the valiant rescuer St. George by Marko Kraljević, and the Dragon by the demoniacal Arab by the sea. Of course, the presence of

fairy tales about the dragon-slayer should also not be neglected. Those tales are summarised in AaTH under Nos. 300, 303, 305 (The types of folktale 1973, 88 et seq.). Their basic motifs are as follows: a princess is demanded as a sacrifice and exposed to a dragon; the dragon breathes fire and has seven heads which magically return when cut off; while waiting for the Dragon, the hero is kissed by the princess and falls into a magic sleep; she awakens him; in the fight, the hero is assisted by his dogs or his horse; the hero cuts off the tongues of the Dragon and keeps them as proof of the rescue; an impostor cuts off the Dragon's heads, which he later seeks to use as proof; the hero intercepts the impostor on his wedding day, when he secures recognition by presenting the Dragon's tongues and thus marries the princess. The last motif, i.e. the marriage, is missing in the epic of Marko Kraljević and the Arab just as it is missing in the Legend of St. George. Let us look at the plot of the epos in detail:

### **NARRATIVE OF THE EPOS 'MARKO KRALJEVIĆ I ARAPIN'**

In this relatively long epos of 435 verses, the following narrative segments can be distinguished:

#### **I. Loneliness and the demand of the Black Arab**

The Black Arab builds a fortress on the Mediterranean Sea. He is lonely and asks the Sultan in writing to bestow upon him his daughter in marriage. If he should prove unwilling to accept this, the Sultan must fight him.

#### **II *Defensive attempt of the Sultan***

The Sultan tries first to rid himself of the menacing danger. He promises an ample reward to any hero who will kill the Black Arab. However, nobody is able to do this; all fighters are killed by the Black Arab. 'The Sultan is in great distress' (*Nuto caru velike nevolje!*)

#### **III. *The Arab substantiates his demand***

The Black Arab travels to Istanbul to realise his plan. In front of the gates of Istanbul he sets up his white tent. He demands luxuriant catering and a nice girl for every night 'in order to serve him red wine' (*Te mu služi crveniku vino*). 'By night he kisses her white face, / By day he goes to Italy / and gathers great wealth' (*A noći joj b'jelo lice ljubi, / Dnevi daje u zemlju Taliju, / Te uzima nebrojeno blago*).

#### **IV *The Arab sets a deadline for his wedding ceremony***

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Three months later, the Arab goes in person to the Sultan and stipulates a time-limit of fifteen days before the wedding ceremony within which time he intends to gather the wedding party.

*V. The Sultan's daughter in despair*

The Sultan's daughter is in a desperate state: 'Oh dear, Good Gracious! / For whom have I taken care of my face? / For the kisses of the Black Arab!' (*Jaoh, mene do boga miloga! Za koga sam lice odgajila! / Da ga ljubi crni Arapine!*).

*VI. A solution is proposed to the Sultana in her dreams*

In her dreams, the Sultana is told of a rescuer from Prilep, Marko Kraljević. A dream advises her to send a message to Marko offering a reward to save her daughter from the Arab.

*VII. Triple appeal to Marko for help*

The Sultan asks Marko for help and promises a reward, but Marko declines. The Sultana asks Marko for help and promises an even greater reward, but Marko declines once more. Now the Sultan's daughter asks Marko to help her, making a blood-pact and promising him an even higher reward, valuables as well as lifelong protection.

*VIII. Marko accedes to the request*

Marko feels obliged to help his blood-sister: 'It is bad to go, but even worse not to.' (*Zlo je poći, a gore ne poći*). His motivation to help does not spring from reverence towards the Sultan and Sultana but from veneration of God and St. John.

*IX. Marko prepares for the fight and proceeds to Istanbul*

Marko puts on his usual outfit: a bearskin vest and a bearskin cap, a sabre and a lance. On the right side of his piebald horse, *Šarac*, there is a wine gourd, on the left a spiked mace. Marko rides to Istanbul where he finds accommodation at the *New Inn (Novi Han)*.

*X. Marko and the Sultan's daughter on the lake*

Marko leads his horse to water at a nearby lake. Here he comes across the Sultan's daughter, who has come to the lake to drown herself. Marko addresses her and she tells him of her sorrow. Marko reveals himself as Marko Kraljević from Prilep and promises to help her. He puts forward the following plan: to welcome the Arab to Istanbul with high honour and, for the sake of appearance, supply to him the daughter of the Sultan as his bride. Then he, Marko, will lead the fight with the Arab and release her.



XI. Implementation of the plan and fight

The Black Arab and his wedding party approach the city of Istanbul. The gates of Istanbul are closed everywhere; only the gates of the *New Inn* (*Novi Han*) are open. Marko is sitting at the inn and drinking red wine. The Arab is refused entry to the inn. He makes his way to the city. Marko Kraljević mounts his horse and follows him. He kills first the godfather and the leader of the Arab's party and then fights a duel with the Arab himself. When the Arab realizes that he is not able to defeat Marko, he flees to Istanbul. Marko follows him and kills him, finally cutting the Arab's head off.

XII. *Return home and reward*

Marko delivers the Sultan's daughter, together with her dowry, to the Sultan's Court. He returns home to Prilep. The Sultan sends him his reward and promises to send additional rewards when required.

Bearing in mind this plot line and the set of abstract functions specified by Vladimir Propp for magic fairy tales (Propp 1972), we could without difficulty apply a whole sequence of them, more precisely the following abstract functions, to our epic song:

- A. Initial situation: deficiency (the Arab's demand);
- B. triple request to the hero for help;
- C. the hero leaves his home;
- D. the hero is brought to the residence of the person who has sent the request;
- E. the hero and his opponent fight a duel;
- F. the opponent is defeated;
- G. the deficiency is corrected; the hero returns home.

The dream vision of the Sultana in which a helper appears and informs her of the great fighter Marko Kraljević at Prilep, together with the triple request to Marko just at the fateful moment for the Sultan's daughter on the shore of the lake, very much resemble the style in which fairy tales are related. The same is true of the scene in which she addresses the lake. She does this in the same way in which the protagonists of fairy tales speak to trees, animals, plants and other natural phenomena: 'God's help, green lake! / God's help, O my everlasting house! / I will live with you for ever, / I will be married to you, lake, / I would rather love you than the Arab.' (*Božja pomoć, zeleno jezero! / Božja pomoć, moja kuća vječna! / U tebe ću vijek vjekovati, / Udaću se za tebe, jezero, / Volim za te, nego za Arapa*).

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On the other hand, Marko does not gain the Sultan's daughter as a reward for his heroic action as is the case in fairy tales about the Dragon-Slayer. In this respect and others, the epic follows rather the legend of St. George.

## NARRATIVE OF THE LEGEND OF ST. GEORGE

By comparison, then, let us look at the plot of the legend of St. George:

The basic idea of this very popular legend is the Christianisation of the pagan virgin, the conversion of the whole country to Christianity, and the overcoming of Evil. As the agent of this main motif, St. George is the virgin's liberator and the Dragon-slayer. The oldest version of the legend reads as follows (compare also Aufhauser 1911, 28 et seq., Schubert 1985):

In the city of Alogia, a king called Selbilos is the ruler. He is an idolater and enemy of Christendom. Near the town there is a marsh, and in this marsh a dreadful Dragon lives. Every day he comes out of the marsh to rob and devastate people and animals. The king summons all his soldiers and moves against the Dragon to kill him. However, he is not able to defeat the monster. He thus decrees that everybody must sacrifice a child to the Dragon; he himself will do the same and sacrifice his only daughter when it comes to his turn. Soon, all the children of the town have been sacrificed to the Dragon and now it is the turn of the king's daughter to be sacrificed. She is already on the edge of the marsh waiting for her sacrificial death when St. George of Cappadocia, returning home from a military mission, passes by and catches sight of the king's daughter. She tells him of her sad fate. George asks her to trust in God and Christ; he, George, will save her. The Dragon emerges from the marsh and approaches the virgin; St. George goes towards the Dragon, crosses himself and asks God for help. The Dragon immediately falls to the ground. He is tied up with a belt, brought into the town and killed there by St. George with his lance in front of the king and all inhabitants. Witnessing the miracle, they avow themselves Christians. Archbishop Alexander baptises the king, his councillors and all the residents of the town within fifteen days.<sup>4</sup>

4. An epic variant of this legend is also to be found among Vuk's heroic songs, in the Fifth volume, under No. 249 titled *Đorđije i đevojka kraljeva* (St. George and the King's daughter). The plot of this song is identical with the legend of St. George.

All analogous legends in Russian, Serbian, Bulgarian and Rumanian are reproductions of Greek sources and appear relatively late—in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. The root of this legend might lie in the story about the fight of St. Michael against the Dragon in the Book of Revelation, but possibly also in other myths.

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## MARKO – A FIGHTER FOR GOOD

Analogies between the heroic song of *Marko Kraljević i Arapin* and the legend of St. George are also evident: we find them in narrative details such as the time-span of fifteen days which is stipulated by the Arab and which is also mentioned in the legend of St. George. Moreover, the scene on the lake in which Marko asks the young woman to trust in God and Christ is very similar to the scene in which St. George addresses the virgin on the edge of the marsh.

In this context it should be noted, once again, that Marko does not fight the Dragon in order to marry the Sultan's daughter as would be the case in a fairy tale. When Božović points out that Marko actually should have married the Sultan's daughter instead of the Arab and that the motif of the suitor as dragon-slayer was already fading away at the time of Vuk Karadžić (Božović 1988, 81), he neglects the motivation of St. George in his fight against the Dragon. The heroism of St. George has nothing to do with earthly and material desires but with the desire to fight against Evil. His fight is an internal process by which, overcoming all temptations of demonical powers and earthly desire, he grows beyond the natural borders of this world.

Marko Kraljević is shaped in a very similar way. At the beginning of the narrative, he does not play any role. Only when all the heroes have been defeated by the Black Arab and he has been directly requested by the daughter of the Sultan—obliging him by the sealing of a blood pact—does he decide to help her 'in the name of God and St. John'. Being a Christian knight and an ideal heroic representative of the Balkan patriarchy, artificial kinship with the Sultan's daughter represents a sanctuary to him. Marriage with an artificial sister is totally out of the question. Heroism to Marko does not mean acquiring the Sultan's daughter or earthly goods; it means fighting for Good against Bad in this world, i.e. the violation and degradation of the Sultan's daughter by the Black Arab. His fight also bears a Christian meaning, even if the conversion of the Moslem girl is not an issue in this text.

The Black Arab, on the other hand, is a substitution of the Dragon. He represents the principles of earthly power and sexual desire. His unusual physical strength breeds fear. In his avarice and lasciviousness he is not content to own pretty girls of ordinary origin; he wants to possess the most distinguished amongst them, the Sultan's daughter.

One question remains: what is the motivation of her sacrificial role? Božović in a note referring to S. Matović (1972) draws attention to the

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assumption that the frequent sacrifice of girls in Serbian lyrical and epic songs is connected with the custom of sacrificing female children in reality (Rade Božović 1988, 79). Other aspects should also probably be taken into consideration in this connection, as for example the picture which is drawn in the Old Testament of the seduction of Eve (Book of Moses 3, 1-7) Enticing, tempting, corrupting, an agent of all that is false and erroneous, the snake seduces Eve with a promise of special knowledge that will make her smarter, better, and more prosperous. The snake knows that if it can only get Eve to accept a power and presence apart from God—evil, falsehood, darkness, and matter—then she will be willing to eat the forbidden fruit. Not unimportant in this connection is that in Christian interpretation the Dragon is equated with the snake and also with the Devil. The Dragon as well as the Devil or snake represents masculine power, strength and violence, Eve/the virgin weakness. On account of this, she is automatically pushed into the role of a victim. However, a closer answer to the question must remain open.

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### The Black Arab in South-Slavic epic songs: merely a power-crazed compulsive lecher?

*The Black Arab is a figure frequently represented in the heroic songs of the South Slavs. He is an antihero, an evil Muslim opponent of the Christian hero, primarily of the ideal hero Marko Kraljević, and also of the ill but honourable Dojčin (Bolen Dojčin, Bolan Dojčin). His most prominent marker is that he is a sexual monster and rapist. He requires a pretty girl for every night and even presumes to appear before the Sultan demanding that he bestow his daughter in marriage to him. Is the Black Arab only a power-crazed compulsive lecher? This question is investigated more closely on the basis of the heroic song 'Marko Kraljević and the Arab' (Marko Kraljević i Arapin), which is published in the second volume of the collection of Serbian songs by Vuk Karadžić under No. 65. A comparative analysis shows the historical, mythical and legendary roots of the figure of the Black Arab and of the epic song dealing with Marko Kraljević and the Black Arab. In some respects it follows the fairy-tale of the Dragon-Slayer, in others the legend of St. George. The Black Arab is a substitution for the Dragon. He represents the principles of earthly power and sexual desire. His unusual physical strength breeds fear. Marko Kraljević, on the other hand, substitutes for St. George. He is shaped in the same way as St. George: He fights for Good against Bad in this world, i.e. the violation and degradation of the Sultan's daughter by the Black Arab. His fight bears a Christian meaning.*

The most important notion:

***The compulsive lecher in epic songs***







## Lidija STOJANOVIC LAFAZANOVSKA (Skopje)

### Heroes –Anti-Heroes<sup>1</sup>

Professor Rade Božović locates the mythological-historical key to the character of the Black Arab in its complex acting function as follows: Dragon/Lamja monster > Crnobog/Troglav/Triglav > the Black Arab > Turk. By doing so, Božović has achieved a major shift in folkloristics, showing that the Turk functions as a substitute for the Arab and not vice versa. This clearly and logically explains the gradual but decisive shift in epic poetry from myth to history as a consequence of the internal mechanism of the poetics of myth and oral poetry. Božović developed the thesis that the Arab as a complex syncretic character constitutes the most elaborate paradigm of the *character of a foreigner* to have emerged in these regions and that the origins of this character lie in the *period of Byzantine-Arab conflicts* (1977). Grafenauer put forward an analogous argument in his study on the ballad *Lepa Vida* (1943). Together with the Middle High German novelistic epic *King Rother*,<sup>2</sup> *Hildesage* (by Kudrun), and the Sicilian story *Scibilia Nobili*, Grafenauer cited other sources in correlation with the ballad of *Lepa Vida*, maintaining that this ballad does not derive from Middle-European, Alpine-Austrian or Nordic storylines created during the Crusades in the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century but rather that the basic plot of the violent abduction of a young woman/mother originates from the time of Arab incursions into the Mediterranean in the early Middle Ages.

The character of the Arab was introduced very early in a large number of epics originating from the Mediterranean rim. As early as 1977, Božović raised the fundamental question: Does the Arab in folk tradition—both in general and in folk poetry as its narrower field—rep-

#### Key words:

- Arab (three-headed/black/sorcerer)
- epic biography
- ballad
- tale
- abduction of the bride
- continuity
- duration

1. We would like to express our immense gratitude to Professor Rade Božović and Professor Zmago Šmitek for their invaluable advice when reading the manuscript. They were of particular importance to the author of this paper.

2. This is the poem about King Rother who asks for the hand of the daughter of the Byzantine emperor. This work, together with the poem about Duke Ernst, his exile from Germany and his voyage east, the legendary poems about Solomon and Morcolf, as well as the characters of Saint Oswald and Saint Orendel, are all characterized by one shared feature: in all these epic poems, irrespective of the authorship, the same fantastic narrative merges religious and worldly motifs

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in a conglomerate which is equally distant from either strictly heroic poetry or the religious zeal found in portrayals of the life of Christ and lives of the saints.

3. We refer to a certain number of stories which reveal Macedonian-Turkish narrative parallels wherein the Arab functions as one of the initiation patrons of the main hero—at times as his enemy (again in accordance with the narrative initiation scenario), in others as a sorcerer who assists the poor, and in yet others as the main hero himself who defeats his opponent with his distinctive skifulness, e.g. in the story *An Arab Lays a Wager with a Vreng (Frenchman)* (Cepenkov 1959, book 3, No. 290, pp. 284-285).

resent a mythological or historical character? Or is he, as Božović claims in his thesis, a complex character which emerges as the most highly developed character of a foreigner in the folk oral tradition of this region? (Božović 1977) The Arab himself, as a formulaic character, inspired us to analyze several other instances in which there occurs an encounter/duel between a protagonist of folk literature and one of the Arab's various manifestations. In addition to the variety of topics and motifs to which the Arab is related, we should also note the diverse treatment of the character of the Arab, both male and female. As Božović concludes, and as is corroborated by the materials we have studied in Macedonian and Mediterranean folklore, in addition to its external development, the internal evolution of epic tradition developed the features of this character to such an extent that the Arab (three-headed/black/the Arab girl) emerges as the most elaborate character of a foreigner in oral tradition. What impressed us above all in the course of our research was the association of the positive attribute of the Arab—as a sorcerer in the role of a helper to the main character of the tale<sup>3</sup>—with his primary negative attribute as a character from whose evil we must be rescued in the folk traditions of Southern Slavic, Balkan, and Mediterranean territories. There is a very clear explanation behind his ambivalent character: the structure of this character in folk prose (tales and novelistic stories), despite some significant differences in relation to the same character in poetry, allows us to conclude that he was transferred from poetry into prose and vice versa (Božović 1977, 18-19). Still, it is important to clarify that there is evident influence of later Oriental motifs in the prose, especially in the stories from the renowned collection *1001 Nights*—a relation researched by Prodanović (1932), Horálek (1969), Kalashi (1972), Nevena Krstić (1973), Penušliski (1984).

We will now attempt a reconstruction of some of the more interesting situations in which poetic and prosaic heroes encounter the Arab (three-headed, black, sorcerer). We will review the main points of the relationship between the Arab in the storylines of epics, ballads and tales.

## EPIC BIOGRAPHY

One of the more significant duels in Southern Slavic epic poetry is that between King Marko and the Black Arab. However, it is impor-

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tant to add that the Arab is a multi-layered syncretic character whose duration and life in the epics is long; the Arab as a formulaic character lasts longer than Marko if we take into account the later poems with purely historical connotations. We accept Božović's view, according to which all remaining confrontations between the Arab and the domestic hero are derived from the Arab–Marko confrontation through variations (1977, 214-215). When we refer to the aforementioned pair, Marko–Arab, we must not overlook the following points: 1. the theory that the duration of the Arab is much longer than that of Marko; 2. that Marko's epic biography is much more linear and uniform than that of the Arab, whose structure is much more layered.

In the very same manner in which Homer's heroes represented idealized Mycenaean characters, some medieval characters were idealized by the Southern Slavs during the Ottoman domination, amongst which characters were some who, as historical characters, did not excel in terms of their bravery or any exceptional feats. Later, however, they came to be considered great heroes and were placed in a new narrative world through the biographical model of the hero. Through this formula, the historical characters and their experiences were completely transformed in the new setting of the narrative world. Their names alone remained unchanged. This formula fully applies to the cultural hero Marko<sup>4</sup> and follows the established scheme: his miraculous birth, his breastfeeding by a fairy, his acquisition of supernatural powers, heroic feats and moments of crisis in mature age, his founding or liberating of towns/new territories, his triumphant death/immortality as a mysterious disappearance which allows hope for his return. All these transpire in the legends about King Marko.

In its essence, King Marko (a national hero of all Southern Slavic peoples) represents the *horseman hero* from the times of the migration of the Slavs into the Balkan peninsula. This horseman hero was a part of the consciousness of the Balkan peoples long before the historical King Marko. This hero bears the attributes of a powerful *saviour* who brings freedom, consolation and rekindles hope (Srejšović 1958, 96). The Slavic peoples who migrated to the Balkans much later, under the influence of the autochthonous population, adopted this legend about the horseman hero that originally belonged to the Thracian and Illyrian pantheon. These deities, themselves influenced by the much more developed Hellenic, Oriental and Roman religions, were in a very different position in relation to the religious notions of the Slavic incomers (compare Srejšović 158, 96). Adapting to their content, the horse-

4. It is a known fact in folkloristic studies that the King Marko of epic poetry has almost no shared characteristics with the historical King Marko. See Vuk S. Karadžić, *Serbian Dictionary*, Marko Kraljević; Tomić (1909); S. Stojković (1922), Srejšović (1958, 75-76).

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man hero analogously transformed into King Marko, who was instantly adopted as a national hero. In this way, the legend of King Marko obtained the value of a great national myth (1958, 96-97). Nevertheless, we must not neglect the fact that the horse appears as an attribute among Germans, Eastern Slavs and Indians, and thus can be rightfully considered a general Indo-European phenomenon.

The case of the Arab is much more interesting; the key to understanding his duration is represented in the horizontal and vertical of his character. Božović observes that the function of the Arab lasted longer than the motif to which it was related, which represents an intrusion of history into epics and the stratification and genesis of the initial bearer(s) of the principal functions. The relation between three-headedness, blackness and the Arab ethnic factor points towards searching for historical and real reasons, which is successfully corroborated by the vertical in the character of the Arab as opposed to its horizontal (1977, 216).

This character emerges in the oldest of epic poems, the wedding songs, typically as a three-headed monster who accosts a wedding procession in order to abduct the bride and steal the gifts. Božović associates this with the time of the dissolution of the institution of group marriage, assuming that the advent of syndiasmic marriage generated the theme of seeking a bride from outside of one's clan/tribe, and hence this heroic warring/battling related to the very act of proposing and marriage (1977, 215). According to Božović, through the progression or regression of the two basic motifs of 'the Arab accosting the wedding procession' and 'the Arab imposing a tax in girls', new motifs were actually created which expanded the content substratum of the epic. According to him, this is the only possible interpretation of the widespread utilization of this formulaic and syncretic character by folk singers, as one of the heroes involved in a collision around which the most varied of contents are put into play (ibid. p 216).

Božović sees a possible explanation of the issue of the syncretic factor of the Arab in the merger of the mythical and historical which is located in the system of the transfer and reception of information among informants. Misapprehension in the reception of information (poems and stories about the Arab) owing to different levels of consciousness, knowledge or understanding between the informant and the recipient, the old and the new conveyors of tradition, led to this merger of the mythical and real. In any case, we must not overlook historical distance—the factor of time and social conditions—or the fact

that the function of the acting character assumed by the Arab is actually the formulaic structure based upon its invariability. On the other hand, change of circumstance and growing distance from mythical times and historical events eroded the existing structure and revitalized it. The structure, thus made dynamic, does not lose its balance but is reconstructed on a new level; in this case, in the function played by the Arab, there appears a vertical line of development which harmonizes and balances this structure with new meanings (1977, 216).

In this struggle between the dynamic and static qualities of the structural formulaic elements, as well as in the new decoding of information by later recipients (i.e. the new transferors of tradition), we can conjecture the syncretic quality and the longevity of the character of the Arab in answer to the question as to why he appears either as three-headed or black or solely as an Arab. Through increased distance from events which happened during Arab-Byzantine strife, the Arab, from being the enemy and opponent in oral narratives or poems originally based upon reality, was gradually mythologized in the course of his epic life owing to the formulaic structures of the epic thinking of the participants in the transfer of tradition. And this mythologization of the Arab's function intensifies as the distance from real historical events increases. The structure is thus deconstructed again, regressing and tending towards its arch-form. In such a situation, Marko emerges as a new member of the collision with the Arab and thus initiates a renewed dynamicization of the Arab's formulaic function. This function gradually retreats from the myth and draws nearer to reality and, with the arrival of the Turks, its vertical passes into reality. In other words, the Arab re-entered historical reality with the Turks and was reincarnated long after the Byzantine-Arab wars (Božović 1977, 216-217). In this manner, Božović offers an analytical solution to a fundamental folkloristic problem concerning continuity by reminding us that, irrespective of the long duration of transfer—as a synonym for tradition—much greater attention should be paid to the 'transferred' content that was dependent upon the historical changes to which it was subjected; even when its outward form remains unchanged, its functions, meaning and import are all changed by the rules of new transferors (narrators).

This character and its functions lasted until the establishment of the character of a new national enemy—the Turk. The genetic totality of the character of the Arab in its horizontal is clear: he inherits the functions of a certain mythical entity, as indicated by the semantic element of his three-headedness. The other semantic element of his

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5. As part of their wedding procession, Islamized Macedonians in the Prilep region until recently practiced masking themselves as Turkish 'chaushi' in order for the wedding to be successful, or masking into animals (as attributes of impure forces) whose aim was the purification of evil forces (Petreska, 2002). In areas populated by the Brsjak Slavs, some of the participants in wedding processions dressed as Gypsies (wearing rags and blackening their faces), while in the Struga region, these people are called *gromnici* (thunderers). The latter also dress up during wedding or circumcision ceremonies (males dress up as women and some of the participants blacken their faces) (see Vesna Petreska, 2002).
6. Abbasid because of the black colour worn by the Abbasid army.

blackness, much more commonly in use, is of a somewhat different nature. Besides its chthonian dimension, it appears to have included a historical dimension of the conflicts between Byzantium and the Abbasid Caliphate whose emblem was black; but the additional influence of anthropological information is not excluded, as well as the possible influence of widespread Arab folk tales about black heroes, especially those about Antarah ibn Shaddad and Abdul Wahab. However, we must not overlook the fact that the mythological interpretation has been much more acceptable to folklorists—the idea of the mythical black man and his association with daemons from the underworld—than the typological theory approach of Putilov or the established horizontal applied by Božović.

In later periods, poems appeared in which the functions of the Arab were taken over by other characters, such as the Gypsy (being dark-skinned), the Arnauts or the Turk as a consequence of the organic growth of those functions with the emergence of a new national enemy. It often happens that in different versions of the same storyline, either the Arab or the Turk—or both—appear as Marko's opponents (ibid. 217). In the part of this text dedicated to Bolen Dojcin, we will refer to this substitution. Similar variations can be found in some wedding customs in Macedonia.<sup>5</sup>

In consequence of the participation of Southern Slavs in the Byzantine-Arab conflicts, the Arab was constituted as a hero who was given due respect. Arabs have been experienced as a sort of historical enemy by the Southern Slavs and this factor must be taken into account in attempting to decipher/interpret the entry of Arabs into our epic tradition. Slavs, who encountered different civilizations when arriving on the Balkan peninsula, were probably prepared to change some of their notions. With the advent of the Byzantine-Arab conflict, their tradition began adopting to the new circumstances and this was the right moment for the arch-collision between Crnobog and some other arch-hero, or perhaps Belobog himself, to be replaced by the black (Abbasid) Arab<sup>6</sup> who would take over his functions. And since the Slavs were still in the process of adopting Christianity during that period (between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries), our epic poetry or storytelling could have developed religious intolerance towards Arabs, especially as the Southern Slavs in those wars were a military power (See Božović 1977, 221-222).

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## THE ABDUCTION OF A YOUNG WOMAN

Among the various heroes who enter into a duel with the Black Arab—and here we refer back to the basic motif of the abduction of a girl and the defence of her honour by her brother/brothers as a pair—we find Bolen Dojčin, Gjergj Elez Ali<sup>7</sup> and the Brothers Jakšić. In the cycle of poems about the Brothers Jakšić, Loma identifies the Indo-European twin myth, stressing that in this case of historical characters only their names remained unchanged in their transfer to the new narrative world. Loma points to the historical background of the cycle about the Brothers Jakšić. Dimitar and Stefan Jakšić, who are historical characters, were the sons or adopted sons of Jakša, an army leader who served the despot Gjorgje Brankovic. After the final defeat of Serbia in 1459, the brothers moved to Hungary and entered into the service of King Matthias. Loma concludes that, apart from the names Stjepan and Mitar, nothing sung about the Jakšić brothers (either in the bugarstica or decasyllabic poems) relates any historical facts. What is more interesting, and which is actually the focus of Loma's research, is the recognizable reference to the Indo-European myth about twins—a myth with which we are familiar in its classical form from Hellenic and ancient Indian mythology. In this myth the protagonists are twin brothers (horsemen) and their sister, whom they either jointly save from her abductor or whose hand in marriage they seek.<sup>8</sup> The Hellenes have the Dioscuri and Helen, as well as Orestes and Pylades and Iphigenia, whose escape from Taurica most probably reflects a domestic, Iranian mythical model; the Vedic Indians have the Divine Twins—the Ashvins ('Horsemen')—and their sister Surya ('Sunny'). Similar notions can be traced among the German and Baltic peoples, in whose folk songs analogous roles are played by the two 'sons of God' and the 'Sun's daughter'. Their most direct Slavic counterparts are the two brothers Jakšić (most commonly named Dimitar and Stjepan) and their sister. The poems tell of how a foreigner, most often an Arab, abducts the sister and takes her to his distant land and how her brothers later find her and liberate her. The classic example is the one recorded by Vuk Karadžić II 97, *Jakšićima dvori poharani* (Loma 2002, 59). Following Čajkanović's example, according to whom the divine ruler of the kingdom of the dead lies behind the figure of the Black Arab in Serbian tradition,<sup>9</sup> Loma also recognizes the mythological pattern of a journey to the other world. In this respect, delimiting waters are of particular importance, regardless of whether they are seas (as in the ancient

7. We can trace polymorphism and multilayered stages in the character of the Arapi and Zi in Albanian folklore. In the duels which most commonly transpire between a girl-soldier and the cultural hero Gjergj Elez Ali, he emerges either as a mythical three-headed monster, as is the case with poem Gjergj Elez Ali (Anton Četta at al. 1993, 8-13), or as a human being.

8. This duality: sister/bride, brother/husband is present in different versions of *Bolen Dojčin*. A lesser number of versions have the wife as a protagonist instead of the sister.

9. Professor Petruševski dedicated his doctoral dissertation under the mentorship of V. Čajkanović to the Black deities and daemons of the ancient peoples, whom he related to the underworld (Egyptian, Babylonian, Indo-Arian, Persian, Ancient Greek and Roman, Old German, Celtic, Old Slavic) (Petrović 1940).

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Indian myth about the two twin brothers who, having rescued their sister, escape with her over the sea), or lakes or rivers whose water cannot be drunk because whoever drinks from them loses the memory of their life on earth and thus becomes one of the dead. Thus, Loma believes that the motif of the feigned drowning of the two brothers 'in the blue sea' was not chosen by coincidence in one of the variations from *Pjevanija* (2002, 62). A Slovenian equivalent of the divine twins from Indo-European mythology was discovered by Zmago Šmitek (2004, 165-166) in the Kočevski ballads about the Coastal girl/Meererin, which reveals many old matrices to which we will later refer in our analysis of Lepa Vida.

10. In this type of poem we can recognize the ballad motif about the sinful brigand.

An epic biography can be recognized in the sick brother defending the honour of his sister (Bolen Dojčin, or Gjergj Elez Ali among the Albanians). As far as Bolen Dojčin is concerned, there exist two types of poems: 1. A minor number of poems in which the reason for Dojčin's illness is extensively explained, and some variations in which he is predestined to defeat the Black Arab in a heroic duel in order to redeem himself for his sins;<sup>10</sup> 2. The second type of poems have the well-known storyline of defending the honour of a sister/wife and these do not explain the reason for Dojčin's illness, placing all their emphasis on the struggle with the Black Arab. Penušliski classifies the first type as extended and the second as abbreviated (general) type (1988, pp. 317-318).

In the two oldest variations of the poem Bolen Dojčin (Brothers Miladinov, no. 155, and Verković 1985, 3, no. 47), the role of Dojčin's sister is taken by Dojčin's wife. In the other seven published versions, his wife appears alongside Dojčin's sister. In later variations there are no such appearances of the wife. On the basis of this, we can conclude that folk singers preferred the role of the nurse to be played by Dojčin's sister, also a messenger and minister of his messages, rather than by the wife of the sick hero.

We must not overlook the odd cases in which Dojčin appears as Marko's companion: for example, in Vuk's unfinished poem *Kraljević Marko u Azačkoj tamnici* (Vuk 2, no. 65), in which King Marko (the hero of all heroes), after unsuccessfully trying to escape the Arab's dungeon, sends a letter to Dojčin (Voivode Dojčilo) by a hawk so that the master of Thessalonica (Dojčin) can rescue/save him. Having received the letter, his companion decides, after some deliberation, that he should employ some cunning. He takes 'boja karaboja' (black colour) and paints his 'white face' so that he can disguise himself as the

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‘Black Arab’:

O Dojcilo, my brother in God!  
Into great troubles have I fallen,  
Into great troubles, into Arab hands,  
In captivity and a dungeon have I fallen;  
And the damned Azac dungeon’s  
Gloom I cannot bear!  
A dungeon is an eerie house;  
Rescue me, in the name of God I implore you!  
(Vuk, 2, no. 65; p.275)

An interesting variation is found in the narrative adaptation *King Marko and Bolen Dojčin* (Reiter 1964, 255-256), in which Marko kills an army of 300 Turks and is then imprisoned by the emperor in a ‘dungeon’ for three full years. His ‘hawk bird’ appears, and with its help Marko calls for Dojcin to save him. These two examples support Božović’s thesis that, under the influence of new social circumstances, and due to historical distance and ‘misunderstandings’ in the process of the transfer of information, there occurred substitution: the anti-hero appears as either the Black Arab or the Turk.

Great attention has been paid to this character by Balkan folklorists, but what we would like to refer to here is the consistency of the evaluation and its alteration in certain literary transpositions of this character. In his two plays, Georgi Stalev, in following the principles of the modernistic movement, or simply by obeying the rules of art (Bourdieu), depicts Bolen Dojcin as not being the moral victor; and the duel with the Black Arab is condemned in particular because it comes about only after his sister Angelina is concerned. The act itself is represented as moral egoism. The relationship between shame and honour as two basic moral categories is completely altered. Taking into account historical distance, archaic honour is transformed into contemporary shame and vice versa. The reason for this is clear: archaic motifs are interpreted in a contemporary manner and where cultural invariables are concerned, in the sense of their continuity and duration, the problem should be perceived as a need for invariability in the evaluation and the reasons which led to the alteration of this evaluation to be examined.

‘Societies of honour and shame’ are by definition agonial societies (Gezeman 1943). These social structures are characterized by bitter struggle on a daily basis for the reputation of one’s person, family and

clan—and in extreme cases—the reputation of the tribe. In our case, we have to take into account Giordano's perception of honour as not being an egalitarian principle based on an equation of the 'status of the powerful' with the 'virtues of the weak' but as, above all, related to a certain social strata. Thus, three different notions of honour and their appropriate norms can be distinguished as conforming with the traditional class structure: plebeian, civic and aristocratic honour (Giordano 2001, 105). In addition, we must refute the idea that honour belongs to pre-modern societies while dignity belongs to modern societies. These two are equally characteristic of both types of societies.

The arch-motif of the abduction of a young woman/bride is the core around which yet another storyline is constructed in folk literature—the ballad of Lepa Vida, one of the most beautiful and most recognizable examples from Slovenian folk literature. The earliest records are from the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As we have already stated, the historical background of this poem lies in the pirate raids of the Arabs (Spanish Moors) on the northern Mediterranean coast in the early Middle Ages (the Negro takes Lepa Vida to Spain). In the Pannonian world, Lepa Vida emerges as a characteristically folk-tale character with no historical background. Folk legend recounts several stories about Lepa Vida and her departure to the sea: in one tragic version, she is abducted with her consent (the well-known motif of the deceitful Arab) through the offer of a medicinal herb to cure her sick child and tragically drowns herself in the sea; in a second, transitional type, she departs to foreign lands where the moon later informs her that her child has died; in a third variant, which has acquired an elegiac connotation, she becomes a nurse to the Spanish prince and looks after somebody else's child instead of her own.

The first, tragic (lhanski variation) type is based on the Breznik lhan manuscript, while the elegiac Dolenjski variation is based upon Smole's<sup>11</sup> version. In the lhanski variant of *Lepa Vida*, *Mlada Vida*, the ballad closes with a typically tragic ending after perfidious abduction by the Negro – Vida drowns in the sea.

In the presumed (possible) predecessor of the Dolenjski type of Lepa Vida, based on Rudež's version, the Negro is sent by the Spanish king to transport Lepa Vida to the Spanish lands where she is to become a Spanish queen and breastfeed the king's child. In the concluding episode, after her arrival in the Spanish lands, we find Lepa Vida's final address to the sun.

In the established beginning and development of the story, the

11. It is believed that Smole received this version from Jožef Rudež (1793-1846) (Grafenauer, p. 134).

tragic outcome is replaced by an elegiac address from the Spanish queen, comforting Vida after the death of her sick child.

According to Grafenauer, these motifs developed in the following manner: the ballad which preceded the Sicilian story is assumed to have been well-known throughout Southern Italy in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century; at the same time, the Ihan version of Lepa Vida was formed, including the motif of abduction on the ship with precious riches (ibid. 288). There exists an Albanian-Calabrese ballad type with the same motif which served as a basis for the ballad predecessor to the Sicilian story. This older ballad pattern about the violent abduction of a young wife/mother by a maritime abductor represents a precursor to the Sicilian versions of *Scibilia Nobili*. The ballad about the violent abduction of the Christian girl by the infidel must have been formed previously.

This type of ballad patterns leads us back to the period of the fiercest Arab-Moor incursions along the west Mediterranean and the Adriatic, to the period when the Saracens occupied Sicily (827-912), when they ruled Tarentum (841-881) and Bari (841-871) and, going even further back, to the period in the mid-7<sup>th</sup> century when the Arabs conquered the Eastern Mediterranean, raiding and pillaging the Greek coasts and attacking Constantinople year after year (672-677/678) (Grafenauer 1943, 288-89).

Research into the predecessors of the ballad *The Abduction of a Young Woman/Mother* seeks to resolve the issue by identifying its country of origin (an approach which characterised folkloristic research up to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century), and this has led to ethnographical research into types and variants, including *King Rother* (which represents a more recent temporal framework). All this is undoubtedly related to the Moorish-Arabic pirate attacks. From a literary-historical aspect, we found the temporal-spatial framework of the possible emergence of the ballad about the abduction of a young woman particularly interesting, as well as the emergence of its basic variants as given by Grafenauer:

**A. I** The primitive type of the ballad of *The Violent Abduction of a Young Wife/Mother*, which predates *Scibilia Nobili* and belongs to the aristocratic class, is a type derived from Greek territory: all its predecessors are of Greek origin and date back to between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**A. Ila.** The version of the Albanian-Calabrese type about the deceitful abduction of the young wife/mother, including the universal motif of boarding a ship, is of the patrician (aristocratic) type and depicts the setting of the

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Roman-Byzantine cities along the Adriatic and Ionian coast. It dates back to the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

**A. IIb.** The version of the Ihan type, recounting the abduction of a young wife/mother, in which the deceit practised on the woman includes medicine for her sick child, was formed among the Slavic population in the western provinces of the Balkan peninsula in the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

**H + A. IIa.** Another ballad predecessor is the Sicilian story by Russo, formed in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and transferred to Sicily by the Italo-Normans.

**A. IIb + P.** The tragic predecessor of the versions of the Carnia inferiora type and the transitional Slovenian-Croatian type, including conversations with the sun, appears in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

**B.** In the semi-tragic type (Carnia inferiora), Lepa Vida is a wet-nurse to the Spanish prince. This version appears in Slovenia in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

**CI.** In the transitional Slovenian-Croatian type, Lepa Vida (in the Kočevski region - Lepa Marija), is forced to become a lover of the lecher. This was formed in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

**CIa.** In a version of Carnia superiore, the Young Vida unwillingly falls in love with her kidnapper and returns home miraculously helped by the Sun. This appears at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

**CIb.** In a version of the type Carnia superiore, Lepa Vida—'a lady and a housekeeper' to the kidnapper—returns home where she looks after a shepherd's son. This version was formed in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

Šmitek relates the variants with the Sun to the Indo-European myth about the sun twins. We can see that Šmitek pursues, as does Božović, the syncretic nature of the abductor 'črn zamorec'. Lepa Vida, like 'die schöne Meererin', is kept in captivity by the seashore, the place of residence of her abductor 'črn zamorec'. This was initially the chthonian daemonic creature 'from beyond the world seas'. The numerous Slovenian parallels about the 'povodni mož' who abducts an earthly wife for himself indicate such a conclusion. Only later was this daemonic creature replaced by the Muslim Moor, the Arab pillager or merchant (2004, 166). This is where Šmitek finds the resolution for this type of variant, which he considers to be an older type, in which the sun brings the abducted woman back home—for the simple reason that the Sun (the Sun hero?) is the only one who can pass the boundaries of

our reachable world. In one variant form Gorenje, Lepa Vida rescues herself by following the sun but is unable to keep up and cries: 'O! Wait you glowing sun// I cannot proceed ahead, and back I would not care to go! (O čakaj čakaj rumeno sonce // naprej ne morem, nazaj ne maram!) (2004, 166).

Gjergj Elez Ali, the Albanian cultural hero with an equally developed epic biography, appears as a protagonist in duels with the Baylozi or the Arabs in a similar way to the Southern Slavic and Romanian hero Bolen Dojčin, which makes for interesting comparison between the two. Almost all Serbian, Croatian, Bulgarian and Macedonian versions are characterized by an eastern position. The events are localized in Thessalonica, or sometimes in Constantinople as the sites of the duel with the Arab (the Black Arab). In the Albanian versions, however, both Baylozi and the Arabs regularly come from the sea, and the events are usually localized in Dures or Skoder. Hadzihasani associates this with the storyline of a chronicle from Ragusa, according to which: 'In 789, a terrifying Giant terrorized and pillaged the entire coast, both in Dalmatia and Araberia.' Irrespective of the dubious character and authenticity of this chronicle, two facts stand out as of interest: 1. that a legend about such a giant circulated in the Balkans as early as the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century; and 2. that this legend was well known throughout the entire western Balkan peninsula (1997, 22).

## THE ARAB IN FOLK PROSE

In addition to subjects and situations in examples from folk poetry, certain cases from folk prose also deserve our attention. Some of these entered Macedonian folklore through Turkish folklore; others were adopted from *1001 Nights*. Professor Penusliski, who edited the Macedonian folk stories by Cepenkov, discovered in the course of his research several interesting Macedonian-Turkish narrative parallels in which the character of the Arab is often found. We will present only the cases in which the Arab appears as a protagonist.

The story *A Rich Man is accosted by an Arab on the road and says he wishes to live serenely in his old age* (Cepenkov, no. 111) is a version of the type EB 136 = AaTh 577 (948). The long title of this story clearly captures the essence of the storyline. A rich man decides to live serenely in his old age and loses everything he has—his wife, children and property. Having survived all these misfortunes, he eventually

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12. E. Littmann, *Die Erzählung aus den Tausend und ein Nächten*, 1-6, Leipzig, 1924.

becomes a king and lives in peace surrounded by his family until his death. There are about 30 Turkish versions. There is also a Byzantine version of the introduction and the conclusion and there is a similar story in the collection *1001 Nights* E. Littmann<sup>12</sup>, Bd. 3, 784-801, quoted by Penušliski 1984, 39).

### THE STORY ABOUT THE POOR MAN AND THE LARK THAT ATE HIS MILLET (CEPENKOV NO. 74). EB 176 = AATH 563

This story, in its entire structure, matches the Turkish story type EB 176 = AaTh 563, with 23 versions recorded: 1. A poor man cries because he loses an expensive item. A magic Arab, Oh-la-la, appears before him and gives him a donkey that makes gold; 2. The donkey is stolen; 3. After he cries a second time, he receives a magic stool; 4. The stool is replaced by an ordinary one; 5. When he cries again, he receives a miraculous club; 6. With the help of the club, he retrieves both the donkey and the magic stool (Penušliski 1984, 397). The poor man in the Macedonian story gets the magic objects (donkey, stool, club) from the king of the larks (version D. Mirčev S6NU IX, 158, from Resen). In one of the Turkish versions (Vasfi Mahir, *En guzel Türk Masallari*, Istanbul 1934, 68-70), partridges take the poor man to a mill where the Arab appears before him with the magic objects (ibid. 397).<sup>13</sup>

13. Versions: Bolte-Polivka I, 346. A. Aarne lists Asian, Indian and European variants (including the Southern Slavic peoples) in FFC 96, 52. A monograph: A. Aarne, *Die Zaubergaben*, *Journal de la Societe Finno-ougrienne*, XXVII (1909), 1-96. Carl Kron, the founder of the migration theory, reasonably suggests an Indian origin for this storyline and its transfer through Asia Minor (see Penušliski 1984, 397).

The story about *The King's Forty Sons and Forty Daughters-in-Law, the Great Serpent, the Dragon, the Arab, the King and the Dervish* (Cepenkov 90) is a conflation of the Turkish types EB 96 and EB 77 (AaTh 513 A). In the latter type of stories, there appear the same unusual helpers-heroes as in the Cepenkov story: a hero who can eat the bread made from the flour of 12 mills; the Čekor mountain; the miraculous archer; and the The Swallower of the Sea (Penušliski 1984, 398).

Judging by the findings of research into folk stories, we find the similarity of the Turkish magic stories with stories in the prose tradition from countries on the Mediterranean coast exceptionally interesting (Slavoljub Džindžić, *Turske bajke*, Beograd 1978, 216). The story *The queen who wants to become pregnant and sees in a dream that if she eats a green plum she will give birth and the king who finds a plum in a strong Arab's garden and promises him his son when he reaches the age of fifteen* (Cepenkov, 73), differs from the Turkish type EB 158 (AaTh 314) in some additions and episodes. In the Turkish versions, the queen becomes pregnant after eating an apple (as in Cepenkov's story

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52, but she gives birth to a girl and the neighbouring woman gives birth to a boy after eating the discarded apple peel), while in Cepenkov's story this happens after she has eaten a plum. In the story, the boy miraculously escapes from the Arab's castle with the help of a magic horse. According to Penušliski, many similar parallels can be drawn with other magic stories recorded by Cepenkov. Almost without exception, they manifest great similarities or are identical to Turkish stories. Naturally, they underwent various alterations in our environment. Often the heroes were given local names (Petre, Cane, Najdenko, Mečo, Zlata, etc.) At times, some of the stories acquired completely different interpretations and important motif series were developed further or lost in accordance with the notions of the local people and narrators. Single episodes were extracted from some Turkish stories in order to function as completely independent creations (Penušliski 1984, 399).

The character of the Arab is present throughout the various anthologies of Macedonian folk prose, but we will now refer to a story with a recognizable initiation-based storyline. In the story *The Child Hero with Magic Power* (Verković, 1985, 4), the Arab is one of the characters whose role is to help turn a little child into a powerful hero. In one episode, the Arab appears as his opponent. Throughout the entire plot, the Arab performs the function of one of several opponents in the initiation tests of the main protagonist:

'On the road he met a terrible Arab with a mouth gaping open to swallow the child in one gulp: his mouth was open so wide that one jaw was on the ground and the other was in the sky. When the child saw this, he pulled out his heavy club and hit the Arab thrice, pushing him aside, and that is how he managed to get past. Another day he went down the same road and met a terrible bear who said to him (...).  
(Verković 1985, 4, p. 378)

## CONCLUSION

Having analyzed the structural elements of this character, we can accept Božović's opinion that, where epic poetry is concerned, the formulaic character of the Arab is a consequence both of historical-cultural contacts with the Arab world and of the genetic development of our epic poetry in its *passage from myth into history* (1977, 218). In the storylines of the ballads, the dominant motif is the abduction of a young girl/woman and variations in this motif are again manifested through

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the genetic growth of the functions. In prose, where later waves of Oriental influence are most strongly felt (Horálek 1969, Penušliski 1984), we must not neglect the opinion that the Arab was transferred from poetry to prose, which is also defined from the aspect of heroes/protagonists who undergo initiation. While the epic hero undergoes his heroic, super-personal initiation and rekindles hope, he has a worthy opponent in the three-headed or Black Arab. The protagonist of the story, undergoing sexual maturation, comes across the Arab in an *adventurous manner*. The Arab retains the functions of this genre: he is related to the *other* world, to the stage of temporary death as a stage in the protagonist's initiation, and plays the role of a sorcerer, miracle-worker, or a formidable enemy in the successful completion of the initiation tests of the main hero.

When we consider the duration of the motifs and subjects of folk literature related to the Arab, we can easily observe stabilizing, shaping elements in both the verse and folk stories (especially in folk tales), which strongly indicate an inflexibility made possible through strict observance of constant patterns. These formulaic elements are associated with variations whose solid core contributes to an amplified impression of continuity in the narrative types. Nevertheless, however much they try, they cannot prolong their life after the internal link with their content is lost.

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### Heroes –Anti-Heroes

*In epic and ballad folk literature, the formulaic character of the Arab emerges as a consequence of historical and cultural contacts with the Arab world, but also in line with the genetic development of epic poetry in its passage from myth into history. In both genres, which at times cannot easily be differentiated, the universal motif of the abduction of a young girl/woman is central. In prose, where the later waves of Oriental influence are most strongly felt, we must not dismiss the view that the Arab was transferred from poetry into prose, which was also defined from the aspect of the hero/protagonist who undergoes initiation. While the epic hero undergoes his heroic, super-personal initiation and assumes the attributes of a powerful saviour bringing freedom and consolation and rekindling hope, he has a worthy opponent in the three-headed or Black Arab. The protagonist of the story, undergoing his sexual maturation, comes across the Arab in an adventurous manner. The Arab retains the functions of this genre: he is related to the other world, to the stage of temporary death as a stage in the protagonist's initiation, and he plays the role of a sorcerer, miracle-worker, or of a formidable enemy in the successful completion of the initiation tests of the main hero.*

*When we consider the duration of the motifs and subjects of folk literature related to the Arab, we can easily observe stabilizing, shaping elements in both the verse and folk stories (especially in folk tales), which strongly indicate an inflexibility made possible through strict observance of constant patterns. These formulaic elements are associated with variations whose solid core contributes to an amplified impression of continuity in the narrative types. Nevertheless, however much they try, they cannot prolong their life after the internal link with their content is lost.*

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## Cultural Practices of Distinction and Exclusion: The Black Arab in Bulgarian Folklore Epics

The figure of the Black Arab is one of the most well-known and culturally specific characters in Bulgarian epics and in Bulgarian folklore in general. It finds a multitude of projections in different forms and genres—in folk songs and oral historical narratives, in folk rituals and masking traditions. Aside from the regular presence of this figure in epic songs and *hajduk* songs, the appearance of the Black Arab is customary in *survakari* rituals and *koukeri* dances, in *russalii* and *stanichari* games. Even a brief overview of representations of the Black Arab in Bulgarian folklore shows that, although the image appears in different forms and genres, it follows a systematic and largely uniform appearance in all of them: one generally shaped by the image of the ‘other’—the ethnic and culturally ‘alien.’ Dreadful in physical appearance (dark, ugly, repellent, etc.), he is described as dangerous and treacherous, which altogether makes him a figure belonging to a culturally unacceptable realm. In all instances in which the figure of the Black Arab makes an appearance, it is his distinct separateness from and opposition to the local community that is stressed; he poses a threat and welcomes efforts to be fought against, though ultimately to be defeated. Whereas in verbal folklore he is regularly depicted as an enslaver or as the foremost enemy of the epic hero, in ritual and masking contexts he is invariably portrayed as belonging to the netherworld and strongly associated with demonic and eschatological forces.

With their unmistakable roots in underlying mythological trends and deep mechanisms of conceptualizing and representing the ‘other,’ these aspects of the Black Arab allow us to trace a certain logic sur-

### Key words:

- Bulgarian folklore epics
- stereotype of the other
- heroic epics
- policies of distinction and exclusion
- South Slavic peoples, Ottoman domination
- Mediterraneanum

### Key notion:

- cultural exclusion

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1. See: Angelov 1997.

2. For an overview of the motifs, plots, development and distribution of Bulgarian folklore epics, see the major collections and interpretative essays of Angelov and Vakarelski 1930; Arnaudov 1942; Bogdanova 1981; Dinekov 1949; Dinekov 1959; Ivanov 1959; Ivanova 1992; Popov 1890-1891; Romanska 1963; Romanska, Stoykova, Angelova, 1971; Romanski 1925-1929; Yordanov 1901; Yordanov 1916. For a comparative contextualization of Bulgarian epic songs in the Slavic, South Slavic and Balkan epic traditions, see Angelova, R., et al., 1968; Banashevich 1959; Epos, etnos, etos 1995; Putilov 1966; Putilov 1971; Romanska 1962; Zhirmunskiy 1979.

rounding their specificity for the Bulgarian cultural context, as well as to outline the internal dynamics of the image in folklore cultural representations and cultural memory. Shaped as an image during the period of Ottoman domination when ethno-religious sensitivity and the formation of negative portraits of 'persons of another faith' (i.e. not Christian) were especially marked,<sup>1</sup> the image of the Black Arab bears testimony to the construction of a cultural boundary between Bulgarians as Christians on one side, and members of other religious groups—Moslems and Jews—on the other. Whereas the former are described as handsome, noble and daring, the latter are within the stylistic register of evil-doers and enslavers. This polar-based logic situates the Black Arab within the same group as Turks, Tartars, and Gypsies so loathed as invaders and oppressors in epic and hajduk songs, and determines the general development of his image along these lines. He not only maintains a regular appearance in the famous song cycle in which 'Marko liberates three chains of slaves [from Turks, Arabs, Janissaries, etc.]', but occupies the central role as a major enslaver among the other ethnic and religious enemies, becoming thus a collective figure of the afflicting evil. This generalizing strategy around the figure of the Arab finds projections both in other songs cycles of the Bulgarian heroic epic and in the hajduk songs, where again the Black Arab has largely displaced the other images of opponents and has evolved as a symbolic figure of threat and danger. Predictably, in the ritual cycle and in masked performances he is again in the company of other ethnically, religiously and culturally distinguished others (Tartars, Gypsies, Jews), being also well outlined among them and with emphasized negative overtones.

All these undercurrents guiding the development of the Black Arab's character in Bulgarian traditional folklore have their historical dimensions, influenced in part by historical processes that unfolded throughout almost five centuries of Ottoman rule in Bulgarian lands and in part by the development of folklore genres and forms at the time and their increasing acquisition of ethnic distinguishing overtones. Closely intertwined with and layered upon each other, these undercurrents are testimonies not only of the particular direction that the image of the Black Arab took in Bulgarian folklore culture, but also of the cultural practices of distinguishing and exclusion which evolved in the process of conceptualizing the image of the 'other.' This paper is guided primarily by the aim of tracing the main lines of cultural inclusion and exclusion surrounding the figure of the Black Arab in Bulgarian folklore epics<sup>2</sup> and of outlining their resonance in other folklore forms

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and their traces in cultural memory to the present day. While providing an overview of the main representations of the Black Arab in several epic cycles, this paper will highlight the diverse aspects of differentiation (ethnic and cultural stereotypes, patterns of kinship and family affiliation, mythological characteristics, etc.) that are involved in the interpretation of the Black Arab in Bulgarian epic. Separate attention will be paid to projections of this image in subsequent epic forms (such as the hajduk song tradition) and in ritual context where the stereotypes of distinguishing and exclusion find their ritual and game-related interpretation.

### THE BLACK ARAB AND THE THREE CHAINS OF SLAVES

As already pointed out, the cycle of epic songs in which the character of the Black Arab appears most regularly are those wherein the major epic hero in Bulgarian and South Slavic tradition, Marko, saves three chains (or three boats, three villages, etc.) of slaves. The song cycle is known to all South Slavic peoples, but is especially frequent and widely distributed in Bulgarian folklore tradition.<sup>3</sup> Although the enslavers may be figures of different ethnic and religious profile (Turks, Mussa Kesedji, Philip Madjarin, Yellow Bazirgyana, etc.), it is the Arab in his various versions and appearances who holds the most systematic presence. As in epic songs belonging to other thematic cycles, here the emphasis is again on the central epic hero who goes to make his confession and take church communion (on Easter Sunday, a special holiday, etc.)<sup>4</sup> and who, following the advice of his mother, does not take weapons with him. His wife, however, secretly hides his sword in the mane of his horse. On his way to the church or monastery, Marko passes through a forest that is all withered with sorrow and learns from the forest that it grieves for the suffering of 'three chains of slaves' driven through it by Turks, Janissaries, and/or Black Arab(s).<sup>5</sup> Marko does not hesitate for a second: he spurs on his horse to catch up with the slaves. When he reaches them, he discovers among them his maiden sister Todora who, after confirming that he recognizes her,<sup>6</sup> asks him to release her. He offers the enslavers a ransom, but they refuse and threaten to chain him too.<sup>7</sup> Prompted by his horse about the hidden sword—or using his plough as a weapon<sup>8</sup>—Marko kills the enslavers and liberates the slaves, giving them gifts and money before they go back home to celebrate Easter.<sup>9</sup> Later, when he reaches the monas-

3. For the most developed versions of this song, see: SbNU XI, 1894, pp. 25-27; SbNU XLII, 1942, pp. 5-6; SbNU XLIV, 1949, pp. 31-35; SbNU LIII, 1971; SbNU XIII, 1896, pp. 99-101; SbNU XLIII, 1942, pp. 9-11; SbNU XLIX, 1958, pp. 57-58; SbNU LIII, 1971. An entire classification of the songs in this cycle was done by L. Bogdanova. See Bogdanova 1981; SbNU LIII, 1971.

4. In some songs, the epic hero goes to plough the fields on Holy Sunday and his mother attempts to stop him (SbNU XLIII: 3); or he is sent by her to buy an iron plough (SbNU XLIII: 2). In other versions (SbNU XLIII: 4), his decision to take to the road is guided by his intention of liberating the land from the Turks.

5. In some versions, Marko encounters different groups of Arabs on separate occasions, the last group numbering three thousand Arabs. All of them are destroyed by the brave and fearless Marko (SbNU XLIII: 9).

6. The recognition in the scene follows the typical scene for the Bulgarian epics of identification between close relatives. Most often, it is accompanied with a story about the treatment of the wounded Marko and the scar on his body. See Bochkov 1994. Putilov 1964; Vukov 2003.

7. In some of the songs, the Turks/Arabs even manage to chain Marko (SbNU XLIII: 1).

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8. See SbNU XLIII: 3.
9. All slaves went home and celebrated Easter. Stefan SbNU XLIII: 1. In many versions, the hero takes back home his newly discovered sister and presents her to his mother (SbNU XLIII: 9).
10. In some versions, the mayors and citizens mock Marko because he missed the liturgy. However, an old priest tells Marko that God will forgive him for the blood he has spilt because he did enormous good and was equal to building three monasteries (SbNU XLIII: 4). The liturgy is repeated and all the mayors pay homage to Marko. In other versions, the holy relics of saints in the church speak out and insist on Marko's righteousness and on his right to receive Holy Communion (SbNU XLIII: 1).

tery, the church doors open wide before him and, despite his having spilt human blood, he receives communion and a blessing from the priest.<sup>10</sup>

The major conflict in the song is between the two distinct ethnic groups. The 'alien' other (represented by the Black Arab and other enemy characters) enslaves the land, spills the blood of the younger generation, and annihilates the children and the elderly. As described in the gruesome picture of the chained slaves, the captives are young boys, maidens and brides; the elderly and the adolescent are slaughtered, thus forming a powerful metaphor of the collective fate of the Bulgarian people. The songs of this cycle express clear indicators of ethnic origin and affiliation: the Sofia Plain, the crossing of the rivers associated with the Bulgarian, Christian, and Slavic populations, etc. Furthermore, the forest is withered with sorrow because a tragedy has befallen the ethnic territory: 'O! Krali Marko! It is not frost or hot wind that has afflicted me. Here there passed three chains of slaves—enslaved by Emza Beg Arab, together with two other Arabs—and that is why I am withered with sorrow.' The participants in the epic fight are clearly identified by their ethnic affiliation: 'the crazy Bulgarian', as the enslavers define Marko, and the 'Black Arabs' as the enslavers are called, sometimes independently of their ethnic or religious origin. The ethnic belonging of the enemy is overtly stated ('Turks,' 'Janissaries,' 'Arabs,' etc.), but the different versions often merge together into one collective reference to the 'Black Arab.' In this cycle of songs, one can easily identify the blurring that has occurred between the images of the Black Arab and the Mussa Kesedji, a representation of a historical personality (a son of Bayezid the First and a pretender to the throne), who has remained notorious in folk memory for his bestial cruelty. The use of the collective term of the 'Black Arab' for all the enemies, however, is a demonstration of its turning into a stable formula because of its extreme difference.

The dominant theme in this cycle of songs is a longing for defence and salvation, which receives its artistic representation in imaginary salvation by a miraculously strong folk hero. Pervaded with a sense of permanently existing evil—as embodied in the figure of the Black Arab(s)—the majority of the songs in this cycle succeed in turning the ethnic drama into a victory of the heroic representative of the threatened ethnic community. From such a perspective, the figure of the Black Arab is a necessary counterpoint to overcome the hostility of the alien ethnic community, to imagine liberation from enslavement and to affirm the rebirth of the ethnic community out of tragedy and suffer-

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ing. The songs, however, do not end with the death of the Black Arab. Having succeeded in defeating the Arabs and his comrades, the epic hero takes care of the slaves, helping them to gain food and to survive. Furthermore, the epic hero continues on his way to the church or monastery to receive communion and cleanse his heart of sins. Despite the objections on the part of certain mayors and priests to Marko's receiving forgiveness after the murder of the Arab, the miraculous opening of the church doors clearly indicates that this sin will be forgiven. Not only will the murder be forgiven, it will be acclaimed as a heroic and glorious act performed on a special day. The shedding of the Arab's blood and the liberation of the slaves are elevated to the level of a moral imperative above all other imperatives, including religious ones. A notable element along these lines is the promise of the epic hero that he will no longer dedicate himself as a godfather at marriage ceremonies and baptism rituals but to the liberation of slaves and the clearing of the land from Black Arabs.

## THE BLACK ARAB IN DUELS WITH DIFFERENT EPIC HEROES

A similar role for the Black Arab as a major enemy with horrendous mythological features is discovered in other cycles of the Bulgarian heroic epics, where different songs and plots involve him as the main participant in epic duels. Although many of the plots are predominantly related to Marko, there are others in which different epic figures, such as Doychin, Gruytza, etc., are the Black Arab's main opponents. In a song about the famous 'sick Doychin', the Arab is the primary reason for Doychin to leave his sickbed and to affirm his miraculous strength.<sup>11</sup> The introduction to these songs typically presents Doychin as having lain sick for nine years: flies come out of his eyes and grass grows out of his hair while his sister nurses him and takes care of his horse. She cries as she sweeps the yard because the Black Arab has descended on the town of Budin: the song tells of how he daily demands a cow, a cart of bread, a keg of wine and a keg of brandy, and how he rapes a different maiden every night before killing her. Doychin's sister cries because she has received a message that she is next in line to go to the Arab and when she has gone there will be nobody to look after Doychin and his horse. Doychin tells her to take his horse and his sword and to bind his sick bones with a white cloth. Then he sets off to meet the Arab. They fight a violent duel in which Doychin manages

11. SbNU XLIII: 87.

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to knock the Arab to the ground and kill him. Then he goes to the Arab's house and kills the Arab's wife and child before taking the Arab's treasure. When Doychin returns home, his sister takes him up on the terrace. When she unbinds the white cloth, all of Doychin's bones fall apart and he dies.

As with the other songs about sick Doychin in Bulgarian heroic epics, this one is also strongly focused on images of death, visible in both the sickness of the dying hero and in his end after he has performed his deed. What is interesting here is that the figure of the dead and seemingly 'resurrected' Doychin enters into conflict with another mythological figure generally related to disaster and death, the Black Arab. The misfortune that the Arab brings to the city can be fought only by mythological means—with the help of figures from the 'beyond.' The death-afflicting image of the Arab can be defeated only by the dead but resurrected image of the defending ancestor. It is worth highlighting the way in which Doychin succeeds in conquering the Arab by half-burying him in the ground, and the way in which the death of the Arab brings annihilation to his entire family and household. The extermination of this enemy is considered a radical obliteration of his presence on earth, made possible by the signs of the netherworld as embodied in the sick Doychin. Notably, after so many years of sickness, Doychin can finally have his body and soul torn apart and can die in peace. The murder of the Black Arab was a mission he was destined to perform and in waiting for this mission he spent years in sickness. It is this universal mission that the songs of this cycle raise as underlying both Doychin's biography and the fate of the Black Arab in general.

The idea of the Arab as a universal disaster is palpably represented in the song cycle about Marko Krleviki. In one of them, about Marko Krlevich, Aykuna Maiden and Black Arab, the Arab is building towers near the sea, but he decides that he has no relative to stay inside the towers.<sup>12</sup> He has no mother to sit inside the colourful towers; he has no sister to sweep the colourful tower; nor has he a wife to serve in the colourful towers. Then he recalls that Sultan Selim has a pretty daughter, Maiden Aykuna, and so he sends a letter to the Sultan requesting that he give her his daughter as his wife. After a period of delay in replying to the Arab's request (while Aykuna's dowry is prepared), the Sultan sends letters to all corners of the world, 'to the Turks and to the Bulgarians', in order to find a brave man to fight the Arab. In return for defeating the Arab, the Sultan promises any kind of gift. No brave man is found among the Turks or the Bulgarians. But then the queen

12. SbNU XLIII: 26.

has a dream that in Prilep there lives a brave man, Marko Krleviki, who is the greatest brave men of all, and so the Sultan writes to him. When Marko reads the letter, he tells the messengers that he is afraid of the Arab because he can take his head down from his shoulders. The Sultan's family offer various precious gifts, but Marko declines every offer. However, Marko does eventually appear to save Aykuna and advises her of a plan to defeat the Arab without damaging the city. The duel takes place outside the city walls and with great effort Marko finally succeeds in defeating the Black Arab and cutting off his head. The murder of the Arab takes place in the symbolically marked place outside the city walls, thereby emphasizing the Arab's status as an excluded and threatening figure for the community. It is worth remarking that this exclusion is specifically outlined in the introduction to the songs of this cycle wherein the Arab is building towers near the sea on the very border of the world. Similar to other songs about diverse mythological enemies and the hajduk songs in which the Arab is blocking the road in the Danube valley, in this song he is again by water, on the very threshold to the other world, and remains there until his death.

An interesting development of the association of the Black Arab as a figure of threat, disaster and death is found in the cycles of songs about Marko Krlevich, Sultan Selim and the Black Arab. In this cycle, the distinguishing of the Arab as belonging to an alien ethnic and religious group is additionally emphasized by his being isomorphous with the Sultan. Here the Sultan takes on many of the features of an evil-doer and the Arab only needs to fight with Marko – the only person who dares break the Sultan's orders.<sup>13</sup> According to the core plot of the songs, Sultan Selim issues an order for the Turks not to drink wine and for the Bulgarians not to wear red or to ride good horses—all reminiscent of the prohibitions imposed in Bulgarian folklore by dragons, monsters, and the Black Arab himself. All the people obey the Sultan's order except for Marko; so the Sultan sends a message to the Turks and Arabs with the demand that somebody catch him.<sup>14</sup> Among the Turks, nobody undertakes the task, but there is an Arab who decides to accept. The Arab goes to the Sultan and negotiates a reward for catching Marko, receiving money as well as the town of Prilep, Marko's horse, and Marko's beloved. The dreadful appearance of the Arab is underlined again: 'his lips reach his chest and his eyelashes reach his shoulders.' In the duel between the Arab and Marko in Prilep, Marko cuts off the Arab's head, puts it in a bag and takes it to the Sultan, demanding to receive everything that had been promised the Arab for

13. Actually, Marko not only disobeys the orders but in some versions overtly declares his different religious attitude: 'He dressed up in green clothes/ covered his horse with weapons/ and urged Turks and Janissaries to drink wine during Ramadan.' (SbNU XLIII: 13).

14. See SbNU XLIII: 13.

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his death. He takes the money and warns the sultan not to attempt to send other Black Arabs to fight him. As in the songs about Hajduk Sider (see below), here Marko is again a figure not only abolishing a humiliating prohibition but also restoring the social order by defeating his opponents.

15. Miladinovi 1861: 143.

Marko's behaviour in breaking the Sultan's prohibitions and thus encountering the Black Arab as an enemy is well outlined in the cycle of songs about 'Seven Heroes and the Black Arab', where the impetus of the epic plot is Marko's initiative to build seventy monasteries in Kosovo Polje without the Sultan's permission.<sup>15</sup> When Sultan Murad learns of this, he offers an award (of Bosna and Sarajevo, lands, forests, etc.) to the person who catches and brings Marko to him. The one who undertakes the task is a Black Arab who bows to the sultan and asks for even greater rewards: the towns of Stalakin, Radomir, and Prilep, together with Marko's horse and sword, as well as his wife and son. Using a device regularly found in epic plots, the Black Arab disguises himself in the habit of a monk, visits Marko's house and learns from Marko's mother that her son is at the new monastery of St. Dimiter. On finding Marko, the Arab reminds him that he should bow to a monk and say a prayer. When Marko obeys, the Arab takes out a chain and ties him up, tethering him to the horse's saddle. Marko cries out 'like a snake' and is heard by Debel Novak who comes to help but is defeated by the Arab and chained together with Marko. A similar fate befalls Novak's child, Gruytsa Voyvoda, as well as the little child of Hajduk Novak, Deli Tatomirche, and Yankula Voevod and Milosh Orgyanin. All are defeated and chained by the Arab. The six men shout out loudly and are heard by Sekula Detentse (the Child Sekula),<sup>16</sup> who reaches the Arab, prays to St. Dimiter for help, and succeeds in defeating the Arab. After cutting the Arab's head off and putting it into a bag, Sekula goes to Sultan Murad to ask him whether he has given an order to the Arabs to go around 'our land.' Frightened by the head of the dead Arab, the sultan gives a reward to Sekula and tells him to kill all Arabs. Sekula Detentse advises the other heroes not to attempt to communicate with any Black Arab if they should meet one, but to call Sekula as he is the only one who knows how to slaughter an Arab.

16. About the mythical elements in the character of the child hero in Bulgarian folklore epics, see Afanasieva 1983; Madzharov 1934-1935.

The songs belonging to this cycle evince several typical elements in the figure of the Arab and the fight with him. The motif of the monastery and the emphasized Christian affiliation of the Arab's main opponents clearly identify the Black Arab as belonging to alien ethnic and religious traditions. This finds palpable expression in the interference

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of the Arab in Marko's attempts to build seventy monasteries in Kosovo Polje without the Sultan's or the Vizier's permission. Especially emphasized in the songs is the construction of the monastery to St. Dimiter, further strengthened by the prayers of Sekula Detentse to St. Dimiter: 'He turned to all the saints/ but he turned mostly to St. Dimiter/ - Dear Lord and Dear St. Dimiter, please help me/ to defeat the Black Arab.'<sup>17</sup> In contrast with all this, the Arab is an embodiment of fake religiosity: clothed as a monk and with religious attributes such as a cross and a prayer book but in fact an enemy. It is notable that all the heroes make the sign of the cross before going to the Arab and that, for some of them (including Marko), the kissing of the fake monk's hand is the trap that leads them into captivity. They build monasteries, bow to saints, pray and call to saints for help. On many occasions, the land is called God's land and the special day is called 'God's Day.' Unlike them, the Arab is a defender of the prohibition on Christian religious activity and is described as abusing the external religious attributes in order to exterminate the Christian faith. Another well emphasized motif in this cycle of songs additionally emphasizes the sharp division between the different worlds and the alien position of the Arab. When addressing the Arab, the heroes ask him what he is doing in their land: 'The Sultan rules in Stambul, and we rule in our land.' Whereas all the heroes participating in these fights are overtly named with reference to the town or land to which they belong, the Arab is a figure without origin and without affiliation. Thus, aside from the animosity of the Arab and his dreadful appearance, another emphasis on his alien nature emerges in the form of his position as having no place and no land—his marginality manifest in spatial exclusion.

Another widespread song cycle about Marko Krlevich, Gruyo Detentse and the Black Arab tells of the evil that the Black Arab performed in the German lands for seventy years and the German queen's request for help to Marko.<sup>18</sup> Yet again, the evils of the Black Arab directly assault religious affiliation. The Black Arab did not permit a child to be baptized or a marriage to take place and he forbade taking communion and attending church. The unmarried men grew beards, the maidens grew old and the little children grew moustaches without being baptized or married. As an illustration of the Black Arab's character as a destroyer of all natural and social foundations, a customary remark in this song cycle is that his assault on religious rites reduced people to being 'lawless.'<sup>19</sup> It is specifically the reconstruction of the social order which motivates the German queen to write a letter to

17. Miladinovi 1861: 143.

18. SbNU XLIII: 12; SbNU XLIII: 12.

19. SbNU XLIII: 12.

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20. Ibid.

21. In some versions, the Arab sleeps in high towers and is woken by Marko who beats loudly at the gates (SbNU XLIII: 12).

22. Note the expressive way in which the young 'bride' breaks the Black Arab (SbNU XLIII: 12).

23. SbNU 1: 4.

Marko with the request to gather brave men and to liberate her lands from the Black Arab. When Marko reads the letter, blood drops from his eyes.<sup>20</sup> His friend Gruytsa says that the Black Arab is very strong and that they cannot fight him unless they use a trick. Thus Gruytsa suggests that he dress up as a young bride and that Marko pretend to be a young bridegroom. They agree to gather together thirty brave men disguised as wedding guests and to go to the German land. As in many other epic song cycles, the wedding procession is both the disguise for the emerging epic fight and the context of defeating the existing evil. Having been woken with the news about the wedding procession,<sup>21</sup> the Black Arab swiftly prepares for the fight and rides after the procession. All the wedding guests run away, including Marko, and the Black Arab reaches only the remaining Gruyo (dressed as a bride) who manages to knock him down.<sup>22</sup> Marko returns just at that moment and cuts off the Arab's head. All the thirty wedding guests go back through the German land and Marko sings a song announcing the permission of weddings, baptisms and festive meetings.

The wedding procession is the general context for solving the epic conflict also in the song cycle about Gyuro Temishvarin, Marko Krlevich and the Black Arab.<sup>23</sup> In this cycle, Gyuro Temishvarin (Gyuro from Timisoara) goes around the world to find a wife. When he eventually finds her, he invites Marko as a best-man and Yankula Voevod as a godfather. However, he does not have anyone to invite as a young 'dever' (the bride's ritual bother) and is advised by his mother to take a white loaf of bread and brandy and to invite the first person he meets to take on this ritual role. On the coast, in the white sand, Gyuro finds Dete Golomeshe and invites him to be a 'young dever.' He takes Golomeshe to his palace where he chooses clothes, a sword, and a horse for the marriage feast. On the way back from the bride's house, the wedding procession enters a narrow mountain pass. There, in a remote place that is hardly accessible for humans, the Black Arab appears. Again, his appearance is dreadful: he is like a terrible blizzard, his mouth as big as a door, eyes as big as windows, with legs and arms as long as house beams. The Arab tells the wedding guests to turn back peacefully, but to leave the bride and the gifts for him. The only one who dares speak is Dete Golomeshe, who declares he will fight with the Black Arab. After a violent struggle, Dete Golomeshe defeats the Arab and cuts off his head with the sharp sabre. Then he goes to the green umbrella of the Arab (note the colour symbolism of Arab's religious affiliation), takes the wedding gifts and, together with the maiden, arrives

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at Gyuro's yard where he berates the cowardly wedding participants. As in all the other song cycles, the fate of the Arab is predestined: despite his monstrous appearance and unbreakable power, he is to be defeated by the young epic hero, a simple but noble and valiant character.

A very interesting example of the figure of the Black Arab in Bulgarian folklore epics is found in the song about his making a bet with Marko and winning Marko's wife as a result.<sup>24</sup> After being warned by his wife never to use her as a stake in any bet, Marko has a feast with the Black Arab and gambles with him. While the Black Arab stakes his horse and sword, Marko proposes his wife as a stake. Marko loses the bet and the Black Arab takes his wife. On the way to Solun, Marko's wife manages to cheat the Arab, warning him that she might be recognized by relatives in Solun and proposing that they change their clothes. They spend the night in an inn and Marko's wife kills the Arab during the night. On the following morning, she accuses the hosts of his murder and they are obliged to pay her for his death. An interesting point is the throwing of the Arab's body in the Aegean Sea and the prohibition to speak about what has happened. Yet again, the body of the Arab is torn apart and scattered without a trace and yet again this happens at the boundary of the world, the beach and the seaside where the memory of the Arab will submerge into oblivion.

24. See for example SbNU XLIII: 11.

## THE ARAB MAIDEN

One of the most interesting plots involving the Black Arab in Bulgarian folklore epics is the song about Marko and the Arab Maiden (Arapka devojka). Although not related to epic fights and while bearing strong ballad characteristics, the song is inseparable from the system of the epics and adds a very important element to the conceptualization of Marko as the main epic hero. It is among the few cases where the representation is not focused on the Black Arab himself but on members of his immediate entourage (as, for example, the Black Arab's wife in some of the songs) or even, as here, on the isomorphic character of his figure. It is precisely for this reason that the song in which the Black Arab is principally absent is so indicative of the strategies of distinction and exclusion which accompany his figure in the epics. The song starts in a way typical of the epic song: in all its versions, the plot is developed in the form of retrospection triggered by the question of Marko's

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mother to her son about the reason for building nine *zadushbini*. The meaning of the latter indicates a commemorative practice in memory of the dead and, as becomes clear from Marko's story, he was building such a commemoration to the Arab Maiden whom he killed and whom he mourns. The story tells of Marko having been captured by the Arabs in a distant land with dry mountains where he is thrown in jail. Every day a maiden comes to his prison to bring him bread and pastry, and on Easter and St. George's Day she brings him festive food. One day, the maiden tells Marko that if he would like to be his beloved, she will steal the keys from her father and release him. Marko agrees and they flee together. On the road, however, the Arab maiden becomes exhausted and Marko is about to leave her. She offers him either to take her as a slave or to kill her if he does not want to have her as a wife. Supposing that his friends will mock at him if they see him taking an Arab woman as a wife, Marko turns back and kills the maiden. Yet again, even when not a demonic and threatening personality but a supporter and a saviour, the Arab is the target of discrimination and destruction. Although seeming to be inherently an exception, the song about the Arab Maiden appears as a confirmation of the hostility to this figure and to the inability of overcoming cross-cultural differences—in struggle as well as in social life and matrimonial practices.

The diverse examples provided so far regarding the appearance of the Black Arab in epic songs shed light on the major tendencies of distinguishing and exclusion which surround this figure in Bulgarian folklore. He is not only depicted as one of the most horrible and threatening characters in traditional culture, but also a figure bearing the marks of an 'otherness' that is so unimaginable and alien that it is doomed to extermination. From the songs about the three chains of slaves, through those about the sick Doychin, to those associated with the exploits of Marko or his ritual brothers, the Black Arab is an embodiment of the radical evil that afflicts the local community and his murder is the only possible way of restoring the status quo. Whether abducting and enslaving members of the young generation, trying to cheat the epic hero in collaboration with the evil sultan, or imposing unlawful and religiously unacceptable behaviour, the Black Arab is bestowed with all those features that folklore consciousness perceives as utterly alien to its ethnic community and its religious and cultural traditions. While symbolically this finds expression in the regular modifier of 'black' (which in Bulgarian folk mythology is firmly associated as belonging to chaos and the netherworld), on the level of the epic texts it clearly testi-

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fies to processes in the emergence of the image—acquiring elements from mythological layers (ones related, for example, to the dragon) and merging together images customarily ascribed to other ethnic and religious opponents, such as Turks and Tartars. Thus, on the one hand, the figure of the Arab attests to the consolidation of mythical layers around a character with a well outlined individual profile, while on the other he accumulates the policies of cultural negation and exclusion to ethnic groups of immediate contact and of immediate identification as oppressors and enslavers.

### THE BLACK ARAB AND HAJDUT SIDER

The thus conjoined realms of exclusion form a symbolic alloy of a cultural image that has enormous significance for the heroic epic as a whole as it permeates some of the most representative and well-known epic cycles as well as serving to update ancient mythological content with pertinent historical issues. This possibility for enhanced actuality with respect to the needs of encoding ethnic and religious differentiation finds translation in epic forms of later historical development, as is the case with the hajduk epics where the figure the Black Arab finds representation in the well-known song about Sider Voevod and his fight with the Arab. In place of the German queen or the Aykuna maiden, here the request for salvation comes directly from villagers and city-dwellers who pray to God to save them from the Black Arab. Despite the principal difference, however, the reasons for the request are very much the same: the Arab causes damage in winter and in summer; he beats and slaughters whomsoever he meets; he oppresses and abducts; people are 'black slaves' to him. In a range of variants, the Arab dwells on a major road or a mountain pass and nobody can travel there—neither a bird, nor a traveller, nor a shepherd with his sheep. Yet again, the Arab is like a mythological figure that blocks the regular paths and roads, who stops the rhythm of the universe, imposing harsh demands on the cycle of life and on social order altogether.

The fighter of the Black Arab, Hajdut Sider, is no less brave and significant than Marko, Doychin, and the other heroes of the epic songs. He is described as a wild hero, a fiery soldier who harnesses his 'blond oxen,' takes his grey hat and 'dryanov krivak' (dogwood/cornel) shepherd's crook), makes the sing of the cross and rushes to respond to the people's request. He is very swift and bears the characteristics

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of a mythological hero: in the course of one night he and his oxen traverse nine springs, nine valleys and nine rivers. Finally, he reaches the Arab's location, or goes to a field of peonies with a spring where he stops to water the oxen. Through the dense mists he is seen by the Arab who rides his white horse towards Sider to catch him like a crow. The Arab asks Sider how he dares to cross the area and orders him to bow his head to be slaughtered. This demand is reminiscent of the actions in a sacrifice. In a manner that powerfully echoes the religious motifs of Marko's exploit, Sider asks in what way this act is supposed to happen: like a lamb on St. George's Day or a young bird on St. Peter's Day. Yet, Sider adds that although he does not have a long javelin, a thin sword or a long gun, he has a long crook and is a good brave man who is not afraid of Arabs and easily takes their blood. The response of the Arab explicitly takes up the theme of religious distinguishing as he calls Sider 'gyavur' (an infidel) who is very foolish to cross a field covered with the blood of infidels. The Black Arab brags that for nine years he has travelled around the valleys and meadows spilling the blood of infidels and looting gold and silver; the forests and fields, rivers and valleys are his slaves.

At the words of the Arab, Sider jumps in the air and they start fighting. In all the different versions of the song, the fight between the two opponents is described as one of universal dimensions. Whereas the Arab fights with his sword, Hajdut Sider uses his cornel crook—and every bone the wooden stick hits is broken in half. The fight continues for 'three long hours' and frightens all of nature—the oxen, wolves, birds, eagles, etc. The struggle continues until Sider breaks the Arab's weapons and cuts off the Arab's 'curly head', then is taken up again in a fight between Sider and the Arab's horse. Yet again, the only thing that Sider relies upon is the cornel crook, which 'bends itself but does not break'. The fight between the man and horse is again marked by ethnic, religious and social distinguishing markers: while the horse fights for the black 'nevrod' (alien ethnic group), Sider fights for the 'beloved narod'. The fight is fierce—it melts ice and snow—and ends with the victory of Hajdut Sider. Having succeeded in the heavy struggle, Sider throws the Arab's carcass into an empty well and leaves the horse on the top of a hill for the hungry wolves. Then he takes the blond oxen and sings a song as he crosses the fields and hills. The song can be heard across nine regions and announces in the mountains and meadows that there no-one will harm them anymore.

Aside from the abovementioned motifs and images, the songs

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about Hajdut Sider and his fight with the Black Arab also contain a number of other elements of cultural distinguishing and exclusion which turn the battle into a duel between distinctive cultural worlds. One of these elements is the fantastic image of the cornel crook carried by Hajdut Sider. Despite its unique appearance in the songs belonging to the epic tradition, the cornel crook bears explicit cultural references to traditional Bulgarian culture. The dogwood tree has an important place in Bulgarian ritual and festivities: the budding branch is decorated at New Year and known as the *survaknitsa*; its buds are used in the preparation of New Year pastry and are still used today in Bulgarian folk medicine. The use of the dogwood crook in defeating the Black Arab clearly emphasizes the cultural background of Sider and the life forces that bring renewal and regeneration to the disturbed natural and social cycle.

Another important image in this respect is that of the blond oxen. For the ordinary Bulgarian, the ox is one of the sacred animals and the respect to it is expressed in different Bulgarian festive days and rituals. Albeit not taking direct part in the fight, the presence of the oxen is indicative both of the sacred elements surrounding the epic fight and of the symbolic blessing on Sider's mission. In contrast to the motifs of life, regeneration and sacredness, the Black Arab is surrounded by the notion of death. In addition to the dreadful physical appearance and the notions of threat surrounding Black Arab's figure in the epic songs, here the motifs of death are conveyed by the field of peonies where he is found by Sider and where their battle takes place. Associated usually with the plague in Bulgarian folklore traditions, the field of peonies firmly inscribes the Black Arab as belonging to the netherworld and thus as destined to defeat and destruction.

## THE BLACK ARAB'S APPEARANCE IN RITUAL CONTEXT

Representations of the Black Arab find particularly interesting representation in Bulgarian traditional rituals where the Arab finds a regular place in masking performances during *survakari*, *kukeri*, *stancharski* and *rusalii* rites in the summer cycle. Despite their different ritual functions and regional variation, in many of them the figure of the Arab holds a regular place. Wearing animal horns and with their faces tarred, the role of the Arab in these rituals is to chase the participants who 'steal' and 'hide' the bride and to threaten to tar them with soot.

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They usually have the task of guarding the 'bride' and of ensuring a carnival atmosphere by making jokes and performing tricks. Together with a range of other characters—drummers, devils, cinder-men, bear-herds, 'camels,' 'donkeys,' etc.— they go around the houses and take part in expelling evil spirits. These visits and games customarily take place on the so-called 'pogani' (dirty) days between Christmas and Voditsi (St. Jordan's Day), or continue until the last day before the beginning of the Easter Lent. They indicate the boundary after the end of the dirty days in the New Year and Christmas rituals, and between the winter and the spring in the Shrovetide events. Their primary goal is to transform the world and to overcome evil spirits, ensuring a joyful and regenerative spirit.

Although principally distinct from the representation of the Black Arab in epic and hajduk songs, here again the figure of the Arabs bears the marks of cultural distinction and exclusion characteristic of the conceptualization of the Black Arab in Bulgarian folklore traditions. As in the epic songs, the Arab is again among a group of ethnically and culturally distinctive others—Gypsies, Jews, Tartars, etc.—and is merged with them by the peculiarity of his clothing, his blackened face and mask. Joining them all in making tricks and mischief, the Arab is again involved in a wedding procession, sustaining a regular, albeit convoluted, relationship with the 'bride' in the masked company. He is far from being as fearful as he is the context of epic and hajduk songs, but he also takes part in staged struggles with other participants in the carnival, as well as 'threatening' to blacken the actors and spectators with soot. Beyond any doubt, the black colour of his clothes and face is a staple mark of this character, as is his grotesque and carnival-like behaviour, staged evil-doing and 'harmful' performance. Aside from the colour symbolism and his presence in collective groups of ethnically and socially distinct others, an important mark is the attribute of a chain that the Black Arab bears with him in the ritual game, a chain with which he 'captures people' and chases them for 'unpaid taxes.' With all the carnival characteristics of this performance, it allows us to trace a link with the epic cycles of the slaves chained by Black Arabs and thus indicates a memory trace of varied appearance in different contexts and traditional folklore forms.

## CONCLUSION

The diverse representations of the Black Arab in Bulgarian traditional folklore help outline a systematic tendency of his 'exclusion' as distinct from the social community and the shaping of his image as the ethnically and religiously 'other' par excellence. All the signs related to the appearance of the Arab are marked by the idea of his position as a threat to the community and his affiliation with the alien and dangerous world of the beyond. Thus, in spatial terms, he inhabits realms on the margins of the world (the coast, the sea, towers, peaks, mountain passes, etc.), and in social terms all his behaviour take the shape of animosity and threat to the local community. Finding expression in both the visual appearance and overall fashioning of his behaviour, the distinctive otherness of the Arab is an object of regular overcoming in verbal and ritual terms, an instance to fight against and defeat. It is a form of exclusion that is both implicitly given and contextually shaped but is also explicitly thematized and systematically elaborated. Notably, while in folklore the Arab and all his 'alien' company are playful manipulators/tricksters, in the epic songs he is a major personality to be fought by the epic hero in order to re-establish harmony in the natural and social worlds. It is against him that the epic hero probes his strength and courage, as well as his genuine religiosity, ethnic affiliation and local patriotism.

These main contours of the Black Arab's representations are indicative of the general pattern of cultural production evolving around such ethnically and culturally distinctive figures. Most overtly, they testify to the systematically traced equation of ethnic and religious affiliation, evolving into the accumulation of personalities with different backgrounds into the collective figure of the Arab. Nurtured by mythological motifs of opposition between the main cultural hero and foes such as dragons, snakes, fairies, etc., they bear the contours of the struggle between representatives of Christian and Muslim religions, and encode this struggle into a universal opposition between distinct ethnic and religious groups. Whereas the historical parameters of this cultural logic

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25. For the issue of the epic version of history, see Bochkov 1986; Putilov 1965; Stoykova 1967.

span the terrible conditions of life under Ottoman domination and popular reaction against the enslavers, they also bear remote echoes of the frequent fights between Arabs and Europeans in the Mediterranean region, as well as the complex processes sustaining communal identity in a multilayered ethnic and cultural environment. From such a perspective, the figure of the Black Arab is to be perceived not so much as a reflection of a particular historical reality<sup>25</sup> but rather as an example of the catalyzing of cultural distinguishing and exclusion within the span of several centuries and a symbolic figure that marks Bulgarian folklore and cultural memory to the present day.

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### **Cultural Practices of Distinction and Exclusion: The Black Arab in Bulgarian Folklore Epics**

Focusing on the representations of the Black Arab in Bulgarian folklore epics, this paper traces the main lines of cultural distinction and exclusion which surround this figure and functionalize it in the epic context. The article outlines various means of differentiation (ethnic and cultural stereotypes, patterns of kinship and family affiliation, mythological characteristics, etc.) involved in the interpretation of the Black Arab as a significant 'other' in epic songs. The logic outlined on the basis of heroic epics is reasserted in subsequent epic forms (such as the hajduk song tradition) and in ritual contexts where stereotypes of distinction and exclusion find their 'national-struggle' overtones and game-related interpretations. Based on concrete examples from diverse epic cycles and surrounding folklore forms, the paper emphasizes the importance of the policies of distinction and exclusion both for the conceptualization of the Black Arab as a major figure in Bulgarian epics and for the development of the epic world in general.

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Part V

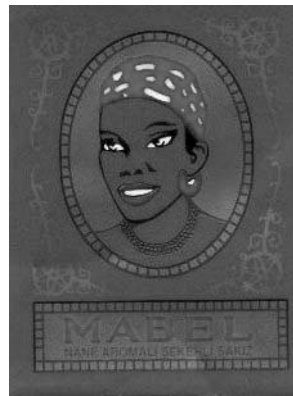
Performing  
the Image



Hande BIRKALAN-GEDIK (Istanbul)

## The Arab Girl is Watching from the Window: Ambiguous Images of the Black Arab in Folk Narratives and Performances in Turkey

As a child, buying cinnamon-flavored chewing gum was a treat. I liked the taste of cinnamon as much as the picture of the black Arab woman on the package. To a child's eye, she was 'cute.' On the other hand, it was no fun to hear that the black Arab would come to get us if we did not go to sleep right away when we were told—a story my grandmother had made up for us. Apart from in these brief memories of childhood, images of the Black Arab can be found elsewhere in everyday life: at the cinema, in novels, in advertisements, but especially in folklore narratives and performances. In film, the black Arab woman is a motherly figure who continues to work in rich households as a maid even after emancipation. The case of eunuchs was more difficult, as they had to take care of themselves after the abolition of slavery (Erdem 1996, 173). Likewise, the African-Turks in İzmir took up various low-paying jobs as street-vendors selling halva, chickpeas, and other sweets (Boratav - Eberhard 1951, 87). This image has been part of the *Karagöz* shadow-play since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and the 'maid' image continued in the novels of the Tanzimat Era<sup>1</sup> (Parlatır 1992; Güneş 1999).<sup>2</sup> In *Karagöz*, there are two types of Arabs: one type is represented as



### Key words:

- folklore
  - folktales in Turkey
  - image in folktales and fairy tales
  - ambiguity
  - construction of reality in folktales
  - gender
  - sexuality and stereotypes
  - racism
  - memory
  - performance, narrative strategies
- The most important term(s):**
- the ambivalence of the image
  - the image in performance.

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1. *Tanzimat* Era (1839-1876) refers to the period of reformation in the Ottoman Empire, when a series of reforms were introduced to reform the out-dated Ottoman institutions. The reforms appeared in several aspects of society, including education, centralization of government, and the abolition of the feudal system (including taxes, land ownership, etc).

2. For many, *Karagöz* is often considered a 'mirror' of multicultural Ottoman society. Although a discussion of whether or not *Karagöz* may be seen in the context of multiculturalism would constitute an article topic in and of itself, for now it is suffice to say that the representation of the Arab, as well as other auxiliary figures in *Karagöz*, can be understood as a reflection of cultural stereotypes, as the context is mainly based on humor and laughter.

3. A character who is known as clever and 'quick with answers.' The character relates to a cycle of anecdotes in which characters are drawn from palace life.

4. A German play song expresses an idea similar to the belief illustrated here: 'C-A-F-F-E-E//trink' nicht soviel Kaffee// Nicht für Kinder ist der Türkentrunk//schwächt die Nerven, macht dich blass und krank//Sei doch kein Muselman//der das nicht lassen kann.' Translation: C-O-F-F-E-E//don't drink so much coffee//the Turkish

a beggar, candy-seller, or coffee-grinder. This type is called *Akarap*, and the characters are named *Hacı Kandil* (Pilgrim Candle), *Hacı Fıtıl* (Pilgrim Wick), or *Hacı Şamandıra* (Pilgrim Match), representing:

'[...] a typical hypocrite and simpleton who, because he is a *hacı* (pilgrim), tries to make a living at the expense of others, pays with prayers instead of money, passes himself off as a holy man and tries to play tricks on women (Boratav and Eberhard 1952, 83).

The second type, described as *Hacivad's* slave or *Çelebi's* servant, is childish and funny. In addition, the Black Arab eunuch is a 'stupid simpleton and nouveau riche, who lends himself airs of importance, appearing also in popular jokes, especially those concerned with palace life and the jokes of *İncili Çavuş*<sup>3</sup> (Boratav and Eberhard 1952, 83). The black Arab also exists in children's rhymes, superstitions, and proverbs:

Yağmur yağıyor	It is raining,
Seller akıyor	The torrents are running,
Arap kızı camdan bakıyor	The Arab girl is watching from the window

As children, we also sang this happy song of rain; yet the question as to *why* the Arab girl was watching from the window remained unanswered. 'You'll become an Arab!' was offered as an explanation for the prohibition of certain drinks. Children were made to believe that they would 'become black' if they drank Turkish coffee.<sup>4</sup>

Turkish employs several names for 'Black Arab', all of which are based on color: *siyahî* and *kara derili* denote skin color. The other, most predominant name is *Arap/Akarap* and means white Arab. *Arap* may refer to gypsies, emphasizing their dark, yellowish skin color. Another is *zenci*, from Persian *zenc*, or *zeng*, originally meaning 'dark-skinned' and referring to black Arabs<sup>5</sup> who, in current parlance, are called Afro-Turks or black-Turks—the term 'Arab' being considered uncomplimentary. The perception of the color black evidently connotes the representation of black Arabs, although the perception of both black and blackness is ambivalent. On the one hand, there is a fear of black and blacks. The term is at times conflated with evil. On the other hand, there is a fascination with black. In *divan* literature, the literature of the palace, for instance, black hair evokes the imagery of the night—it is the color of seduction. The lover-poet draws analogies between dark nights and the beloved's hair or eyes. Yet black can be demeaning, as

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it also evokes dirt and a state of impurity. The 17<sup>th</sup> century folk poet, Karacaoğlan, who apparently suffered from this perception, refutes his beloved: '*bana kara diyen dilber, saçların kara değil mi?*' (Beloved who calls me black—is not your hair black as well?) (Boratav and Fıratlı 2000 [1943], 109-100). The dilemma that Karacaoğlan faces compels him to prove himself of worth to his beloved. He points out that coffee and pepper, the most valuable foods of his time, are both black. He finally asserts that the holy stone in Mecca is black and yet it is the most revered site for Muslims.

Besides the ambiguity towards the color black in folk literature, Turkish has a number of other terms and phrases with 'Arab' which often allude to physical characteristics such as skin color, facial features, or hair:<sup>6</sup> *Arap* means the negative film in photography; the phrase *Arap saç*, meaning the wooly hair of an Arab, refers to any case impossible to be solved; *arap sabunu* in French translates as *savon noir*, in English as soft soap; *arap zamkı* is gum Arabic; *Arap dudağı* is a kind of textile woven in black and white; *Arap uşağı*, 'Arab's servant', is used in a derogatory sense; *Arap uyandı*, 'the Arab woken up' means that a lesson has been taken from a certain case. In botany, *Arap sümbülü* is called *muscari bourgaei* in Latin and grape hyacinth in English. The proverb '*zenci yüzü yıkamakla ağarmaz*' ('a black face cannot be made white by washing) is used to state that the inherent qualities of human beings cannot be changed.

In addition to these examples from language, the Black Arab appears in prominent folklore genres where narration prevails. This paper aims to contribute to the notion of 'the Black Arab as a figure of memory' by thinking through cases from folklore in Turkey about black Arabs. It will not discuss the folklore of black Arabs, although studies on such an issue would increase our understanding of the black Arabs. Instead, the paper examines, briefly but critically, the forms and fashions in which the black Arabs appear in folktale texts and performances in Turkey. The paper maintains that the image of the black Arab lies at the juncture of the reality of history and folktale's own reality. As historic reality, the image reflects the behavior of and the reaction to the 'other' construed by white ideology. At the same time, the image is a result of both the fictive and projected reality of the folktale. Here, the role of folklore in registering, preserving and disseminating memory is important. Performance strategies have resulted in the creation of not one, but various images of the black Arab, rather than portraying the figure in the binary opposition *good/evil*, as Pertev Naili Boratav once

drink is not for a child//it  
weakens the nerves, makes  
your face pale//You are no  
Muslim//he cannot quit it.'  
These lyrics were compsed  
in the 18th century to keep  
children away from coffee  
(<http://www.planet-wissen.de>, 21/03/2009).

5. Boratav notes that in French '*maure*' (in Greek *mauros*, black) designates the Arab and the Turk (Boratav 1958, 9).

6. Snowden also notes a similar case in the representation of negroes in classical Greece, where physical characteristics were associated with the word Ethiopian (Snowden 1948).

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suggested (Boratav and Eberhard, 1952). On the theoretical level, it aims to impact image studies by discussing 'performance' in which images and representations are created and remembered in reference to cultural memory yet are blurred and sustained in ambiguity. It concludes that the image of the Black Arab can be tailored according to the audience within the contexts of performances through the narrative strategies of the folktale narrator.

Despite the existence of people of African origin living as slaves in Turkey, their existence was not acknowledged until recently. Esmâ Durugönül underlines an 'inability to deal with the facts surrounding the existence of the Afro-Turks.' (Durugönül 2003, 281) If we call Afro-Turks 'invisible' today, this undoubtedly has historical roots. They are missing in statistics and official documents. Durugönül rightly observes that:

'Judging from an overview of studies on slavery in general and slavery in the Ottoman Empire, and bearing in mind the body of work on slavery conducted in different parts of the world, predominantly by Western scholars, we can establish the extent to which Ottoman slavery has been neglected.' (Durugönül 2003, 288).

Part of this neglect is due to the attitude of some historians, most of whom have not considered Ottomans as colonialists and thus have not established a relationship between slavery and colonialism. However, Ottomans took the system of slavery from the Middle Eastern Muslim states and adapted and integrated it within social and political life. Slaves were used in the palace as eunuchs in the harem, not to mention in military service. The slave-trade of the Ottomans included not only black slaves brought from the Sudan and Ethiopia, but also slaves from the Black Sea, such as Georgians and Caucasians, traded in slave markets in Istanbul, Bursa, İzmir, Belgrade, Damascus, and Cairo (Toledano 1998, Erdem 1996). In İzmir, where the majority of black Arabs continued to live together, certain neighborhoods have names that imply their cultural history: Sabırtaş<sup>7</sup>, Dolaplıkuyu,<sup>8</sup> Tamaşalık and Ballıkuyu (Boratav 1952, 87). Likewise, as Güneş informs us, in İzmir they called their communities such names as Borno, Afini, Tağali, and Cengi (Güneş 1999, 5). Such communities, although smaller, exist in İzmir today, in addition to a small community in Antalya (Durugönül 2003).

Today, the public appearance of black Arabs carries social and cultural importance. The nascent interest in African-Turks partly derives

7. Etymologically, this toponym of Sabırtaş (Patience Stone) relates to the tale of the patience stone.

8. Dolaplıkuyu and Ballıkuyu refer to the 'black of the well' legend, (*kuyu* in Turkish means well).

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from a closer relationship with African cultures in recent years. First, Turkey has become a 'waiting room' for numerous immigrants from Africa *en route* to Europe. In relation to this movement, the name of Turkey became associated with the violation of human rights when a Nigerian immigrant was killed at a police station. Second, many African athletes have been invited to Turkey and have even been given Turkish citizenship in order to participate in sports, especially in the Olympics. The state officials talked of Elvan Abeylegese, an Ethiopian athlete who was naturalized as a Turkish citizen, and of her '*devşirme*'<sup>9</sup> status. Third, the African-Turks in Turkey, who are mostly farmers in the Mediterranean and Aegean regions, established the African Culture and Solidarity Association in 2006, aiming to highlight their history. Last, an oral history project has been completed by the History Foundation of Turkey—the first detailed research on the lives of African-Turks, mainly based on interviews (<http://www.afroturk.org/10/02/2009>).

From this cultural, linguistic and historical sketch, I shall move into my main domain of analysis, namely folktales and fairy tales where the image of the Arab is portrayed in a wide spectrum. Based on the function, role, and description in folktale, the following classification can be offered, and it will be selectively discussed due to spatial limitations:<sup>10</sup>

- 1 - Magical helper
  - a. helper to bride: 102, 104; to heroine: 218, 60; to the poor: 223 (and by giving the poor a child: 102, 104, 158); to the good: 60; to children: 168
  - b. fulfills wishes: 117, 176, 287
  - c. Arab as guardian or guide: 46, 95
  - d. facilitates the marriage of the poor: 103
- 2 - Magical giver
  - a. makes people rich: 46, 138
  - b. gives treasure: 287
  - c. gives magical table: 176
  - d. gives magical things: 72, 102, 213, 239; by playing flute: 175
  - e. gives gold, gives money: 209
  - f. Makes people young: 117
- 3 - Magical teacher: 223, 239, 258, 287
  - a. teacher to the poor: 132 V
  - b. teaches exchange game: 169
  - c. female Arab teaches how luck can be found: 132 V
- 4 - informs the fearless: 280, 284
- 5 - chews gum: 342
- 6 - informs *padişah*: 279

9. The phrase connotes to a historical context and literally means to gather, to recruit slaves for military-governmental purposes, or to impose a child-levy.

10. The reference to the folktale numbers are based on the type numbers in *Typen Türkischer Volksmärchen* (Eberhard and Boratav 1953).

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- 7 - as astrologer: 125
- 8 - guards the treasure room: 367
- 9 - becomes a young person: 367
- 10 - abducts bride: 215 V, 104, 157
  - a. abducts bride as a cannibal: 157
  - b. as ogre (cannibal) abducts children: 156
  - c. eats children: 141, 169
- 11 - represented in reference to sexuality: 84, 204, 277, 346
  - a. homosexuality: 188, 95, 103
  - b. as beloved of the sultan: 94, 204, 277, 346
  - c. seduces the mistress: 245; makes love with the sultana: 277
  - d. black lover is killed: 204
  - e. marries the princess: 126
  - f. female Arab has a love affair: 376
- 12 - People dressed as Arabs:
  - a. *padişah* dressed like an Arab: 224
  - b. bride pretends to be an Arab during escape: 215
  - c. Arab as a spare person: 227
  - d. Arab puts himself in the place of the prince: 61
  - e. hero dresses like Arab to test faithfulness: 203, 334
- 13 - Female Arab as impostor, deceiver as bride: 89, 168
  - a. *lala*'s daughter as false bride: 240
  - b. takes heroine's place: 168
- 14 - Female Arab kills the heroine: 248; female Arab adopts the heroine and kills her: 247
- 15 - Marriage to an Arab
  - a. Arab marries a princess: 92, 95
  - b. Arab must be beaten so that he can be white: 126, 239
  - c. Arab is beaten by heroes: 248
- 16 - Arab as tester: 256
- 17 - Arab must be beaten for an amulet: 239

11. *Lala* takes care of children, oversees children's education as a governess in rich homes.

Images of the Black Arab are concentrated in the roles of magical helper, giver, or teacher. In certain types of tale, the black Arab helps the bride, the heroine, the poor, the good, or children; knows helpful medicine; facilitates the marriage of the poor; or helps the poor by giving them a child. The character *Arap Lala*,<sup>11</sup> also known as '*Of-Lala*,' in a variant of Cinderella, TTV 60, is a woman who helps Cinderella, fulfilling a function similar to the fairy-godmother in European versions. In Turkish texts, it is usually a cow that helps Cinderella, while in some variants an Arab woman performs wonders and clothes her in a nice dress to facilitate her attendance at the ball in the palace (Eberhard Boratav 1953, 67-68). In more fantastic tales, such as TTV 168- The

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Deer Brother, the black Arab is a helper to children (Boratav 1992 [1958], 87-91):

'The step-mother threatens her stepdaughter and stepson with murder and they save themselves by a magical flight. The brother drinks from a spring and he is transformed into a deer. The girl binds together poplar branches. A prince notices this, but he cannot get them. The tree is healed by the licking of the deer's tongue. At the proposal of the prince, an old person goes under the tree and begins to prepare a meal in a completely wrong way. The girl comes down and cooks it correctly. She marries a prince. A jealous maid pushes the bride into the water and she is swallowed by a fish. The maid is annoyed by the deer, which comes at night to her bed where she sleeps in place of the bride with the prince; she orders the killing of the deer. The deer runs to the water and asks his sister for assistance. The prince finally understands the situation; he saves the bride from the stomach of the fish. In the meantime, she gives birth to her child.' (Eberhard and Boratav 1953, 187-190).

The maid may be a jealous black Arab woman or a gypsy. She tells the maiden to kill her brother. While such a representation is most commonly associated with evil, another rendering can assert *lala's* vicarious, symbolic attempts to attain a status higher than slavery. Unlike this character, in TTV 46- Black Cat the *Arap Lala* is transformed into a black cat, leading the girl to the prince (Boratav 1958 [1992], 125-130), thus remaining within the limits of her existing status. She can fulfill the girl's wishes whenever she needs her (see also: TTV 90, 140, 160, 263). In many folk tales, the black Arab assumes the function of *Hızır*,<sup>12</sup> a syncretic figure represented as an old saint who helps the needy, almost always at the last minute. Likewise, the black Arab appears when one calls 'Of-Arab!' or 'Of-Lala!' or sometimes, when one only cries out 'Of!'. The black Arab replies: 'My name is Of. You summoned me. Tell me what it is that you want!' Then *lala* does whatever is desired and performs supernatural acts. This figure approaches the role of



12. According to Warren Walker and Ahmet Uysal, 'Hızır walks the earth with men more than any other Moslem immortal, and he dies in order to fulfill certain functions that are peculiarly his own.' (Walker and Uysal 1973, 286).

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the black Arab as saint, which can also be found outside the folktale context—such as the black saints of Anatolia, the seven black saints in İzmir, a certain *Arap Dede* of Çorum; and another one in Erzincan (Boratav 1958, 10).

*Arap lala* can be a magical giver who makes people rich. In TTV 287- The Mat Weaver, the *lala* gives the treasure which is wished for. The motif line of the tale is as follows:

'A hero flees and he is brought by a giant to a distant country. He meets a compatriot who gives him advice. He takes large loans and distributes money. He talks about a caravan arriving soon and bluffs about the money. He marries a princess. The loving princess advises him to escape. An *Of lala* comes and gives him the treasure which he had wished for.' (Eberhard and Boratav 1953, 332).

TTV 102-Grape I opens with a motif in which a father asks about his daughters' wishes. In some variants, the young girl may ask for an *Of lala* as 'rare or unusual thing' who helps the poor, gives the needy a child, or offers magical objects. The *Of lala* appears much more vividly in TTV 117- Getting Young in which an old woodcutter sighs '*Of!*' and a magical black Arab appears with whose aid the old man wishes to become young. The magical black Arab takes him to the fairy-sultan where he can see the young and beautiful fairies dance. Similarly, in TTV 138- Servant Hüseyin, the black Arab is a giver:

'The rich Mehmet dismisses his servant Hüseyin who questions the justice of God. He comes to a garden where a magical black Arab gives him piles of gold. He sees his master eating in a community kitchen. He gives him gifts. He gives advice on life.' (Eberhard and Boratav 1953, 154).

In other tales, he can help the poor through the gift of a magical object. The motif line of TTV 175-The Magical Purse tells of a poor man who receives magical objects, among which there is a magical purse that never runs empty. He wishes to reach the princess through these objects, but she gets these objects from him one by one and dismisses him. In the end, he teaches her a lesson and marries her. Among the magical objects, there also might be a flute which, when played, gives soldiers or a helpful black Arab. Similarly, the Arab as giver can be seen in TTV 176- Easy Life, wherein the Arab gives a magical table which appears when one utters the words 'Open! Table, open!' (similar to the incantation 'Open Sesame!'). In the tale, a man cries over

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something that he has lost, upon which an *Of lala* appears and gives him a gold-dropping donkey that will be changed into an 'Open, table, open!', which is again exchanged against an ordinary table. He comes back crying and gets a stick from a sack and regains his magical power (Boratav 1992 [1969], 181-183).

TTV 209-Salt is about a man who thinks that he can be rich with a single chick pea. He wishes for a princess but their ways part. He sends the gold he earns in a salt basket. He meets the girl again. The black Arab can be seen as a more realistic framework: in one variant he gives the hero money so that he can marry the princess. Similarly, in TTV 258-The Unknown Warrior, the magical black Arab gives the hero a horse. The tale tells of a princess who marries. Then a war breaks out. The Arab gives the wounded hero a horse so that the war can be won.

The black Arab can also appear as a magical teacher. An example of this may be found in TTV 223-The Dress of a Violet Color, which tells of a sultan who orders a curfew and walks in the country to check if the people are obeying him. He sees a house with a light. This house belongs to three daughters who must work at night. The girls chat amongst themselves. He secretly listens to them. The first two say that they want to marry artists. The third says that if the sultan marries her she will be the one to ask his service. The sultan fulfills the first two daughters' wishes and imprisons the last to be hanged. She makes beautiful dresses for herself through which she makes the sultan fall in love with her. They get married. In one variant, a black Arab with magical powers gives the heroine a dress. There is a beautiful girl called *Arap üzengi*, an Amazon-like hero who might have a flying horse or a magical black Arab, who appears in TTV 239-The Beautiful and in TTV 247- Shah Ismail.

In TTV 239, the episode of the curfew and the three sisters chatting is the same. During their conversation, the first two say that they will undertake great tasks. The third only says that she would like to have twins for him. The first two cannot keep their promise while the youngest gives birth to a boy and a girl. The jealous sisters switch the babies for puppies. The sultan orders the bride to be sent off to an island and spat at. The babies are taken care of by an ordinary man who later dies; the children become rich. The jealous sisters learn that the twins are alive and they send a magician to them. The magician convinces the girl—while her brother is absent—to ask for a magic bough. He endangers his life for the sister and brings another magical object. Finally, after a lengthy quest, a beautiful girl is brought and she warns

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them of the trick. The boy invites the sultan—his father—to his house and explains the deception to him. They save their mother and the bad sisters are hanged (Eberhard-Boratav 1952, 287-291). Here the black Arab may appear in the form of a Hızır who is summoned by a magical ring to help the twins. A black Arab may appear when the boy breaks a jasmine branch as he says the magical words. Just as in the previous tales, a magical object can cause the Arab to appear. In this type, there is also a black Arab who must be beaten until he turns white—one who gives life to the petrified in order to get the princess.

The Arab can be a teacher to the poor, as in TTV 132-The Well of Fate, and TTV 169, where he teaches the exchange game (*Ali Cengiz oyunu*). The black Arab may take the role of informing the fearless (TTV 280, TTV 284). In TTV 342-Thief and the Master Thief, Hasan the thief puts the *lala* who takes care of the Indian Sultan to sleep and draws the chewing gum from his mouth with a hair in order to show it as a proof that he has accomplished the pre-assigned tasks (Boratav-Eberhard 1952, 374). The *lala* may be able to foresee the future (TTV 125), inform the *Padişah* (TTV 279), guard the treasure room, or be a young person (TTV 367). Yet the most visual representation of the black Arab relates to his portrayal as the abductor of young brides (TTV 157-Spindle-Seller) or children (TTV 156-Patient Stone). The Arab as the abductor of a bride can be seen in the following example:

'A spindle-seller locks up the eldest of three sisters in his house. The house is full of flesh. The girl does not eat. She must eat a finger that has been cut off. She does not eat the finger but throws it to the ground. The finger explains, when asked, where it is. The girl is killed. The same fate befalls the second girl. The third secretly feeds the finger to a cat. On being questioned, the finger explains it is in a warm stomach. She now has the confidence of the man, who forbids her from entering the 41<sup>st</sup> room. In the 41<sup>st</sup> room there is a young man hanging. He advises her which old person's hair should be cut so that he will sleep for forty days. The old person puts people to sleep. The young man is awoken and kills the old person.' (Eberhard and Boratav 1953, 170-173).

The bad *Of lala* is as magical as the good one, but the figure does not assume the function of a Hızır. Such a female *lala* is depicted as one 'whose lips are in heaven and on earth' (see for example, TTV 121, 86). The representation of *Of lala* as a character who treats people unjustly relates to a belief that to sigh '*Of!*' in times of hardship is a signal to call bad spirits, or even Satan. Many people warn: 'Call to

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God, not to Of!' (Boratav 1992 [1958], 226).

The black Arab as a cannibal abducting children appears in the variant of TTV 156-Patience Stone. In this folktale, a princess marries a prince and gives birth to several children who are kidnapped by a ghoulish teacher. The teacher leaves blood that suggests the mother has murdered her children and she is imprisoned (Uther 2004, 519). The cannibal character might be represented by the black Arab in some variants. Representing the black Arab as a terrible, merciless giant, or as a cannibal, as the 'symbol of wickedness and barbarism' (Boratav and Eberhard 1953, 85), also appears in TTV 169-Game of Ali Cengiz, where the black Arab eats the sultan's daughters one by one.<sup>13</sup>

The Arab as abductor can be seen in village theater, where men take up various roles and dress accordingly. The black Arab abducts the bride (And 1985, 113), which can also be a motif in folktales. However, folktale deals with supernatural or magical things. Metin And tells of the Arab figure in the game called *Arap*:

'The characters of the Arab game which is performed in Fethiy are: the Arab, the grandfather, the bride, and Satan. The Arab paints his body in black with smoke; the grandfather wears a beard and puts flour in his hair, wearing a cushion at his back not be hurt when he is beaten and to show that he has a hunchback. The Arab holds a stick between his legs (clearly a phallus). A man takes the role of the bride and another of Satan. While the Arab dances, Satan hides the bride. As soon as the Arab finds this out, he swings his stick at Satan, the grandfather and the audience. He dances and looks for the bride. In the end, the bride is found and all four dance.' (And 1985, 111).

In a variant of TTV 104- Grape II, the *Of lala* abducts the heroine. In similar fashion, in TTV 213-The Amulet of the Sprits, (Boratav 1958 [1992], 189-197) the black Arab is an ogre that abducts the bride.

The representation of the black Arab in association with sexuality includes some interesting cases. Perhaps the most prominent sexual imagery comes from the opening story of Arabian Nights in which the concubines have an orgy with black slaves. However, in the Turkish tales, the representation of the black Arab's sexuality goes beyond these scenes, presenting a variety of images. The motif line of TTV 95- Skull and the Fairy Girl is about a man who is put under a spell (or in some variants a black Arab). He is married to the youngest of three sisters and tests her to see if she can endure her marriage. In the end, because she does, the man is turned white. The most interesting part

13. Boratav notes that the hostile black supernatural creature in the Crimean version of 'Karaođlan' owns a palace in which the newly married Karaođlan and Ismihan Sultan live. When Karaođlan is absent, the black Arab puts his arms around the sleeping wife. Upon his return, Karaođlan sees his wife in the black Arab's arms and he thinks she is unfaithful. Upon his curse, her body is covered with a bad smell. No-one will come near her and she is exposed in the desert. Upon Karaođlan's finding out about his wife's innocence, she is cured and returns to him (Boratav 1958, 85).

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of the tale is when the first sister spends the night on a tree-top in a cemetery and observes her surroundings. She sees a black Arab 'as dark as the night' who keeps the prince in a grave, not surrendering himself to the Arab. She tells this to the parents of the prince who are desperately seeking their son. They find the son and marry him to the young girl (Eberhard-Boratav 1953, 110). Here the black Arab is represented as a homosexual and a child-molester. Homosexual tendencies in the Black Arab are described in detail in TTV 84 and reference to the Black Arab's sexuality can be found in TTV 277-Family without Grief, in which the black Arab is represented as an ugly, marriage-breaking eunuch. Similarly, the negative role assigned to the black lover appears in TTV 204 - the story of Sinan Pasha. In TTV-95, the fortune-teller foresees how the fate of three daughters will come about. One of the sisters sees a woman cuckolding her husband with a black Arab. She warns the husband, who kills the black Arab on hearing this warning and presents his skull to his wife.

In TTV 188 - Hüsnü Yusuf, a girl living in a locked place falls in love with the description of a foreign prince who lives far away. She sends a letter asking to marry him; the prince sends things symbolically to show his refusal. She goes out looking for him. She comes to the house of his sister. In multi-colored dresses, she serves him several times whenever he visits his sister between intervals of many months. She intentionally shows herself thereby in an awkward manner. Thus she wins the compassion and then the love of the prince. They get married. In a variant, the prince is forced to endure sodomy with a black Arab (Eberhard and Boratav 1953, 218).

TTV 376 - The Bloody Negro begins with a man's arrival at a closed palace where he spends 40 days with the wife of a black man. The returning black figure pursues the man returning home. The man allows the black man to drink water from his hands. The black man takes him home and tells him that he cannot kill a man who has given him water. His wife also confesses the same. The black man explodes with rage and the man marries the woman (Eberhard and Boratav 1953, 409).

The Black Arab takes the role of a lover in TTV 94-Golden Jug. The youngest of three poor sisters cannot get anything but a jug. The jug gives gold to them. She goes into the jug and comes to an underground palace where she sees the prince with a woman. Then the wife sleeps with another man. She warns the prince about the wife's actions. The prince offends his wife and marries the poor girl. In some versions, the lover of the woman is black and is eventually killed by the

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poor girl.

There are other tales in which people dress as black Arabs to test certain things or people. A bride pretends to be an Arab in TTV 215; a *Padişah* is dressed as an Arab in TTV 224 III. Handsome young sultans may disguise themselves as black Arabs to test the faithfulness of a sweetheart. If they are loved even as blacks they are pleased (TTV 203-The Lover, TTV 334-The Victory of Laziness). On the other hand, taking up roles 'in disguise' is also characteristic of black Arabs in folktales from Turkey. This is not a reversal of dressing, but a case of imposture. The black Arab woman putting herself in the place of a true bride is best illustrated in TTV 89- Three Oranges, a folktale widespread in Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Orient:

'A prince falls in love with three lemon girls due to a curse. He looks for them. He meets a giantess, sucks her breast-milk and becomes her adoptive child. The giantess protects him before her children. She explains to him where to find the lemon girls and how they are to be attained. He attains them and cuts the first and second open in a place without water; thus the girls coming out of the fruit die. The third remains alive, since he gives her water. An Arab woman fetching water sees them and climbs on the tree. She tosses the girl down and forces the girl to be taken by the prince as a bride. The one thrown down becomes a bird who comes into the palace and sings a song about a wrongful bride. Where the bird sits, the tree branches dry out. The impostor demands to eat the bride-bird. Where a drop of bird is sprinkled, a tree will grow. The impostor demands that a cradle be made from that tree. A woodcutter turns the cradle into a girl in his cottage. The lovesick prince asks people for soup. An elderly brings a bowl of soup prepared by the girl in which she has put a ring as a gift to the prince. Thus she is recognized and they are married, and the impostor is killed.' (Eberhard and Boratav 1953, 98-99)

The antagonist in the Turkish variants, whether an Arab or a gypsy woman,<sup>14</sup> is represented as an impostor. While the black Arab is angry at her unjust suffering, she is seen as a mirror of evil forces (Shojaei Kawan 2000). On the other hand, it could be posited that her destruction of things around her is a result of ridding herself of her role as a slave. Similarly, the Arab girl can put herself in the place of the heroine (TTV 168-Deer Brother). In TTV 248-The Bad Father and TTV 247-Shah Ismail, the female Arab adopts the heroine and then kills her. In TTV 240-Smiling Roses, Crying Pearls, a black Arab can be the daughter of a *lala* who assumes the role of the bride. However, one may certainly read the note of Boratav on the negative image of the

14. In Spain, Portugal, Italy, Turkey and Persia, the black Arab is an African girl, as in the Iberian Peninsula she is Moorish. In Italy, she is Saracen. In the Balkans she is a Gypsy. In Greece and Malta, she is sometimes a Turkish girl. The character may also be demonised as a witch, and may be called a Moorish or a Gypsy witch (Shojaei Kawan 2000).

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15. Marriage to a black Arab is a topic in some saints' legends as well. Boratav presents an example from a 12<sup>th</sup> century legend about Zengi Ata, a disciple of Ahmet Yesevi, an early mystic in Central Asia. Here racial prejudices are both vocalized and criticized at the same time. In the legend, Hakim Süleyman Ata has dark skin and his wife Anber Ana, the daughter of a sultan, wishes that he were whiter. Overhearing her wish, he is offended. He prays that his wife will marry a darker husband after he dies. When he dies, she marries Zengi Ata, a black shepherd and his disciple. Zengi Ara is also a famous sheikh (Boratav and Eberhard 1952, 85). Boratav's conclusion about this tale is that Islam sought to break down racial differences. However, it is true that Islam also encouraged slavery. I find his remarks and the Muslim practice contradictory.

16. This folktale has a reference to a legend, known as the 'Arab of the Well'. Boratav notes that the coalminers of Zonguldak (Black Sea Coast) tell a legend, in which each mine belongs to a particular black Arab who is seen from time to time but especially when a new miner goes into the mine. The black Arab asks: 'To whom does this mine belong?' The black Arab should be answered: 'You are the proprietor of the

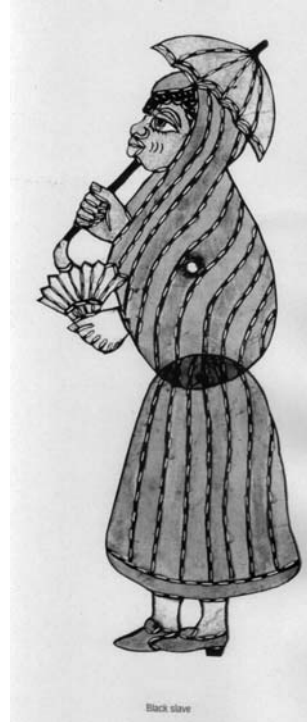
black differently, as it is the representation of black through white eyes. Similarly when the Arab takes on the role of an imposter, this could be interpreted as the black Arab seeking to improve her status.

Marriage and the black Arab is yet another area to explore. In a tale type which shows racial prejudice, the beautiful daughter of the sultan must marry a black Arab who transforms himself supernaturally so that the bride willingly accepts her fate.<sup>15</sup> A spinning woman follows the dog to a palace and marries a black Arab (TTV 103-Saving the Tortured).

The black Arab as tester appears in TTV 256-Lazy Mehmet:

'Out of rage, a *Padışah* marries his youngest daughter to a lazy man. The princess puts the lazy man to work. The lazy man locks himself up in a caravan. He goes out into the wilderness to a well to get water. There he finds a stolen girl who is as beautiful as a pomegranate. Through another caravan he sends pomegranates to his wife. Jewels fall from them and the woman becomes rich. A palace is built. An Arab, or an old man, asks whether the animal or the girl is more beautiful and says he will kill the ugly one. The man replies: 'The beautiful one is the one that one loves.'<sup>16</sup>

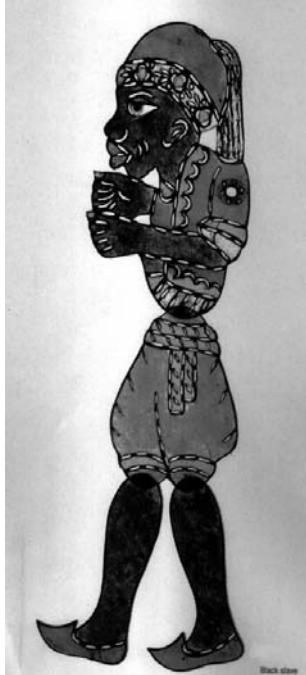
In TTV 215-Supernatural Creatures, the hero helps a supernatural creature fall in love with a beautiful girl from afar. He searches for her and, after overcoming great dangers, wins her. Through a careless action, he puts his life in danger. The hero wins the bride through new obstacles. In a variant, the hero beats a black Arab. The hero gets himself a horse in which the amulet of an ogre is kept. The amulet is the girl's amulet. The hero wrestles with the black Arab who is dressed as a girl. In order to beat her, he has to grab her by the hair. He beats the black Arab and wins the amulet. In TTV 239-The Beautiful (Boratav 1992 [1993], 95-103), a black Arab should be beaten until he turns white. When he turns white he assumes the role of the good and asks



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for the wishes of the sultan. I find the motif of beating a black until he becomes white to be a symbol of enculturation into whiteness—another construction of white ideologies.



Having posited a variety of images of the Black Arab in folktales and fairy tales from Turkey, what can be concluded about the black Arab image as a form of memory? Certainly, historical circumstances—nationalism, race, and colonialism—have influenced the representation of black Arabs, both in positive and negative terms, but particularly in the form of racist imagery. However, not all the images are racist. How, then, should we construct a meaningful reading and interpretative approach? In order to offer a plausible answer, it is necessary to look beyond the texts to performance in which the ambiguous imagery is resolved.

The relationship between folktales and identity has not been central to folkloristics in Turkey (mainly due to the use of nationalism as a building-block in the naturalizing process of different groups).

Yet, with awareness of race, it is useful to re-examine the 'other' by referencing history. So far, the image of the black Arab has been based on the assumption of 'invisibility', in which the Ottoman context plays an important role. Ottoman identity was based on religious differences: each religious group formed an *umma* (community). The shift from the Ottoman *umma* to the Turkish nation based on national, ethnic, and blood ties, required a purging of heterogeneous elements in order to form an essential Turkish culture in the new Republic: Armenians, Jews and Greeks were given minority status through the Treaty of Lausanne. The Kurds, although not a minority, became the pre-eminent *other* for the 'Turks', even though most Kurds were also Muslims. Within this frame of reference, African-Turks were not exclusively outside the framework of 'Turkishness': they were Muslim and spoke Turkish. However, the exclusion and inclusion of African-Turks brought about another problematic as they did not belong to the 'Turkish' race which was considered, in the heyday of the Republic, superior to the

mine.' The miners believe that the worker will have good luck and earn more money with less effort than the average miner. However, if he should say that the mine belongs to a particular company or to some man or other, bad luck will befall him, or his output will be less (Boratav and Eberhard 1951, 84).

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17. The Sun-Language Theory of the 1930s, which was purported by the state ideology, asserted that Turkish was not only the mother of all languages, but also that the Turkish 'race' was the cradle of all races.

European races.<sup>17</sup> Besides the Turkish Republic solving the identity problem of the African-Turks', it contributed to their liminal identity in the nation's formation. Not specifically excluded from everyday life, they became 'invisible' or 'socially disintegrated'—as is the case with the Roma.

Based on this historical note, an easy conclusion to offer would have been to say that the image of the Black Arab is a result of racist attitudes. However, the image is much more complex. At its best, the image speaks of a helper to the poor and needy; at its worst, the black Arab is pitied in a manner I term 'soft racism.' This does not necessarily imply exclusion, but it creates a sense of 'feeling sorry for the other'. This ambiguity of attitude in culture and its representation in fiction is further taken up, sometimes even in the same folktale, as different roles are assigned to black Arabs. A sound analysis requires one to delve into the realm of folklore in general and folktales in particular. One has to know the rules of the folktale as well as the contexts and performances in which folktales are being told in order to view them as 'verbal art'.

Richard Bauman, referring to two important studies in the area of folklore, criticizes the idea that 'folklore is a function of shared identity' (Bauman 1971, 32). To him, identity might be dependent on text performances in different renderings. In order to understand why the black Arab takes on different representations, the question should be asked about the audience (who are supposed to have a shared identity) and the performance of the folktale. It seems plausible that the image of the black Arab in folklore lies somewhere between history and reality. While folktales are generally thought of as the products of popular imagination, a strong relationship should be drawn between folktales and reality. Folktales are not fictive constructs; rather, they *construct* different realities. Lutz Röhrich (1991 [1959]) illustrates this in a schema of folktales and reality. Determined by generic rules, 'fictive reality' is a product of the narrative imagination and is *apart* from the narrator's worldview. Nonetheless, fictive reality can be a part of transformed 'historical reality' and may include customs and beliefs as survivals of 'fictive' elements in folktale. Narrators, however, may transform history into fiction, reality into fantasy. In addition to historical reality, a third reality is that of 'projected reality', a result of the incorporation of the 'present' into folktales. This can be seen in variants of the same tale told by different narrators who bring their own cultural, social and psychological backgrounds into the folktale. The image of the Black Arab

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pertains to the social construction of a stereotype that is based on race or ethnicity, which can be called 'historical reality'. Here a final note should be addressed to the issue of the performance of the folktale which sheds light on different 'realities'. Fictive and projected realities can include the narrator's dexterity in dealing with images. Similar to Röhrich's projected reality, Neil Rosenberg accentuates the 'detached third person perspective' in the analysis of black jokes (Rosenberg 1969, 90), which can help disassociate the narrator from the particular character, associate with a neutral character and avoid any associations with the system's negative aspects. By means of such a strategy, black stereotypes can be perpetuated without overt acceptance on the part of the narrator. Rosenberg's explanation about the role of the narrator can clearly be employed in an analysis of the black Arab's images in folktale which considers the strategies of constructing the image of memory, sustaining that image or, in particular contexts, getting away from that image.

Finally, I should add that the esoteric-exoteric issue of folklore in performance is also an important aspect of constructing and transmitting the image. In 'The Esoteric-Exoteric Factor in Folklore', William Hugh Jansen considers the idea of the folk group and the lore of the folk 'as being shared within group boundaries and made distinctive by its esoteric sharing' (Jansen 1959), while Richard Bauman criticizes this division. It is true that the conceptualization of folklore, until 'denationalization,' based itself on the assumption that the 'group' was the nation, and maintained a vision of the nation as homogenous (Bauman 2000 [1972]; Abrahams 1993). According to Bauman, this national aspect meant an emphasis on national culture or a regional sub-culture. Bauman's challenging view posits that folk groups produce and sustain esoteric and exoteric knowledge, which requires an examination of other qualities beside texts. We need to know, in addition to the image as it is construed, the ways in which it has been communicated esoterically and exoterically—or, as Richard Bauman calls the process, 'differentially.' Thus lore does not have to be a collective representation of participants, pertaining and belonging equally to all of them as folklore performances. He reminds us that 'texts and forms alone are not reliable indices, for one and the same text may signal hostility in one situation but solidarity in another' (Bauman 2000 [1972], 49).

To sum up, we need to consider the relationship of the folktale world and that of the real world as well as the dynamics of performance. Folktales express people's worldview and their place in it. They attain

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this by unusual and unnatural characters and occurrences. Hence the tale world is different from that of the real and the narrator locates these worlds by artfully playing with folktale discourse (Goldberg 1986, 163). Put differently, the so-called anonymity of folklore text should not undermine the role of the narrator. In relating the image of the black Arab, the performer's view and subjectivity, the context of the environment, the ways in which the performer interacts with the audience, and certainly the reactions from the audience, should all be taken into consideration, instead of thinking that culture of memory in folktales is formulated only among people who are alike and that there is a single unchangeable image of the black Arab.

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Appendix: TTV Tale numbers used in analysis.

TTV 46	Black Cat
TTV 60	Cinderella
TTV 61	The Gratitude of Ants
TTV 72	Phoenix
TTV 83	Young Dove Girl I
TTV 84	Young Dove Girl II
TTV 89	Three Oranges
TTV 92	The Ape Man

TTV 94	The Golden Jug
TTV 95	The Skull and the Fairy Girl
TTV 102	Grape
TTV 103	Saving of the Tortured
TTV 104	Grape II
TTV 117	Getting Young
TTV 125	Letter of Death
TTV 126	The Question of Fate
TTV 132	Fountain of Fate
TTV 138	Servant Hüseyin
TTV 156	Patient Stone
TTV 157	Spindle Man
TTV 158	The Red Horse
TTV 168	Deer Brother
TTV 169	The Ali Cengiz Game
TTV 175	Magical Purse
TTV 176	Easy Life
TTV 188	Hüsnü Yusuf
TTV 203	The Lover
TTV 204	Story of Sinan Pasha
TTV 209	The Salt
TTV 213	The Amulet of the Spirit
TTV 215	Supernatural Creatures
TTV 218	Beauty of the Sea
TTV 223	Dress in a violet color
TTV 224	The Night Companion
TTV 227	The Exchanged Bride
TTV 239	The Beautiful
TTV 240	Smiling Roses, Crying Pearls
TTV 247	Shah Ismail
TTV 248	The Bad Father
TTV 256	Lazy Mehmet
TTV 258	The Unknown Soldier
TTV 277	Family without a Grief
TTV 280	Sultan Who Cheated His Punished Wife
TTV 284	Fearless Hero
TTV 287	Mat Weaver
TTV 334	The Victory of Laziness
TTV 342	Skilful Thief
TTV 346	The Man Who Wanted to be a Thief
TTV 367	The Penny Pincher and the Smart Woman
TTV 376	Bloody Negro

**Hande BIRKALAN-GEDIK**

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## **The Arab Girl is Watching from the Window: Ambiguous Images of Black Arab in Folk Narratives and Performances in Turkey**

*This paper aims to contribute to the notion of ‘the black Arab as a figure of memory’ by examining cases from folklore in Turkey about the black Arabs. It is not a discussion of the folklore of the black Arabs themselves, although studies on such an issue would increase our understanding of the black Arabs. Instead, the paper examines, briefly but critically, the forms and fashions in which the black Arabs appear in folklore texts and performances in Turkey. The figure of the black Arab appears in various folklore genres—village theatre, the shadow-play Karagöz (The Black-Eyed) and legends, but more importantly in folktales, where the space of narrativity is at large. The paper argues that the image of the black Arab lies at the juncture of historical, fictive, and projected realities of the folktale discourse. As historic reality, the image reflects behaviors and reactions to the ‘other’. At the same time, the image is a result of the projected reality of the folktale. Here, the role of folklore in registering, preserving and disseminating memory is important. It concludes that the image of the Arab can be tailored according to the audience within the contexts of performances through the narrative strategies of the folktale narrator. Therefore, performance strategies result in the creation of not one but various images about the black Arab. In the theoretical part, this paper aims to contribute to image studies by bringing forward the notion of performance, where images and representations might be shifted, blurred, created, remembered and sustained in ambiguity.*

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Ljiljana STOŠIĆ (Belgrade)

## The Black Arab in Serbian Literature and Art

Many people, the Serbs included, have pictured the deities and demons of the underworld or 'the other world' as black. Myths, beliefs and folk literature usually depict them as Arabs, Egyptians, Ethiopians or Africans. The blackening of faces in the koledar (Christmas carol singing) processions is related to the representation of the deceased and of mythical ancestors and the possibility of their bringing good luck, blessings and fertility; this applies even in the present day to anybody blackened by the fire in the hearth, including chimneysweeps.

Until the period between the two world wars, traces of the lives of Arab, Saracen or Moorish scribes, soldiers and slaves in this region under Ottoman rule were preserved in several toponyms and micro-toponyms (Arapovići, Arapi, Arap, Arabica; Saraćino, Sraćinec, Sarakin, Saraćence; Moro, Mavar), but today remain in only a handful of geographical terms: *Arapovac* near Lazarevac, *Arapuša* near Bosanska Krupa, *Mavrovsko Jezero* in Macedonia, *Arbanasce* near Prokuplje, *Arbanaško* near Prohor Pčinjski monastery, on the foothills of Mt. Kozjak, *Arbanija* on Čiovo Island near Trogir, and *Arbinovo* between Struga and Kičevo. Unlike Africans, black Arabs, or *Zengi*, real Arabs from Arabia and its neighbouring countries were called White Arabs. In earlier times, Arabs came to the Balkans to serve as guides to Muslim pilgrims making the hajj to the Kaaba in Mecca (*delili*) or to serve as well-paid proxies making the pilgrimage in their stead (*bedeli*). In 18<sup>th</sup> century Ulcinj, close to Bar, in Skadar and neighbouring places, between the Cretan, Morean and Balkan Wars, there were hundreds of houses belonging to African Negars, the descendants of slaves

### Key words:

- exotic
- Egypt
- genre scene
- heathen
- oriental
- page
- slave
- turban
- the Black Arab
- African

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brought as children from Egypt, Tunisia and Libya, who lived there as free men alone or with their families. In Greece, on the Peloponnese, in Aegean Macedonia, and along the lower reaches of the River Vardar (Povardarje), the graves of black people can be found to this day with the presence of Sudanese ethnotypes. Interesting legends and beliefs about blacksmiths, the cult of grain as food, and the symbolism of the number three, are to be found in relation to the descendants of Egyptians, *Eđupci* in Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia and Bulgaria (*Agupti*). A Serbian folk lament goes:

*Oh, let us lament our Kosovo plain!  
After our honourable prince,  
What have you lived to see, alas!  
That Arabs should have their say on your land.*

*[Oj, davori ti Kosovo ravno,  
Posle нашег кнеза честитого,  
Шта си данас дочекало пусто,  
Да Арапи сад по теби суде.]*

Ulcinj's predecessor on the Adriatic coast in the Middle Ages was Venice, with a black slave market known throughout the Mediterranean as far as Constantinople. The mixture of races in the Byzantine Empire led to its epic hero, Digenis Acritas, becoming a Saracen convert, while Emperor Nikephoros I was of Arab blood, two imperial brides of Hazar origin had pure Turkish blood flowing in their veins, and Emperor Justinian II forced a woman from a senator's family to marry his black cook. Much later, among the pages of the Russian Tzar, Peter the Great, there served for a time a young black man, Abraham Petrovich Hannibal, purchased in Constantinople, who converted to Christianity when he was eleven years old. Reaching a ripe old age, he would become, through the female line, great-grandfather to the Russian poet Aleksandr Sergejevich Pushkin. His great-grandson would later in life repay him with a story entitled *The Negro of Peter the Great*.

In Serbian heroic poems, from ancient times to the present, the Black Arab engages in combat with Kraljević Marko, Bolani Dojčin, the child Grujica, Lazar Mutap, the deputy of Petrović Đorđe, and Banović Strahinja with the Turk Vlah-Alija; in the end they cut off their heads, thus saving the country and freeing white slaves, women and young girls from slavery, oppression and exorbitant taxation. Imprisonment in

the *black Arab land* implies the Underworld and its demonic forces, and the expression *black in the face* is used for those who 'look as though they had been underground'. In all probability, almost all the motifs relating to black, angry, terrible, three-headed Arabs, sometimes replaced by black Bulgarians and black Gypsies, are actually versions of the famous legend of St. George and the seven-headed dragon. To the binary relations or antithesis of contradictions in folk poetry of the type *the black Arab kisses his white love*, the Krajina folk custom of giving up a *nakonjče*—an Arab male child—to the bride arriving on horseback outside the groom's house, frightening small children with black slaves, Africans, a black Arab woman or a Gypsy woman, the black devil and the *karakondžula* or bogeyman, we should also add a similar example—black Arab—white snow—from the paintings of more recent times. At the request of the steward of the Dalj manorial estate, the Serbian painter Jovan Isailović the Elder in 1776-1777 painted a representation of *An Arab on a Sledge*, still known today from the original bill for the work, which was preserved, archived and published. In the Turkish folk theatre work, *Karađoz* (Black-eye), a *white Arab* appears; *arapke* are the most difficult and dangerous form of smallpox and scabs which can blind a person, make him deaf or dumb or even cause his death; and Arabs are often identified with black ravens and executioners. The idea of a black slave who is born of a relationship unrecognized by society and struggles for his place in the sun originated from the familiar Old Testament story (Genesis 16, 12) of Ishmael, the forefather of all the Arabs, son of the aging Abraham and his banished Egyptian slave Hagar: 'And he shall be as a wild ass among men; his hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him.' The black Arab, African or Saracen in the *Song of Roland* is a heathen; he does not believe in the religion of Christ, is as black as pitch, never plays or smiles but is brave and wildly daring. A testimony to the strength of this ingrained legend is an icon by the Greek master-artist Elias Moskos from 1678, today part of the Loverdos private collection in Athens. It shows *The Holy Emperor Constantine the Great* at the Battle of Milvian Bridge on a rearing horse flanked on both sides by two pages who are trying to restrain him. The two pages are Africans, too young for their task. In olden times, Orthodox monks were called *crnorizci*, *črnici* or *crnci*, by analogy with the black robes or *melanifori* of the Egyptian priests of the cults of Isis, Serapis and Anubis. Although with the ancient Egyptians it was not black that signified mourning but light blue, the folk belief persists that if someone sees a monk in a dream he will meet death

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or misery. This is supported also by the lore which Ivo Andrić notes at the beginning of his historic novel of the Višegrad Bridge. The story goes that in a loophole for a gun in the central pillar of the bridge lived a Black Arab, and anyone who saw him or to whom he appeared in a dream would surely die. An effective antidote for this horror was to overcome him in a duel or to swiftly utter the Lord's name.

Petar Kočić's story *Iz Starostavne Knjige Simeuna Đaka/ The Ancient Book of Simeun the Pupil* foretells that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Bosnia will be ruled by two masters, Inđinđi (Turkey) and Birinđi (Austria). It will happen that the first will not be able to step down from the throne and that the second will not be able to ascend to it. In this situation, which will last for many years, the Birinđi will arrive with black people of white skin. At first, all will be glad to receive them, but they will soon see that the black people have black thoughts and commit even blacker deeds. The people will follow them to the accursed West and renegade Rome, but will be left behind by them half-way there. Kočić's story ends with the Inđinđi and Birinđi being overcome by a people from the Eastern Sea who will shake their throne so hard that they will throw them into a dark abyss. The black people of white skin—worse than those with black skin because of their hypocrisy—are here connected to the nations of Western Europe, although the future of the unfortunate Serbian people in Bosnia is seen in a general reconciliation and the birth of a worthy descendant of both East and West, of the Inđinđi and the Birinđi: Mrko Unučić Crnog Đeda (Dark Grandson of Black Gradfather).

Respect for the cult of the *Black Madonna of Egypt, the Saracen or Arabian Madonna*, goes back to the Middle Ages. Theodosius notes that St. Sava, during his stay in Cairo, prayed before the Madonna with Christ shrouded in 'Egyptian blackness'. All trace vanished of this type of dark-skinned Madonna with the Christ child, modelled on black Egyptian figures and, according to legend, the work of St. Luke, but began to be depicted again on canvas in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Among the representations of the Arabian Madonna there is a prominent group of serially produced miraculous icons in which the Madonna wears a gold brooch in the shape of a rhomboid, of the type of the Theotokos Odigitria, where the Mother of God and the Son of God are always depicted with crowns. Traces of a revival of this cult, more pan-Christian than Orthodox, are to be found in icons and lithographic pages in Hajdučica (Banat), Serbian churches in Timisoara, Budapest, Rácalmás, Szeged, Szentendre, parish churches in



Pančevo, Batajnica, Bečej, and the Slavonian, Fruška Gora and Srem monasteries of Lepavina, Velika Remeta and Fenek. Copies of these 'black Egyptian images' appear in folk art at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

All attempts at an iconographic interpretation of the origin and meaning of these dark-skinned Madonnas, although reserved and incomplete, agree on one thing: that the Catholic order of the Pauline Fathers was primarily responsible for the spread of her cult (*Regina Eremitarum*). Their abodes were known as *remete*, and they themselves were considered to be the followers of the first Egyptian hermit, St. Paul the Hermit (4<sup>th</sup> century). Among the most famous Black Madonnas are those of Czestochowa (Poland) and Brno (Czech Republic), although statues in France, Switzerland and Spain are believed to be even older. Concerning the *Black, Arabian or Egyptian Madonna*, there are inevitable speculations about a dark complexioned handmaid of the Lord, a reminder of Solomon's bride, burnt by the sun as she guarded her brother's vineyard (Song of Songs, 1,6). As a manifestation of the Egyptian cult of Isis, the Black Madonna has both a spiritual and a practical interpretation: that she was shown as being black to symbolise the struggle of the Mother of God with the dark spirits, or to facilitate the conversion of black African people to Christianity.

To worship and bring gifts to the newborn Christ Child in the cave at Bethlehem came three representatives of all parts of the earth, the three human races and the ages of man: three Magi from the East, wise men and kings. This Euro-African caravan was comprised of the venerable, white-haired Melchior with his long beard, sixty years of age and bearing gold; the black-haired, bearded Balthazar, aged forty, bringing myrrh; and the young, beardless, ruddy-faced Caspar, twenty years old and bearing frankincense. In the traditional *Vertep* Christmas play, the black king Balthazar is identified as an Arab in the verses:

*I am King Balthazar,  
Balthazar is written in black letters,  
I breathe from an Arabian country.  
The heathen created me,  
And led me to this place.*

*[Ja sam краљ Валтасар,  
Валтасар се црним словом пишем,  
Из Арапске земље дишем,*

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*Незнабожац је који ме створи  
И на ово место своди.]*

In 1742, while decorating the iconostasis for the Szentendre Pozaravačka church, the Timisoara icon-painters Georgije Ranite and Nedeljko Popović painted *The Birth of Christ with the Adoration of the Magi*. Kneeling before the infant in order of age, the figures can be distinguished by their grey or black beards and the degree of darkness of the flesh tones. Caspar is depicted as the youngest and as a black man, since he comes from southern Egypt.

For his three icons, *The Birth of Christ*, and *Adoration of the Magi*, Nikola Nešković made three versions of this motif for the Serbian church in Zrenjanin, the Bishop's Chapel in Vršac and the Church of St. George in Timisoara (1764). A noticeable difference between them lies in the appearance and the ornaments assigned to the three holy kings. In the younger icons in the form of two small medallions, the differences in race and royal attributes between the three Magi are more pronounced. Their apparel is more exotic: a brocade cloak trimmed with ermine, feathered turbans, brooches, beads, and branching gold crowns at the top of the gold crowns and the accompanying train of camels instead of horses or mules.

In Italian Renaissance art, followed by Dutch Baroque painting and again in French Rococo art of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a multitude of Old Testament and New Testament figures originating in the Middle East are given costumes and decorations known to art historians as *turqueries*. In Serbian church art of more recent times, a group of figures in oriental garb—such as Jacob the Persian, John of Damascus, the Persian King Xerxes, the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar, the Pharaoh and the Pharaoh's wife—are joined by Old Testament religious sects such as the Sadducees and Pharisees, who appear together with Christ in a number of scenes from the Gospels. Besides voluminous turbans decorated with long white stork or crane feathers, they also appear in wide Turkish trousers, Turkish slippers, broad caftans trimmed with ermine, or in astrakhan caps known as Persian caps. Their exotic appearance is enhanced by long beards extending to the waist, moustaches, hooked noses, a cunning look about the eyes and a piercing glance. By the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, among the first Serbian artists to pay noticeable attention to oriental figures were Gavril Stefanović Venclović in miniatures, and Hristofor Žefarović, Andrej Andrejević the Younger and Stefan Tenecki in monumental painting. Instead of medieval images

of desert monks and the Venerable Mother Mary of Egypt, the orient in art of more recent times is depicted mainly through Biblical figures in strikingly urban or courtly settings, with authentic details taken from real life or even realistic genre scenes.

After the coats of arms of Bessarabia and Bosnia in the *Stemmatography* (Vienna 1741), with two, or three 'black, demon-like faces', the oldest representation of black men in Serbian 18<sup>th</sup> century graphics was by Hristofor Žefarović in his copper engraving *The Monastery of Saint Sabbas the Sanctified*, as the 59<sup>th</sup> illustration on page 45 of his work *Description of Jerusalem* (Vienna, 1748). The faces and figures of these two members of the desert are entirely darkened, their flesh and garments evenly shaded in fine hatching. In other places in the *Description* there are figures wearing an oriental *chalma*, or turban wrapped around a fez. Vistas of the city do not fail to include minarets or crescent moons surmounting the domes, and in two places in the background, caravans with camels and turbaned guides may be seen.

In 1799, at his workshop in Buda, the engraver Johan Filip Binder carved illustrations for a late 18<sup>th</sup> century edition of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, translated into Serbian and published by the Printing House of the Royal University of Pest. One of the illustrated pages, entitled *The Liberation of Man Friday*, shows a negroid male nude in the foreground with two dead natives immediately behind and a group of cannibals wrapped in short skirts dancing in the background.

A virtual parade of items of oriental dress from turbans to slippers worn by representatives of dark-skinned peoples and races appeared in 1780 in Teodar Kračun's splendid and very picturesque iconostasis for the Cathedral Church in Sremski Karlovci. The *Entry into Jerusalem* shows four long-bearded Scribes and Pharisees gesticulating in a lively manner amongst themselves as they await the arrival of Christ in front of the city gates. They are dressed in Turkish costumes of the imperial court, and one has a knife prominently displayed in his belt that is wound around his waist *alla turca*. In *Esther before the Persian King Xerxes*, all five male figures, of which three are black, wear wide Turkish trousers and Saracen shoes, and one even sports a fashionable European tailcoat and cane. In *The Discovery of Moses*, a negroid woman and boy under a white unfurled parasol stand in counterpart to a white-skinned woman who has stepped into the river, baring her legs and clasping a small open chest containing a naked male child. Among the white people gathered around the spring of living water in

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*The Fountain of Life* stands a black man or woman with gold earrings and wearing bracelets on both arms. In the foreground at the opposite end of the painting, space was found for two capricious Chinese men with slanted eyes—one of the men with a pigtail, the other wearing a Chinese cap.

In 1815, Arsa Teodorović designed a medallion in the manner of Kračun for the archpriest's throne in the Church of the Bogorodica in Zemun, showing *Saint Sava Reconciling his Brothers*. Among the armed escort of the two quarrelling brothers are two-dark skinned pages in oriental costume, bearing spears and engaged in conversation amongst themselves. Again, in the scene *The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist* on the same iconostasis, a smallish black page holds Herodias's purple cloak.

When painting the iconostasis for the monastery of Kuveždin in 1850, Pavle Simić included two compositions with themes from Serbian folk songs, one of which, *Ilija Birčanin Pays Taxes to the Turks*, shows a snub-nosed black man in a costume such as those worn at the Porte in Constantinople.

Another oil painting of what might be called 'the imaginary orient' is Katarina Ivanović's *Incantations, Fortune Telling or Women in the Harem*, painted in 1865-1870. Composed after Delacroix's renowned painting *Algerian Women in their Apartments*, in which one of the protagonists is black, this work is considered to be an allusion to a love story. In it, four women in semi-reclining, sitting and squatting poses are entertaining themselves with tobacco, coffee, preserves and cards, while a black woman stands under a veil, almost rigid in anticipation, arms folded, a double strand of pearls around her neck, the whites of her eyes prominent against her dark skin. A couple of years later (1870-1873), Ivanović produced a genre painting, variously known as *The Black Letter-Bearer* or *The Love Letter*. Here, a laughing black Amor represents the 'baroque iconography of love', an intermediary who warns of the suffering brought on by passions of the flesh which can burn their victims like the Sun if they are not held in check. In each of two paintings of scenes from Serbian history, *The Capture of Belgrade 1806* and *Turkish Envoys Ask for Mara's Hand* (1865 and 1879), Katarina Ivanović also places a black figure.

The paintings of Paja Jovanović are a virtual parade of Albanian characters, with genre scenes from life among the Balkan folk such as *Cockfighting, The Albanian Guard, An Albanian Duel, An Albanian Asks for a Girl's Hand in Marriage*. Having studied under the Viennese

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professor and orientalist Leopold Karl Muller, known as 'the Egyptian,' Paja Jovanović dedicated over a decade at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the painting of these exotic motifs, much sought after at this time.

Besides the famous verses from the Song of Solomon (1, 5-6), which say that black can be beautiful as a consequence of being burnt by the sun, the Scriptures abound in references to black or sun-burned people. The Holy Ghost descends upon the Arab eunuch after his baptism (Acts 8, 36-39); when misfortunes, longings or sorrows befall them, the faces of the Babylonians (Isaiah 13, 8) and the citizens of Nineveh (Nahum 2, 10) 'gather blackness' and become like flames. The Nazarites of Israel, the consecrated of the Lord, were purer than snow and whiter than milk until they fell into Babylonian slavery, after which their visages became blacker than coal (Jeremiah 4, 7-8). The culmination of teaching on those that are different amongst people rests in Christ's words that rivers of living water shall flow from the body, whatever form it may take, of those that believe in Him (John 7, 38), while the prophet Isaiah assures us that on the Holy Mountain all will be welcome, the outcast and the sons of the stranger, and that the House of the Lord shall be called a house of prayer for all people (Isaiah 56,7). It is not, therefore, outward appearance, nationality, religion, gender or social status that will decide at the Last Judgment, but the inner moral values of man and his persevering faith in God.

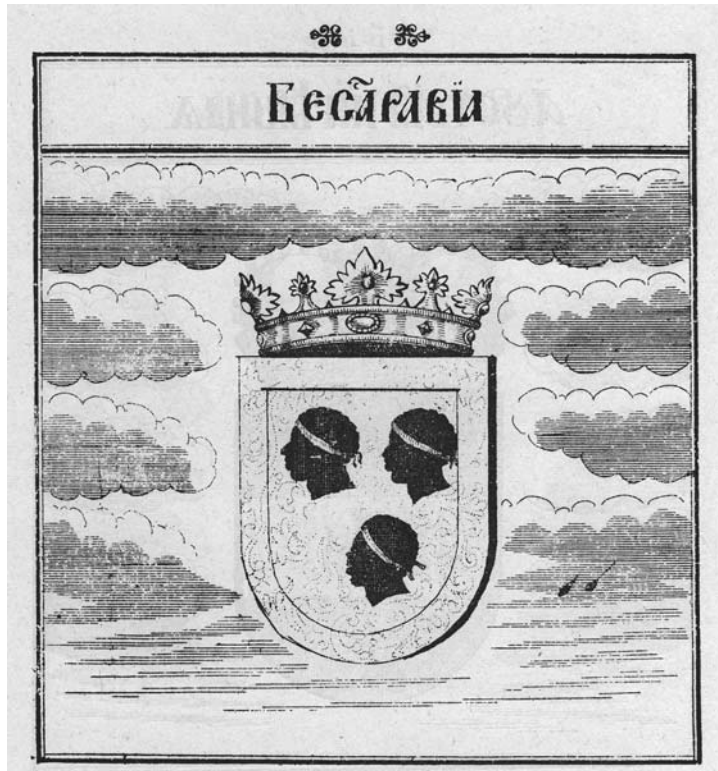
The fundamental ideas of the Old and New Testaments find a resounding echo in historical and genre painting of more recent Serbian church art. Extra-European images of black Arabs are neither the last nor the only ones to appear in many instances of this form of expression. Those mentioned here are only a few from among numerous examples in two centuries of life amongst the Serbs. They confirm an essential acceptance of the universal idea of Christian ecumenicalism: co-existence, reconciliation, change of heart, spiritual transformation, religious conversion and dedication to humanism of both individuals and people.

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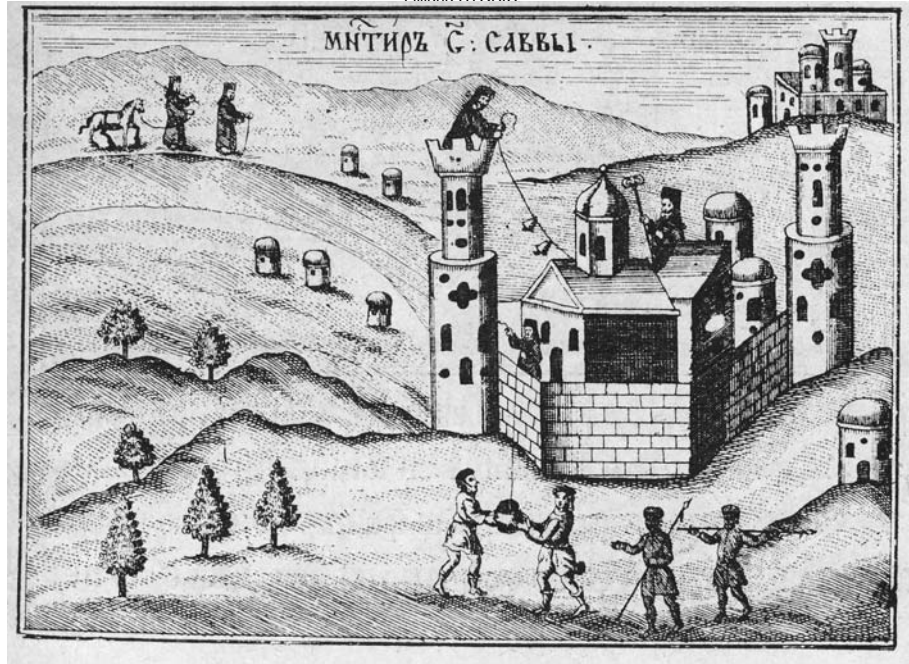
## ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Hristofor Žefarović, *The Coat of Arms of Bessarabia* (*Stemmatography*, 1741), copperplate
2. Hristofor Žefarović, *The Coat of Arms of Bosnia* (*Stemmatography*, 1741), copperplate
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9. P. Simić, *Ilija Birčanin Pays Taxes to the Turks*, oil on canvas (1850–1853)
10. K. Ivanović, *Fortune Telling*, oil, (1865–1870) oil on canvas
11. K. Ivanović, *The Black Letter-Bearer*, oil on canvas (1870–1873)
12. P. Jovanović, *Cockfighting*, oil, (c. 1890)
13. M. Savčin, *Black Madonna of Egypt*, icon on glass (beginning of 20th century, Town Museum in Sombor)



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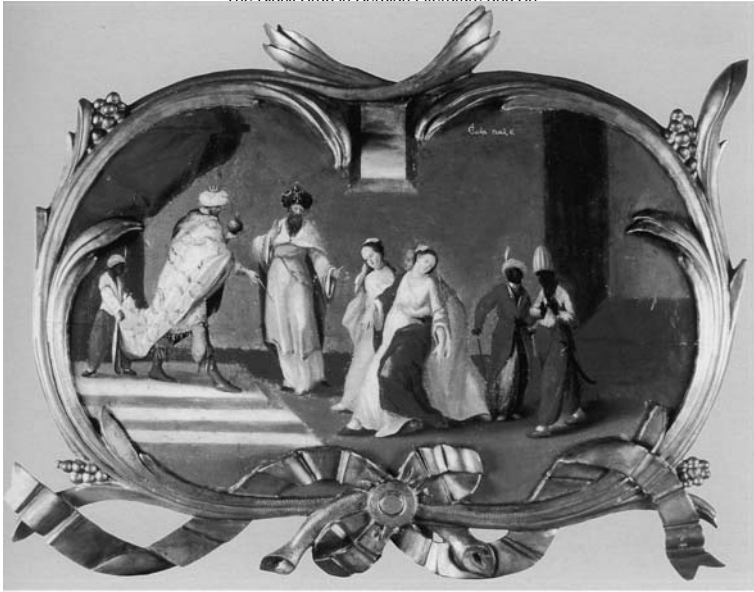
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### **The Black Arab in Serbian Literature and Art**

*Many people, the Serbs included, have pictured the deities and demons of the underworld or 'the other world' as black. Myths, beliefs and folk literature usually depict them as Arabs, Egyptians, Ethiopians or Africans. The blackening of faces in the koledar (Christmas carol singing) processions is related to the representation of the deceased and of mythical ancestors, and because of the possibility of their bringing good luck, blessings and fertility, it applies even in the present day to those blackened by the fire in the hearth and to chimneysweeps.*

*In Serbian heroic poems, from ancient times to the present, the Black Arab engages in combat with Kraljević Marko, Bolani Dojčin, the child Gruzica, Lazar Mutap, the deputy of Petrović Đorđe, while Banović Strahinja fights the Turk Vlah-Alija; in the end they cut off their heads, thus saving the country, freeing white slaves, women and young girls from slavery, oppression and exorbitant taxation.*

*In Serbian art of the 18th and 19th centuries, images of Black Arabs and Negroes are related to representations of the Black Mother of God of Egypt, then to one of the three kings/magi who came from the East to pay homage to the infant Christ, while the Pharisees and Sadducees are always represented in oriental costumes in scenes with Christ. Their representations are an inevitable feature of historical and genre scenes in this period, except in sacred compositions. The numerous examples in Serbian art of the early modern period, of which only some are mentioned here, confirm the acceptance of the universal idea of Christian ecumenism about a common life, mutual reconciliation, spiritual metamorphosis and general humanistic enlightenment both of the individual and the nation.*

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European Research Project for Poetics & Hermeneutics

Volume No. 3

Black Arab  
as a Figure of Memory

Part VI

Performing  
the Identity



Ioana-Ruxandra FRUNTELATA (Bucharest)

## Identity Patterns in Some Romanian Variants of 'The Black Arab' in Epic Folk Songs

### THE IDENTITY OF A FOLK EPIC SONG TYPE

The folk epic song type is a form of a 'cultural narrative' emphasizing 'more or less stable' resemblances and differences often connected to 'myths' from the national culture to which the folk song type belongs. These myths (the founding myths of any nation) are 'more or less common' in cultures from neighbouring areas or nations—for example, in South-Eastern European cultures. By connecting narrative to culture in a poetic and musical creation, epic songs contribute to the verbalization of certain 'mythic nuclei'. For example, the mythic nucleus of the 'hero' would not be relevant to us in the absence of the epic form that contributes to create our culturally marked mental representation of heroes.

The heroic epic song about the Black Arab has a special place in Romanian folklore. It is a 'classical' folk epic song because its text was included, under the title 'Doncilă', in the first published collection of Romanian folklore in the 19th century. Numerous variants of this type collected in the 20th century demonstrate the widespread circulation of the song. At the same time, comparative research into the Black Arab motif in south-eastern European folklore reveals that the Black Arab's roots are not Romanian (Fochi (1965) 1987: 60-239). Nevertheless, 'Ailing Doicin' (I shall use the Romanian name of the type, including local variants of the Black Arab song) has been adopted for some reason and integrated into Romanian folklore as part of the national repertory

#### Key words:

- 'Ailing Doicin'
- Black Arab
- identity
- intangible cultural heritage
- epic hero
- epos
- folk song variant
- heroic epic song
- oral poetry
- South-Eastern Europe

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of oral epic songs.

This paper intends to explore mainly the identity of the 'Black Arab' motif on Romanian soil, referring to the identity expression encased in the most stable parts of Romanian variants. I shall analyse and attempt to find at least partial possible answers to the following questions:

- 1) Where is Ailing Doicin's place in the system of Romanian folk epic songs according to critical bibliography?
- 2) Which are the specific Romanian elements of Ailing Doicin according to comparative research?
- 3) What are the reasons for Ailing Doicin having been adopted by Romanian folklore despite the main character of the epic song not being a typical hero?
- 4) Why should Ailing Doicin be considered a part of the Romanian intangible cultural heritage?

Of course, the questions above could open into other questions as they contain a certain degree of ambiguity (what is a 'system'? what is a 'typical hero'?, etc.), but I shall try to dissolve confusion for non-Romanian readers along the way as much as possible from a 'native' point of view. At the same time, an investigation of the Romanian characteristics of Ailing Doicin provides a good opportunity for the folklore scholar to generalize detailed analysis towards a more comprehensive interpretation of traditional mentality as mirrored in oral poetry.

## 1. THE PLACE OF AILING DOICIN IN THE SYSTEM OF ROMANIAN EPIC FOLK SONGS

Vasile Alecsandri published the first collection of Romanian poetic folklore in two volumes issued in 1852 (Vol. 1) and 1853 (Vol. 2) entitled *Folk Poetry - Ballads (Songs of the Old)*. The three terms alternating in the title of Alecsandri's folklore collection point to the national academic denomination of the genre in the author's time ('folk poetry'), to its international approximation ('ballad'), and to the name given to it by folk communities ('songs of the old'). The definitive edition of Alecsandri's collection was issued in 1866 with the title *Folk Poems of the Romanians. Collected and Compiled by Vasile Alecsandri (Alecsandri, Vasile Poesii populare ale Romînilor, adunate și întoc-*



mite de ..., Tipografia Lucrătorilor Asociați, București, 1866). Among the epic songs published in the 1866 volume we find 'Doncilă', the first published Romanian variant of the Black Arab oral epic poem. 'Doncilă' begins with the image of the ailing hero lying on a bed 'in the shade of a pear-tree' for nine long years. The folk poet suggests Doncilă's suffering by using two recurrent images in the Romanian variants of this subject: 'Pieces of his flesh are falling off/ Maggots are biting into what flesh is left' and the hero's sister is looking after him by moving his 'white pillows...from one end of the bed to the other/ In the sun or in the shade.' One day, Doncilă notices his sister has been crying and asks her what has happened. She answers that a 'Tartar' has come to their village demanding a large tribute from every person ('Ten golden Venetian coins/ A lamb and a fat heifer/ And a maid every night.'). Doncilă asks her to prepare a milk bath for him and to rub his skin with basil leaves, then to bring him his hero's clothes, weapons and horse. After bathing and getting dressed, Doncilă mounts his horse and rides to the Tartar's tent. The Tartar asks him if he has brought along his sister as he wants her for his bride. Doncilă answers that he has brought another bride for the Tartar and draws his sword to 'wed' him. The analogy 'wedding – death' is quite frequent in Romanian epic heroic songs, for example in 'Mioritza' and 'Corbea' where it is expressed by 'dressing up' death or dying as wedding allegories. At the end of Alecsandri's variant of the epic song, Doncilă cuts off the head of his Tartar enemy and goes back to his sister to announce his victory. There are also some notes Alecsandri wrote to comment on 'Doncilă'. Pointing to the collection of Serbian folklore translated by August Dozon into French, Alecsandri mentions that the 'topic of the ballad has also been treated' by Serb oral poets who use the title 'Ailing Doicin' for their variants. He comments on the epic message of 'Doncilă', considering it to be a reflection of the Romanians' fight against foreign plunderers like the Tartars who used to organize raids through Moldavia in the Middle Ages, burning villages and taking prisoners to be their slaves.

Several variants of 'Ailing Doicin' were published in different collections of Romanian folklore issued after 1866. Al. I. Amzulescu organized the Romanian corpus of folk epic songs in a critical edition of Romanian folk ballads published in 1964 (Amzulescu, Al. I. *Balade populare românești* Ediții critice de folclor – genuri, 3 vol., Editura pentru Literatură, București, 1964). In his abstract of the type of folk epic song 'Ailing Doicin' (type 47, vol.1, pages 133-134), Amzulescu quotes the epithet 'thick-lipped Arab' used by many folk music performers

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(*lăutari*) to describe a negative character who greedily goes around villages asking for large amounts of food and drinks and for many virgin girls. Doicin, 'once a brave man', is lying sick and is looked after by his sister who is about to become the Arab's next victim. When she tells him about the Arab, Doicin asks her to help him rise and to bring his weapons and horse. The enemy becomes frightened at the sight of the hero whom he had thought was dead. Doicin kills the Arab and then goes to the emperor to call him a coward for having allowed the Arab to abuse people, in some cases even punishing him for having done so. Going back home, Doicin lets his sister know about his victory over the enemy and asks her to prepare his funeral. 'The brave man turns to dust and his horse goes into the green woods.' (Amzulescu 1964, volume 1, p.133.) In this variant, very similar in content to the one published by V. Alecsandri, Doicin's sister calls him 'neică', a word used by peasant girls in the Oltenia region to address their elder brothers. Doicin teaches her to wrap nine 'bridle belts' tight around his waist and when she passes his heavy sword to him he raises it 'on his little finger' and flings it up into the sky so that it is cleaned 'as white as milk' by the clouds. After killing the Arab, Doicin also kills the emperor of the country because he should not have 'taken off his fez' in front of an Arab. Then the brave man asks his sister to bring 40 priests to perform his funeral service and sets his red horse free. Nevertheless, the horse waits until the end of the funeral service and then takes his master 'by the teeth' and buries him, using its hooves to dig a grave close to a 'trunk with five elm-trees' growing together 'as five brothers born to one mother'.

Adrian Fochi, the author of the most consistent Romanian study dedicated to the 'Ailing Doicin' type (first published in German in 1965), lists 44 Romanian variants of the epic song (Fochi (1965) 1987, pp. 68-72): of which only one has a fragmentary text, 10 variants do not have the informants mentioned, 5 variants do not contain data on their place of origin, and 2 texts are difficult to date. According to Fochi's research, the oldest Romanian record of 'Ailing Doicin' is to be found in a miscellaneous manuscript of 1809 (Fochi (1965) 1987, p 62), while the most recent was collected from the village of Ciuperceni near Bucharest in 1962 (Fochi (1965) 1987, p 70).

We should add to the 44 variants mentioned by Fochi three variants collected by Ion Nijloveanu from the Olt and Teleorman districts (southern Romania) in 1961, 1962 and 1968 and published in his 1984 collection (Nijloveanu, Ion *Balade populare românești* <Romanian Folk

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Ballads>, Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 1984, pp.148-157). The variants in the Nijloveanu collection have musical transcriptions of texts. As for poetic content, we could add a few significant details to the overall picture outlined so far: the girls killed by the Arab are buried 'with a fir-tree' to mark their tomb and Doicin asks his sister to milk nine mares for his bath and to put a basil stalk in the milk 'unseen by the Sun'.

More variants of the epic song of 'Ailing Doicin' may have been recorded or even published in collections to which I have not had access. Nevertheless, with at least 47 variants recorded between 1809 and 1968, we can assume that 'Ailing Doicin' is well integrated into the typological system of Romanian folk epic songs. Although researchers agree that 'Ailing Doicin' is not an original Romanian topic, there must have been some elements in the epic song content that appealed to folk music performers and public alike, making them 'adopt' the story of the dying brave man who defeats the Black Arab to save his sister.

## **2. SPECIFIC ROMANIAN ELEMENTS OF 'AILING DOICIN' ACCORDING TO COMPARATIVE RESEARCH.**

Adrian Fochi took a comparative approach to the Black Arab topic in his 1965 study, paying attention also to the particular content and structural details that distinguish Romanian variants from Serbian, Croatian, Bulgarian and Albanian versions. Fochi considers that Doicin's epic song has five episodes:

1. The Black Arab comes to the hero's village and causes misfortune.
2. The hero finds out about the Black Arab's deeds and is called to help.
3. The hero prepares for his battle.
4. The fight and victory of the hero.
5. Death and apotheosis of the hero (Fochi (1965) 1987, p 80).

The first episode of the Romanian version is characterized by the portrait of the Black Arab (Fochi (1965) 1987, p 81). By portraying his negative character, the anonymous author of the epic song aims to suggest supernatural size and force and also grotesque physical features (Fochi (1965) 1987, p 84) such as 'thick lips' and 'carp scales' on his head—as if the Black Arab were a kind of 'human beast' acting only to satisfy his insatiable, hyperbolised greed.

The second episode of 'Ailing Doicin' (in which the hero finds out about the Black Arab's deeds and is called to help) stresses the positive he-

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ro's severe condition in Romanian variants of the epic song. Some variants (like that of Vasile Alecsandri) privilege the second episode by placing it in the first position in the epic: thus, first we are introduced to Doicin 'the sick brave man' and his sister, and only afterwards do we find out about the Black Arab's coming to the village and abusing the community (Fochi (1965) 1987, p 88). There are several Romanian variants in which Doicin's prolonged disease is 'explained' by his various sins. As he is such a sinner, Doicin is cursed to lie sick unable to die until he kills his hundredth enemy (Fochi (1965) 1987, p 91).

The request to have a bath prepared is characteristic of the third episode of Doicin's song in Romanian variants, as bathing is also a ritual act for someone who is ready for his funeral, like the dying hero himself (Fochi (1965) 1987, p 102). Fochi also mentions the sequence in which the hero flings his mace (or sword) up to the sky for the clouds to clean it (Fochi (1965) 1987, p 103). Romanian variants of Doicin's song include a social conflict opposing the hero to the 'emperor' accused of having allowed the Arab to abuse his subjects (Fochi (1965) 1987, p 105). In some variants, Doicin even kills the cowardly emperor, as in the variant published by Al. I. Amzulescu in 1964. Other variants favour a different epic solution: the hero sticks the Black Arab's head upon a spear and goes to the emperor who organizes a feast in his honour and offers him money; Doicin will not take the money but asks instead for help for his sister who will remain alone after his death (Fochi (1965) 1987, p 108).

Finally, the fifth episode of the poem (the death and apotheosis of the hero) is characterized in Romanian variants by a detailed description of Doicin's funeral ceremony. Sometimes even the emperor attends the hero's funeral service and subsequently takes care of his sister. There are variants in which Doicin's body turns into dust immediately after his death as a result of his curse. The hero's horse buries him in the woods in other variants, acting like the faithful horse of brave men in other epic songs (e.g. 'Toma Alimoş. An English version of 'Toma Alimoş' can be read in *Cinci balade populare!* Five Folk Ballads, Translated by W.D. Snodgrass, The Romanian Cultural Foundation Publishing House, Bucharest, 1999, pp. 49-65.) (Fochi (1965) 1987, p. 111). As it is quite uncommon for the protagonist of a heroic epic song to die at the end of the story, some folk music performers ('lăutari') looked for compensation in the action by introducing different 'solutions to hide the death of the hero'. In their variants, the focus shifts to Doicin's sister who becomes a nun or gets married to the Emperor's

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vizier or accumulates a great fortune. In other variants, Doicin finds a settlement in the place where he has defeated the Arab or even recovers his health and marries the Emperor's daughter (Fochi (1965) 1987, p 112).

In conclusion, Fochi refers to the 'cultural universe' of Doicin's song, demonstrating that Romanian variants of the topic are linked to the 'concrete conditions of relations between Turks and Romanians' in the past, as the Black Arab is sometimes identified as a Turkish clerk (*deliu*) or a Tartar invader. Although the epic line is quite vigorous, the action is presented against a lyrical atmosphere characteristic of verse epic creations in Romanian oral culture (Fochi (1965) 1987, p 186).

Another typical feature among Romanian characteristics of Doicin's song is, according to Fochi's analysis, the 'thematic purity' of each episode. In contrast with variants from south of the Danube, Romanian variants do not favour the anticipation of one episode within previous ones but repeat verses of some episodes wherever needed further in the text to maintain the coherence of the story (Fochi (1965) 1987, pp 118-119).

Summing up the results of Fochi's comparative analysis, a folklore scholar can bring enough arguments to support the idea that there is a Romanian identity of the Black Arab epic song type, as the Romanian variants of this song grouped under the type 'Ailing Doicin' are characterized by certain specific features which differentiate them from other South-European concretizations of the topic. The detailed portraits of the dying hero and his enemy, the particulars of the hero's preparations for battle (the milk bath, the weapon flung up to the sky) and the role of Doicin's horse in his master's burial are among the Romanian content particulars to which poetic elements like lyrical atmosphere and repetition, in preference to anticipation of epic episodes, should be added.

### **3. REASONS BEHIND THE INTEGRATION OF THE 'AILING DOICIN' TYPE INTO ROMANIAN FOLKLORE.**

Most epic Romanian heroic folk songs fit into two content patterns: theoreticians have called the first 'salvation and revenge' epos and the second 'daring and punishment' epos (Al. I Amzulescu quoted by Nicolae Constantinescu in Constantinescu, Fruntelată 2006, p.122). The hero of the first pattern is usually a Romanian replica of the me-

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dieval knight who triumphs over a dangerous enemy and saves his community. The hero of the second pattern is a sort of folkloric tragic protagonist who dares too much, defying powers beyond his reach (the forces of nature, for example) and is punished for his recklessness. According to the epic scenario pattern, the rescuing hero triumphs and stays alive while the daring hero dies, thus setting an example for witnesses to his adventure. As he saves his sister and community from the monstrous Black Arab, Doicin should be a rescuing hero and stay alive. Nevertheless, he dies at the end of the epic poem and some variants even suggest that death comes as a prize to him because his prolonged illness would only come to an end through the achievement of one last heroic victory. Thus Doicin's action somehow overlaps the two settled patterns for Romanian heroic epic songs as salvation from one pattern combines with death from the other pattern; only death is not a punishment for the ailing hero but a just redemption after long suffering. In this way, although the Romanian variants observe the South-Eastern European Black Arab topic, the point of the story digresses somewhat from the fight of the brave man against a monstrous enemy to the issue of 'getting even with life' before dying, which is a content hallmark in Romanian literary folklore. As in other oral traditions, many Romanian folk epic song types are connected to fundamental human experiences like getting married or dying and the heroic adventures often encase a deeper meditation on the social and individual consequences of certain choices that one makes in life. Usually such meanings are captured by the ritual repertory of folk cultures, but there are numerous connections between ritual and non-ritual pieces as modes of creation are similar in oral productions whether they be ritual or not. Romanian folklore scholars acknowledge the common features of epic poems and some winter solstice songs, pointing out, however, that the texts of epic songs have a denser narrative structure and a more pronounced historical background than texts of ritual winter solstice songs (Pop, Ruxăndoiu 1978, p.317). The explanation of such common features could be thus: 'In the past, Romanians had narrative songs related to mythology and fairy tales. Such creations could express ritual prescriptions and interdictions in poetic form and could describe ceremonies [...] The hypothesis is supported by the persistence of ritual and mythological elements in the recorded variants of our epic songs.' (Eretescu 2004, pp.148-149.) At the same time, the verse form of epic songs and winter solstice songs sets this type of creation apart from prose narratives, relating it 'to the idea of the sacred [and to the] crea-

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tion of a language which distinguishes everyday facts from exceptional ones.' (Ispas 2006, p.95.)

Exploring further the connection of ritual folklore to epic songs, we come across several mythic nuclei that are converted to substantiate either ritual poetry or non-ritual epos. The fight of the hero against a monster is such a nucleus that forms the core of a category of ritual winter solstice songs dedicated to young men. At least as old as the myth of Perseus, but more familiar in the South-European area in the form of Saint George's fight against the dragon, a confrontation with a monster is to be found in several Romanian fairy tales and legends and also in a few epic songs. The representative Romanian epic song for this mythic nucleus is *Iovan Iorgovan* (Pop 1998 p.319) in which the hero is a young man who fights a dragon to save his wife. As I have previously mentioned, 'Ailing Doicin' includes an episode on the fight of the hero against the Black Arab who is 'fabulously portrayed' (Pop 1998 p.322) and has saurian features (scales) and the spear on which the brave man sticks the head of the monster in some variants also echoes the 'St. George image'. This is why we can assume that Doicin's popularity with folk audiences has something to do with this 'fight against the monster' mythic nucleus which has turned into an archetypal image marking our mental representations of the rescuing hero.

At the same time, the song of Doicin intersects with the 'brother' theme in Romanian folk epic verse, touching the context of family connections in traditional rural societies. Doicin and his sister are a poetic embodiment of the brother-sister couple in which, according to the rules of behaviour in patriarchal society, the elder brother must take care of his sister in the absence of a father. Many Romanian variants of Doicin, as presented above, introduce the successful marriage of Doicin's sister in a sequence towards the end of the action. The representative type of this 'brother-theme' is the type of the 'ghost-brother' known as 'Voica' in Romanian folklore and reflecting the 'Lenore' type in the cultures of north-west Europe (Constantinescu 2000, p.194). The 'ghost-brother' in the variants of the type 'Voica' is a young man set by his mother to return from the dead and to bring home his sister. Doicin is not a 'ghost', but he is dying and he must take care of his sister as a last act of familial responsibility.

Although it was not created on Romanian soil, the 'Ailing Doicin' type fits very well into the system of Romanian folk epic songs as it fulfils the condition of 'ritual proximity' which makes it absorb several

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elements from the description of the funeral ritual (the last bath, burial with a fir tree next to the tomb, even the quantities of food the Black Arab mentions in his greedy request and which are the same quantities considered necessary for funeral alms in ritual songs (Fochi (1965) 1987, p.85). At the same time, 'Ailing Doicin' touches the perennial mythic nucleus of the fight against the monster, which makes it familiar to the archetype-marked imagination of listeners. The third reason that may explain why the Romanian public has embraced Doicin's song is the social reflection of family relationships in this hero's epic adventure which may be understood mainly as a 'brother-sister' story unfolding in the middle of a tragic life crisis which is to separate the two close relatives who love each other so much.

In my opinion, the otherness represented by the Black Arab (and its possible historical connotations) is of little importance in the Romanian variants of this epic song type as it does not explain the powerful position of this type in the system of Romanian epic verse. It is much more likely that the explanation lies with the subtle affinities of Doicin's song with ritual folklore and other folk epic songs revolving around the major theme of death. As Lévi-Strauss says, if 'external connections' can explain the transmitting of one folklore text from its original culture to another, only 'internal connections' provide the answer to the survival of the text in its adopting culture (Fochi (1965) 1987, p.180).

#### **4. WHY THE 'AILING DOICIN' TYPE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED PART OF THE ROMANIAN INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE.**

'A folkloric text survives only if it gathers new meanings permanently to address new people who are living nowadays.' (Fochi (1965) 1987, p.161.) Folk epic songs (or 'songs of the old' as they were called in their genuine environment) are losing ground to new means of entertainment (especially to the mass media's greatly diversified offer) and some folk music performers (*lăutari*) exclude them from their repertoires as useless pieces that nobody asks for any longer. At the same time, folklore scholars centre their research upon the complex meanings of folk epic songs in context and acknowledge their cultural and artistic value. Performing folk epic songs has become an act of cultural restitution nowadays and talented performers are recorded and encouraged to promote their art mostly in front of an intellectual



audience. The typology of Romanian folk epic songs has been written and the masterpieces have been archived. 'Ailing Doicin' is one of the types in the heroic epos category; therefore it has its legitimate place among folklore archive treasures. Nevertheless, the UNESCO concept of intangible cultural heritage implies the idea that a cultural item should still be preserved in its original context in order to be considered for the inventory of the intangible cultural heritage (see <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich>). It is difficult to say how many variants of Doicin's songs are still in circulation on Romanian territory at present, but given the popularity of the type until the seventh decade of the 20th century we may assume that there are still some in circulation to act as living proof of the value contained in this 'adopted' ballad/ epic song. The specific Romanian features of the 'Ailing Doicin' type presented in the second part of this research give contour to a 'Romanian identity' of this folk epic song as a form of 'cultural narrative' emphasizing 'more or less stable' resemblances and differences often connected to 'myths' (Yuval-Davis (1997) 2003, p.65) of Romanian culture which are 'more or less common' to myths of South-Eastern European cultures. At the same time, Ailing Doicin's 'success' with Romanian folk culture can be interpreted as the expression of a 'distanced identity' which is not circumscribed to immediate localism but also comprises awareness of what is common to people living in a larger area, sharing common risks and possibilities and bearing mutual responsibilities (Tomlinson (1999) 2002, p.272). The Black Arab character becomes very interesting with regard to 'Romanian identity' and 'distanced identity' as it can be interpreted as an 'epic instrument' that points both to 'the common enemy' in a certain historic period (the Turk or Tartar oppressor) and to 'the common mythic heritage' of European peoples (the dragon challenged by the knight). At the same time, only in Romanian variants of the song can the Black Arab be considered a redeemer as he is the 'hundredth enemy' that the hero has to kill in order to find absolution and death. This instrumental role of the Black Arab can be extended to Doicin's sister as well, since both Black Arab and sister are only 'discourse' characters while Doicin alone is the 'action' character. He is the only one who will change his identity in the story, from dying man to rescuing hero and then to caring brother, while the other characters do little more than respond to his acts. We could of course say that Doicin does not really change his identity but assumes in turns his threefold physical, social and family identity as any of us would do in similarly critical circumstances. Doicin goes beyond the limit and that makes him a hero

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of universal appeal. Nevertheless, the power of such a hero to convey to the public the sublime qualities he embodies emanates from a deeply contextualized discourse—for the hero without the story would be unintelligible to us. ‘To identify with’ or ‘to be identified to’ means first of all to put the object of identification in words (Dubar (2000) 2003, p.191). Without epic substance, epos heroes could not exist. The Romanian type of ‘Ailing Doicin’ is a part of the national intangible heritage made up of poetic images which contain a ‘concentrated intuition that makes us really connect to one of the truths of human being and destiny’ (Caracostea, D. *Poezia tradițională română* <Romanian Traditional Poetry>, vol. 2, Editura pentru Literatură, Bucharest, 1969). At the same time, a comparative approach to the ‘Romanian identity’ of Doicin’s song and its other ‘south-eastern European identities’ can lead us to a better understanding of the relationship of cultural memory to artistic creation in traditional folk cultures.



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### Identity Patterns in Some Romanian Variants of 'The Black Arab' in Epic FolkSongs

*This paper intends to explore mainly the identity of the 'Black Arab' motif on Romanian soil, referring to the identity expression as encased in the most stable parts of Romanian variants. Romanian research has placed the 'Black Arab' subject under the type entitled 'Ailing Doicin'. After presenting the most important stages in folkloric research into this epic song, I move to a concise description of specific elements which can be found in Romanian variants of the Black Arab song. I then investigate the cultural and poetic reasons for the 'adoption' of the Black Arab's song in Romanian folklore. The last part of the paper approaches the identity issue in relation to individual self-awareness and collective cultural heritage.*

*Summing up the results of comparative analysis, I consider there to be sufficient arguments to support the idea that there is a Romanian identity of the Black Arab epic song type, as the Romanian variants of this song grouped under the type 'Ailing Doicin' are characterized by certain specific features which differentiate them from other South-European concretizations of the topic. The detailed portraits of the dying hero and of his enemy, the particulars of the hero's preparations for battle (the milk bath, the weapon flung up to the sky) and the role of Doicin's horse in his master's burial, are among the Romanian content particulars to which poetic elements such as the use of lyrical atmosphere and repetition in preference to the anticipation of epic episodes should also be added.*

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*In my opinion, the otherness represented by the Black Arab (and its possible historical connotations) is of little importance in Romanian variants of this epic song type as it does not explain the powerful position of this type in the system of Romanian epic verse. It is much more likely that the explanation lies in the subtle affinities of Doicin's song with ritual folklore and other folk epic songs revolving around the major theme of death. The Romanian type of 'Ailing Doicin' is a part of the national intangible heritage because it gives contour to a 'Romanian identity' of this folk epic song as form of a 'cultural narrative' emphasizing 'more or less stable' resemblances and differences often connected to 'myths' of Romanian national culture which are 'more or less common' to myths of South-Eastern European cultures.*

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## From 'Arapi i zi' to discussions on Orientalism – the figure of the Black Arab in Albanian folklore and culture

Despite various appearances in oral traditions and everyday speech, the figure of the Black Arab has not yet been an object of analysis in Albanian scholarship. This paper aims to begin to fill this gap by presenting the uses of this figure in oral communication among Albanians. Naturally enough, the figure also appears in written communications, especially in literature, and even political discussions. Such examples will be presented in the following text. However, the goal of this essay goes further than mere description. It seeks to interpret the place of the expression 'Black Arab' in a larger, social, cultural and even political context, both in the distant past and in the contemporary setting.

### A PRELIMINARY DESCRIPTION

It would be appropriate to start by listing several situational and verbal uses of the expression 'Black Arab' in Albanian language, folklore and ethnography. When he discusses the term *Arab* in his highly praised *Dictionary of Oriental Loanwords in the Albanian Language*, the orientalist and linguist Tahir Dizdari<sup>1</sup> also presents an inventory of the uses of *Arabi i zi* (or *Harapi i Zi* in the northern dialect of Albanian). He emphasizes that the term appeared earlier, but spread during Ottoman rule. From this period originates the distinction between the *Arabi i zi* (Black Arab) and the *Arapi i bardhë* (White Arab). The former

1. Tahir Dizdari was born in Shkodra in 1900 to a Muslim family of intellectual background. He studied in the Asqerie *mejtëp* (primary school), attended the College of St. Francesco Saverio (run by Jesuits in Shkodra since 1877), and completed his further education in Istanbul. Between 1929-1939, he served in the public administration of the Kingdom of Albania. Simultaneously, he published several articles on the influences of oriental languages (Ottoman Turkish, Persian and Arab) in the Albanian language. Due to his political ideas, he was interned in Italy during the war and also imprisoned in 1951 for propaganda against the communist regime. From 1965 to 1972 he worked as an associate of the Institute of Linguistics. During this period he finished his *opera vitae* and handed it over for

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publication in, as he anticipated, a series of articles. However, due to his past as an 'enemy of the people' he was marginalised and his name was rarely mentioned by other Albanian scholars, despite the fact that they made extensive use of his work. Recognition came from outside Albania and in 1972 Dizdari was invited by the Collège de France to attend the 29th Congress of Oriental Studies. His death prevented his ever attending this event. His scholarship was appropriately honoured after the fall of the communist regime in two conferences held in Prishtina (1995) and Tirana (1997). Finally, in 2005, his dictionary was published.

2. Throughout this paper I will use geographical names in Albanian and in their articulated form, though, when necessary, I will also mention their designations in other languages, i.e. Shkodra vs. Skadar.

3. In accordance with common use, I understand the River Shkumbin to be the line of division between the Southern and Northern parts of Albania and their two respective dialects – Geg and Tosk. However, it should be noted that this division represents rather a 19th century intellectual construct than a proper division existing in practice. This issue is the object of another essay which I am currently working on.

was used to label black people who came or were brought mainly from Africa, whereas the latter was used for naming the Arab people proper whose 'colour of skin was white, or simply slightly dark.' (T. Dizdari, 2005). Dizdari then explains the appearances of the term *Arab* in everyday speech, idiomatic expressions, oral tales and songs, personal and geographic names, cattle breeding, agricultural production, and cuisine and dishes. For instance, in a lullaby recorded in Shkodra,<sup>2</sup> the mother sings to her son: *N'ahër tand t'hinglloftë ati, / Hysmetin t'ia bafhtë harapi* (in free translation: In your hut may your steed neigh/ and may the Arab take care of him). A frequently used idiom is 'to get as messed up as the hairs of the Arab' (*m'u ngatërrue si flokt e arapit* in Northern dialect and *bëhet lëmsh si lesht e arapit* in Southern dialect).<sup>3</sup> Such family names as *Arap* or *Harap*, and their respective derivatives *Arapaj* and *Harapaj*, are noted amongst all Albanians throughout the Balkans. Dizdari stresses that the personal name *Rrapo/Rapo*, which is very common in southern Albania, especially in Mallakstra, Vlora, Labëria and Gjirokastra, most probably originates from the name Arab. The noun *Arab* (as well as its derivative forms: *Harap*, *Arapaj*, *Harapaj*) appears in geographical appellations in various parts of the Balkans inhabited by Albanians. Dizdari lists a few of them: *Thika e Harapit* (Arab's knife – Puka); *Bjeshka e Arapit, Sukat e Arapit* (Arab's mountains, Arab's peaks – Puka); *Guri i Harapit* (Arab's stone – Vukël, Kelmend); *Harapi i Ivanit* (Arab from Ivan – Vukël); *Hurdhat* and *Kodra e Harapit* (Arab's hills – Kokdodë, Puka), *Suka Harap* (Arab's rise – Zadrimë), *Varri i Arapit* (Arab's grave – Skrapar), *Arapaj* (quarter in the village Spathar, Skrapar), *Arâpi* (quarter in Luz, Dibër/mac. Debar) *Arapaj* (quarter in Roskovec), *Arapaj* (quarter in the village of Rrashbullë, Durrës), *Arap* (quarter in the village of Berish, Puka), *Prroni i Arapit* (Arab's Creek, in the Iballa region), *Maja e Harapit* (Arab's Peak in Theth, Shala region), *Gomna e Harapit* (Arab's Will, in the suburbs of Shkodra). In the area of Shkodra and in the town itself until the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there lived several families of black people who were believed to be the descendants of slaves or prisoners brought to the town by sailors and pirates from Ulqin in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. They were called *Harap* (feminine *Harapesha*) and were respected widely by the locals, especially those of them who were involved in agriculture and owned land. And finally, almost throughout the regions in the Balkans where Albanian was or is spoken, the designation *Arab*—in its derivative forms like *arap* (Gjirokastra), *harap* (Kruja, Dukagjin), *rapo* (Çamëria)—was used to name a black bull. Similarly,

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the feminine forms of this noun were used to name a black cow or a black ship: *arapkë* (Gramsh), *arape* (Labëria), *harapeshë* (Myzeqe), *rape* and *rapkë* (Çamëria) (Dizdari, 2005). In written records, the name Arab is found as early as 1635 in the writings of Frang Bardhi, who describes the *Harapetë* as 'mauri Aethiepes'. It appeared afterwards in different records about the Shkodra area, and became quite common in travel writings, literary works, essayistic and other accounts during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

This highly descriptive note by Tahir Dizdari allows us to note two important points. First, that in its denominational role the name *Black Arab* is related to colour, and hence also racial distinction. And, second, that most of the geographical names that include it are to be found in the northern and north-eastern part of present-day Albania.

## PROVERBS, SAYINGS, TALES, GAMES AND SONGS

Dizdari only mentions a few oral tales, sayings and songs in which the designation *Arab* appears. These traces, however, as being additional important evidence of the presence of this designation in the oral memory and cultural practices of Albanians, need to be extensively described and interpreted. Thus, in everyday speech in Shkodra, it was a customary habit to say of a person who had fallen in love with a plain girl that 'he has fallen like the Arab for the frog' (*e ka kapë meraku në ta si harapi në bretkocë*). Of brothers or relatives whose households were prospering, people would say that 'they are doing well with each other, just like Arabs' (*sa mirë po shkojn me njani tjetrin ata vllazën, duken si harapët*). Both of these sayings illustrate aspects of the everyday life of this small community, but they also reveal the ambiguous attitude of the Albanian majority of locals towards them. Thus, on the one hand, they were perceived to be somehow bizarre, if not a synonym for physical unattractiveness (hence an Arab could fall in love with a frog), which was usually an attribute attached to the Roma. On the other hand, the level of their social solidarity and kinship ties was well recognized and appreciated.

Overall, one may consider the designation Black Arab in Albanian to be primarily a synonym of dirtiness. Of children who often got dirty their mothers would say they looked as black as Arabs. The 'Black Arab' appears in a popular game, especially among children in southern and central Albania. It goes as follows: one of the participants, or

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sometimes even the mother, would be named the Black Arab and sent out of the room for a while. Then each of the participants would pick up a colour and the Black Arab would be recalled to enter the room. He would then start naming colours and if he picked one chosen by either of the players, that player would go for one year to live with the Black Arab. The game ends when the Black Arab names all the colours, i.e. when that player has gathered all the others into his possession, and then the turn goes to someone else. Again, the figure of the Black Arab appears here in close association with colours, something that most probably relates to the inclusion of black within this name.

It is only in few fairy tales that the figure of the Black Arab appears as the main character, usually as the personification of a negative force. Thus, the Danish scholar, linguist and folklorist, Holger von Pedersen (1867-1953), collected a tale in which one of the opponent-characters, met by the major hero while wandering out with his stallion, is named *Arap Uzengjia*. (Pedersen, 1895). Since this tale is one of the very few in which the figure of the Arab emerges as the main hero, it is worth quoting some fragments from it at length. Arap Uzengjia appears in the course of the tale as the owner of an ill-fated inn. No one stops to eat at the inn, despite a golden table being set at all times by the roadside, laid with gold plates, spoons and forks, and laden with wonderful dishes. All travellers are afraid of Arap Uzengjia. The stallion teaches the main hero, a boy and the son of a king, to go and sit at the table, to eat but not reply to the Arab. The young lad is also taught to cover the back of his stallion with five buffalo hides. When the Arab sees that the boy has eaten and is about to leave the table, he leaves the inn and chases the stallion on his mare. At some point the mare neighs and the whole space in front of the inn suddenly transforms into a lake. The Arab's mare and the boy's stallion find themselves in water up to their bellies. They start to fight with each other. The battle is hard; the mare takes the buffalo hides off the back of the stallion while the stallion breaks the ribs of the mare. In the end, both fall exhausted to the ground. Then the boy and the Arab start fighting, first with their swords and then wrestling with their bare hands. Neither is able to conquer his adversary. Eventually, the Arab claims that he has seen no other fighter like the boy in the entire world and proposes they become blood brothers. The boy replies, 'All right, let us be brothers, then, though I do not yet trust you!' They return to the inn and the boy sits at the table while the Arab goes in the backyard to make coffee for them. In reality, the Arab is not an ugly black man but the Earthly Beauty. The Arab

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takes off his skin and returns to the room, more beautiful than any girl ever seen before, and serves the men coffee. Everybody in the room begins to tremble at how beautiful the girl is. However, she returns to the back-room and puts the black skin on again. Being again an Arab, she returns to the main room and asks the king's son: 'Did you see my sister, who brought you coffee?' 'Indeed, I did,' responds the young lad. Then, the Arab continues, 'I would like you to take her as your wife.' 'I will take her,' replies the young lad, 'though, I must find first the daughter of the king of jinns. After that I will return to take your sister.' At this moment the Earthly Beauty reveals herself and they exchange rings (Pedersen 1895, 39-40).

Imagined as a dark, black, ugly and scary person, the Arab appears in this tale as the equivalent of the Earthly Beauty (Alb. *e bukura e dheut*), the main female character of Albanian oral folktales. This amalgamation is unique in Albanian folklore. Usually, the Earthly Beauty is closed behind the thick walls of high towers, hidden behind seven mountains, seven forests and seven rivers or seas. Often she is imprisoned by dark forces, such as jinns, or mighty dragons (Alb. *kulshedra / kuçedra*), with whom the main hero has to wage merciless battles. In this tale, it is the black skin and 'dreadful' appearance of the Arab that literally hides the Earthly Beauty from the eyes of the others. In other words, it is the Black Arab who this time metaphorically imprisons the Earthly Beauty.

The blackness and terrifying look of the Black Arab, which finds expression in the above-quoted fairytale, are often referred to still in everyday language and reality. Exactly these two features are recalled when the Black Arab is referred to as a means of pressuring children who refuse to follow an order given by their parents, or will not go easily to sleep. In general, however, such a social and psychological role is performed by the figure of *kulshedra*, or *kuçedra*. Yet, it is not unusual in the streets of Gjirokastra and surrounding villages to hear mothers reprimanding their children for getting as dirty as the Black Arab while playing outside on the fields.

Another evident manifestation of the figure of the Black Arab in Albanian folklore is his appearance as the adversary of Gjergj Elez Alia. Generally taken, the line of argument of this song reveals strong similarities with the song about Bolani Dojčin among the Serbs and Bolen Dojčin among Macedonians and Bulgarians. In this wider Balkan context, the ultimate fight of Gjergj Elez Alia brings to mind also the legend of St. George, or Saint Demetrius, the saviours of Thessaloniki.

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It should be stressed, though, that the Albanian Gjergj Elez Alija, as sung mainly in northern Albania and Kosovo, is the hero of only one song and in this respect he differs from the corresponding Bosnian figure, Džerdželez Alia, who wages many battles and has many adventures.

The most well-known Albanian variant of this song was noted down by the Franciscan father Bernardin Palaj in the region of Nikaj and was published in 1937 in the second volume of the collection of Albanian folklore *Visaret e kombit* (Treasures of the Nation). This text is considered canonical and since then has served as a point of reference for any analysis of the subject. There are certain differences between this song and those about Bolani Dojčin and Bolen Dojčin. It does not take place in any clearly stated geographical place (as known, the latter take place in Solun/Thessaloniki), the main hero does not have a wife (Anđelina in the Serbian song), but only one unnamed sister, who has taken care of his wounds for nine years. The adversary of Gjergj Elez Alija in most Albanian variants is a figure called Black Baloz (*Balozi i Zi*), who is usually identified as a reminiscence of the Byzantine *basilus*, or sometimes also as related to the *bailo*, the chief Venetian diplomat in Constantinople. Baloz emerges 'from the sea' and imposes very heavy taxes on the people: every house must send him a roasted lamb and a virgin girl; every day he must kill a hero in battle; every week he must raze one region to the ground. When the turn comes to Gjergj Elez Alija, he sends his sister to his brother-in-law the blacksmith to put new shoes on his horse. But in reward for the work, the blacksmith asks for the love (in the original 'asks for her eyes') of Gjergj's sister. She refuses, strongly revolted, and replies that she gave them once and forever to her dead parents and to her wounded brother. Eventually, a second blacksmith, who is godfather to Gjergj, helps to prepare the horse for the fight. Gjergj comes to the battlefield and, after a bitter struggle, defeats the Black Baloz. In the end, Gjergj Elez Alija returns home exhausted from the fight and asks his friends to take care of his sister after his death. However, his sister then embraces him and dies at the very same moment (*Visaret e Kombit* II 1937, 42-48).

However, to the Franciscan fathers Bernardin Palaj and Donat Kurti who edited this volume of *Visaret e kombit*, and presumably to many other readers, another variant of this song was already known. It appeared as part of Canto V, entitled *Deka* (the Death) of the epic poem *Lahuta e Malcis* (The Highland Lute), of which the final edition appeared in 1937 in Shkodra. The author of the poem was Gjergj

Fishta, another Franciscan father and one of the main political and cultural figures in Albania during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. While fighting with the Montenegrins in Vranina on the Albanian/Ottoman–Montenegrin border, one of the Albanian fighters, Kacel Doda, starts singing the song while playing the *lahuta* (an instrument very similar to the South-Slavic *gusle*). He sings the song about Gjergj Elez Alija, but in a different form to that published by Palaj and Kurti. This variant is shorter. It lacks the episodes and dilemmas related to the horseshoeing. The sister does not appear in the song and the line of argument is concentrated on the conflict between Gjergj Elze Alija and his adversary. But, although the enemy emerges from the sea, the enemy is not Baloz but 'an Arab, black brave and severe'. Similar to the Baloz of the canonical variant, the Arab imposes heavy taxes, but in addition he explicitly demands from Gjergj either to come and fight him or to pay these taxes. Otherwise, the Harap threatens, he will destroy Gjergj's house, capture Gjergj's cattle and enslave Gjergj's wife. Before going to war, Gjergj takes care of his health by eating and drinking well for two weeks, repairing his armour, feeding his horse and, finally, asking for his mother's blessing. The duel is fierce, but Gjergj defeats the Arab and cuts off his 'black head', which is described by the singer as follows: 'three palms long his lip was/ his ear as big as a pelerine/ enough to cover three big men' (Fishta 1937).

It is impossible to judge whether this is indeed a folk song that was literally incorporated in the poem by the poet. However, Fishta is known for making use of folk poetry, especially of the tradition of epic songs amongst the highlanders of northern Albania. Arguably, both variants were in use among Albanians, though more commonly the adversary of Gjergj Elez Alija was named 'Baloz'. Questions could be raised as to why Fishta opted for the rarely occurring name of 'Black Harap'. Was it because Fishta was aware of the South Slavic variants of these songs, since during his studies in Bosnia he was an alumni of father Grga Martić and the folkloristic activity of the Croatian poet was an inspiration for Fishta's own work? Or was it because Baloz brought to mind reminiscences of the Latin and hence Christian world, whereas Harap was more related to the Ottoman or eastern world? If that was the case, was Fishta an orientalist in the sense that Edward Said gave to this term? (Said 1978).

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## BLACK ARAB, ARABS AND ALBANIAN ORIENTALISM?

How to interpret the use of the 'Black Arab' figure in Albanian folklore, oral memory and cultural practices? It is evident that it has racial and ethnic connotations. By all means, this figure was and is used as a personification of *the other*, someone, who has another colour of skin, who cherishes another way of life and who does not belong to the community that *owns* this place. Still, this *other* sometimes happens to be respected for moral and ethical qualities that are similar to those of the majority.

However, this short exposé of the figure of the 'Black Arab' brings to mind other, more recent discussions on the perception of Arabs in general and something that has already been termed 'Albanian orientalism'. A full presentation of these discussions would require another essay; however, a few major traits may be drawn here as well. During the phase of the Albanian national movement that entered history under the term The National Awakening (*Rilindja Kombëtare*)—i.e. from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until 1912 when Albania declared independence—there prevailed amongst other ideological traits a sort of anti-Ottomanism. Everything oriental, Ottoman, Persian or Arab, started to be perceived as an obstacle to the development of the country. Despite the fact that many Albanian activists were indeed Ottoman officials, in their writings the orient was perceived as an overlay imposed on Albanian identity and culture. These lines of thinking found expression in the verses of the greatest poet of the period, Naim Frashëri, who wrote about the sun that rises from the place where it sets.

During the inter-war period, the main object of intellectual and political discussions among young Albanian cultural elites was the need for Westernization of the country. King Zog I was perceived by his supporters as a leader that would direct the country in this process—almost as an enlightened ruler. But his opponents saw in him the personification of the typical Ottoman ruler, a pasha in new clothes. In both cases, everything that was oriental, related to the Ottoman Empire, to Arabic or Persian culture, was perceived as backward and an obstacle to the development of the country. Only Branko Merxhani, though openly opting for directing the mentality and thinking of the youth towards the lines of western philosophy and political sociology, depicted a source of inspiration in the transformation that Turkey was undergoing at that time under Kemal Atatürk. The Italian occupation of Albania

in 1939 was presented as a sort of landmark and enlightening hope on the road to westernization. The same rhetoric was associated with the establishment of the communist regime after the war, which was interpreted as a real social revolution leading towards the democratization of the country. It was precisely during the communist regime that this Albanian orientalism became a sort of official ideology and the only line of thinking in Albanian scholarship. All the shortcomings that Albanian society was facing were seen as a result of the Ottoman heritage. All links between the Albanian national movement and the Ottoman Empire were eradicated and these two were presented by Albanian historiography as having always been in an open and deadly conflict. In the works of Ismail Kadare, Ottoman despotism and the Arab deserts played a metaphorical role for the Albanian communist regime. Whether this was the case is still a matter under discussion; however, the fact remains that Arab culture and Arabs in general were perceived as something foreign to the Albanian cultural heritage. The myth of Skanderbeg and his victorious fight against Ottoman rule that eventually saved the whole of Europe laid the foundations of post-war Albanian historiography (for a detailed account see Sulstarova 2006).

In this context, one may conclude that nowadays the use of the figure of the 'Black Arab' and 'Arab' in general seems to be an expression of this Albanian orientalism. Accusations against Albanians for representing, alongside Bosnians, the avant-garde of a larger Islamic threat to 'Christian' Europe—accusations which frequently appeared in the Serbian and Macedonia media during the conflicts in Kosovo and Western Macedonia—seem to have further strengthened such Albanian orientalism. This, on the other hand, has led to large internal discussions on the role of Islamic heritage in Albanian culture and identity. The joining of Albania to the Conference of the Islamic Countries was widely criticized inside the country. The lack of recognition by Arab countries of the independence of Kosovo provoked the same sort of discussions. The 'Arab', usually equated with 'Wahhabism', is nowadays associated with backward and despotic social relations, a non-developed economy and alien cultural traits. That is not the case, since most Albanian music, as is generally true throughout the Balkans, shows clear Arabic and oriental influences—if not roots. Stigmatisation of the 'Black Arab' goes hand in hand with Arabic-sounding music played during weddings. Demonization of the Ottoman Empire appears alongside an emphasis on the fact that Albanians produced 42 Grand Viziers for that state. Such ambiguity is not only Albanian but

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can be perceived among other nations of the Balkans. They all curse or stigmatise the 'Black Arab' and make children afraid by evoking his presence. And yet, it does happen sometimes that the 'Black Arab' turns into an 'Earthly Beauty' as in the Albanian tale.

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### **From 'Arapi i zi' to discussions on Orientalism – the figure of the Black Arab in Albanian folklore and culture**

*At the starting point, this paper aims first to inquiry on the presence of the figure of the “Black Arab” in the Albanian folklore, with a special focus on epic songs and ballads, as well as tales. Further on, the analysis will embrace other levels of cultural and social communication. For instance, the “Black Arab” appears in the everyday language all through Albanian inhabited territory in the Balkans as a synonym of blackness and physical dirtiness. But it is only in the littoral that Black Arab appears in curses.*

*During the last decade the development of Islam among Albanians and the impact of religious variety on the Albanian identity has been one of the main issues in the public and scientific discussions in Albania and Kosovo/a. Both Orientalist and Occidentalist rhetoric has been present in these discussions. One of the main arguments raised by those who see the spreading out of Islam among Albanians as an earlier phenomenon than the coming of Ottoman Empire in the Balkans, mention early contacts of Albanians with Arabs. In this context, the inquiry on the figure of “Black Arab” in the Albanian folk culture and social memory appears to bear a special importance.*

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Ghjacumu THIERS (Corse)

## Un Theatre D'ombres Maures

Au coeur des enjeux de nos sociétés contemporaines se dresse la figure de l'Autre qui nous observe... avec des regards familiers, comme disait le poète. Ils pourraient être attirants et pourtant ils nous inquiètent car nous habillons le plus souvent ces inoffensives silhouettes de lourds manteaux d'angoisse. Ce sont des peurs ancestrales face à l'existence que nous savons tout à la fois palpiter et s'éteindre dans notre identité individuelle. Aussi avons-nous besoin de projeter l'éphémère de notre vie vers l'avenir en le faisant porter par l'assurance du lignage et d'une postérité où notre empreinte personnelle s'inscrit de manière inaltérable. C'est pourquoi où il y a complexité, diversité, discontinuité et hasard nous ne voulons qu'unicité et prévisions infail- libles. C'est pour cela sans doute que nous recherchons fébrilement notre double identitaire et faisons la chasse à l'Autre depuis des temps immémoriaux. Nous nous réservons l'apanage de la culture et le privilège de l'humanité et nous nous évertuons à ne voir en lui, le Différent, que barbarie et cruauté.

L'idée de race et les filtrages qu'elle permet nous est devenue si nécessaire que nous nous attachons à nous en prouver à tout instant la vérité génétique, la pertinence conceptuelle et la validité morale. Nous savons désormais construire nos théâtres d'ombres. Nous nous armons à cet effet d'une ressource puissante et indéfectible: l'appréhension de la différence. Dans nos cultures méditerranéennes, l'image du Maure est depuis longtemps l'objet et le plus souvent, la victime de cette stratégie de la distanciation.<sup>1</sup>

Mesure essentielle de notre identité, la différence joue un rôle ir-

### Les mots clés:

- théâtre d'ombres
- la figure du «Maure»
- identité
- alterité
- l'Autre
- l'Orient
- la Corse
- la Sardaigne
- la Toscane
- appellation générique

1. Cette appellation (Maures) dérive du terme Moros en grec et Mauri en latin, qui désigne à l'époque romaine les Berbères d'Afrique du Nord, du Pays des nuits ou Terre des ténèbres car le soleil disparaît à l'ouest. Au moyen âge, le terme latin

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Mauri passe en français sous la forme maure, mais aussi en espagnol sous la forme Moros pour désigner les musulmans, mais aussi les Arabes à l'origine de la conquête de la péninsule ibérique au VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle. En 711, les Maures imposèrent à une grande partie de l'Espagne et du Portugal le règne de l'islam jusqu'en 1492. Ils étendirent leur influence au midi de la France, mais furent arrêtés à Toulouse et à Poitiers en 732. En 1212, les royaumes chrétiens, sous le commandement d'Alphonse VIII de Castille, repoussèrent les Maures du centre de l'Espagne. C'est la période de la Reconquista. Cependant le royaume de Grenade résista durant près de trois siècles. Le 2 janvier 1492, l'armée de l'Espagne chrétienne obligea les Maures à quitter l'Espagne ou à se convertir au christianisme. Le terme «Maure» est souvent utilisé pour les Noirs, les musulmans, les Perses ou les Indiens. Othello de Shakespeare fut le «Maure de Venise». Dans l'usage espagnols «Maures» a aussi un sens plus large et signifie musulmans en général.

2. Samuel Huntington:  
*Le choc des civilisations*.  
Paris. Odile Jacob, 1997.

remplaçable du fait de son extrême plasticité. Selon les besoins de nos affirmations identitaires du moment, nous pouvons en effet la réduire à une dimension insignifiante ou lui donner la profondeur d'un insondable abîme. Infranchissable. Consacrée comme ligne de partage entre identité et altérité. Alléguée comme une évidence, nul besoin de la démontrer. Il n'est que de la désigner pour la montrer et l'instituer, avec une ostentation que paraît légitimer le seul appel à l'expérience de notre interlocuteur. Celui à qui nous nous adressons devient alors pour ainsi dire notre double en identité, celui à qui nous pouvons désigner l'Autre, différent de nous et de lui-même, parce que précisément nous sommes, lui et nous, identiques et partageons une seule et même identité.

Il serait naturellement malvenu au moment même où nous fusionnons avec lui d'attirer l'attention sur la dénomination de la communauté que nous formons ainsi, ce «nous autres» dont la mention impose sa relativité alors même que notre proclamation identitaire entend borner et instituer une identité collective indéniable et absolue. L'expression et sa déclinaison («nous autres», «vous autres», voire le québécois familier «eux autres») dresse en effet une différence construite. Elle n'est autre que différenciation, prise de distance qui éloigne mais établit entre le Même et l'Autre un compagnonnage sans lequel l'identité deviendrait impossible à montrer parce qu'impossible à dire.

Cette instauration de la définition identitaire intervient à différents niveaux. Je suis ainsi conduit à y recourir pour camper ma personnalité dans la foule de ceux parmi lesquels je vis. J'y associe d'ordinaire nom et prénom(s) et décline au besoin différents caractères anthropométriques ou socioprofessionnels pour en conforter la véracité. Elle est également sollicitée au niveau des formations sociales (groupes, classes, cultures) plus ou moins larges et jusqu'au niveau civilisationnel. On sait, sur ce dernier point, comment elle a pu devenir au cours des vingt dernières années une manière de lire les rapports entre Orient et Occident, islam et chrétienté, Nord et Sud... Pour nous, dans les régions de Méditerranée que nous habitons, c'est encore la silhouette du Maure qui vient se profiler sur ces horizons menaçants.

Dans la surabondante littérature de justification des conflits il suffira de citer ici la doxa mise en circulation par le livre de Samuel Huntington *Le choc des civilisations*<sup>2</sup>. Elle s'est trouvée particulièrement renforcée par les commentaires qui ont suivi les attentats du 11 septembre 2001. Cette année-là, *L'Express* daté du 13 septembre proclamait: «les effroyables attentats (...) consacrent une fracture entre civili-

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sations». A l'origine de l'événement s'impose pour les commentateurs le « choc des civilisations » comme socle de l'argumentation: « Le mardi 11 septembre 2001 apparaît comme le premier jour de cette guerre civilisationnelle entre l'islam et l'Occident. Mais c'est aussi le cours de l'histoire qui s'emballe. Comme cela s'est déjà produit depuis quatorze siècles dans les relations entre le monde musulman et le monde chrétien devenu occidental. Ce n'est pas une parenthèse, comme l'a été, le temps d'un siècle, l'affrontement entre la démocratie et le communisme, mais une très vieille affaire, une rivalité plus que millénaire dont l'intensité a varié en fonction de la démographie, du développement économique et de la fureur religieuse des deux camps ».

Disons-le d'emblée, une telle vision du monde en termes de « chocs des civilisations » constitue une affirmation dangereuse et erronée, reposant sur une conception dévoyée du politique. Huntington utilise en effet le mot « civilisation » comme « le mode le plus élevé de regroupement et le plus haut niveau d'identité culturelle dont les humains ont besoin pour se distinguer des autres espèces. Elle se définit à la fois par des éléments objectifs, comme la langue, l'histoire, la religion, les coutumes et par des éléments subjectifs d'auto-identification. Les civilisations sont les plus gros "nous" et elle s'oppose à tous les autres "eux" ».

Or cette conception a été magistralement critiquée par Marc Crépon<sup>3</sup> qui met en critique les « trois questions que l'on retrouve dans le Choc des civilisations: celle de l'originalité, celle de la cohérence et celle du schème du devenir » (p. 29).

Premier postulat donné comme une évidence indiscutable: **l'originalité** de chaque civilisation envisagée dans sa singularité foncière débout toute possibilité de civilisation universelle. Elle disqualifie d'autre part la notion même d'humanité. La notion de « civilisation » se donne en effet « non seulement (comme) l'identité la plus large, mais surtout la dernière que l'on est susceptible de reconnaître ». Aussi toute civilisation a-t-elle un « esprit spécifique » et, par voie de conséquence les civilisations « sont incapables de se comprendre et donc de s'entendre » (p. 29 et 32). C'est dire que pour Huntington la différence entre civilisations n'est pas le produit de causes conjoncturelles, mais procède bien au contraire d'une nature essentielle. Il en résulte que la démocratie et les valeurs d'égalité et de liberté sont dépourvues de toute signification en dehors de la civilisation occidentale.

Cette mise en cause de la thèse de Samuel Huntington n'empêche

3. Marc Crépon dans *L'imposture du choc des civilisations* (Pleins Feux, 2002). L'auteur entreprend de « déconstruire l'interprétation des événements du 11 septembre 2001 en termes de "choc des civilisations" » (quatrième de couverture). En un peu plus de quatre-vingt pages il parvient à montrer à la fois les faiblesses de la théorie de Huntington, les dangers des lectures en termes de « chocs des civilisations » et surtout l'imposture que constitue cette « vision » du monde. C'est un ouvrage important qui a été écrit ici. Un ouvrage qui décortique d'abord les insuffisances du concept de civilisation façon Huntington, et qui met ensuite en évidence la vision perverse du politique qui apparaît dans la thèse du « choc ». *L'imposture du choc des civilisations* nous met devant la nécessité de nous réapproprier le beau mot de « civilisation » sali par la médiocrité de la thèse de Huntington.

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pas le même Marc Crépon de tourner son regard critique du côté de l'Islam. Il y remarque que depuis une vingtaine d'années se manifeste une opposition systématique à l'Occident. Cette présentation systématiquement agonale des rapports entre les deux ensembles fabrique pour ainsi dire l'ennemi. Elle pose «l'Occident comme le responsable de tous les maux, et l'ennemi à combattre» (p. 39-40). Bien entendu d'autres conceptions, d'autres aspirations sont présentes au sein du monde islamique. Quelque difficile que soit, dans les sociétés islamiques actuelles, l'affirmation de principes de démocratie, de liberté et d'égalité, ces idées n'en sont pas moins bien présentes. La modernité des comportements et des idéaux démocratiques ne peut donc en aucune manière être considérée comme un privilège de l'Occident. Or Huntington ne retient pas les signes d'évolution, la marque des processus de civilisation comme par exemple «l'émergence de l'individu dans les sociétés du sud». Avec lui s'impose l'idée, toute dogmatique, que le jugement critique ne peut coexister avec le sentiment d'appartenance.

Autre postulat mis en place pour accréditer cette conception réductrice de la Civilisation, **le principe de cohérence**: les civilisations sont présentées dans toute leur particularité, dotées d'une identité pleine, incommunicable et parfaitement tenue à l'abri de tout rapport d'influence. Le seul mode de relations qu'elles peuvent entretenir avec les autres ensembles humains est l'opposition, le conflit, la guerre ouverte.

Or ce dogme est contrebattu par une pensée qui introduit dans la définition des réflexions tempérant la cohérence des systèmes civilisationnels et constate que ces ensembles sont mouvants, perméables, provisoires et soumis à l'évolution. Il y a une cinquantaine d'années que cette idée a pénétré les milieux de l'histoire et de l'anthropologie occidentale. Si donc un système identitaire et/ou culturel est envisagé comme dense, unique et unitaire dans sa nature comme dans son existence ce ne peut être que sous la forme de l'utopie ou dans une perspective abstraite et spéculative. On sait d'ailleurs comment Ferdinand Braudel considère l'imbrication de causalités et de périodes temporelles multiples, souvent sans articulation manifeste entre elles. A l'opposé, la causalité d'Hutington est toujours univoque, taille dans la complexité et privilégie les raisonnements idéologiques et politiques qui procurent des justifications à la violence. C'est pourquoi, selon Marc Crépon, la théorie du «choc des civilisations» convient aux terroristes, car elle est, à leurs yeux, la meilleure justification de la terreur» (p. 54).

Troisième élément pointé et combattu par Crépon: le «schème du devenir» qui implique après la stabilité et l'apogée, le déclin des civilisations. Le critique y voit à l'oeuvre l'idée pernicieuse d'une dégradation des civilisations à partir du moment où elle cesserait d'être «identique à l'idée qu'on s'en fait». Le dynamisme caractéristique de toute évolution est ainsi assimilé à une idée reçue: tout ce qui n'est pas préservé dans son intégrité –réelle ou imaginaire- initiale est réputé soumis à la dégradation.

On voit bien comment se construit l'idée même du «choc des civilisations» dont un sentiment et une idée-force attestent la véracité et favorisent la vérification par l'expérience autant de fois que nécessaire. Il s'agit là de deux fondements indispensables. L'un est un invariant: la peur, dont nous pouvons constater l'existence en nous et autour de nous, y compris à travers ses manifestations physiques très concrètes ou ses conséquences sur nos attitudes et nos comportements. L'autre –savoir de qui il faut avoir peur- est une variable liée au contexte et à l'histoire des «civilisations» concernées, bien que certaines figures et motifs soient lisibles longtemps dans la durée, jusqu'à y prendre l'aspect d'éléments pérennes.

Or dans les régions que nous habitons, dans ce coeur de l'Occident qu'est la société française, aucun doute: nous savons de qui nous avons peur. Sous des appellations diverses c'est encore et toujours la figure du Maure qui inspire l'angoisse et provoque le geste qui repousse.

De quelque côté que l'on regarde, c'est donc le Maure, l'Arabe, le Turc, l'Infidèle qui fait ainsi figure d'ennemi historique et de menace permanente.

## L'ACTION DU CCU ET LE PROGRAMME MORES

C'est en s'appuyant sur ces constats que le Centre Culturel de l'Université (CCU) de Corse a entrepris depuis quelques années d'apporter la contradiction à cette image qui avait pu s'invétérer dans les représentations. Cette action prend la forme de diverses réalisations empruntant les langages de la littérature et de l'art.

Les sources historiques abondent concernant les relations de l'île avec les territoires hier soumis à l'autorité ottomane et entretenant avec les puissances occidentales un état de guerre permanent abondent en faits et récits où les Corses ont une place notable. Ceux-

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ci sont souvent signalés comme victimes des razzias et figurent parmi les innombrables prisonniers des potentats d'obédience turque. On les trouve aussi comme corsaires au service des états italiques (Gênes, Pise et Venise la plupart du temps) en guerre contre les Turcs. Mais il n'est pas rare de les retrouver sous les traits peu flatteurs de renégats, hier esclaves puis passés au service des beys d'Algérie et conduisant contre l'Occident des opérations où ils manifestent une efficacité remarquée par les chroniqueurs dans la course et la guerre navales.

Il va sans dire qu'un tel motif nous a paru d'emblée capital pour un projet de réexamen critique de l'image de l'Autre puisque ces références, assez nombreuses pour ne pas être considérées comme déviantes, nous offraient la possibilité de montrer comment opère la distanciation identitaire et quels processus sont à la base de la fabrication de ce que l'on peut appeler «l'image de l'ennemi». En insistant sur le brouillage que produit inmanquablement ce rapprochement du Même et de l'Autre dans la figure du Corse devenu Maure, nous croyons avoir pu contribuer à ramener l'attention sur l'essentiel (les causes objectives des conflits prétendument identitaires) et montrer que les identités n'ont rien d'essentiel, qu'elles doivent être respectées, traitées et gérer comme produits de l'histoire, et par conséquent subordonnées aux intérêts explicitement exprimés par les groupes et individus qui s'en réclament.

La plus ample des réalisations du CCU de Corse dans ce domaine l'a uni à deux de ses partenaires habituels en Toscane et Sardaigne. Tous trois ont décidé de mettre à profit un appel à projets européen pour réaliser un collectif de réflexion, de réalisation et d'action à travers un triple spectacle sur le thème. Du point de vue qui nous occupe ici, ce projet mené à bien dans le cadre des programmes européens «INTERREG», est sans doute le plus abouti et le plus représentatif de la coopération interrégionale entre la Corse, la Sardaigne et la Toscane. Il s'agit en effet à l'origine, d'un projet fondé sur un échange artistique et culturel entre les trois régions à travers la production de spectacles construits sur un symbole commun: celui de la figure du Maure. Quoi de plus emblématique que la tête-de-maure, qui figure sur les armoiries du pavillon corse et en quatre exemplaires sur celui de la Sardaigne?

Ce projet intitulé **Mores** a donc réuni trois partenaires: le CCU, l'association culturelle LABORINTUS de Sassari et l'association de promotion sociale ACAB de Livourne, qui avaient déjà collaboré en 2004-2005 au programme **Ex-voto**, à savoir trois spectacles sur la

piété populaire des régions concernées.<sup>4</sup>

Le programme **Mores** a ainsi donné le jour à trois spectacles: **Moresca** (Livourne), **Bandera** (Sassari) et **I Quattru Mori** (Corse).<sup>5</sup>

Le projet **Mores** consistait ainsi en un échange artistique et culturel concret entre la Corse, la Toscane et la Sardaigne à travers des représentations théâtrales ayant pour thème principal les Maures, les histoires que cette référence inspire en mettant en branle un imaginaire symbolique commun aux trois régions impliquées dans le projet. L'attention s'est d'abord portée d'un commun accord sur la curieuse coïncidence (qui n'en est pas vraiment une) qui réunit:

- en Toscane, dans la darse du port de Livourne, l'ensemble monumental majestueux représentant quatre Maures enchaînés au piédestal sur lequel trône la statue de Ferdinand Ier de Médicis, Grand-duc de Toscane.
- en Corse, la tête de maure figurant sur le drapeau corse institué emblème national par Pasquale Paoli, Général de la Nation corse indépendante (1755-1769).
- en Sardaigne la répétition du motif sur le drapeau sarde avec quatre têtes de maures. Toujours cette représentation des maures comme emblème d'une île, qui représentent quatre prisonniers issus d'une terre divisée à l'origine.

On notera que l'emblème était ancien (datant de l'emprise du royaume d'Aragon sur la Corse), mais que les yeux du maure étaient bandés, symbolisant la condition du chef maure tombé en esclavage après sa capture. En signe de liberté, le bandeau est depuis l'époque de Pasquale Paoli relevé sur le front du maure figurant sur le drapeau corse. Intéressant glissement au cours de l'histoire où l'image de l'Autre (chef maure vaincu par les chrétiens) finit par représenter l'identité nationale des Corses!

Cette convergence de signes inclus dans la culture des trois régions limitrophes (la Corse est voisine au Nord de la région italienne de Toscane et au sud d'une autre région italienne, insulaire comme la Corse) a fait naître l'idée de recueillir ces histoires de pirates sarrasins qui sont à la base d'une communauté symbolique faisant des Maures un élément de contact entre ces régions transfrontalières dont deux font partie de l'Italie et une de la France. Ces récits ont constitué la matière première d'un travail visant à l'élaboration d'une triple production artistique tendue entre Histoire, rapports avec l'actualité et fiction théâtrale.

4. Des Ex-voto sur les frontières, trois spectacles à propos de la piété populaire en Corse, en Sardaigne, Albiana - Association de soutien du CCU, Corti, 2004, 113 pages et DVD.

5. Mores, Teatru è cultura di a diversità: Corsica, Sardegna, Toscana in: Quaterni Teatrini, Albiana - Association de soutien du CCU, Corti, 2004, 102 pages et DVD.

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Le choix de ce thème est clairement dicté par la volonté de se rattacher à une actualité où les rapports à l'Autre, "L'étranger", en particulier si c'est un homme de couleur, rappellent les conflits armés et l'émigration de masse. Autant d'éléments qui conduisent à un contact entre les cultures miné par un ressentiment entretenu par un corpus légendaire nourri de la peur évoquée plus haut. Nous avons donc, d'emblée, le sentiment de tenir là l'archétype même du mécanisme par lequel le contact entre les communautés se trouve faussé jusqu'à devenir, en fin de compte, impossible sinon sous la forme du conflit et de la guerre. Rappelons ici que le type d'affrontement évoqué par la guerre pirate visait moins à la destruction de l'ennemi qu'à sa soumission totale et à sa réduction au rang de marchandise à travers la traite des esclaves.

Evoquer le passé de ces trois régions réunies autour de ce projet impliquait donc la collecte de récits, d'événements et de situations reliés à la même racine symbolique. Pourtant notre recherche était loin de se donner comme motivée par le seul intérêt documentaire et historique. Très rapidement l'attention s'était en effet concentrée sur la représentation traditionnelle qu'inspirent les Maures dans les trois régions. L'accord se fit très tôt sur l'importance du travail que nous voulions accomplir pour ramener cette image sur le plan contemporain et les situations actuelles où elle exerce une influence déterminée par une vision négative de l'Autre. Ainsi, sans se départir de sa fonction esthétique ni se subordonner à un quelconque utilitarisme, le langage théâtral se voyait assigner un rôle privilégié dans les processus contemporains de communications entre cultures et origines différentes pour une meilleure compréhension.

A vrai dire ce projet s'était imposé comme une évidence, vraisemblablement du fait de la forte présence, dans les trois régions réunies dans le projet, d'immigrés venus d'Afrique du Nord. Il va sans dire d'autre part que, pour les acteurs réunis, l'opportunité était belle d'éprouver ce rôle de compréhension réciproque que le théâtre a toujours permis de jouer et que, confiants dans la qualité profondément humaine de leur art, ils n'avaient pas besoin de se prouver!

Dans la pratique, ce projet s'est articulé autour de l'écriture et de la mise en scène de trois spectacles dramatiques centrés sur le thème choisi. Ces productions ont été volontairement créées et représentées au printemps dans les trois régions afin de répondre au besoin local d'une offre culturelle diversifiée qui ne soit plus concentrée sur une période estivale désormais saturée. Chacun des partenaires a donc



d'abord oeuvré dans sa propre région en tenant compte de deux choix précis à caractère artistique et culturel:

1) Caractériser ces spectacles dans l'offre générale des spectacles. On voulait ainsi éviter à ces actions d'intention pédagogique manifeste d'être noyées parmi les nombreuses productions estivales majoritairement destinées aux touristes. Au contraire, les spectacles composant le projet **Mores** se voulaient avant tout destinés aux populations résidentes en vue d'une connaissance réciproque plus profonde. C'est en ce sens que nous pensons que la période retenue, le printemps, est la meilleure pour ce type de projet.

2) Aux différentes étapes de l'élaboration, les partenaires se sont appliqués à un travail d'échange permanent réunissant:

- les auteurs des textes dramatiques confrontant leurs travaux et les résultats de leurs investigations documentaires ;
- les acteurs et les musiciens à la recherche de procédures de réalisation communes (bien que cet aspect de la relation, toujours plus dispendieux, n'ait pas pu être sollicité autant que nous le souhaitions).

L'exiguïté des moyens financiers nous a aussi contraints à renoncer à notre projet initial – et idéal ! - d'un spectacle où les langues corse, italienne et sarde se seraient mêlés avec la force dictée par la nécessité interprétative due à la présence dans les histoires de personnages aux origines diverses. Quoiqu'il en soit, ces textes ont finalement donné corps et sens réel au projet, en permettant une rencontre concrète entre cultures, rendue possible par le biais des trois spectacles

## LE SPECTACLE CORSE

*I Quattru Mori* de G.Thiers est une fiction dramatique qui croise l'histoire de la Toscane et celle de la Corse, par l'évocation des pirates et de leurs razzias sur les côtes de l'île. L'action se déroule successivement à l'intérieur du palais grand-ducal à Florence et sur le port de Livourne, face à la Corse. Nous sommes dans les années 1615. L'action a comme base référentielle historique la bataille de Lépante et ses conséquences durables. La régente et ses conseillers ressentent les coups portés à l'autorité à l'intérieur comme à l'extérieur du Grand-duché. Il ne fait pas bon être pour les idées nouvelles et le procès de Galilée est imminent. Mais déjà s'annoncent de grands mutations. Sur le quai face au port de Livourne, le sculpteur Pietro Tacca vient

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d'ajouter quatre statues de bronze au pied du monument de marbre qui représente Ferdinand I<sup>er</sup>, créateur de la grandeur toscane. Elles représentent quatre chefs turcs, devenus esclaves, au pied de leur vainqueur.

L'action repose sur le conflit entre les ténèbres de la violence engendrée par l'État, les guerriers et la religion, et les promesses de l'aube de la science. La trame de l'action est tressée avec trois fils:

- la violence inouïe des Turcs, évoquées par des récits horribles de carnage;
- le destin de Galilée condamné au silence;
- la fabrication de la statue des «Quatre Maures» visant à immortaliser le génie et la puissance de Florence, mais aussi chef-d'œuvre, témoin de la beauté à laquelle peut parvenir la civilisation.

La Corse est présentée dans 1e «vocero» improvisé de Ferdinand quand il apprend la mort de l'amiral, et aussi dans une trouvaille dramatique essentielle au propos: les quatre Maures qui servent de modèle au sculpteur Pietro Tacca sont des Corses enlevés par les barbaresques et devenus de féroces guerriers à la solde de leurs ravisseurs. Violences d'État, violences guerrières, violences religieuses: qui sont les victimes? Pietro Tacca le dit: «Tous les malheureux se ressemblent. Le malheur ne porte qu'un seul masque». La dernière scène met face à face Galilée vieux et Ferdinand II jeune, dans un chassé-croisé paradoxal: c'est le jeune homme politique qui a le plus confiance dans les possibilités du savoir, tandis que le vieux savant doute davantage de la réalité du changement, du progrès moral. Dans une atmosphère où retentissent les échos des grands affrontements entre Turcs et Chrétiens en Méditerranée, la cour de Toscane s'inquiète sur son sort. L'époque troublée favorise toutes les ambitions: des complots s'ourdissent dans l'ombre. Nous sommes loin de la gloire qui auréolait la cour de Toscane illustrée par le Grand-Duc Ferdinand I<sup>er</sup> (1549 – 1609) vainqueur des Maures. La mort du grand amiral de la flotte toscane, terreur des Turcs et garant du pouvoir toscan, ouvre une ère d'inquiétude. Ferdinand II n'est qu'un enfant, surdoué, mais encore faible. Il n'a d'yeux que pour Galilée et ses théories, nouvelles et prometteuses. En fait, dans cette évocation historique, toute l'intrigue repose précisément sur la personnalité des quatre chefs maures. Notre «manipulation» en a fait des Corses impliqués dans les expéditions pirates de l'époque en Méditerranée. Ce traitement fictionnel nous était rendu possible par le destin de nombreux «renégats» d'origine corse

devenus pirates au service d'Alger et revenus épisodiquement sur leur terre natale, la Corse, pour y effectuer des razzias.<sup>6</sup>

6. Jacques Thiers: *Papiers d'identité(s)*, Ajaccio, Albiana, 2008.

Ce postulat de fiction nous a permis:

- de renvoyer à un ensemble thématique riche, pour lequel les documents abondent dans les histoires de corsaires et pirates en Méditerranée ;
- de renforcer la collaboration des partenaires (Histoire de la Toscane, présence de la tête de maure sur les drapeaux corse et sarde);
- de porter la réflexion sur des problèmes bien actuels: la question identitaire revisitée dans la confrontation du "je" et de l' "autre", les relations entre les régions frontalières en Méditerranée, la gestion des relations entre les différents espaces méditerranéens.

## LE SPECTACLE SARDE

***Bandera*** se déroule, quant à lui, en pleine actualité.

C'est un texte inédit de Daniela Sari, mise en scène par Mariano Corda, sur une musique composée par le maestro Gabriele Verdinelli. L'histoire se déroule dans un petit village sarde, de nos jours. Le curé déclare la disparition de la statue d'une Madone noire. Cette effigie est réputée miraculeuse car une légende dit qu'elle est arrivée par la mer après une tempête. Cette statue est de grande valeur et l'homme d'église accuse sa servante d'être mêlée au vol de la statue. Miriam, la servante du curé, une musulmane immigrée est désespérée, car elle confiait à la vierge noire sa douleur de mère. En fait, la Vierge noire n'a pas été volée; elle est partie délibérément, emportant avec elle le vent. De la sorte, le drapeau sarde, «a bandera», ne pourra plus flotter. Les quatre têtes de maures du pavillon sarde n'appartiennent pas à la culture sarde, mais aux envahisseurs aragonais. Ces derniers signifiaient par cet emblème la victoire qu'ils avaient remportée sur quatre chefs arabes, qu'ils avaient décapités sur le champ de bataille.

Le point de référence est donc la composition du drapeau sarde où figurent les têtes coupées de quatre maures sur un fond blanc partagé par les branches d'une croix rouge. Ce symbole n'appartient pas originellement à la culture sarde. Il a été importé dans l'île par les envahisseurs aragonais qui le brandissaient en souvenir d'un de leurs combats victorieux contre les arabes. C'était le drapeau d'Aragon, qui soumit les Sardes. Par voie de conséquence, l'emblème de la Sardaigne est fondé sur une contradiction fondamentale puisque, au-delà d'un signe funeste renvoyant à la mort brutale, c'est le symbole d'une défaite qui

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réfère à l'identité de la culture insulaire!

Miriam est désespérée. C'est une immigrée. Elle arrive de l'est, elle est musulmane mais dévouée à cette vierge à laquelle elle confie toutes ses peines. Ses quatre fils, migrants embarqués clandestinement, ont en effet trouvé la mort dans un affrontement avec les passeurs qui les avaient pris en charge.

Pendant que l'enquêteur écoute et relève les témoignages, les protagonistes se rendent compte qu'il fait de plus en plus chaud. Le vent qui soufflait depuis le début, depuis toujours, le vent a disparu. Le vent n'existe plus...

Le policier, resté seul, est pris de torpeur et s'endort. Il rêve de la Madone qui n'a pas été volée mais qui est partie de son plein gré, emmenant le vent avec elle. Elle a fait cela car le vent doit cesser d'agiter ce drapeau sur lequel sont représentées les têtes coupées de quatre hommes. Elle refuse ainsi de continuer à glorifier la décapitation de personnes, de fils comme l'étaient ceux de la gouvernante musulmane. Au réveil le policier comprendra, et ce sera clair pour tout le monde, que de ses rêves et de ceux des autres peut naître l'espérance.

## LE SPECTACLE TOSCAN:

*Moresca* de Gabriele Benucci est une fiction dramatique inspirée, comme le spectacle corse, par le groupe monumental «Ferdinando Primo e i Quattro Mori» la statue du grand-duc de Toscane, en marbre blanc, surplombe quatre chefs maures en bronze, enchaînés. Ce monument qui orne la darse de Livourne est le chef d'œuvre du sculpteur Pietro Tacca, né à Carrare en 1577, mort à Florence en 1640, l'élève préféré de Giambologna, et le meilleur représentant toscan du genre baroque. On doit à Tacca la statue d'Henri IV qui orne le Pont Neuf à Paris, et la statue équestre de Philippe IV à Madrid.

Dans la pièce, le metteur en scène reprend l'un des thèmes traditionnels liés à l'érection de ce groupe statuaire. On raconte en effet que Morgiano est le nom attribué par la tradition populaire à l'un des Maures qui a servi de modèle à Tacca, et que le sculpteur aurait connu quand celui-ci était captif au bagne de Livourne. Un regard technicien pour ainsi dire de la part du sculpteur. Rien qui puisse faire penser à un partage de goût, d'idées, de culture. Or Benucci imagine une rencontre, faite de respect mutuel d'abord, puis de familiarité amicale entre le sculpteur Tacca et Morgiano. Cette amitié imaginaire sert d'exorcisme

aux tragiques événements d'aujourd'hui déclenchés par le choc des diverses cultures et religions, un choc toujours plus brutal et dévastateur. Naturellement, outre le texte, cette thématique a trouvé diverses traductions esthétiques, grâce en particulier:

- à la confrontation / rencontre des différents matériaux dont le monument est composé: le marbre et le bronze, renvoyant à d'autres oppositions que l'on rencontre dans la réalité,
- à l'opposition des styles, entre le classicisme de la statue du grand duc et le baroque dans la représentation des Maures,
- au soulignement de la période historique, dans la mise en évidence de la fin de l'époque de la Renaissance.

Au-delà de l'anecdote et de la temporalité de ce programme (2006-2007) on voit bien quels sont les effets marquants du projet: élargissement de l'inspiration, ouverture de l'espace local aux réalités limitrophes et transfrontalières, mais surtout émergence d'un territoire symbolique commun, traversé par des références historiques, également communes, à interpréter dans un réexamen critique à la lumière du présent. Il ne s'agit plus seulement de célébrations esthétiques et festives autour d'un motif servant de support-prétexte à un travail transfrontalier, mais d'une réflexion-action sur les affinités réelles ou imaginaires alléguées par le discours identitaire et les programmes d'actions qui en relaient l'écho au sein des politiques du développement euro-méditerranéen.

On l'a compris, notre propos est d'attirer l'attention sur l'essentiels des mécanismes par lesquels s'expriment et s'insèrent dans nos sociétés les sentiments identitaires. Nous avons la candeur de penser que si le vecteur artistique et culturel n'a pas l'efficacité immédiate du politique, il participe d'une activité citoyenne où il investit une voie qui n'appartient qu'à lui. Nous pensons aussi que l'homme contemporain devrait pouvoir à tout moment s'appuyer sur les indications que lui délivre continûment la conscience, à travers son individualité singulière, d'une appartenance qui inscrit chacun dans la sphère universelle de l'humanité. Nous devrions ainsi saisir distinctement, par cette voie, la relation que chacun d'entre nous entretient avec l'histoire du monde et nous sentir ipso facto concernés par tout ce qui se passe sur la planète.

Il suffit pourtant de reporter notre attention sur la moindre de nos expériences quotidiennes pour observer que nos réactions se situent aux antipodes de ce qui devrait être une attitude conforme à notre con-

dition humaine. C'est sans conteste la manière dont les différentes cultures se sont historiquement constituées -les conflits Maures-chrétiens évoqués dans **Mores** en sont une des innombrables illustrations- et continuent de se définir qui provoque cet ensemble de comportements et d'attitudes mentales peu conformes à la solidarité. Mais si l'on pousse plus loin la réflexion, on ne tarde pas à comprendre que ce faisant nous en venons à hypothéquer le fondement même de l'attitude qui permet de reconnaître en l'Autre la qualité d'être humain. C'est en effet par cette reconnaissance - alors implicitement refusée- que s'affirme l'idée de droits imprescriptibles et attachés à cette qualité de l'humanité.

L'idée de la différence trouve là un climat favorable et croît alors jusqu'à prendre la forme d'une notion essentielle qui s'impose sans laisser de place à la contestation ni à la discussion. Malgré la complexité des sociétés où nous vivons notre intellection du réel dépend étroitement du filtre culturel, simple et univoque, à travers lequel nous interprétons le rapport à l'Autre, nous ôtant par là même toute possibilité de nous identifier à lui.

Dans les périodes et les contextes où faisaient rage les conflits de la course pirate et les affrontements entre chrétiens et musulmans, maures et blancs, Europe et Monde arabe, une telle dichotomie apparaissait comme une évidence et un point de dogme, religieux et intellectuel. Les sensibilités ont évolué depuis et les oppositions se nourrissent d'argumentaires plus élaborés, voire d'une subtilité remarquable.

Dans bien des discours autorisés, il semble impossible de s'entendre avec les représentants de civilisations non occidentales dans la mesure où se laisse largement accréditer l'idée de principes d'égalité et de liberté exclusivement défendus par la civilisation occidentale. En se référant à l'histoire des relations entre l'Occident et le reste du monde le même Huntington déjà cité affirme sans coup férir: «Dans tous ces points du globe, les rapports entre musulmans et peuples appartenant à d'autres religions (qu'il s'agisse de catholiques, de protestants, d'orthodoxes, d'Hindous, de Chinois, de bouddhistes ou de juifs) ont généralement été conflictuels et la plupart du temps violents à un moment ou à un autre, en particulier au cours des années quatre-vingt-dix. Si l'on considère le périmètre de l'Islam, on peut se rendre compte que les musulmans ont du mal à vivre avec leurs voisins» (Huntington, 1997, p. 284 ; cité p. 70).

Mutatis mutandis, ces paroles pourraient être extraites d'une tirade de quelque amiral toscan pourfendeur de pirates maures et issu d'un des spectacles historiques de **Mores**. Mais le contexte est tout autre et la finalité étrangère à l'expression brutale mais spontanée de la distanciation identitaire qui s'exprime au quotidien.

Il s'agit en réalité d'une stratégie consistant à fabriquer de l'ennemi en insistant sur la différence de civilisation d'un Islam posé comme l'adversaire passé et à venir de l'Occident. Un ennemi indispensable pour la démonstration qui se veut théorie explicative des rapports internationaux dominants aujourd'hui comme hier. Le prétendu « choc des civilisations » est ainsi donné comme un article de foi et un postulat scientifique s'imposant sans reste à l'esprit.

La manipulation idéologique à l'oeuvre dans ce montage théorique a beau jeu de s'appuyer sur la peur qu'inspirent aujourd'hui les attentats spectaculaires dans les mégapoles, comme le faisait hier la crainte des coups de main des Maures sur les rivages d'Occident. Les événements ainsi traités à travers le prisme de l'opposition identitaire et civilisationnelle reçoivent alors une explication simpliste et manichéenne qui repousse toute vision de la complexité dans les zones où nous vivons, sous le feu de géopolitiques antagonistes.

Ainsi exposée, recherchant l'aval de nos réactions les plus spontanées, cette conception bipolaire des relations internationales agit pernicieusement parce qu'elle ne se présente pas pour ce qu'elle est véritablement, une entreprise qui entend partager le monde entre puissants et dominés et perpétuer la raison du plus fort érigée en système politique. Elle se travestit au contraire et avance masquée derrière les apparences de prétendues oppositions de civilisations, confortées par un discours qui allègue les différences de cultures et de conceptions. Ce faisant elle agit avec une efficacité redoutable parce qu'elle installe le recours à la violence d'état non au centre de la politique et des relations entre états et zones d'influences économiques et stratégiques mais au coeur de l'identité. Face à l'Autre, elle nous enjoint alors de réagir au nom du respect de valeurs ethnoculturelles et non selon les impératifs de nos appartenances politiques, car elle pourrait se voir opposer, dans les sociétés contemporaines, les principes et valeurs qui placent les fondements de la civilisation au-dessus des intérêts partisans et des chauvinismes de tous ordres.

On comprend dès lors que l'image du Maure doit faire l'objet d'un réexamen permanent dans nos sociétés modernes. A travers la contradiction des représentations qu'elle véhicule et dont nous avons tenté

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de figurer la diversité et la richesse en puisant dans l'histoire des relations musulmans-chrétiens pour illustrer les spectacles du programme **Mores**, se laisse deviner la fécondité et la modernité d'une attitude qui doit nous permettre de donner tout son sens à la notion de «civilisation». Il nous faut en effet établir celle-ci comme un processus plus que comme un état et en mesurer le degré au niveau de notre identité en évaluant notre aptitude d'identification à l'Autre. Le regard que les individus et les groupes humains portent sur le reste de l'humanité évolue en fonction de l'histoire, du degré de connaissance que l'on a des autres peuples et des contacts que l'on entretient avec eux.

Tiens! Dans ce nouveau théâtre, les Maures ont les mêmes traits que nous...

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## Ghjacumu THIERS

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### Un Theatre D'ombres Maures

*L'article «UN THEATRE D'OMBRES MAURES» s'appuie sur une réalisation concrète du Centre Culturel de l'Université de Corse réalisée en 2005-2006 dans le cadre d'un partenariat européen entre trois régions limitrophes et transfrontalières et trois centres d'art dramatiques. Ce travail de recherches, d'études et de réalisation s'est effectué grâce à la coopération de deux régions insulaires: la Collectivité Territoriale de Corse (France) et la Région autonome de Sardaigne (Italie) et d'une région continentale voisine: la Toscane (Italie). Cette action prenait place dans le programme européen INTERREG-III A. La réflexion et l'action ont porté sur la problématique des rapports du Même et de l'Autre, envisagée dans l'histoire et illustrée à travers le thème de la course pirate en Méditerranée à l'époque des grands affrontements entre puissances rivales et confessions opposées.*

*Dans ce contexte, la figure du «Maure», appellation générique pour désigner la forme de l'ennemi dans la différence civilisationnelle, prend l'allure d'une menace brandie contre l'identité culturelle et l'intégrité des civilisations occidentales. Nous avons revisité cette image pour en réfuter la validité. Nous avons pour ce faire recherché dans les motifs qui fondent nos trois spectacles (corse, sarde, toscan) et nos trois patrimoines culturels, des références historiques et esthétiques renvoyant à ces représentations. Elles sont de nature à démontrer comment le Même et l'Autre sont en interaction au coeur même de toute culture. Elles nous permettent de débouter la thèse hungtingtonienne du «Choc des civilisations» et de fonder, à travers la métaphore de l'Art, l'idée du dialogue et de l'échange interculturels.*

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## Appendix



## GLOSSARY for THE BLACK ARAB as a FIGURE of MEMORY

### **Ambivalence of the image. Image in performance**

(Hande Birkalan Gedik) *Ambivalence of the image* refers to the argument that the image and the meaning is not fixed but in flux and can be resolved in performance depending on the narrator, audience and other contexts that go with performance.

### **Culjanje**

(Tomislav Oroz) The sliding of the Carnival doll of Lastovo down a rope from the top of a hill to the village as bombs explode at the doll's boots. This custom is still alive on Lastovo island in Croatia today and is practiced during Carnival week. The Carnival doll takes the shape of a Turk, with a black face, a moustache and a cigar in his mouth. This custom was known in 18th century Montenegro as *mormario*. In the eastern Adriatic, this custom came from 15th and 16th century Istanbul and its performers and acrobats. Their skills were well known in Venice as that custom was adored by Venetians. During centuries this custom changed its name from *Il volo del Turco* (with a Turkish acrobat lowering himself from the bell-tower of St. Marks to the Doge), through *Il volo del Columbina*, and finally to *Il volo dell Angelo* (the flight of an angel that throws confetti on the crowd in Venice during carnival days). Lastovo's form of this custom, known as *culjanje*, is practiced with special attention on Carnival Tuesday. If the sliding goes well, it is believed that the following year will be productive.

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### **Cultural exclusion**

(Nikolai Vukov) This notion describes the set of strategies of distinction, marginalization and objection applied to people of different cultural, ethnic, religious, and historical backgrounds. Widely applied in the spheres of anthropology and cultural studies, the notion addresses cases of cultural contact and intercultural communication where the interrelation between representatives of different groups is prevented by the functionalization of stereotypes and policies of negative interpretation. The concept is closely connected to notions of cultural stereotypes, orientalization and policies of interpretation, and helps towards a better understanding of cultural responses to group differences in the context of political and social domination.

### **The function of the performing character**

(Božović Rade) The function of the performing character, as Prop has explained in examples taken from fairy tales, is highly appropriate even in the analysis of epic poetry, given the definite specific characteristics of every genre. The application of this type of analysis is especially useful in cases where this function is connected to definite (formulated) motifs, which can be defined as driving motifs for the narration of the theme. Prop's followers would define it as a formalistic method. Those motifs are usually characteristic as they define the theme of epic objectification; they exist in numerous epic traditions. The holder of the function always performs the same action, or a very similar one; however, according to the rule, through the diachrony of performance, he is another new hero. This very fact allows and encourages the use of this function in the analysis of epic performance. Therefore, the function of the performing character is the element of verbalization. As Prop says, this element of verbalization is a 'constant and structural element', no matter who performs that function or the fact that those functions 'form the basic integral parts of the story.' However, Claude Levi-Strauss considers this function to be a meta-structure. Nevertheless, together with its related motif, the function becomes an important element of genre and structure which enables us, in continuous epic situations, to follow the sequence of heroes who essentially perform the old, long-since determined actions as the performing characters. The firm connection between the function, which often appears as the archetype, and the formalistic method, however, allows substitution of a hero who is a holder of the function, thus making it easier to understand the other changes which appear during the performance of an epic discourse.

The function, during the diachronic continuance, loses or gains some new attributes, but essentially it is connected to its motif and therefore unchangeable and constant in its essential idea. However, the attributes of the function of the performing character are variable and often follow the course of time; more exactly they are partially influenced by historical reality. The message of the action, the acts carried out by the performing character, is essentially constant, and in epic objectification of the essential motif it gives to the theme or the subject-matter its absolute character. Narrative epic poems can be divided by this function into numerous segments, according to which the constant and variable elements of the performance can be established. Propp established 31 functions of the performing character which verbalize the analysis of fairy tales. The (Black) Arab has eight different (attributes) functions in Serbian epics, but the essential meaning which the action of the holder of the function of the performing character presents is the battle against misfortune and evil, with the positive premonition that the victory of the domestic hero in collision with the foreigner represents the arrival of the new faith or the new age. The variability of the attributes of the performing character allows for the longer existence of the motif in epic tradition.

### **The identity of the folk epic song type**

(Ioana-Ruxandra Fruntelată) *The folk epic song type* is a form of a 'cultural narrative' emphasizing 'more or less stable' resemblances and differences often connected to 'myths' of the national culture to which the folk song type belongs. These myths (the founding myths of any nation) are 'more or less common' in cultures from neighbouring areas or nations, like South-Eastern European cultures, for example. By connecting narrative to culture in a poetic and musical creation, epic songs contribute to the verbalization of certain 'mythic nuclei'. For example, the mythic nucleus of the 'hero' wouldn't be relevant to us in the absence of the epic form that contributes to the creation of our culturally marked mental representation of heroes.

### **Identity. Identity and ethnicity**

(Ghjacumu Thiers) In less complex societies, the need to express individual identity is limited, primarily because duties are only vaguely differentiated and each member adopts a limited number of behaviours with which they then identify. Social cohesion and rules of cohabitation

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are enforced in the interests of the group and impose conformity on individual behaviour in keeping with group rules and values. Identity is thus merged with those group norms and models. Societies in which archaic structures and modern ways of living coexist still function on the basis of such schemes. Consequently, definitions of identity based upon individual identification with the values of a single group survive to the present day. Perceived in this manner, identity is an external limitation, all the more pronounced in its manifestations when it depends on a priori and stereotypical judgments. **Identity and nation.** National identity also functions as an evident and unquestionable definition. However, this definition is even vaguer than the previous definition of identity and it appears that it does not tolerate any objections. It is laden with an official nature and the power upon which it is founded and symbolizes the correlation with the institutional apparatus of the nation-state. Its most powerful illustration and most evident sign is the 'national identity card', which simultaneously operates as a certificate of citizenship and as an infallible control of identity. **National identity** thrives on confusion. Pretending to be a symbol of citizenship, it actually controls the citizen and confiscates nationality (as a cultural notion) which is then appended to the 'super-ethnicity'. **Identity and culture** When we attempt a definition of cultural identity we face a double obstacle: Culture is a prerogative of humankind which created it. In other words, *culture is universal*. Culture can be observed in the manifestations rooted (expressed) in space and time. In other words, *culture corresponds with the particularities of human society*. Related to this is the manner in which individual experience acquired regularly within society is adopted. Therefore, we propose a broader definition of culture as 'a unity which consists of the modes of thinking, acting and feeling of a community in its triple relationship with nature, humans and the absolute', but simultaneously limiting the scope of possible variations and specifying that cultural identity is characterized as a sum of the shared traits of all members of a historically determined group. The perception of differences, when understood as a threat, leads to self-defensiveness and ultimately to affirmation of one's own identity. This brings us to the core of one of the primordial questions of our time and our world: how should we translate into our spirit attitudes and customs registered by reality long ago: the mixing and interpenetration of human groups and ultimately, the incurable and wonderful heterogeneity of life?



## **Civilization**

(Ghjacumu Thiers) *Civilizations*, frequently associated with confessional systems, are based upon limited cultural identities. In that case, civilization is described as the broadest sum of identities (broader than any other affiliations) with which an individual can identify. As was stated in our study, Samuel P. Huntington's thesis about contemporary conflicts is based upon one such conception. Postmodern thought questions the legitimacy of this term, considering it unadjusted to the complexity of each situation. Numerous indicators demonstrate that attitudes and policies relevant to 'civilization' or to its antonym 'barbarism' are found simultaneously in different cultural contexts.

## **Otherness**

(Ghjacumu Thiers) *Otherness* involves a lay relation that is well-intentioned and may be associated with a mixing of cultures, but which is a long way from the notion of tolerance. However, it is closely related to awareness of relations with the other as long as the other is different and feels the need to be recognized in their right to be different. Otherness authenticates the notion of being distinct outside any normalization, whether individually or as a group. At present, there is a tendency to draw a distinction between tolerance and otherness. 'Tolerance' denotes clear territories of freedom respected by partners and neighbours regarded as 'tolerant'; otherness involves attention explicitly directed at the other and obligatory non-interference in case of the other's disrespect of basic human rights.

## **The mythical and legendary roots of the epic figure**

(Gabiella Schubert) Different traditions and narratives, including fairy tale motifs, legendary epic songs and Acts of Saints converge in the fictional character of the epic Black Arab. Some of the narrative details of the epic *Marko Kraljević i Arapin* (Vuk II 65) resemble the style in which a fairy tale is related, in particular the dream vision of the Sultana in which a helper appears and informs her of the great fighter Marko Kraljević in Prilep; the triple request to Marko; the fateful turn which occurs to the Sultan's daughter on the shore of the lake; as well as the scene in which the princess addresses the lake. Nevertheless, the actual roots of the song lie in the myth about the Dragon-fight and its Christian actualisation, the legend of St. George. In this case, the legendary ruler and his daughter are substituted by the Turkish Sultan

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and his daughter, the valiant rescuer St. George by Marko Kraljević, and the Dragon by the demoniacal Arab living by the sea. Of course, the presence of the fairy tale about the Dragon-slayer should also not be neglected. Their basic motifs are: A princess is demanded as a sacrifice and exposed to a Dragon. The Dragon breathes fire and has seven heads which magically return when cut off. The hero cuts off the tongues of the Dragon and marries the princess. Marko Kraljević however, like St. George, does not wish to acquire the Sultan's daughter or earthly goods: he fights for Good against Bad in this world, the violation and degradation of the Sultan's daughter by the Black Arab. His fight bears a Christian meaning. The Black Arab, on the other hand, is a substitution of the Dragon. He represents the principles of earthly power and sexual desire.

### **Orientalism and the 'Black Arab'**

(Rigels Halili) The term '*Orientalism*' encompasses different meanings. Initially it meant a sort of positive attitude to the Eastern visual and written arts, as imitated or described in Western literature and artistic practice. On the other hand, the term 'Orientalist', which started to be used already in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but which became widespread in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, appears frequently as the name for a scholar in Oriental studies or a person engaged in travelling to and studying the Orient. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the 'Orient' itself moved eastward parallel to the expansion of the Western world and modern colonization. It is exactly to this later process that the third meaning of the term 'Orientalism' refers to. It was coined by Edward Said in his highly influential book *Orientalism*, published in 1978. In Said's understanding, 'Orientalism' means a general deprecatory and negative attitude towards the East which prevails in the Western scholarship, travel writing, artistic and cultural practices. In his book, Said traced and analyzed expressions of such 'Orientalism' in Western academia and travel writing during the modern era, though with an emphasis on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Highly influential in the years to come, Said's work initiated a whole new trend of critical efforts, especially in social anthropology, discourse analysis and post-colonial studies. Said's work met with both appreciation and criticism. While reviewing the book, Talal Asad called the book 'a classic' and a 'must read' for everyone interested in the relations between the West and the East. On the other hand, there is a long list of critics, among them one could mention the British historian and orientalist Robert Irvin, who empha-

sized misunderstanding in Said's analysis and even Said's misleading conclusions. The figure of the 'Black Arab', especially used in its modern mutations in political discourse and cultural practices, brings to mind the creation of the *Oriental other* as described by Said. This figure embodies thus a various range of negative traits, such as despotism, closed-mindedness and backwardness that are either not present in our culture and traditions or need to be cleaned from them.

### **Historicity and continuity**

(Lidija Stojanovic Lafazanovska) *Historicity and continuity* refer to continuation and remind us that, what we should place in opposition to tradition—synonymous with the long duration/continuity of a certain memory fact in the process of transfer—is the 'transferred content' or the transferred (remembered, unforgotten) object. The transferred content depends on the historical changes to which it has been subjected. Even when its external shape remains unchanged, in keeping with principles of the new transfers (narrators, informants), this content changes its functions, its purpose and meaning. The continuity of the Arab (in folk literature) is not maintained in the same manner and to the same extent in all areas. This implies the problem of substrata and the super-strata. If we approach the Arab only by listing the facts without taking into account the historical background (from the Arab-Byzantine conflict to the present day), then we may arrive at a paradoxical, ahistorical idea of continuity. Moreover, the continuity of a certain phenomenon (the formulaic character of the Arab, for example) is actually made possible by profound social changes.

The historicity and continuity of the Arab in Mediterranean folk literature are affected by historical, real events in correlation with the level of consciousness. As the Arab-Byzantine conflict receded into the past, the formulaic character of the Arab assumed three basic characteristics (three-headed/black/sorcerer), most frequently as a bearer of the basic attributes of an enemy (in the epic) or a helper/miracle-worker (in folktales). By sustaining the rules and requirements of genre, the Arab performs his function. This character is associated with the *basic motif of abduction of a young woman* (Lepa Vida, Bolen Dojcin, King Marko, Gjergj Elez Ali). With the arrival of the Turks, he returns to the stage as a real historical opponent of the domestic, national hero. The emergence of his substitutes (the Turk, Aranut or Gypsy) has the primary purpose of preserving his attributes and this indicates the subtlety of the issue of continuity.

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## The Mythical Black Man

(Nikos Causidis) *The mythical black man* is a result of the concept of binary oppositions within which he assumes the role of a mythical-symbolic opposite who determines and reinforces the semiotic status of the real white man. Conversely, in the domains of the other, darker races, this role is assumed by the white man himself. Simply by existing, the mythical black man attracts to himself other components within the same concept of binary oppositions: 'We, **the ordinary people (our folks)** live in **this world – white world – the world of light**, and for this reason we are white. Aside from us, there exist other, different people (**foreigners**) who come from some other place. They are black, which analogously implies that they come from the **black world** opposite to ours, which is located **somewhere there, beneath, under our world** and represents a certain kind of **underworld, the world of darkness, of death**. Therefore, these people are our opposites: **they are bad, unclean, incomprehensible**, but also **powerful** and **able** in a mystic-negative sense.' Ultimately, in relation to the white man, these black people are defined as *non-people*, which in principle categorizes them within the **sphere of the dead, daemons, or gods**. On the basis of these semiotic structures, a category of black mythical characters/deities is formed with a zoomorphic or anthropomorphic appearance (Negroid characteristics or more generally traits of people who do not belong to the white race). These characters in Macedonia can be observed in the Neolithic period, through ceramic visual depictions, and in Antiquity, through earrings and lamps shaped as or adorned with negroid heads. Comparative analyses indicate the possible attribution of these depictions to several Mediterranean mythical characters and deities (Cadmus, the Kabiri, the Pygmies, Dionysus, Pluto, Hades, Hephaestus, Vulcan), or to their unidentified local equivalents. Upon this older layer, new components from the Slavic circle were appended in the Middle Ages (Crnobog, Crnoglav). Subsequently, they all entered the process of adjustment to the Christian mythical-religious system, both in its orthodox (the devil) or heretic varieties (Ahriman). Throughout all these periods, these characters were attributed various functions, related primarily to the chthonian spheres: underworld, death, birth, fertility, vegetation, resurrection, water, sacral potions, fire, metallurgy.

## SUMMARIES into Macedonian

### РЕЗИМЕА

#### КАТИЦА КУЛАВКОВА (Скопје)

**Од Црн Бог до Црна Арапина: различни митски и историски актуализации на универзалната матрица на Црното**

Мемориските фигури на Црна Арапина, на Лепа Ангелина и Болен Дојчин се парадигма на споделени фигури на меморија со словенска, балканска, медитеранска, а се чини, и со универзална конотација. Варијациите на нивните имиња и олицетворувања се само потврда на сознанието дека овие фигури се универзални архетипови кои се усвоени на балканско-медитеранските простори уште во древните времиња и кои, од тогаш па до 20 век, се актуелизирани во повеќе различни персонификации. Во оваа уводна студија на третиот том на *Интерпретации* е направена синтеза на сознанијата за конституирањето на овие мемориски фигури во културните практики на Балканот (словенскиот и несловенскиот) и на Медитеранот. Овие фигури се сретнуваат во антагонизирани бинарни парови или во театрализирани тријади. Секоја актуелизација на преден план поместува некој аспект на фигурите кој има моќ да го изрази доминантниот поглед на свет (дуелот, грабнувањето на жената, јунаштвото, пожртвуваноста). Фигурите на Црна Арапина, на Лепа Ангелина и Болен Дојчин денес се синтеза на нивните претходни кодирања и културни толкувања, според конвенциите на дискурсот што го претставувале (обредни, митски, религиски, историски, фолклорни и естетски). Во некои епохи преовладува тенденцијата кон митизација на фигурите на меморија, во други – тенденцијата на нивна историзација. При тоа доаѓа и до варирање на степенот на нивната универзалност, односно локалност. Колку се поисторични, толку се полокални. Па сепак, и во услови на ригидна историска идентификација на архаичните мемориски фигури, тие успеваат да го сочуваат, макар во херметична форма, својот оригинален семантички супстрат.

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## ТАТЈАНА ЦИВЈАН (Москва)

### Руските хипостаси на Арапот и нивниот развој

Во трудот станува збор за сликата на Арапот одразен во европската/балканската слика/модел на светот каде што тој го претставува оној свет/долната земја, опасен за овој горниот свет. Поврзан со митолошкиот змеј, како и со реалниот непријател (Турците на Балканот), Арапот останува секогаш непријател и/или странец. Странец, затоа што *црното* помеѓу *белите* (*црн* со сите негативни семиотички конотации на бојата: *валканост, смрт, опасност, зло* и т.н.). Руската етно-културна традиција го преобразува *Арапот* од митолошки змеј, противник на громовникот, и воопшто од „главен јунак“ во трикстер, т.е. во подлец, измамник, трчилажи, во комична фигура (иако потајно).

Еволуцијата на Арапот како лексем, личност, симбол, е анализирана sub specie во рускиот јазик и во руската книжевност, во периодот од крајот на 19-от до првата половина на 20-от век (Ремизов, Грин, Мајаковски, Замјатин, Булгаков и др.). Забележана е и појавата на новата и многу специфична руска митологема врзана за *позитивниот Арап*. Таа се однесува на „големиот руски поет *Арапот Пушкин*“ чијшто прадедо (1/8!) бил африканец (Арапот на Петар Велики). Уверувањето дека токму африканското потекло го направило Пушкин подобар поет, му припаѓа на секуларизираниот модел на руската култура (не само на мас културата).

## НИКОС ЧАУСИДИС (Скопје)

### Црниот човек во митските традиции на Македонија

Од Македонија потекнува едната од најстарите ликовни претстави на црнец во Европа. Станува збор за керамички предмет, пронајден на локалитетот „*Церје*“, с. *Говрлево, Скопско*, кој претставува дел од некаков сад. Садот бил дополнет со глава која мошне реалистично прикажува лице со негроидни обележја (Т.1: 1-4). Овој предмет наметнува сериозни прашања околу раното присуство на луѓе од оваа раса на Балканот (5-4. милениум пред н.е.), причините т.е. мотивите на ова присуство и механизмите преку кои тоа било реализирано. Мошне веројатниот култен карактер на овој предмет го актуализира и прашањето за раната симболизација и митологизација на човекот - припадник на црната раса во Европа.

Вториот пункт на нашево истражување е хеленистичкиот период, а поводот за тоа е еден специфичен тип **обетки дополнети со негроидни глави**, кои најчесто се наоѓаат како прилози во гробовите од 3-2. в. пред н.е. (**Охридскиот регион**) (Т.11). За разлика од претходниот, овие археолошки наоди, на посреден начин се придружени и со пишани извори кои

известуваат за присуството на црнци на Балканот (**Пигмејци** околу реката Strymon/Струма). Мотивите за нивното доселување се бараат во металургијата, која на полуостровот доаѓа од Истокот, а ја носат ориенталци т.е. луѓе со потемна тен на кожата. Архетип на овие металурзи - дојденци е митологизиранiot **Кадмо** - предводник на една „тајфа“ од црни митски ликови, покрај другото составена од **Кабирите** и од џуџестите **Пигмејци**. Во овој период, многу појасно се отцртува концепцијата на митологизирање на црниот човек. Неа би можеле да ја симплифицираме низ следниве опозиции:

- **бели луѓе - бел свет - овој свет - горе - живот - добро - чисто**
- **црни луѓе - црн свет - оној свет - долу - смрт - лошо – нечисто**

На спомнатите ликови им се припишуваат разни функции, главно во релација со сферите на хтонското: подземје, смрт, раѓање, плодност, вегетација, воскреснување, вода, сакрални напитки, лекување, оган, металургија. Нивното присуство на обетките би можело да се оправда со интенцијата, покојникот да се изедначи со митските Пигмејци како симболи на воскреснувањето (црно – смрт – живот; џуџе – дете – раѓање). Слична симболика може да се проектира и врз **античките светилки оформени во вид на негроидни глави**, особено ако се земе предвид нивното присуство во гробовите (Стоби, Хераклеја, Прилеп) (Т.ІІІ). Кај овие предмети, огнот излегувал од устата на прикажаниот лик, што него го определува како митски извор, создавач и господар на огнот (еквивалент на Хефест, Вулкан, Как).

Нашиот третпунктна истражување го претставуваат паганословенските традиции кои, судејќи според сегашните сознанија, пристигнуваат на Балканот во 6-7-от век. Во словенската митологија се добро потврдени неколку црни митски ликови т.е. божества. Едниот е **Чернобог / Црнобог**, а другиот **Черноглав / Црноглав**. Во Македонија, првиот од теонимите е потврден преку два топонима: **село Црнобоки**, Битолско, и **месноста Црнобоци**, кај село Бајрамовци, Дебарско (Т.V:2,3). Судејќи според изворите и подоцнежните етнографски традиции, станува збор за хтонски ликови кои носеле функција на опонент на небескиот бог, често именуван токму спротивно од нив - како Белобог. Оваа дуална структура е потврдена во сферите на сакралната топографија, каде присуството на двата бога се поврзува со називите на два спротивни брега на река, поток или дол.

Следната линија се однесува на присуството на црниот - темниот - мрачниот митски лик во **дуалистичките учења**. Тука мислиме на **богомилството** и други слични на него еретички доктрини (**масалијанство**, **павликијанство**, **манихејство**), присутни во Македонија во средниот век, а веројатно и порано - во текот на доцната антика. Низ пишаните извори, археолошкиот материјал и подоцнежните фолклорни прежитоци на овие учења, се следи опозицијата на добриот и на лошиот т.е. белиот и црниот бог (**Ахурамазда** т.е. **Ормузд** и **Ахриман**), чијашто генеза води до иранскиот дуализам, но и до веќе спомнатите аналогни традиции присутни во културата на Словенските и Старобалканските етноси.

Во текстот е претставена композицијата „Слегување во пеколот“ (11. век), од црквата во манастирот **Велјуса** кај Струмица, каде што во пеколот се претставени *два митски лика*, а не еден (едниот со црна, а другиот со бела боја на телото) (Т.VI:1,2).

Изнесена е тезата дека ваквата нетипична двојна претстава на пеколот може да се поврзе со паганско-еретичките богови - опоненти (Црнобог - Белобог, Ормузд - Ахриман), на што, меѓу другото, упатуваат и некои пасуси од *Тиликот* на ктиторот на овој манастир.

Последната тема на ова истражување се однесува на народните претстави поврзани со **Св. Јован Крстител** (Т.VI: 5,6), во коишто се провлекуваат некои од клучните обележја на наведените постари црни и хтонските митски ликови и божества.

## РАДЕ БОЖОВИК (Белград)

### Митот и Црна Арапина

Во трудот е ставен акцент многу повеќе врз моралните и на културните пораки што ги носи митот врзан за црниот Арапин, одошто врз самото толкување на митот. Сложената синкретична структура на овој лик може да се сфати најдобро ако ликот и дејствувачката функција на (црниот) Арапин се посматра од перспектива на Проповата визура. Тоа зборува за должината на неговото траење и важноста на таквата функција на дејствувачкиот лик за епскиот и за историскиот живот на српската култура. Од повкето функции што ги остварува овој лик, две од нив, сепак, имаат исклучително митски карактер. Првата се однесува на *пресретнувањето на сватовите и мегданот со некој од домашните јунаци*, а втората функција е поврзана со некој *лош бог од старата словенска* или *јужнословенска* митолошка традиција. Црните јунаци се појавуваат навистина ретко и со неизграден лик и во некои други епски традиции; нив ги има и во арапските јуначки романи но, освен во еден случај, тие се појавуваат како јунаци-витези кои имаат нагласено либидо. Нивната улога во јуначко-витешките романи е сосема поинаква од онаа што ја има (црниот) Арапин во српските народни песни. Во првата функција, Арапинот ја презема функцијата на некакво хтонско божество (Троглав) или змеј/ламја, чудовиште кое ги граба жените/невестите. Мегданот што го води некој од српските јунаци е приказната за победата над Злото и за влез во „новата вера“, што всушност ја претставува српската космолошка приказна.

Токму овде ја препознаваме динамиката на митската свест, толку важна за должината на опстојувањето на некој мит во актуелниот живот на една заедница. Интензитетот на доживувањата на божествата на злото во српската епска традиција се појавува како кобен придружник на целата историја, оставајќи немилосрдна трага врз луѓето и генерациите кои



доаѓаат и по Лазар Мутап, последниот кој го делел мегданот со Арапинот. Во втората функција, Арапинот е митско чудовиште кое треба да биде победено, како во библиската приказна, за да се влезе во нова вера, но и во историјата. Овој втор пример ја претставува српската варијанта за културниот јунак Марко Краљевиќ кој ги победува митските времиња. Епитетот „црн“ на некои места во овој труд е ставен во заграда, за да се подвлече разликата помеѓу митскиот и историскиот слој.

## СОЊА ЗОГОВИЌ (Прилеп)

**Дали е митско-историската појава на Црна Арапина на Средоземноморието врзана за Халифатот или за некоја постара матрица?**

Појавата на Арапите во ромејскиот, а оттаму и во словенскиот свет, како и нивните семитски претходници, била примана без предрасуди и кога се војувало, и кога се преговарало, и кога се тргувало, и кога се живеело во соседство, едни покрај други. Овој труд е фокусиран врз заемните културно-историски влијанија меѓу Арапите и Ромеите, потем Арапите и Словените, како и врз нивните заеднички/заемни придобивки. Поголемиот дел од арапскиот свет и корисниците на нивната култура, сè до појавата на исламот, живее рамо до рамо со претставниците на хеленистичко-римскиот свет, се напојува со нивната култура, ги користи достигнувањата на нивната цивилизација и ги впива во себе, нудејќи им ги - за возврат – своите сопствени постигнувања. Во односите примање – давање, како и при размената на културните добра помеѓу Ромеите и Арапите, ништо не се менува ни по конверзијата и приемот на исламот. Напротив, со појавата на Словените, нивните односи се продлабочуваат и се збогатуваат, затоа што Словените во обете култури, по пат на акултурација, ја внесуваат сопствената, а нивната ја прифаќаат и ја преобликуваат во своја култура. На тој начин, и Словените стануваат дел од големата медитеранска култура.

## ТОМИСЛАВ ОРОЗ (Задар)

**Турчинот на Ластово - општественото сеќавање низ преданието за каталонскиот напад на островот**

Во трудот се анализира колективното сеќавање на каталонската опсада на островот Ластово (Хрватска) во 15 век, како и издвдбениот аспект на збиднувањата во покладната недела, при што приказната за нападот служи како подлога на покладната драма што ја изведуваат нејзините учесници. Манифестацијата на колективното сеќавање, во којашто учествувал и авторот на трудов, се анализира преку резултатите

од теренското истражување, како и во соучество со покладните собитија на Ластово, а понатамошниот увид, во литературата, ја открива слоевитоста на покладниот обичај на Ластово, како и културните и цивилизациските влијанија на коишто Ластово им било изложено во минатото.

## ГАБРИЕЛА ШУБЕРТ (Јена)

### Црна Арапина во јужнословенските епски песни: лик на еден бесрамен развратник?

Црна Арапина претставува една од почесто претставените фигури во јуначките песни на јужните Словени. Тој е антихерој, злочест муслиман и противник на христијанскиот херој, главно противник на идеалниот херој Крале/Крали Марко, како и на болниот, но благороден Дојчин (Болен Дојчин, Болан Дојчин). Неговата најпроминентна ознака го обележува како изразито сексуално чудовиште. Тој бара секоја ноќ по една млада мома, та дури и се дрзнува да се појави пред Султанот за да ја побара неговата ќерка да се омажи за него. Дали е Црниот Арапин само еден бесрамен развратник? Ова прашање е подробно испитано врз основа на јуначката песна "Краљевиќ Марко и Арапин", објавена во втората книга од *Збирката српски песни* од Вук Караџиќ, бр. 65. Споредбената анализа ги покажува историските, митските и легендарните корени на фигурата на црниот Арапин и на епската песна која се однесува на Крали Марко и на Црна Арапина. Во неа, во одредени делови, се препознаваат особините на змејоубиецот од волшебните приказни, а во други - легендарните својства на Св. Ѓорѓи. Црниот Арапин е супститут на Змејот. Тој ги претставува принципите на земната моќ и на сексуалната страст. Неговата необична физичка сила шири страв. Од друга страна, Крали Марко претставува супститут на Св. Ѓорѓи. Тој е обликуван на ист начин како и Св. Ѓорѓи: тој се бори за Доброто против Злото во светот, против насилството и деградацијата на султановата ќерка од страна на Црна Арапина. Неговата борба има христијанско значење.

## ЛИДИЈА СТОЈАНОВИЌ ЛАФАЗАНОВСКА (Скопје)

### Херои - антихерои

Во епското и во баладното народно творештво, формулниот лик на Арапот се јавува како последица на историските и на културните врски со арапскиот свет, но и со оглед на развојниот, генетички *премин на епиката од мит во историја*. Во двата жанра, кои понекогаш и не можат така лесно да се издиференцираат, како основен се јавува универзалниот мотив на грабнувањето на младата девојка/жена. За прозата во којашто најмногу се чувствува помладиот бран на ориентални влијанија, сепак не смее да

се запостави фактот дека Арапот преминувал од поезија во проза, што пак се одредува и од гледна точка на протагонистите кои минуваат низ својата иницијација. Додека епскиот херој минува низ херојска, надлична иницијација, и ги носи атрибутите на еден моќен спасител кој ја носи слободата, пружа утеха и одново ја враќа надежта, за достоин противник го има троглавиот или Црниот Арапин, дотогаш пак протагонистот од сказната, кој минува низ своето полово созревање, во еден *авантуристички манир*, наидува на Арапинот кој ги задржува функциите на епскиот жанр: поврзан е со *оној* свет, со фазата на привремената смрт низ којашто минува иницијантот, како волшебник, чудотворец, или како страотен непријател, повторно во функција на успешно извршување на иницијацијските искушенија на главниот јунак.

Кога се мисли на траењето на мотивите или темите од народната книжевност поврзани со Арапот, лесно можат да се воочат стабилизираничките обликовни елементи во поезијата и во народната приказна (особено кај сказната), кои пак, од своја страна, многу успешно можат да ја предочат вкочанетоста/стереотипноста која е последица на слепото придржување кон наследените и постојаните обрасци. Овие формулни елементи се врзуваат за варијациите, чиешто цврсто јадро придонесува да се засили впечатокот на континуитетот на раскажувачките типови. Сепак, колку и да се обидуваат, истите едвај да можат да го продолжат своето животно траење, во моментот кога се губи внатрешната врска во нивната содржина.

## НИКОЛАЈ ВУКОВ (Софија)

### Културни практики на разликување и исклучување: Црниот Арап во бугарскиот народен епос

Фокусирајќи се врз репрезентациите на Црниот Арапин во бугарскиот народен еп, статијата ги проследува главните линии на *културното разликување и исклучување*, кои ја проследуваат оваа фигура и ја ставаат во епски контекст. Статијата ги набележува различните начини на разликување (етничките и културни стереотипи, видови на сродство и семејна припадност, митолошки карактеристики и др.) кои се вклучени во интерпретацијата на Црниот Арап како значаен „друг“ во епските песни. Зацртаната логика од херојскиот епос е одново потврдена во последователните епски форми (каква што е ајдучката поетска традиција) и во ритуалниот контекст, каде што стереотипите на разликувањето и на исклучувањето ја пронаоѓаат својата национална борба во додатните значења и интерпретации. Засновано врз конкретни примери од различни епски циклуси и сродните фолклорни форми, статијата ја истакнува важноста на правилата на разликувањето и на исклучувањето, како за концептуализацијата на Црниот Арапин како главна фигура во бугарската епика, така и за развојот на епскиот свет воопшто.

## ХАНДЕ БИРКАЛАН ГЕДИК (Истанбул)

### Арапка девојка гледа низ прозорец: Амбивалентните слики на Црниот Арапин во фолклорните приказни и претстави во Турција

Трудот настојува да даде прилог кон поимот „црна Арапина како фигура на сеќавање“ истражувајќи неколку примери од фолклорот во Турција во коишто се јавуваат црните Арапи. Тоа не претставува дискусија на фолклорот за црните Арапи сами за себе, иако истражувањата од овој вид ќе го зголемат нашето разбирање на црните Арапи. Наместо тоа, овој труд ги истражува, концизно ама критички, формите во коишто се јавуваат црните Арапи во фолклорните текстови и перформанси во Турција. Фигурата на црниот Арап се појавува во различни фолклорни жанрови - во народниот, селски театар, во театарот на сенки *Karagöz* (Црно-Ок) и во легендите, но уште повеќе во народните приказни (сказните), во коишто наративниот простор е многу поголем. Токму тука е многу важна улогата на фолклорот во регистрирањето, во сочувувањето (траењето) и во пренесувањето (дисеминацијата) на меморијата. Трудот покажува дека сликата за црниот Арап се темели врз спојот меѓу историските, фиктивните и проектираните стварности на дискурсот на народната приказна. Тој заклучува дека сликата на Арапот може да биде раскажана во согласност со аудиториниумот на театарските претстави, а преку наративните стратегии на раскажувачот на сказната. Оттука, перформативните стратегии создаваат не само една, туку повеќе различни слики за црниот Арапин. Во теорискиот дел, трудот се стреми да даде прилог кон имаголошките студии, актуелизирајќи го поимот изведба (перформанс), во којашто сликите и претставувањата би можеле да бидат преправани, бришени, создавани, запаметени и сочувани во сета нивна двосмисленост.

## ЉИЉАНА СТОШИЌ (Белград)

### Црниот Арап во српската книжевност и уметност

Со оглед на фактот дека многуте народи, па и српскиот, своите божества и демони од долниот, подземен свет, ги замислувале како црни, во нивните митови, верувања и умотворби најчесто тие божества и демони се означуваат како Арапи, Египќани, Етиопјани или црнци. Поцрнувањето (гаравењето) на лицата на учесниците од коледарските поворки е директно поврзано со претставувањето на ликовите на покојниците и на митските претци. Овој обичај е сочуван дури и во денешно време, кога се применува кај оџачарите и се поврзува со претставата на оџачарот, поради можноста тој да донесе среќа. Почнувајќи од најстарите, па сè до поновите времиња, во српските епски песни, Црниот Арапин го дели мегданот со Крале Марко, Болен Дојчин, детето Груица, со Лазар Мутап како заменик

на Петровиќ Ѓорѓе (Караѓорѓе), а Бановиќ Страхиња со Турчинот Влах - Алија; тие на крај на Арапите им ја сечат главата спасувајќи ја со тоа земјата, народот и девојките од ропството, од зулумите и од прекумерните даноци.

Во српската уметност од 18 и 19 век, ликовите на црните Арапи и црнци се појавуваат во претставите на *Црна* или *Египетска Богородица*, во сцените со трите магови или со источњачките кралеви кои доаѓаат на поклонување и на дарување кај малиот Христос, како и во композициите со фарисеите и со садукееите кои, во сцените со Христос, секогаш се појавуваат во ориентални костими. Освен во сакралните композиции, црниците или црните Арапи редовно се претставуваат и во историските и жанр-сцените. Споменатите случаи претставуваат само неколку од многубројните примери во српската уметност од поново време, кои ја потврдуваат суштинската прифатеност на универзалната идеја за христијанскиот екуменизам поврзан со заедничкиот живот, меѓусебното помирување, духовната преобразба и општото хуманистичко просветување на поединецот, но и на народот.

## ЈОАНА-РУКСАНДРА ФРУНТЕЛАТА (Букурешт)

### Обрасци на идентитетот во некои романски варијанти на “Црна Арапина” во народните епски песни

Овој труд го промислува идентитетот на мотивот на Црната Арапина на романска почва, упатувајќи на поимот идентитет кој се конституира во најстабилните делови на романските варијанти на истиот мотив.

Истражувањето покажува дека во романската фолклорна традиција мотивот на Црна Арапина се конституира главно преку фигурата на *Болен Дојчин*. По презентирањето на најважните стадиуми во фолклорните истражувања посветени на оваа епска песна, оваа студија преминува на концизна дескрипција на специфичните елементи кои можат да се пронајдат во романските варијанти на песната за Црна Арапина. Потоа, авторот ги истражува културните и поетските причини за присвојување (адопција) на песната за Црна Арапина во романскиот фолклор. Последниот дел од трудот го истражува идентитетот во однос на индивидуалната самосвест и колективното културно наследство.

Сумирајќи ги резултатите од компаративните анализи, авторот смета дека постојат доволно аргументи кои ја поткрепуваат идејата дека романското традиција на песната за Црна Арапина, што романските варијанти ја конституираат под името на на епската фигура на Болен Дојчин, се разликува од југо-источно-европските конкретизации на оваа тема и создава еден поинаков културен идентитет. Подробниот портрет на херојот кој умира и на неговиот непријател, спецификите на подготовките на херојот за последниот мегдан/борба (бањање во млеко, наоружан

до небо) и улогата на коњот на Дојчин во неговиот маестрален закоп, ја надополнуваат специфичноста на романската фолклорна традиција (специфична лирска атмосфера и повторување како антиципацијата на епските епизоди).

Според мислењето на авторот, другоста претставена преку ликот на Црна Арапина (и евентуалните историски конотации на другоста) имаат исклучително мала важност во романските варијанти на овој тип епска поезија, дотолку повеќе што таа и не соодветствува на инаку моќната позиција на романската епика. Се чини дека ова може да се објасни со суптилните афинитети на песните за Дојчин спрема обредниот фолклор и спрема другите епски песни сосредоточени главно врз темата на смртта. Романскиот тип на Болен Дојчин е дел од националното духовно културно наследство, затоа што оваа епска песна ја претставува како облик на културен наратив во којшто се зацртани контурите на „романскиот идентитет“. Фигурата на Болен Дојчин ги истакнува - помалку или повеќе стабилно – сличностите и разликите, често поврзувани со „митовите“ од романската национална култура, кои потсетуваат - помалку или повеќе - на митовите од југо-источните европски култури.

## **РИГЕЛС ХАЛИЛИ (Лондон/Тирана)**

### **Од Црна Арапина кон дискусијата за ориентализмот – фигурата на Црна Арапина во албанскиот фолклор и култура**

Најпривин, во трудот се разгледува присутноста на фигурата на „Црна арапина“ во албанскиот фолклор, особено во епските песни, балади и приказни. Понатаму, анализата ги опфаќа другите рамништа на културната и општествената комуникација. Така на пр., Црниот Арапин се појавува во секојдневниот јазик на сите територии од Балканот населени со Албанци, како синоним на црното и на физичката нечистотија. Но само во крајбрежието, Црниот Арапин се јавува во проклетојата. Во последната декада, развојот на исламот кај Албанците и влијанието на религиозните разлики врз албанскиот идентитет, претставува едно од главните прашања во јавните и научни дискусии во Албанија и Косово. Заедно, ориенталистичката и оксиденталистичка реторика се присутни во ваквите дискусии. Еден од главните аргументи на оние кои го гледаат ширењето на исламот меѓу Албанците, како претходен феномен поврзан со ширењето на Отоманската империја на Балканот, претставува токму споменувањето на раните контакти на Албанците со Арапите. Во овој контекст, испитувањето на фигурата на Црниот Арап во албанската народна култура и во колективното сеќавање добива огромна важност.

## ЃАКУМУ ТЈЕР (Корте)

### Маварскиот театар на сенки

Трудот „Маварскиот театар на сенки“ се темели врз една конкретна реализација од Културниот центар на Универзитетот од Корзика, остварена во текот на 2005-2006 год, во рамките на европското партнерство помеѓу три погранични и прекугранични региони и три центри за драмска уметност. Овој труд на истражувања, студии и реализации, е спроведен благодарение на соработката помеѓу два островски региона: корзиканскиот (Франција), тосканскиот и оној на Сардинија (Италија). Овој проект се одвиваше во рамките на европската програма INTERREG-IIIА. Рефлексијата и акцијата се фокусираа врз проблематиката на односите помеѓу Мене и Другиот (идентитетот и алтеритетот, нас и другите), забележани во историјата и илустрирани преку темата на пиратските напади на Медитеранот, во епохата на големите судири помеѓу мокните ривали и спротивставените вери. Во овој контекст, фигурата на „Маварот“, генерички назив за одредување на формата на непријателот во рамки на цивилизациската различност, добива облик на една загрижувачка закана против културниот идентитет и интегритетот на западните цивилизации. Ние ја ревидираме оваа слика со цел за да ја побиеме нејзината валидност. Токму затоа ние направивме истражување на мотивите врз коишто се темелат нашите три театарски претстави или спектакла (корзиканскиот, сардинскиот, тосканскиот) и нашите три културни наследства, историските и естетските референци кои упатуваат на овие претстави. Тие се тука за да ни демонстрираат, суштински, дека интеракцијата помеѓу Истиот (Même) и Различниот (Другиот) се наоѓа во срцето на секоја култура. Тие ни дозволуваат да ја одбиеме хантингтоновата теза за цивилизацискиот шок, и да ја засноваме, со помош на метафората на уметноста, идејата за *цивилизациониот дијалог и интеркултурната размена*.





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Saviour, hero saviour  
Semantics of black  
Semites, Semitic population  
Serbian literature  
Sexuality, sexual symbol  
Slave, slavery  
Slavic mythology  
Slavs

Snake  
Social memory  
Southern Slavic epics,  
Southern Slavs  
Stereotypes of the other  
Stranger  
Symbol  
Symbol of time

Theatralization  
Theatre of shadows, Moorish theatre of shadows  
Trakia Horseman  
Turks, Turkish  
Turkish folklore  
Tuscany

Universal semiotic opposition  
Underworld  
Upper world  
Uranus

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## NOTES on CONTRIBUTORS

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Turkish History Foundation, Cultural Analysis (Berkeley, CA), Border Crossing Network (Greece). In 2007, she spent three months in Germany with the DFG Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft stipend, working on the typology of Turkish folktales. Another project on Turkish folktales was also supported by TUBITAK.

**BOŽOVIĆ, Rade** (b.1938). PhD. Professor at the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade, and eminent expert on oriental studies. He is also a lecturer at the Novi Pazar University. Since 1960, he has worked on the spread of Arab culture, language and literature. He has been a member of the Tunisian Association of Science (with such authorities as Professor Emilio Garcia Gomez, A. Miquel, Joseph Van Ess, and Roger Garaudy) since its foundation in 1983, as well as of the Serbian Writers' Association, the Association of Translators of Literature, etc. His activities in bringing different cultures and religions together have been appreciated for a long time in cultural circles. His book entitled *Towards A Cultural Dialogue* has been published in Arabic (*Nahwa hiwar thaqafi*). His numerous publications include articles on literature, commentaries, translations of Serbian poetry into Arabic and of Arab poetry into Serbian. Amongst the 16 books of his which have been published, the most important are: *A Textbook of Modern Arabic*, *An Anthology of Arab Lyrical Love Poetry*, *An Anthology of Arab Poetry in the East*, *An Anthology of Arab Poetry in the West*. His book entitled *Arabs in the Epic Poetry of the Serbo-Croatian Speaking Region*, based on his doctoral dissertation, is also well-known amongst expert circles in former Yugoslavia.

Professor Bozović has established and taught three new subjects in the Oriental Department: the History of Arabic Classical Literature, The History of Contemporary Literature and The History of Arab Culture. During a very difficult period, he was the founder of the Yugoslav-Arab Association for Cooperation and Friendship (1994). His name can be found in the Dictionary of International Biography, Cambridge (1997). He has served several times as head of the Department of Oriental Studies, which is the oldest department of its kind in the Balkans. He was Vice-Dean and Dean of the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade. He was elected dean two times (1999-2002), during a turbulent period. After the political changes in October 2000, he was one of the two deans that were not replaced by the new authorities. He received The Golden Ring Award for translating from Arabic into Serbian (1984).

**CIVJAN, Tatjana** (b.1937). 1954 – 1959 Moscow State University (Classical Philology). 1960–1963 Institute for Slavic and Balkan Studies RAS (supervisor, V. N. Toporov). Dissertations: "The substantive in Balkan languages: towards a structural typology of the Balkan Linguistic Union", 1963; "The concept of linguistic union and modern Balkanistics" (1992). Institute for Slavic Studies RAS, Head Research Fellow. Institute for World Culture MSU, Assistant Director. She is a member of the Scientific Council RAS "History of World Culture". Member of editorial board: "Slavjanovedenie", Moscow, "Elementa", New-York (1993

– 2002), “Russian Literature”, Amsterdam, “Philologica”, Riga, «Balgarski folklor», Sofia; series «Slavic and Balkan Linguistics», Moscow. Has taught courses of studies on Balkanistics, Ethnolinguistics, and the Structure of Text in the Universities of Moscow, St. Petersburg, Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, and the Netherlands.

Main areas of interest: Linguistic typology, Balkanistics, Semiotics, Structure of text (Slavic, Balkan, from antiquity to modern times, Russian Literature), Folklore and Mythology, Cultural Anthropology Publications: 7 monographs, more than 400 articles.

Monographs. The substantive in Balkan languages: towards a structural typology of the *Balkan linguistic union* (Moscow, 1965); *The syntactic structure of the Balkan linguistic union* (Moscow 1984), *Linguistic bases of the Balkan model of the world* (Moscow 1990). *Movement and road in the Balkan model of the world* (Moscow 1999), *Semiotic travels* (St. Petersburg 2001; 2002), *The model of the world and its linguistic bases*. (Moscow, 2005; 2006; 2009), *Language: Theme and Variations*. Vv. 1-2 (Moscow 2008).

**CHAUSIDIS, Nikos** (b. 1959). He received his BA, MA and PhD from the Institute of Art History and Archaeology at the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje where he continues to teach. His special fields of interest include the pagan religion of the Slavs, pictorial semiotics, mediaeval archaeology and, primarily, the ancient and archaic myths and religions as well as their manifestation in the pictorial medium. He is the author of the following studies: *Mitskite слики na Južnite Sloveni (Mythical Images of the South Slavs*, Skopje 1994); *Dualistički слики: bogomilstvoto vo mediumot na slikata (Dualist Images: The Bogomil Movement in the Pictorial Medium*, Skopje 2003); *Kosmološki слики – simbolizacija i mitologizacija na kosmosot vo likovniot medium (Cosmological Images – Symbolisation and Mythologisation of the Cosmos in the Pictorial Medium*, Skopje 2005). He is also co-author of the study *Macedonia: Cultural Heritage* (English version, Skopje 1995) and of the CD ROM *Macedonian Antiquities* (English version, Skopje 2000). He has written over 50 articles that have been published in relevant scholarly periodicals.

**FRUNTELATA, Ioana-Ruxandra** (b. 1971). holds a PhD in Philology (Magna Cum Laude) from the University of Bucharest, Romania, under the mentorship of Prof. Nicolae Constantinescu (2005), with the thesis: *Personal Narratives: Experience and Story-Telling*. Publications include: *Personal Narratives in the Ethnology of War*, Ager Printing Press, Bucharest, 2004 (in Romanian), *Folklore*, a course for students in the *Programme for Rural Teaching* (co-author Nicolae Constantinescu), financed by the Romanian Government, World Bank and local communities, edited by the Romanian Ministry for Education and Research (also CD version), 2006 (in Romanian), and over 30 studies in Romanian publications (in Romanian and English) on topics such as: the ethnology of oral war memories, intangible heritage, globalisation, ethnologic interpretation, ethno-

logic terminology. She is currently a Lecturer with the Collective of Ethnology and Folklore, Faculty of Letters, University of Bucharest, Romania, where she teaches Courses on Romanian Folk Culture, Preservation of Cultural Heritage, Folklore and Intercultural Communication, Urban Ethnology, Mythology. She has attended numerous Scientific Conferences and Symposiums (national and international). Her area of scientific research includes: Ethnological field research and coordination of students' ethnological practice, especially in rural areas from all over Romania. She is a team member in several research projects initiated by the Department of Ethnology and Folklore (University of Bucharest) and financed by the National Council for Scientific Research in Higher Education (5 projects beginning with 1998) and by the National Cultural Fund (1, 2006). She is a member of the International Society for South-Eastern European Anthropology (InASEA) and of the Association of Ethnological Sciences from Romania (ASER).

**HALILI, Rigels** (b. 1975). Anthropologist. Graduated from the Graduate School for Social Research at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences (Warsaw) in 2007 and is about to defend his PhD thesis *Orality and Literacy. Oral Epic Poetry among Serbs and Albanians*. He has studied cultural anthropology and Polish Philology at the Faculty of Polish Philology, University of Warsaw, as well as international relations at the Institute of International Relations in the Faculty of Political Sciences and Journalism, University of Warsaw. He currently holds the post of Alex Nash Fellow in Albanian Studies at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London, and also is teaching Albanian culture and language at the School of Eastern Studies, University of Warsaw. His publications include: *A story about singers of tales* [in:] *Communicare, Almanach Antropologiczny II*, ed. A. Menwel, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warszawa 2007; *Notes about a forgotten book*, [in:] *Përpjekja* (Endeavour), Nr. 18, ed. Fatos Lubonja, A. Puto, Tiranë; *Two Fundamental Texts of Albanian and Macedonian Awakening Movement*, in: Stawowy-Kawka, Irena [ed.]. 2005. *Macedonia na Bałkanach – Historia, Polityka, Kultura, Nauka*, (Macedonia in the Balkans – History, Politics, Culture, Science), Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2005; *The Ideas of the Albanian National Movement and its Relations to Macedonia*, in: Zieliński, Bogusław [ed.]. *Wokół Macedonii: siła kultury – kultura siły*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań (The English edition: *Around Macedonia: the Culture of Power – the Power of Culture*): Wydawnictwo UAM, Poznań 2003.

**KULAVKOVA, Kata** (b. 1951). Poet, theoretician of literature and literary essayist. Member of the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts since 2003. She is a Professor of Theory of Literature & Literary Hermeneutics at the Faculty of Philology, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje. Her poetry has been translated into many languages and represented in books, anthologies and



selections of contemporary Macedonian and World poetry. Vice President of International PEN (by 2008) and editor-in-chief of the PEN collection *Diversity* (<[www.diversity.org.mk](http://www.diversity.org.mk)>). She has published several books on literary theory & hermeneutics (*Figurative Speech and Macedonian Poetry, Pact and Impact, Stone of Temptation, Cahiers, Small Literary Theory, Theory of Literature, introduction*, English translation, *Hermeneutics of Identity*), and has edited several readers and anthologies (*A Glossary of Literary Notions, The Balkan Image of the World, Violence and Interpretations, Memory and Art, The Dialogue of Interpretations, The Theory of Intertextuality, Poetics and Hermeneutics*).

Other publications include (poetry): *Annunciations* (1975); *The Act* (1978); *Our Consonant* (1981); *New Road* (1984); *Neuralgic Spots* (bilingual edition – Serbian & Macedonian) 1986; *Thirsts* (1989); *Wild Thought* (1989); *Domino* (1993); *Exorcising Evil* (1997); *Via Lasciva* (into French), 1998; *Time Difference* (into English), 1998; *Preludium* (1998), *World-In-Between* (2000) (into Bulgarian 2005), *Expulsion du mal* (into French), 2002, *Dead Angle* (2004); *Dorinte* (into Romanian), *Tenok mraz* (2008), and short stories (poetic fiction): *Another Time* (1989), *Autopsia* (2006). Personal website: <[www.kulavkova.org.mk](http://www.kulavkova.org.mk)> Main areas of interest include: theory of literature, theory of intertextuality, literary and cultural hermeneutics, Macedonian literature, Balkan figures of memory, linguistic rights.

**OROZ, Tomislav** (b.1984) ethnologist. Since 2008, he has been Assistant Professor at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Zadar (Croatia), and external associate at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Zagreb (in seminars 'Anthropology of tourism' and 'Anthropology of Social Memory'). Graduated in 2007 in the field of history, ethnology and cultural anthropology at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Zagreb. In 2007, he started a postgraduate doctoral study at the same department. Member of the Croatian Ethnological Society (HED). He has won several awards: award of Croatian Ethnological Society *Milovan Gavazzi* for best student project, entitled *Memory of the Battle of Vis: Festivals, Monuments, narratives*, and the Franjo Marković dean award for the ethnological movie *Zlatni čovjek*. In co-authorship he won a prize for the same movie at the 54<sup>th</sup> international Pula Film Festival in 2007. Awarded by faculty the award for best student of ethnology and cultural anthropology in 2007. Attendant of 8<sup>th</sup> International student seminar at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Szeged entitled *Water and Urban Life in a Hungarian Town (Szeged - cultural heritage, memory, leisure)*. Has attended several programs regarding ethnology and tourism (2006. *Ethnology and rural tourism*, 2007. *Rural tourism*) and was the Coordinator of the 5<sup>th</sup> International student conference on Roaming Anthropology, held in Zagreb in 2007.

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**SCHUBERT, Gabriella** (b.1950). Professor at the Institute for Slavonic Studies at the University of Friedrich Schiller, Jena, Professor-in-Ordinary for South Slavonic Studies and Southeast-European Studies.

Areas of interest include: Identity and dissociation in the Danube-Balkan-region; self and alien in the mirror of Southeast-European literatures; Southeast-European ethnology and folklore studies; language and identity; literary and cultural relations between Germans and South Slavs; contemporary South-Slavic narrative writers.

**STOJANDVIC LAFAZANOVSKA, Lidija** (1965). Full-time researcher at the Institute of Folklore "Marko Cepenkov" – Skopje, Department of Folk Literature. In 1989 she graduated from Philological Faculty, Department of General and Comparative Literature, at the University of Skopje. Gained a PhD in Philology from the Ss Cyril and Methodius University – Skopje (1999). In 2003 she undertook a postdoctoral study visit in Germany, Universität Hamburg, Institut für Volkskunde (DAAD Stipendium). Since 1997, she has been a member of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research; since 2004 she has been Editor-in-Chef of the journal "Makedonski Folklor". In the period 2005-2007 she was a member of the EC of the International Association for Southeast European Anthropology. Her areas of interest include: folklore theories and new practices; the concept of tradition and its epistemological relationship to the experience of modernity, comparative Slavic and Balkan cultural studies, Macedonian migrations. Publications include: *Thanatological Archetype of Life. The Phenomenon of Sacrifice in Macedonian Folk Literature* 1996; *Homo initiatus*, 2001 (<http://www.auburn.edu/~mitrege/mac-folklore.html>), *New Folklore Methodology* (ed. by, 2005), *Horizons of Folk Culture* (ed. by, 2006)

**THIERS, Ghjacumu / Jacques Thiers** (1945) was born in Bastia in Corsica. He is a professor of Classical Literature (Classical Philology), university professor (Regional Language and Culture) and director of the Cultural Centre at the Corte University in Corsica. He is one of the most eminent contemporary Corsican writers. He has published several popular comedies, plays, novels and poetry books. He writes poetry and texts for the stage (including *Soledonna*, *Canta u populu Corsu*, *I Muvrini et Surghjenti*). He has undertaken

a number of cultural projects. He has been a member of the group of Corsican cultural activists called 'Generation 1970'.

Since 1980, he has worked with the Corsican section at the Institute of Mediterranean Theatre (ITM, Madrid) on a multilingual stage (together with L. Sole from Sardinia, F. Scaldati from Sicily, and others). He has also published several books of essays. Areas of interest: sociolinguistic hermeneutics, historical studies of the relations between Corsica and Tuscany in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the narrative collection from the archive of Francization of Corsica, Mediterranean cultures, Corsican cultural history, teatrology. He has been awarded several prizes for literature and translation.

**VUKOV, Nikolai** (b.1971) has a PhD in Folklore Studies (2002, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) and a PhD in History (2005, Central European University). He is a Research Associate at the Institute of Folklore in the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and an Assistant Professor at the Department of Anthropology, New Bulgarian University. Nikolai Vukov has held visiting and research fellowships at the Maison des sciences de l'homme in Paris, the Centre for Advanced Studies in Sofia, Wissenschaftskolleg in Berlin, the New Europe College in Bucharest, and the Department for Southeast European History in Graz. Areas of research include: folklore epics and folk historical narratives; the anthropology of kinship and family; the historical anthropology of death and commemorations.

**ZOGOVIĆ, Sonja** (b.1949). In 1976 she graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy, Department of History, at the University of Skopje (Macedonia). Since 1980 she has been working with the Institute of Old Slavic Culture in Prilep, Macedonia, as a full-time researcher. She works as a Contracted Professor at the PMF, Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology; Institute of history and archaeology, at the Faculty of Philosophy (Skopje). She defended her MA (Pelagonia in mature feudalism) and her PhD thesis ("The historical development of ethno-political societies in Macedonia up to the end of the early Middle Ages") at the Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje. In 1982-1983 and 1988 she undertook two study visits at Moscow State University M. V. Lomonosov (Institute of Ethnography), under the mentorship of Acad. J.V. Bromlej. Areas of interest include the ethno-genesis of Slavs and Macedonians, Macedonian cultural and medieval history, and Mediterranean mythologies. She has published many scientific articles and two books: *Ethnic Communities in Macedonia Up to the End of the Early Middle Ages* (2001) and *Society and Folk Culture in Macedonia in the Early Middle Ages* (2002).





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