

VENUS IN THE MYTHOLOGY OF THE SOUTHERN SLAVS

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The paper tested the hypothesis that the folk literature of the Balkan Slavs could be a good and reliable source for the study of their pre-Christian religion and mythology. Religion and mythology, as a rule, include understanding of the world in a particular culture, i.e. cosmology. If so, the same source may contain knowledge and understanding of heaven and celestial bodies together with the way these understandings were incorporated into myths and rituals. Since Venus has no significance in Christianity, folk poems that refer to it probably have their origins in pre-Christian beliefs. In this particular case, the place of the planet Venus in the pre-Christian religion of the Balkan Slavs was examined.

Keywords: Venus, Danica, Evening, Vid, Southern Slavs, cosmology, mythology

References:

Janković, Nenad, Đ: (1951) *Astronomija u predanjima, umotvorinama i običajima Srba*, Odeljenje za društvene nauke SANU, Beograd.

A PAIR OF MONUMENTAL MEDIEVAL BOSNIAN TUMBSTONS (STEĆAKS) FROM DONJA ZGOŠĆA

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In this paper the hypothesis was tested that visual representations on stećak tombstones can illustrate certain knowledge and beliefs from pre-Christian mythology, cosmology and religion, as well as the calendar knowledge of the Balkan Slavs. The stećak tombstones were made of large marble monoliths, in medieval times. Older researchers attribute these to the Bogumils, a religious sect whose religious beliefs are not sufficiently known, but this assumption has been abandoned in recent times. Some are richly decorated with relief, some with inscriptions, written in Bosnian Cyrillic, in a language that is indisputably Slavic. The subject of analysis is the pair of stećak tombstones, found at a local cemetery in Donja Zgošća near Kakanj, in present-day central Bosnia. Both of these are richly decorated with relief. One can see formations of horsemen, scenes of hunting, as well as some abstract symbols, which appear in characteristic formations and numbers. These abstract symbols are arranged in groups of three, four or twelve elements, associating to calendar numbers. A more detailed analysis of this symbolism, as well as the spatial relations of these two stećak tombstones, leads to the conclusion that these two artefacts were at the same time a record of calendar knowledge as well as an instrument for determining the summer solstice.

Keywords: Stećak, Vid, Svetovid, Sun, Southern Slavs, cosmology, mythology

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