

A HOLY BEVERAGE: ON THE HISTORY OF WINE

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Abstract: In this paper we shall consider several aspects in which we can investigate the occurrence, the presence, and the significance of wine in the Balkans. We will use data from ethnolinguistics and folk literature, especially the presence of giving a toast and the cult of drinking wine in epic poetry, as well the etiological legends that analyze the origins of wine. In addition to this, some accompanying ritual and cult actions will be analyzed that may explain the significance and meaning of wine in some parts of traditional folk culture.

Клучни зборови: вино, традиционалната култура, потеклото на виното, етиолошки легенди

Резиме: Во овој труд ќе се осврнеме на некои аспекти во испитувањето на појавата и значењето на виното на Балканот. Ќе бидат опфатени податоците од етнолингвистиката и народната книжевност, со особен акцент на здравицата и култот на пиење вино во епската поезија, како и потеклото на истото во етиолошките легенди. Во прилог на ова, ќе бидат анализирани некои придружни ритуали и култови, што уште повеќе го потенцира значењето на виното во традиционалната народна култура.

1. Introduction

Wine is an ancient mythological symbol of fertility (abundance) and a mythological sign identified with human blood. The earliest evidence of the mythological triumph of wine and blood were established in ancient Hittite rituals and middle Hittite texts of warriors' vows, where in the performance of rituals there is pouring of wine and exclamations – "this is not wine, this is your blood!" These formulas appear in Christian mythology (in the words of Jesus Christ, who taking the cup of wine, says: "This is my blood" – Matt. 26,28).

The relation between wine and blood is also found in the cult of the Ugarit God (Death and Evil), who was cut like vines from vineyards, and in the Greek cult of Dionysus, representing mysteries that are followed by sparagmos of Dionysus (MNM 1, 1987: 236).

For Dionysus (Bacchus), the attribute of wine is usually related, yet it is not the most significant, and certainly not the most important fruit grown in Balkan lands. Consequently, we should expect that it played a crucial role in the Eleusinian Mysteries dedicated to fertility. Yet, wine comes from the southern part of the Balkans, from the same area which is considered the oldest homeland of Bacchus and Dionysus. It is the southern district of the Podunavlje, where botanical geography has established the oldest occurrence of a grapevine (Budimir 1969: 79–80). Budimir concludes that the Greek tribes took the Dionysus' games and mysteries from Indo-European precursors, dedicated to the cult of the ancestors during the vernal and autumnal equinoxes. Hence, the autumnal Dionysus' day, Apaturia, does not only apply to new wine and the other gifts of Demeter, but also to the young Athenians who entered into a cult community called a fraternity. The name for the autumnal feast of Dionysus, Apaturia, emphasized the great symbiosis of Greek settler tribes with the old Balkan Pelasti, their relatives from the Indo-European line. Such symbiosis shows overall mixoglottic terminology that refers to the ancient landscape and drama (1969: 81).

Experts consider the name of this deity to be non-Greek; actually it is considered to be old Balkan or Anatolian, and there are similar opinions regarding its synonyms: Dionisos, Sabazios, Zagreus, Iakhos (Budimir 1969: 83). Also interesting for the Balkan areal is the Illyrian expression Bizb, mentioned during the cutting of young vines from which, through a dissimilation, the shape olisbos appeared as a term for a small sickle that serves for the cutting of a vine (1969:88).

From Vasmer's etymological point of view, wine is usually considered as an ancient Mediterranean term, compared with Greek *φοῖνος*, *οἶνος*, lat. *vinum*, arm. *gini*, alb. geg. *venë*; tosk. *verë*, got. *wein*, ahd. *win*. This theory is supported by the fact that the given word is absent in the Indo-Ir. languages, and the fact that the origin of wine is considered to be the Caucasus and Asia Minor. Still, the folk cult of wine in the Slavic world is still the most widespread among the southern Slavs, where there is an ancient tradition of viticulture (SD: 1995), from whence we shall derive many examples.

2. Etiological legends

There are many variants in legends about the origin and cultivation of wine in the Balkans, and they are all interesting because every national variation contains its own specific uniqueness. We shall mention the Serbian, Macedonian and Slovenian variations, which represent an alternation of the rivalry between various hypostases of God and Devil. Čajkanović (1973) provides information about the Serbian variation of this kind of a story that emphasizes the typically Serbian unique details about the vineyard, the wine, and the brandy in the legend “St. Sava and the Devil”. This tale was created following a common form, but it contains an addition that is specifically Serbian. It is said that St. Sava planted a vineyard together with the Devil, and then gathered the grapes, put the wine in barrels and poured it; he kept the wine for himself, and he left the grape remains for the Devil, who made brandy out of it. St. Sava tasted the brandy and blessed it. This detail about the grapes and the wine cannot be found in any other foreign version, although the number of such variations amounts to hundreds. Čajkanović concludes that this is the original Serbian version. But the question is why these details appear in this story (related to the cultivation of wine)? According to him, the connection is in the fact that the main protagonist of the legend is St. Sava. Wine, as we have seen (compare MNM) in all Indo-European and Oriental religions (except Islam)¹, is of great importance and has played an important role in various cults. Vine and wine symbolize life and salvation, the principle of “the upper” world; when a new, happy life is coming (which was supposed to inaugurate the Messiah), then, in the first place, “the mountains will bathe with sweet wine.” It is also interesting that in these religions the deity that recovers and saves the world, who teaches people and discloses new culture to the world, at the same time he is also the inventor of the vineyard and wine (Čajkanović 1973: 97–98). We agree with Čajkanović that St. Sava falls into the category of life-giving “thesmophoric” deities, like Noah from the Old Testament (who planted a vineyard), Dionysus, and other Indo-European deities who travel around the world bringing order, culture and wellness.

This “Saint Sava” travels the Serbian lands, teaching people how to plough, bake bread, make cheese, sow onions; he sets people free from the power of the Devil and so on. He is the Serbian Dionysus, Orpheus, Hercules or Thor. Hence, in the Serbian folktale he is the one who strains wine and blesses brandy (Čajkanović, 1973: 97). In dualistic stories brandy is said to be the devil's drink; but, despite that, it gets a conditional blessing from the Lord: those who drink a little shall see no harm and will still

¹ Let us state the phrase from the Kuran: “The Devil exists in every seed of the grapes”.

belong to God, and those who drink a lot shall belong to the Devil (Čajkanović 1973: 235).

In Macedonian variation, God creates a vineyard, and the Devil following his lead, creates blackberries:

God and the Devil²

When God created himself from the energy of the world, he created people. But the people did not have food to eat, so he made a type of plant, resembling a vine.

But when the plant gave fruit, the Devil saw it and went to collect the grapes. It was delicious.

Wait - said the devil -- I shall make such a plant against God.

He created the plant, but his was different from God's -- his was a different plant – a blackberry.

The blackberry gave fruit.

People started stealing from his plant. He added thorns to the plant so that when people would try to steal they would get stuck.

God came and saw the Devil:

- What's this Devil?
- Well, that is protection for the plant, so that they don't steal it – answered the Devil.

And then God said:

- Get out of here, are you contradicting me?

In the Slovenian variation this dualistic concept is shown spiritually through sour grapes. The Devil planted a grape vine. He planted a lower portion of it with bird's blood, the middle part with bear's, and the top part with monkey's blood. People drank wine made from the grape and sang like birds. They drank too much and they rolled like bears. If they drank even more they behaved like monkeys, and this happens often even today. The trick worked a little too well, and soon the Devil began to run out of space in his dwelling place. That is why the vine does not grow in the valley of Mežica anymore. However, in the village of Žitara Ves in Podjuna Valley, a kind of sour grape grows, but it is so sour that nobody can drink enough for the monkey's blood to have an effect (Kropej/Šmitek 2010: 17). In the second variation from Slovenia, which is titled "Plezanje po vinski trti" (Climbing vines, Šmitek 2012: 37), some analogies with Noah from the Old Testament are revealed in the character of the Slovenian god and protector Kurent and the poor man who first planted a vineyard and first drank the

² A.I.F., m.l. 1494, informer: Karamfilovski Stojan from v. Dolno Krušje (Poreče, Macedonia) recorded by Milan Risteovski 1970.

wine revealing a Messianic role (“This will bring us comfort in work and suffering in this life.”) Similarities are revealed with Dionysus or Osiris, who also bring prosperity and pleasure. To summarize the story: During the Flood a poor man saves himself by climbing the vine that reaches to the sky. Once Kurent (see *Kurent* in SEL 2004) stops the Flood, the man goes to the coast of the Adriatic Sea with the vine in one hand, and with the beans in the other hand. He plants them, recovering the life of the population, and all the descendants happily drink wine in honor of the good Kurent

3. Ritual feast

3.1 Toasts

The toast is a general and universally unifying moment for all of the Balkan Slavs. Čubelić assigns a key position to this ritual between the rhetorical folk genres, stating that “the toast is the oldest and best-known form of oratory in all cultures of the world, and that along with the epic poem it is the most prominent representative of the oral folklore” (quote according to Petrović 2006: 25). The ritual of making a toast, besides being the most important component in the traditional culture of the Balkan Slavs, is an event also present in all most important moments of life and the calendar cycle. Filipović (1949: 223) states that in *Višočka nahija* “different toasts are made with a drink for happy occasions (celebrating a patron saint's day, weddings, baptisms, etc.) and for sad events (deaths, funeral meals, etc.) (cf. Petrović 2006: 19). Vuk Karadžić, who in his Glossary (1818), gives an excellent description of the same toasts (compare: wedding feasts, prayer-cup, name day, funeral meal).

3.2. Straw and the dining table (*trpeza*)

We see that wine gives us an interesting mix of several institutions: religion, sacrifice, and offering hospitality (sharing meals). Čajkanović gives us numerous examples of various ritual feasts, celebrating a patron saint's day, a funeral meal, etc. where besides food a little wine is poured, which is nothing else but a sacrificial substitute known almost everywhere in the world. There are interesting examples of a ritual feast that takes place on straw (in more primitive feasts), or later, at the table, that it represent a strong status symbol of the medieval feudal culture.

Sacrifice (most often a libation) for the souls of ancestors on grass or straw is preserved to this day among some Indo-European peoples. In eastern Serbia there is a custom, on the fortieth day after the death of a man, straw is to be spread on the grave and food to be arranged on it. It is not hard to guess why food is spread on straw for the souls of ancestors and

gods: the gods eat the same way that humans do and primitive Indo-European people, instead of using tables³, which were not known to them, spread the straw and ate on it (Čajkanović 1973: 101). There is a Montenegrin proverb mentioned by Vuk Karadžić: “Where there is straw, there is a feast”.

There is a much more specific and brief statement of that proverb by Vuk Karadžić in parts of Montenegro and Boka Kotorska. It says: “In Risan there is a custom where people spread straw and shout, “where there’s straw, there’s a feast”. It is obvious that these words have the same goal as summoning the souls of ancestors: they are called in this way to draw their attention to the fact that there will be a feast on the straw” (Čajkanović 1973: 102–103). There are examples where a special cake is made for a wedding which is cut at lunch. Just as the cake is cut at the celebration of the patron saint’s day, a cup is raised for the “name day” (in Levca and Temnica, see SEZ 7, 1907: 24). We know that sacrifice in the form of a cake and the raising of a cup “in honor of” are typical sacrifices on ancestors’ feasts. During weddings in Homolj, wine is poured three times over the right shoulder, which is obviously libation to the ancestors (Čajkanović 1973: 97).

In Cepenkov we have a number of examples that teach “how to drink sparingly”. (“The Hegumen Teaches Monks”), as well as stories of the cult of St. Trifun, who becomes a symbol of viticulture, i.e. the pruning of the first vine.

While reading the “Words of the Higher One”, it is important to bear in mind the following: many lessons can be found that call for carefulness and warn against reckless actions. Scholarly literature holds opinions about the lessons of this kind that reflect the “peasant cunningness”, “the view of the world”, “the little man”, his limitations and fear from the opposite “high style”, of the nobles and Vikings who lead heroic and free lives.

It is clear that the norms according to which common people were led – peasants, peaceful farmers – significantly differed from the warrior cravings of the nobles and the Vikings. Prudence in speech and behavior, especially outside of the home – at meetings, with guests and parties with unknown or rich people - moderation in speech, mistrust, wisdom, cunningness, the tendency to preserve independence and at the same time to avoid quarrels and hostilities, soberness, moderation in eating and drinking, praise the limitation and modesty, including knowledge and accountability –

³ This regards the abovementioned meal-sharing discussed by Mauss, Dumésil, Benveniste et al.

those are the features recommended by the *Words of the Higher One* (Gurevich 1994: 261).

One of the most important ways for a comfortable and leisurely life, according to Gurevich, is the maintenance of friendly relations with other people. Visits and gifts should be exchanged. Participation in feasts and the exchange of gifts were the most important ways of socialization among barbarians. In many nations the exchange of gifts was so important that it grew into a whole system called a ceremonial exchange: certain items or fruit constantly passed from hand to hand as exchange for others, where these items were not used, but transported further, so that they could be publicly exhibited (Gurevich 1994: 262). This moment occurs in South Slavic epic songs like “The Prince’s Supper”, where a cup of wine circles around with a toast until it comes to the person it is intended for (the youngest, etc.).

Mutual treatment of guests among primitive peoples sometimes turns into kind of a contest in generosity: the hosts tend to overshadow the generosity. Guests then have to overcome in hospitality their former hosts. This hospitality, according to Gurevich, borders on hostility, and sometimes transforms it: the purpose of the communion, feast is not to achieve a pleasant stay, but to demonstrate to them one’s own superiority (Gurevich 1994: 262).

Such feasts and festivities should have strengthened the moral welfare of the winner, which was, after all, much more important than material welfare.

In this story we discover that the feast is one of the most important institutions in the social life not only for the Balkan people. Similar situations are revealed with the Scandinavian barbarians after the early Middle Ages. The image of the enormous role of the feast and the exchange of gifts in social life is found among Germans as well. In the above mentioned Macedonian folktale example we discover that one of the leading motives is the participation in the feast and the need for dignified behavior at the same. (Influenced by Christian standards).

Eating at the feast, as well as gift-giving required a reward. (...) The feast and its concomitant sacrifices represent the means of ensuring the welfare of the people, which depended on the princes. Cups were raised at the feasts in honor of the pagan gods.

Joint overeating and drinking had in the minds of these people above all great social, religious and moral significance. Friendly relations were established at the table and all hostilities were settled (Gurevich 1994: 266). Serving the guests was the first responsibility of every host, and this rule of hospitality was indestructible. Even in Scandinavian countries in the Middle

Agnes it was believed, under the influence of Christianity, that he who does not behave according to the rules of hospitality (service in abundance) is a miser, or a heck, a victimizer who deprives people of hospitality and eating. (Gurevich 1994: 266–67).

“The words of the High” mention the need for careful treatment of guests many times: friendship is secured with generosity, care and gifts (Gurevich 1994: 267).

The early Christian ideal of a community of believers who denounced all their property and did not care for their diet, Medieval Christianity replaced it with the ideal of a small ownership, whose possession enables satisfying necessary requirements. (...) The main point was put on human spirituality Wealth, as stated by Thomas Aquinas, cannot be the ultimate goal, it is only a means to achieve other goals that are beyond the economic sphere. (p.275). In fact, there is something in common between games like "destruction" that existed in archaic societies, and feasting that spread a medieval feudal lords "of typical gargantuan way.

In both instances it is not difficult to see an aggressive generosity, an aspiration the guests to be overwhelmed with generosity and hospitality of the host, and to allocate victory in a kind of a social “game”, whose parameter is prestige and reputation. (Gurevich 1994: 283). Although such view is close to Mauss and Durkheim (about mechanical and organic solidarity), I still believe hospitality and generosity are greatly influenced by archaic religiosity, and an act of the original sacrifice as the basis of all religions. This morality above all connected with the Christian religion.

In Vuk Karadžić we find the following description for the name day: everyone has one day in the year to celebrate the name day, which is a holy day and feast. The host prepares for this holiday the entire year and considers the ways to celebrate it. (...) It is celebrated for three days, people eat, drink, talk, during breakfast, lunch and dinner. During luncheon everyone sings in glory: “Whoever drinks wine for the glory of God, // God helps him, and the glory of God. // And what is more beautiful than the glory of God // And from dinner rightfully got.” (...) The host does not sit at the table, but stands bareheaded and serves the guests with wine and spirits. (...) Even the poorest of men must celebrate his Christian name, even if he had to sell an animal, or something else from the home, so that he could buy rakia and something else, if he does not have his own. (Karadžić 1818: 344).

There are many examples, and we shall mention one typical:

When King Marko understood
What old Volkašin told him
That he is Marko's father
The boy leapt to his feet (...)
And Volkašin hugged his son Marko (...)
And they sat at a table
To drink wine and brandy:
They ate and drank exactly for three months
And everyone went merrily away after a wedding was set.
(Cepenkov 1, 1972: 64)

Loma reminds us of the eating of bread and wine in the famous poem about the Kosovo girl. Originally, the Kosovo girl is a fairy; ethnic and geographic settings should not be sought into her name, but an omen for the ominous and alien. In a bugarištica the engagement with the Kosovo girl is a metaphor for the death of the hero on the Kosovo field. But in the poem, the role of the Kosovo girl is rationalized and humanized: here we have this ordinary girl who searching after her fiancé on the battlefield after the battle, turns the dead people over and helps the wounded. The manner she does that is quite interesting: she promises bread and communion with wine. The bread and wine, as well as the verb communion point out that this regards not an ordinary healing but a sale of the Holy secret so that the dying man is opened a way to salvation and passage to the other world (LOMA 2002: 143). The colors of the bread and wine in the Communion: the Kosovo girl gives communion to the wounded heroes with “red wine” and “white bread”, and the colors reflect the flesh and blood of the heroes, as was noticed in the oldest bugarištica from Gioia del Colle, where Janko promises the eagle that he shall give him to eat “red blood and white body of the knight” (Loma, 2002:143).

3.3 On toast

In the earliest version of the epic legend about the Prince's dinner, the Italian interpreter of Duka, the pre-Kosovo dinner has a certain ritual character. The interpreter mentions that there is a custom in the court of Lazarus – the master raises a toast in a certain order. It is said that at Lazarus's feast the guests raised toasts to one another according to that country's customs (second l'uso del Paese).

Dinić notes that, while in some other places of the Italian translation of Duka the word “Sdraviza” simply means to “binge”, in the description of the “Prince's dinner” it means the same thing as in the Kosovo folk songs.

(...)And indeed, the Serbian ritualized toasts, represented to the Italian readers at the time of the Renaissance – as a court order or a folk custom, were an integral part of the folk rituals, especially the Slavs’ rituals (LOMA 2002: 163–164).

Loma states Nušić’s description of the execution of the Slav’s ritual from the late 19th century from the very birthplace of the historical Lazarus (in Prilepac at Novo Brdo). The “raising of the glory” is the most important moment that takes place at night, and that is not characteristic of the other Serbian regions (...) On the eve in Kosovo, first a sip is taken from a cup of wine in order starting from God’s glory, and when everyone takes his turn, the host takes out a special cup called “kalenica”, and wine is drunk from it in glory of the saint; he offers it to all his guests, but they all refuse it until the host makes a toast to the youngest in the party. He drinks the wine in three gulps and then the cup circles around the guests. Different songs are sung for every drinker (Loma 2002: 164).

Concerning the celebration of the patron saint’s day among the South Slavs, we can agree with the opinion of Čajkanović, according to whom the same is only a Christian kind of ancient pagan festivities. Going back to the motif of the *Prince’s dinner* (Loma 2002), the quests of Miloš’ loyalty and faith should be emphasized – which has a central meaning in it, and that is understood as a reflection of contemporary concerns between nobility and their suzerains. Actually, it is shown in its former pre-feudal context, as a ritual confirmation of the social community in front of a huge temptation. It is natural that the subject of this verification is precisely the faithfulness of the members of the community to one group or another, especially towards the subjects of the ruler and vice versa, as well as loyalty of all against the laws of the ancestors (Loma 2002: 170).

In the Slavic ritual and the dinner of Lazarus there are two joint elements; both are covered by the notion of the toast: celebrating God (“glory of God”) and the saint-protector (“Christian name”) and making toasts to the ones present. In a variant of *Matica Hrvatska* I, 1, 58, and in other variants of the Catholic notion there is absence of the Christian name, and “The Prince’s Dinner” is presented as the first ordinary meal, where the entire action is represented as “celebration of the glory” of all the present Dukes:

He poured a full cup of wine,
And made a toast for everyone,

Celebrating his glory with everyone.
(Loma 2002: 171)

A very important moment in folk poetry is the motif of the prayer-cup. In Montenegro there is a prayer that is an integral part of the wedding ritual, “as they carry the girl out... they take out a cup of wine and put it on the table, and starting from the witnesses everyone drinks the wine, blessing the girl, and that is called the prayer cup” (SEZb 1934: 69). In Vuk Karadžić, the prayer cup is presented as follows: when the participants come to the girl's house and sit on a chair, then (as the custom has it) the girl's father offers a new cup, and they drink from it in the girl's health. Then the cup is given to the girl, and during the wedding the bride and the groom drink wine from it, and that is called a prayer cup or “the bride's cup”. After the wedding the bride leaves the prayer cup and she keeps it until her death: “She takes the prayer cup” (“Te uzima čašu molitvenu”) (Karadžić, 1818: 410). In the song “Wedding of Jakšić”, it turns out that the golden prayer cup was given to the bride by her father to be her own. Hatidža Dizdarević Krnjević (1997) and Loma (2002) write about this motif, as well.

In Vuk's glossary the following is written under the term name day: a priest comes before or at lunch and the priest sings and says prayers. In the middle of the lunch they light a candle, bring incense and wine, and they raise in glory; they pray to God, eat cake and drink ritual wine: “For the glory of heaven, which can help us”, they cut the cake (it has to be made with maize flour) (VUK 1818: 344).

3.4 Initiation Temptation

The drinking contest is another universal motif that is present since antiquity. The drinking contest appears during Dionysos celebrations, and the winner gets a beautiful girl and a big cup (pitcher?) (Budimir 1969: 84). Similar analogies are found in Balkan epic poetry, a kind of heroic ordeal by drinking wine or brandy (rakia) is elaborated by Murtezani in an Albanian and a Macedonian poem (2006: 103–105). In Cepenkov⁴, despite Marko's victory, he does not get the prize because he finds out that the defeated rival is his brother. In the Albanian variant the hero Khalil, after successfully performing the ritual drinking of rakia, set by the father of the bride, manages to get the young “Halili merr Dylberen e Bardhë” (KK III, 1993: 369), (Murtezani 2006: 103–104). In Vuk, in the song “The Wedding

⁴ “Here wine is drank with a bet://If you make him drunk, you'll take his loved one:// If he makes you drunk, He'll take your blond head” (1972 1: 68).

of King Marko” (VI 24), we find this motif in a typical form for Marko. Although grotesque, it still appears charming. Marko wanting to ask the Duke of Pribinj for his daughter’s hand in marriage, instead of sitting at the bottom of the table (*trpeza*) where he was told to, he sits himself next to the king to which the king said:

And the king summoned his faithful servants,
They placed one cup in front of everyone
And they put two cups in front of Marko. (249–251)

Marko, in his famous fashion, drinks both cups at once, after which he starts drinking the wine of every suitor. According to Loma, Marko’s behavior seems to be hiding the ancient motif of paying tribute to the greatest hero with two cups and downing all the other cups. It is as if Marko wants to humble and challenge the heroism of the other present people; in the sequel of the song he causes them even more embarrassment by driving them all out of the yard without horses and unarmed (Loma 2002: 181).

3.5 A miraculous cup

Desiring to interpret the meaning of toast in the “The Prince’s dinner”, where Lazarus questions the fate or disbelief of Miloš and he comes to interesting analogies from international epic tradition.

According to the one in “The Prince’s dinner”, the epic tradition is much less manifested as a game of a creative imagination and much more as an ideological reflection of a proto-historical war society, which in its origin must have had its ritual correlate. Under the glare of the real, or at least probable event, (the military council of Lazar before the battle), Loma foresees the ancient epic sujet of the feast which is a ritual gathering of the members of the war party. On the same feast, through making a toast with a golden cup of wine a tribute is paid to those who have distinguished themselves by their heroism and, tacitly or not, they inflicted shame on the cowards.

For comparison, Loma lists summaries of Celtic legends, where the subject of dispute between the heroes at the table is the allocation of portions of roast meat. This kind of mutual tribute paying and eventual insults between members of the war parties is a legacy from the past hunting bands. They can be found in the verses of Homer, along with honorary places at the table and the cups (jugs) of wine ... (Achaeans – Diomed) (Loma 2002: 183).

Support for the assumption for the ritual foundation of “The Prince’s Supper”, which for the ancient Slavs was not only a heroic motif inherited

from ancient European ancestors or a borrowing from the Scythian-Sarmatian neighbors, is also an integral part of their pagan rituality representing scarce resources for the old Slav religion. One such source is found in the German priest Helmold, who in the mid-11th century stayed in Brandenburg (Branibor) as a missionary, trying to bring Prince Pribislav into Christianity:

The Slavs have a strange superstition: namely, at their feasts and drinking parties they say words that would not be called a prayer, but rather curses towards their gods, good and evil, confessing the (belief) that every good fate is given by the good (god) and the bad by the bad. Hence, they call the evil god in their own language devil or *chernobog*, i.e. “black god” (Helmold, cf. Loma 2002: 185).

4. Conclusion

From everything discussed above, we can take several moments which in a certain manner explain the presence of wine in the Balkan area. We find it in the following institutions: sacrifice, hospitality, ritual feasting, and that brings us back to a deeper dimension of religion. Benveniste (2002) and Trubachyov (ESSA 7: 66–69) derive hospitality and the feast from the Indo-European origin in the meaning of a foreigner, a stranger that should be given food to eat, and that should be given a roof over his head. According to some etymological dictionaries the word ghost originates from Indo-European root meaning without food, and in this purpose is the meaning of hospitality created and performed, that a stranger should be accepted and fed.

From the given examples we can completely concur with the etymological explanation given by Benveniste that refers to religion:

There is a long dispute about the origins of the Latin word *religio*. Here it is shown that it is both from the semantic and from the constituent reasons related to relegare “gather again, again taken for a new election, to return to an earlier synthesis for its re-composition”: *religio*, “religious scruples” is therefore in its origin, personal mood, reflective effects associated with a gap of a religious nature. Historically inaccurate, the interpretation of the verb *religare* “to bind” found by Christians, is indicative of the restoration concepts: *religio* becomes a “duty”, an objective relationship between the believer and his God.

This meaning of the word *religio*, which can be found in many other subjects, is confirmed by the coin of the word *religiosus* “one that is careful in matters of the cult, which seeks understanding about the ritual”. “Several Roman scholars inform us that the cult itself can be called religious ... Religious is what caused some of the commitment (sanctitas) and far away

from us” (Sabin Masuria with Aulus Gellius NA 4, 9), “religious is what man is not allowed to do, so if he did, it would seem like opposing the will of the gods” (Benvenist 2002: 431).

In the end, *religio* represents reluctance that retains, hesitation that prevents and not a sense that directs man to an action or encourages him to a cult. This corresponds with the examples about the hegumen who taught his monks to drink wine with control, which on the other hand associates to the mutual connection between the medieval feudal system and the religious consciousness that jointly establish their rules of behavior and form the medieval habitat whose reminiscences can be met in the Folk Traditional Literature Collections from the 18th to the 20th centuries. According to all above, we mention the interpretation given by Cicero tying it to relate *religio* with *legere* (Benvenist 2002: 431–432).

Taking into consideration that religion represents a gap, fear, and gap, we can conclude that the best salvation from that fear is just the second attribution, connected with pleasure and festivity.

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