

The Role of Communicative Memory in Preserving the Continuity of the Old Slavic Myth in Žrnovnica near Split, Dalmatia

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ABSTRACT

Collective memory as a reference theoretical basis is separated into cultural and communicative with the aim of distinguishing the archaic and contemporary understanding of the Old Slavic myth in interpersonal and intergenerational communication among residents of Žrnovnica. Research was conducted using a questionnaire on an intentional sample of a total of 50 residents. The results confirm the existence of cultural memory among respondents and a high level of general knowledge about Old Slavic myth. We found no statistically significant differences in the communicative memory of the respondents in relation to age, nor indications of interruption of intergenerational communication on this subject.

Key words: *communicative memory, interpersonal communication, intergenerational communication, Old Slavic mythology, Žrnovnica-Split*

Introduction

Žrnovnica is a settlement geographically located east of the centre of the town of Split in Dalmatia, Croatia.. According to the latest population census from 2021, it has a total of 3,279 residents¹. Although administratively a part of the city of Split, this paper analyzes Žrnovnica as a separate geographical and cultural entity. The first mention of Žrnovnica (and the area around the eponymous river) dates back to the 11th century, specifically around the year 1080². The name of the god Perun, probably the most renowned name from Old Slavic mythology in modern times, was recorded immediately after this mention. Perun, in the form of a toponym, was first mentioned in connection with Žrnovnica in 1090 in the Šupetar Cartulary, in Latin, as *curtem in Sirnovnica et viana in Peruno*, which translates to "a court in Žrnovnica and a vineyard in Perun"³. Although today the name Perun is undeniably associated with the name of the hill beneath which Žrnovnica is situated among numerous settlements, it is essential to keep open the possibility that its initial mention pertained to a hamlet or simply an integral part of the settlement at that time.

Radoslav Katičić is the primary author who discusses Žrnovnica in the context of Old Slavic mythology exten-

sively in his books *Božanski boj* ("The Divine Battle", 2008) and *Naša stara vjera* ("Our Ancient Religion", 2017). Katičić personally visited Žrnovnica and the lands around the eponymous river beneath the Perun Hill with the aim of ethnographic documentation of what he refers to as the Proto-Slavic or Proto-Croatian "sacred interpretation," specifically concerning the landscape in the Žrnovnica area. He puts forward the assertion that the sanctuary of Perun near Split (whose cult was later replaced by the Christian saint George) is entirely comparable to Eastern Slavic Perun sanctuaries in Kiev and Novgorod³.

In support of Katičić's claims about the cult of Perun in the Žrnovnica area in pre-Christian times, there are indeed the names of peaks on the Perun Hill, namely Veliki Perun (meaning big Perun), Perunić (meaning small Perun), and Perunsko (meaning Perun's). It is certain that these toponyms are directly linked to the name of the god Perun. However, in the topography of Žrnovnica, there is no toponym associated with the god Veles, another Old Slavic, and possibly Old Croatian deity. The explicit form of his name can be found in other regions of Croatia and beyond (for example the peninsula of Veles near the bay of Žrnovnica near Novi Vinodolski or the city of Veles in North Macedonia).

Although the god Veles is not physically located in Žrnovnica, Katičić believes that the mythical site of his killing in a conflict with Perun has been identified. This location is referred to as the *Zmijjski kamen* ("Snake Stone"), which is situated near the Žrnovnica River. It is first mentioned in a document from the 12th century as *Zmij kamik*⁴.

Referring to the Belarusian tradition that mentions *Zmajev kamen* ("Dragon Stone") in the context of a mythical battle and considering the mythical interpretation that places Perun on high ground and Veles in the water, Katičić concludes that Perun killed the snake/dragon, i.e., Veles, at that very location in Žrnovnica⁴. The myth in the landscape is also supported by Belaj, who proposes the concept of so-called "sacred triangles" at various locations in Croatia. According to Belaj, one of these triangles is located right above Žrnovnica and "consists of the points sv. Jure (St. George) (Perunsko), Gospa u Siti, and Zmij kamik"⁵.

The point marked by the church Gospa u Siti is essential for understanding another aspect of Old Slavic mythology. It relates to the divine mother figure named Mokoš, whom both Katičić and Belaj consider integral to Croatian pre-Christian history. Additionally, both authors identify Mokoš as the wife of Perun, and they find continuity in her worship through the existence of the Marian cult in Croatia, particularly in the early veneration of the Virgin Mary^{6,7}. It should be noted here that the name Mokoš is not found in its explicit form in Žrnovnica. However, we can find variations of the name of this deity in other places in Croatia. For example, Mošnica is the name of the hill situated above Dugi Rat in the immediate vicinity of Žrnovnica. Also, a few hundred kilometres further south in the city of Dubrovnik there is a settlement called Mokošica.

Mužić also writes about the Old Slavic myth and myth-making in Žrnovnica, where he examines the pre-Christian interpretation of the relief on the facade of the Parish Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the town centre. Mužić concludes that the relief unquestionably depicts Saint George in a battle with a dragon and that "there could not have been a representation of the so-called divine battle between Perun and Veles, as there is no slightest confirmation of such a belief in the entire Slavic world, and also not on the Balkans at any time"⁸. This view is shared by Russian archaeologist and historian Ribakov. Ribakov leaves open the possibility of the existence of Perun's counterpart who dwells in the underworld and the underwater world. However, according to him, that deity is certainly not Veles, whom Russian sources consider a benevolent deity associated with livestock and wealth, and whom people swear by⁹.

Mužić's need for the scholarly reaffirmation of the Christian depiction of Saint George in Žrnovnica arose as a result of recent interpretations suggesting that the relief actually represents the Old Slavic god Perun as a horseman who slays Veles with a spear, with Veles depicted in the form of a bear. This interpretation was first put for-

ward in 2008 by Milošević, who wrote more extensively about the relief in his book *Tragovi starih vjerovanja u kršćanstvu ranoga srednjeg vijeka* ("Traces of Ancient Beliefs in Early Medieval Christianity")¹⁰. Milošević did not dismiss his initial claims in subsequent discussions; instead, he attempted to strengthen them. Comparing the Žrnovnica relief with a pre-Romanesque relief depicting a horseman in Pridraga near Novigrad (Zadar), Milošević concludes that "the rider from Pridraga can also represent Perun, and the snake under the hooves of his horse, Veles"¹¹. On the other hand, Pleterski argues that the debate about the depiction on the Žrnovnica relief is unnecessary and concludes that the sculptor "obviously crafted the slab with multiple meanings to satisfy the religious needs of every observer, whether a Christian or a believer in old beliefs"¹².

The meaning of toponyms and the interpretation of physical artifacts in Žrnovnica has been and will likely continue to be the subject of new analyses in the future. On the other hand, the presence of Perun, Veles, and Mokoš in the lives of the ancient Slavs across Europe is unquestionable. Supporting this are toponymy and topography, idols, archaeological remains, written and oral traditions of numerous Slavic peoples. The interpretation of Old Slavic divine roles and their relationships is indeed subject to ambiguity when correlated with specific geographical areas and cultures. Taking into account what has been discussed, it is essential to emphasize that the purpose of this paper is not to confirm or reject the hypotheses of the mentioned authors who primarily deal with the existence or non-existence of the Old Slavic pantheon in Žrnovnica. In this paper, the focus is on exploring the communicative aspects of the Old Slavic myth in a specific spatial and temporal context, primarily through the lens of collective memory and intergenerational communication.

Communicative Memory, Interpersonal and Intergenerational Communication

Collective memory serves as a reference point in the theoretical part of this paper. French sociologist Halbwachs believes that individual memories are formed within the context of the collective, meaning that an individual's mind reconstructs its own memories under the influence of the society or group to which they belong¹³. Collective memory can be divided into cultural and communicative memory. According to Assmann cultural memory reaches far into the past, factual history is subordinated to commemorative memory, and in such a relationship, the figure of memory itself becomes a myth in its own right. On the other hand, communicative memory relates to recent history (three to four generations) and is maintained through everyday oral communication¹⁴. Communicative memory can also be seen as a kind of "agreement among the members of a group about what represents their own past within a broader identity narrative"¹⁵. In a similar vein, Joško Božanić, in his paper on

the collective memory of the residents of the island of Vis, writes that "radically different value systems among generations prevent the recognition of heritage as something worth preserving"¹⁶.

Consequently, when we talk about the communicative aspect of collective memory, we can conclude that unanimous communicative memory is a prerequisite for preserving the continuity of what members of a group consider important in their identity and cultural sense. Furthermore, since communicative memory is inherently tied to the recent past, consequently intergenerational communication is essential for the continuity of communicative memory.

Intergenerational communication, or communication among different age groups, can be hindered by various factors. Whether it's individual differences, different life affinities and priorities, personal biases towards others, whether older or younger. However, practical problems of this kind within the framework of intergenerational communication are not the subject of the research part of this paper. In this paper, we exclusively examine this type of communication through the prism of a specific geographical and cultural environment. In this context, it is purposeful to mention the theory of social identity, according to which an individual's identity is conditioned by the identity of a specific group to which the individual belongs¹⁷. Accordingly, we can assume that certain value systems and elements of memory will be integral parts of intergenerational communication among members of a social group.

One of the foundations of intergenerational communication is undoubtedly everyday interpersonal communication. Such communication is characterized by "direct message exchange between individuals, using verbal and non-verbal signals, spontaneously or planned according to a symbolic system and the environmental conditions in which communication takes place"¹⁸. Therefore, it is logical to assume that the elements of interpersonal communication among different age groups, as well as in the case of communicative memory, are subject to specific identity and cultural conditions. If we assume that aspects of the Old Slavic myth truly represent an integral part of the cultural identity of Žrnovnica, it is to be expected that its elements are (un)consciously transmitted through interpersonal and intergenerational communication in continuity.

When we talk about myth, we primarily think about the distant past. However, even though the aspect of the past is a part of the myth, the story contained within the myth is timeless. The reason for this, according to structuralist Levi Strauss, is that myth is fundamentally similar to language and, as such, endures regardless of various linguistic translations and interpretations¹⁹. Based on the above, we can conclude that the Old Slavic myth, as part of the (Croatian) language, as an integral component of interpersonal and intergenerational communication (and oral tradition), has to some extent influenced the formation of communicative memory in Žrnovnica.

Although in this paper we primarily focus on the communicative aspect of memory, for a better understanding of its formation, we will mention the theoretical model of the "five monkeys." This is a conceptual behavioural experiment in which monkeys are punished the moment one of them reaches for a banana lowered into their cage. After a while, in order to avoid punishment, the monkeys, on their initiative, prevent anyone among them from taking the banana. They also do not allow new monkeys, introduced one by one, to do so. The learned response of the monkeys continues even after there are no longer any of the original five monkeys who initially witnessed the punishment in the cage. This theoretical model is based on actual research by G.R. Stephenson, who, through manipulation of experimental conditions, sought to identify the cultural acquisition of learned responses among the tested monkeys²⁰. If we view this theory through the prism of communicative memory, the factor of a learned response in a behavioural sense can be replaced with the factor of a learned response in a communication sense within a specific cultural environment. Accordingly, it is to be expected that some people in interpersonal and intergenerational communication will have identical or similar interpretations of aspects about which they realistically do not have, nor can they have, fully grounded knowledge. Such learned responses that constitute communicative memory become the foundation for preserving the myth as a language in its timeless form.

Methodology

For the purpose of this paper, the research was conducted on a purposive sample of 50 participants, exclusively residents of Žrnovnica. It was quantitative research, and for this purpose, a questionnaire was created, which was divided into two parts. The first part was designed with open-ended questions (without pre-offered answers), while the second part consisted of questions in the form of a Likert scale.

To gain insight into the level of general knowledge of the participants regarding aspects of the Old Slavic mythology, we asked a series of questions in line with the available scientific theories about the presence of elements of this mythology in the Žrnovnica area. The primary question revolved around the name of the Perun Hill, and participants were asked to provide their own opinions about the origin of the hill's name. Subsequently, participants were asked to list the names of deities from the Old Slavic pantheon that they were familiar with. Alongside Perun, special focus was placed on Veles and Mokoš, and participants were asked to explain, in their own opinion, the relationship between these deities and Perun in the context of Old Slavic mythology. Participants were also asked to interpret the depiction on the stone relief on the front of the church in Žrnovnica, and they were inquired about the origin of the name of the location 'Zmijski kamen' on the way to Žrnovnica.

The participants' responses were analysed across a total of four (4) categories. The categories were graded based on levels of knowledge, ranging from "not familiar" to "very familiar," and the criteria for categorizing responses into each category were as follows:

1. Not familiar = the respondent does not know the name of any Old Slavic deity.
2. Superficially familiar = the respondent mentions the name of the god Perun.
3. Familiar = the respondent, in addition to Perun's name, mentions the name of the god Veles.
4. Very familiar = the respondent, in addition to Perun and Veles, mentions the name of the goddess Mokoš.

To gain insight into the respondents' attitudes toward the Old Slavic myth in the context of Žrnovnica, we created a Likert scale consisting of a total of five (5) levels: (1 - strongly disagree, 2 - disagree, 3 - neither agree nor disagree, 4 - agree, 5 - strongly agree).

The first part of the questionnaire aimed to provide insights into the cultural memory of the respondents, while the second part, using the Likert scale, explored the attitudes of the respondents in the context of communicative memory and, consequently, interpersonal and intergenerational communication. The responses to these questions were statistically tested in relation to demographic factors, such as age, gender, and education of the respondents.

The following hypotheses were tested in the paper:

H1: Aspects of the Old Slavic myth are part of the cultural memory of the residents of Žrnovnica.

H2: The continuity of the Old Slavic myth is evident in the communicative memory of the residents of Žrnovnica.

H3: There are statistically significant differences in the perception of the Old Slavic myth based on the age of the respondents.

Results

The results of the first part of the questionnaire (which pertained to the level of general knowledge about aspects of the Old Slavic myth) categorized by the percentages are as follows:

The level of general knowledge of respondents about aspects of the Old Slavic myth, as shown in the graph, was primarily identified and categorized based on the answers to two questions. The first question was related to the name of the Perun Hill, while the second explicitly asked respondents to list other deities they were familiar with from the Old Slavic pantheon, from which the names Veles and Mokoš were later extracted. Therefore, the presented results in the context of the first hypothesis should be taken with some caution, considering that some respondents, in their responses, demonstrated a broader contextual knowledge beyond explicitly mentioning the names of

Level of general knowledge of respondents about the aspects of the Old Slavic myth

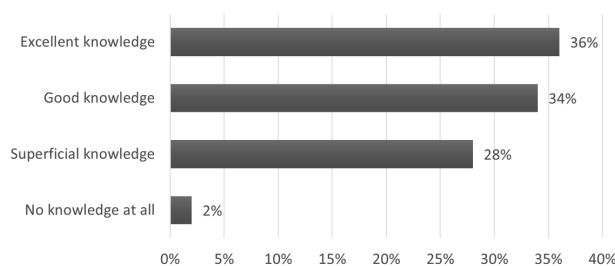


Chart 1: Level of general knowledge of respondents about aspects of the Old Slavic myth expressed in percentages (Source: research conducted by the author)

gods from the Old Slavic pantheon. In response to the question about the potential continuity of the cult of Perun after the acceptance of Christianity, 74% of respondents expressed their opinion, while 26% did not offer any answer. Among them, 44% believe that the Christian interpretation of Perun is St. George, whose church (*Sv. Jure*) is located on one of the peaks of Mount Perun – Perunsko above Podstrana, not far from Žrnovnica. 26% of respondents consider St. Elijah as Perun's successor in the Christian world. Although St. Elijah is not present in the geographical area of Žrnovnica as one of the toponyms, the reasons for this interpretation can be found in the epithet "gromovnik" (thunderer) that respondents added to his name. In addition to St. George and Elijah, 2% of respondents mentioned St. Vitus as Perun's successor, a martyr who suffered during the persecution of Emperor Diocletian.

The question about the origin of the name of the location *Zmijski kamen* ("Snake Stone"), a stone boulder located on the way to Žrnovnica, was posed before explicitly mentioning the name of the Slavic deity Veles, and immediately after asking the respondents to provide the names of other deities they are familiar with from the Slavic pantheon. 72% of the respondents offered their opinion on the origin of the stone's name, while 28% did not provide any response. Some of the provided answers and interpretations are highlighted below:

- Snake = Veles, the field is called *Žminjača*, which probably derives from "zmijevača" (related to snakes).
- The place where Perun, or rather Saint George, killed the snake or dragon.
- Likewise, *Žminjača*, because of snakes.
- Named after Veles.
- Perun killed Veles there.
- Perun killed a dragon there.
- The place where snakes dwell.
- Snakes probably have always been found there in greater numbers.
- The snake found carved into the rock, representing Veles.

- Based on the outcome of the divine battle. If Veles lost the battle, he would return there wounded and maimed to his cave underground.
- Veles, the god of the earth, ascends towards Perun, the god of the sky, in spring, winding himself like a snake.
- Based on the snake, one of the personifications of Veles.
- The place where they found a snake's den year after year.
- Based on the legend that says Perun killed a snake there.
- At the foot of Mount Perun, in the shape of a snake, its tail is by Perun, and its head is in Žminjača.
- Mythology related to Perun and the killing of the snake.
- Below him was a snake that Perun killed.
- This is an area known for snakes and has legends of the battle between the dragon and the god, good and evil.

The respondents' answers about potential Christian personifications of the god Perun, as well as the personal interpretations of respondents who offered their opinions on the origin of the name of the locality *Zmijski kamen* ("Snake stone") on the way to Žrnovnica, indicate the intertwining of aspects of the Old Slavic myth with elements of Croatian early Christian history. The linguistic terms and names that are repeatedly mentioned in the respondents' answers are Perun, Veles, snake, dragon, good, and evil. According to the interpretations of the respondents, it is evident that these elements are in opposition to each other. The factor of opposition becomes even clearer in the respondents' answers to the explicit question about the relationship between Veles and Perun. 68% of the respondents expressed their opinions on this matter, while 32% did not provide any answer. Here are some of the responses and interpretations provided by the respondents:

- His eternal opponent.
- Eternal adversaries.
- Opponent.
- They are in conflict.
- They loved Mokoš.
- He was his opponent, rival.
- Rival. Veles is the god of earth and the underworld, while Perun is the god of the sky.
- Veles is an earthly god, and Perun is heavenly. They are in conflict.
- In eternal struggle.
- Veles is the dragon against whom Perun fought.
- Veles ruled the earthly, and Perun the heavenly. Their relationship is antagonistic.
- Eternal battle between heaven and earth and eternal adversaries.
- Veles is the dragon and Perun's enemy.
- In an antagonistic relationship.

- Rivals, opposites.
- God of water and the underworld, the main opponent of Perun.

In response to the question about the interpretation of the stone relief on the facade of the Parish Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the center of Žrnovnica, we received expected answers (considering the depiction) based on opposition and rivalry. Differences in responses among respondents who offered their interpretation (94% of them) are primarily evident in identifying the depicted characters, while the interpretation of the act of murder is identical. Here are some of the answers and interpretations provided by respondents.

- The divine battle between Perun and Veles is interpreted in the folk tradition as St. George killing the dragon.
- Perun / St. George kills Veles. The battle of order and disorder, good and evil.
- St. George kills the dragon or Perun kills Veles.
- Perun kills Veles with a spear.
- The pagan god Perun kills Veles.
- St. George kills the dragon.
- Some say that Perun kills Veles, while others say that St. George kills the dragon.
- Perun kills the snake.
- The only representation of the god Perun in the world, previously believed to be St. George.
- A mythical bear hunter in ancient times.

60% of the respondents provided their opinion on the potential relationship between Mokoš and Perun, while 40% did not provide any answer. Here are some of the responses and interpretations provided by the respondents.

- Perun's wife for half a year,
- Perun's wife.
- She was his wife.
- Wife, the supreme goddess.
- Goddess of fertility, Perun's wife.
- Mokoš is Perun's wife, but also Veles's, depending on the time of year.
- A connection between one and the other (Perun and Veles).
- Goddess of the earth, stood between Perun and Veles.
- Goddess of the earth's fertility.
- Goddess of fertility, protector of women, and Perun's wife.
- Mother.
- Wife or daughter.

Although, in this part of the paper, the results of broader contextual knowledge about aspects of the Old Slavic myth that participants consciously or unconsciously expressed in their answers and interpretations have been presented, the primary research focus in the context of the first hypothesis is still on the general knowledge shown in

Graph Number 1. When the first two categories from the graph ("not familiar" and "superficially familiar ") have been compared with the remaining categories ("familiar" and "very familiar"), the following percentage ratio has been obtained: 30% versus 70%. From this ratio, it is evident that more than two-thirds of the participants are either well or excellently acquainted with aspects of the Old Slavic myth in Žrnovnica. Based on these results, the first hypothesis (H1: *Aspects of the Old Slavic myth are part of the cultural memory of Žrnovnica residents*) is confirmed.

The results of the second part of the questionnaire were expressed through answers to four (4) questions in the form of a 5-point Likert scale. These four (4) questions formed a research construct called "Continuity of the Old Slavic Myth in the Communicative Memory of Participants." To confirm the reliability of the construct and thereby improve the credibility of the results, we used the Cronbach's Alpha test (0-1) with data processing software (SPSS). The construct showed good reliability with a obtained coefficient ($\alpha=0.78$). Using the same software, the mean of the responses from all participants to all four (4) questions was measured (*Mean = 3.86/5*).

The results indicate a positive attitude towards the Old Slavic myth in the context of Žrnovnica. More than half of the respondents (58%) completely agree with the statement that Old Slavic mythology is an integral part of Žrnovnica's cultural identity (Chart 2).

Old Slavic mythology is an integral part of Žrnovnica's cultural identity

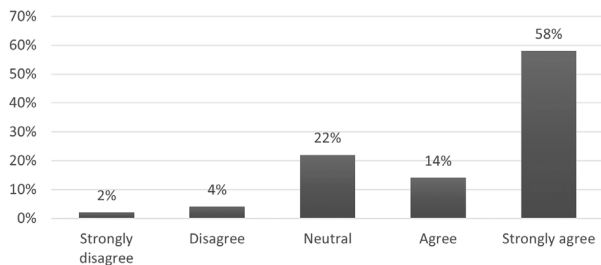


Chart 2: Likert Scale - Respondents' Attitudes Towards Old Slavic Mythology in the Context of Žrnovnica's Cultural Identity (Source: research conducted by the author).

More than two-thirds of the participants (72%) strongly agree with the statement that preserving the cultural memory of Žrnovnica's mythological past is important (Chart 3).

In total, 60% of the participants strongly agree that intergenerational communication is the best way to preserve the continuity of the Old Slavic mythology in the Žrnovnica area (Chart 4).

Although more than two-thirds (70%) of the participants in the first part of the questionnaire demonstrated good or excellent knowledge of the aspects of Old Slavic mythology in Žrnovnica, they simultaneously believe that

It's important to preserve the cultural memory of the mythological past of Žrnovnica

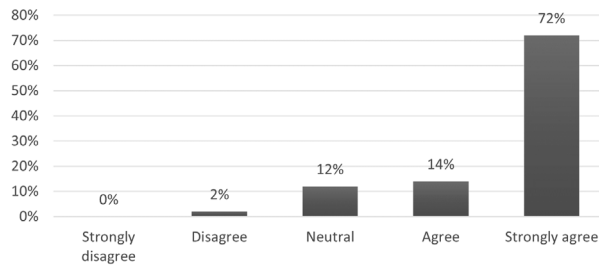


Chart 3: Likert Scale - Participants' Personal Attitude Towards Cultural Memory in the Context of Old Slavic Myth (Source: research conducted by the author).

Intergenerational communication is the best way to preserve the continuity of the Old Slavic myth in Žrnovnica

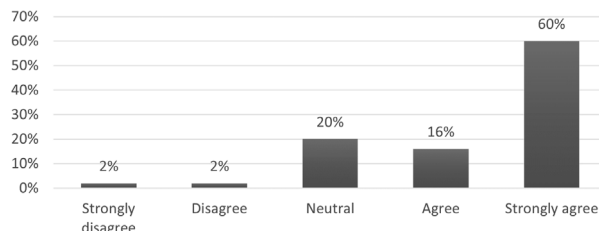


Chart 4: Likert scale – participants' attitudes toward intergenerational communication in the context of preserving the continuity of Old Slavic mythology (Source: research conducted by the author).

their fellow villagers are not well-informed about these aspects. Only 12% of the respondents partially agree with the statement that the residents of Žrnovnica are well acquainted with aspects of Old Slavic mythology in the area (Chart 5).

Although the participants' attitudes regarding the last statement had a minimal impact on the overall construct's

Intergenerational communication is the best way to preserve the continuity of the Old Slavic myth in Žrnovnica

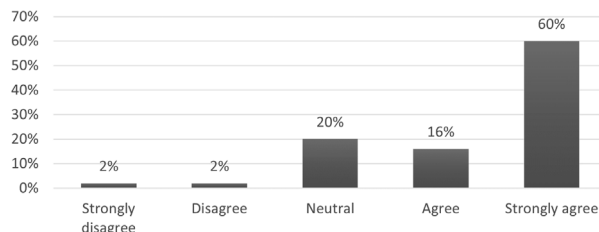


Chart 5: Likert scale – participants' attitudes toward level of knowledge of aspects of Old Slavic myth in Žrnovnica (Source: research conducted by the author).

mean score ($Mean = 3.86/5$), the second hypothesis (H2: *The continuity of Old Slavic mythology is evident in the communicative memory of the residents of Žrnovnica*) has been confirmed.

To test the third hypothesis, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted using a statistical data processing program (SPSS). Responses to the four (4) questions on the Likert scale property were tested separately and as the construct "Continuity of Old Slavic mythology in the communicative memory of participants." The test did not show statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$), leading to the rejection of the hypothesis (H3: *There are statistically significant differences in the perception of Old Slavic mythology based on the age of the participants*).

Additionally, the test was used to identify any statistically significant differences in the perception of the Old Slavic myth in relation to the gender and education level of the participants. As in the case of the age of the participants, such differences were not found.

Discussion and Conclusion

The aspects of the Old Slavic myth in Žrnovnica have become the subject of research for an increasing number of authors in recent years. An analytical approach to this topic is evident in the scholarly departure from the literary works of the 19th century. During that time, the aspects of Old Slavic and Old Croatian myths were conditioned by specific political and cultural circumstances in the spirit of the so-called Illyrian movement or the Croatian National Revival. The scholarly approach, although a challenge compared to the romanticism of the 19th century, is certainly welcome in shedding light on aspects of pre-Christian antiquity in our region. However, it is noticeable that many authors, some of whom are cited in this paper, primarily focus their research on archaeological, ethnological, or linguistic insights. They aim to reconstruct or partially refute the existence of elements of the Old Slavic myth in the Žrnovnica area using these approaches. To the best of our knowledge, this paper is the first to approach this specific topic from the field of communication sciences, relying only to a lesser extent on certain sociological and linguistic assumptions. The sociological (and behavioral) factor was introduced primarily to better understand the concept of intergenerational and interpersonal communication, while the linguistic factor, i.e., language, was introduced to gain a better understanding of the myth itself.

Now that the key factors in the formation of communicative memory have been identified, it is necessary to emphasize what is needed for its maintenance and preservation, primarily uninterrupted intergenerational communication. Cultural memory is undoubtedly linked to communicative memory, but it cannot be its exclusive foundation. As we mentioned in the theoretical part of the paper, cultural memory is fundamentally archaic and inherent to the distant past. On the other hand, communi-

cative memory relies primarily on oral communication between several generations in the recent past. In this context, intergenerational communication emerges as an integral part of communicative memory. When, for some reason, there is a disruption in intergenerational communication, we can speak of a direct threat to communicative memory. Accordingly, it is clear that the interruption of intergenerational communication, and consequently, the disappearance of communicative memory, leads to collective forgetting. In this context, forgetting should be observed as the disappearance of elements of cultural memory, i.e., those elements that have been part of a society's culture for more than a millennium. Taking into account this complex interrelationship, the conclusion that communicative memory is the true foundation of cultural memory, as well as intergenerational communication being the foundation of communicative memory, is once again evident.

Intergenerational communication primarily relies on interpersonal communication between individuals and groups of different age groups. In the context of forming specific communicative memory, in this case, the Old Slavic myth in the Žrnovnica area, it is necessary for interpersonal communication to take place in specific cultural conditions. In other words, it is essential for members of a particular group to form their personal identity, relying in part on the identity of the group to which they belong.

The research in this paper has shown that the majority of respondents consider Old Slavic mythology to be an integral part of the cultural identity of Žrnovnica. The continuity is evident from the fact that there has been no interruption in intergenerational communication on this matter. We can support this claim with the results of the test conducted, which did not find statistically significant differences in attitudes and perception of Old Slavic mythology in Žrnovnica based on the age of the respondents. The fact that we did not find statistically significant differences based on gender and education further confirms a kind of socio-cultural consensus among respondents on this issue. Additionally, respondents demonstrated a high level of general knowledge about the aspects of the myth itself. Consequently, we can conclude that the specific conditions have been met in which intergenerational and interpersonal communication forms and maintains communicative memory, preserving the continuity of Old Slavic mythology in Žrnovnica.

In addition to interpersonal and intergenerational communication, the formation and preservation of communicative memory are partly facilitated by the landscape. According to Assmann, "we can view the landscape as a medium of cultural memory" (p. 35)¹⁴. Such media of cultural memory can be found in the environment, specifically in the landscape of a settlement. In the context of Žrnovnica, these include the river, mountains, hills, archaeological sites, reliefs, and more. In the vicinity of the settlement and the area around the river of the same name, the existence of the myth is evident in the rich toponymy of the place. The myth is, therefore, present in the space. However, it is not unjustified to emphasize that the myth is also present in

time. When considering the element of time, it is necessary to mention the (Croatian) language that has been present in this area for centuries. The concept of preserving the myth through language is particularly interesting in the context of intergenerational communication. If the myth is also language, then mythical names in the space are preserved through interpersonal and intergenerational communication and in time. In this context, the written word is not disregarded; instead, it acknowledges the evident fact. Language, in this case, Croatian, is the primary form of interpersonal communication. What is not recorded is lost or preserved in the form of oral tradition in its primal or modified form. Therefore, the concept of preserving the myth through a spatial-temporal continuum is largely conditioned by the continuity of interpersonal and intergenerational communication.

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In conclusion, interpersonal and intergenerational communication, supported by cultural memory and language in the form of myth, are the most significant factors in the formation and preservation of communicative memory. Despite various interpretations of elements of the Old Slavic myth in Žrnovnica and conflicting views among authors, the continuity of the myth itself remains unquestionable. The guarantee of this continuity lies in communicative memory, which, to some extent, transforms cultural memory while simultaneously maintaining the continuity of the myth in its timeless form through interpersonal and intergenerational communication. That this is the case is evident, in part, from the results obtained in the research conducted as part of this study.

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ULOGA KOMUNIKATIVNOG SJEĆANJA U OČUVANJU KONTINUITETA STAROSLAVENSKOG MITA U ŽRNOVNICI POKRAJ SPLITA

SAŽETAK

Rad istražuje ulogu komunikativnog sjećanja u kontekstu očuvanja kontinuiteta staroslavenkog mita na području Žrnovnice pokraj Splita. Kolektivno sjećanje kao referentna teorijska osnova raščlanjeno je na kulturno i komunikativno s ciljem jasne distinkcije arhaičnog i suvremenog poimanja staroslavenkog mita u interpersonalnoj i međugeneracijskoj komunikaciji. Istraživanje je provedeno pomoću anketnog upitnika na namjernom uzorku od ukupno 50 ispitanika, isključivo stanovnika Žrnovnice. Rezultati istraživanja potvrđuju postojanost kulturnog sjećanja kod ispitanika te visoku razinu općeg znanja o aspektima staroslavenkog mita. Nisu identificirane statistički značajne razlike u komunikativnom sjećanju ispitanika u odnosu na dob, niti ima naznaka o prekidu međugeneracijske komunikacije na ovu temu