

LJILJANA MARKS

Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research
Zagreb, Zvonimirova 17

HISTORY AND FICTION IN THE ORAL LEGENDS OF KONAVLE

This paper deals with the historical legends and legends about the saints of Konavle region near Dubrovnik and is based on the assumption that individual notations should not be regarded as a source of historical authenticity — or as a departure from scientifically proven historical truths — but rather that it should be shown how such texts retain and preserve local history, while also re-interpreting it and changing it according to the laws of the oral literary genre in which they are created. They describe, interpret and adapt history with the knowledge, conceptions and experiences of the eras in which they were written down. Their linguistic style is, of course, much closer to the vernacular, everyday speech than that in historical texts, and it is in that very richness of similar and still very diverse individual utterances that they reveal a greater density of both experiences and data.

According to historical and literary sources, primarily those related to written oral stories from the past and in the present, analysis is made of the legends about the origins of the name of Cavtat and other Konavle toponyms, about the ostensible settlement by Cadmus and Harmonia in this region and their transformation into snakes, and also on the possible influence of that myth from Antiquity on later oral tradition, particularly in relation to the local legend of Saint Hylarion and the Dragon.

Keywords: Croatian oral literature, legends, Konavle

Searching for the spiritual traces of the past of a particular region has always been an adventure.

Oral tradition also preserves such traces, in this oldest form of history. Tradition is mentioned in old historical books as a source which reinforces the authenticity of historical data; sometimes tradition itself is the beginning, the stimulus from which science sets out, and these very

oldest written records of oral legends are preserved in almanacs, chronicles, and pious writings.

Once they were committed to paper, oral legends became part of written literature, and are then again returned to oral tradition, in which the two layers became closely intertwined. They have reached us in fragments, in vague contours, or entirely reshaped with many fanciful additions or most stupenduous fabrications.

In communities and groups in which oral communication prevails, knowledge of history is not transmitted through fully formed, more or less scientific, abstract categories. In order to preserve knowledge, make sense of it and pass it on, oral culture creates and often uses stories about events: everyday ones which have been experienced by some known person, but also historical events. Stories about the local past are thus often a rich warehouse of orally transmitted history (Ong 1987:139). They can encompass a relatively wide historical period in informatively rich and, to a considerable extent, permanent forms. They should not be regarded as a source of the historical authenticity — or a departure from scientifically proven historical truth — of individual texts, but rather as showing how such texts retain and preserve history, and also re-interpret it, changing it according to the laws of the oral literary genre in which they are born. They describe, interpret and adapt history to the knowledge, concepts and experiences of the era in which they were noted down. Their linguistic style is, of course, much closer to vernacular, everyday speech than that in historical texts, and it is in that very richness of similar and still very diverse individual utterances that they reveal a greater density of both experiences and data. While written history includes the chronicler's perspective, organising data according to its mutual historical and temporal dependence and connection, the past narrated in the oral mode occurs and is sapped from the individual, personal perspective of the narrator.

The stimulus for the birth of historical and local legend is always some particular event which corresponds to the most broadly understood historical concept. Local legend can also contain elements of the fantastic, the unusual in both personages and events which exceed customary norms, and thus also aim to explain, to warn, to edify and to provide *exempla*. The historical and the fictional is inextricably intertwined in such legends, one growing from the other in mutual enrichment. Constructing the aetiological stories of the birth and naming

of individual places, mountains, bays and rivers, they add a spiritual dimension to the native place area.

The question also arises as to whether the narrator recognises the general sense, more particularly, the sense of the story which he is telling. No narrator would tell a story which he finds senseless. Consequently every variant, no matter how contaminated or far-fetched, means something to the person recounting it. The meaning read off by the researcher — or some other intermediary — does not have to be identical with the narrator's, moreover it is often completely different. A narrator can interpret and mediate even sense he does not understand. However, if such texts did not say something to us personally, we would not research them or consider them. Consequently, we are also ourselves involved in the fabric of the stories we read or are told.

Oral legends are primarily still texts in themselves — *the text is the thing*. — and not the mere interpretations. If they were not, at the same time, models by which people offer solutions to diverse problems, they would not have lasted for so many centuries. Only tales which touch Humankind deeply and directly are recounted, and only those which *mean* something are passed on (Röhrich 1985).

About Epidaurum only after its fall

The search for the history of cities goes back into their founding and naming. This assertion has to be reversed in connection with certain Konavle examples: the written story of Cavtat starts with its fall and the founding of Dubrovnik. In old written historical legends, the two cities are almost one: the fall of one — Cavtat or Epidaurum — starts the life of the other — Ragusa or Dubrovnik. Testimony to that event has been preserved in both oral and written tradition, although it must have been much more complex, historically.¹

¹ Today, Cavtat is a small harbour town south-east of Dubrovnik, and the administrative and tourism centre of Konavle. The Greeks founded the settlement of Epidaurum four centuries B.C. on the site of today's Cavtat; it was a colony during Roman Times. At the beginning of the 7th century, it was destroyed by the Slavs. Later, a settlement was rebuilt on the ruins of Epidaurum and it was called *Civitas vetus*, which lead to today's name, Cavtat.

Konavle is the region south-east of Dubrovnik with some thirty villages; it stretches along the line of the Dinaric mountain range over a distance of about 22 km — from Plat in the north-west to Oštro Point, which is the most distant

Interpreting the oldest sources for the history of Dubrovnik — *Annales Ragusini Anonymi* — Milorad Medini assumes that the first analyst, who had written the *Annales* by 1385, also had access to some old lost *Chronicle*, which was probably written at the end of the 11th or, at the latest, the beginning of the 12th century, and spoke of the period from the foundation of Dubrovnik up until the year 1001. That lost *Chronicle* probably also contained oral legends which the chronicler did not transcribe, but noted down in his own way: the oral legends about the city which were known to him (Medini 1935:18-27).²

Legends, descriptions of the transport of the relics of the saints, miracles, and the like can be found in *Versus Miletii*, Miletius's verses, the oldest fragmentarily preserved Dubrovnik chronicle. Miletius does not speak of the cause of the fall of Epidaurum, but he does speak of the impoverished Epidaurum refugees and their meeting with the Romans who had sailed in Gruž harbour by chance. Miletius did not write down verses which would have recounted the reason for the fall of Epidaurum. These *reasons* were mentioned in his incomplete work *Historia Ragusii* by Ivan Conversini from Ravenna, a humanist and Petrarch's student, who was a notary public in the service of Dubrovnik between 1384 and 1387. I would like to note them as they could be partly from oral tradition. In one version "Epidaurum was destroyed out of revenge by a magnate, while the inhabitants were on the island of Supetar at some ecclesiastic celebration; while according to the other it was destroyed by the Arabs during the rule of Pipin" (Medini 1935:27).

On the basis of four preserved texts by Constantine Porphyrogenite, Dukljanin the Priest, Miletius and Thomas the Archdeacon, Radoslav Katičić researched and reconstructed the old, lost hypothetical textual legend about the birth of Dubrovnik, to which all of the four authors mentioned probably had access. Katičić concludes that this was probably a lost memorial text in some Latin bishops' catalogue or

point in Croatia on its current border. From the 15th century onwards, Konavle belonged to the Dubrovnik Republic and, after its fall, shared the fate of the entire Dubrovnik region (*Opća enciklopedija*, Vol. 2, 1977:35; Vol. 4, 1978:499-500).

² This is where one finds the legends about Radoslav Bela, on the move of the people from Epidaurum to Dubrovnik after the Saracens destroyed their city, the settlement by the Wallachs, and then the legend of the transportation of the miracle-working painting of the Virgin to Dubrovnik and the legend of Saint Blaise. The chronicler sets the date of the settlement in Dubrovnik by the people of Epidaurum in the year 691 (Medini 1935:18-27).

pontifical chronicle, which had to be older than the mid-10th century, because Constantine Porphyrogenite made use of it in the year 949. Building his thesis on the identical or similar statements in all the four sources of the story known in common, Katičić further concludes that there undoubtedly existed two different, but inter-related legends about the fall of Epidaurum.

According to one of these, "The Ragusians in ancient times held under their authority a city called Pitaura, and when it was conquered, after all the other cities in the region had been conquered by the Slavs who lived in that province, some were slaughtered, others taken captive, and those who could flee and save themselves settled on places along the steep coastline, just where the city stands now" (Katičić 1993:132).

According to another legend, almost at the same time, some newcomers who had been exiled from the city of Rome, pulled in with their ships near to Epidaurum, attacked Epidaurum, considerably weakened, and when it was no longer strong, conquered and devastated it. "And the people assimilated with them and they became one people. They built Ragusa and settled in it" (Katičić 1993:143).

Various conquerors are mentioned in the texts about the fall of Epidaurum. We are naming them because they will appear later even more diversely in oral legends. Ivan Conversini of Ravena's version cites a magnate acting out of revenge, and mentions Arabs in the second version; according to Constantine Porphyrogenite the conquerors were Slavs, Dukljanin the Priest speaks of the Saracens, Thomas the Archdeacon on his part considers that the invaders were newcomers from Rome; Miletius says nothing on this point. In his work, Epidaurum was destroyed because destiny wanted it so. (Indirectly, he, too, assumes that the Romans were the conquerors of Epidaurum because the refugees later built a new city with them.)

Oral legend speaks of the same historical facts, but links and interprets them in a completely different way. According to one text from 1954, the Saracens were evil conquerors who enslaved Mediterranean Europe and Konavle in the year 931. The Drobaši tribe, from whom the narrator originates, took refuge beside the sea, in the cliffs. Ten thousand Konavle soldiers were ordered — it is not known by whom — to set out and destroy the Saracens, who were at that time pillaging on the island of Korčula. The Konavle soldiers carried out their orders and saved Europe from the Saracens.

The personal, narrator perspective is seen in the desire for confirmation of the ancient origins of his family name — the genealogical line of the narrator's family originated from the tribe which defeated the Saracens, and it is still alive today. The authenticity of the legend is warranted to by the year mentioned for the fall of Epidaurum — the year 981 — although it is arbitrary and has no connection whatsoever with the actual year of the city's fall — and a hearth which was found in an old house and has been preserved to the present day. The contemporary times of the narrator can be read off from the legend in a digression which in fact commends on the fall at that time in the population of Konavle (in the written text, it is placed in brackets): "An army gathered with ten thousand under spears and swords and they managed to destroy them and make their grave here (while today there are only seven thousand inhabitants in the whole of Konavle)" (MS IEF 171: 120).

Legend about the Slavs as conquerors of Konavle can be interpreted in almost the same way. They are remembered as having been good (unlike their descriptions in the written texts as the destroyers of Epidaurum) because the people of Konavle are directly descended from them: the Slavs killed the indigenous people wherever they encountered them in the places they conquered. "But they did not act in this way in Konavle." When they came to Konavle they found beautiful women with whom they married "and it is from these unions that the people of Konavle came, because even now the most beautiful women and men are found here" (MS IEF 171:118-119). Beautiful women as a reason for being spared by the enemy can really be only the product of imagination.

There are certain dates and historical events which are commonplace in the legends, by which they try to fix time in a precise and unambiguous way. In modern writing, such a date is usually World War II, after which, it is said there have been no more miracles or stories. In one demonological legend such a time is fixed by the fall of Epidaurum. This event was a temporal dividing line, a moment in time which divides local history into *before* and *after*. What came later in this legend are fairies, who from that time onwards inhabited the caves, cliffs, ditches, forests and mountains of Konavle. They appear only after the fall of Epidaurum: "In olden times, when Epidaurum fell, fairies started to appear and they were found everywhere, but mostly in the *Crljene*

Stijene [Red Rocks] on the way to *Plat* and on the entire *Mali Obod* [Little Brim]" (Bogišić, MS IEF:9).³

Nomen est omen!

Literature — sometimes in a ludicrous, jesting and frivolous way — but almost always positively responds to the ancient rhetoric question of whether essence can be read off from a name. Since etymology belongs to the basics of grammar and rhetoric, it has been and still is an obligatory ornamentation of poetry. The etymological play with names, and/or names which speak, is found in literature from Antiquity through the Middle Ages, the Baroque up to modern literature (Curtius 1971:497-501). Folk etymology which is preserved in oral texts merely complied with this game in the meaning of names.

Oral tradition conferred names on villages, cliffs, water, field and mountains in Konavle; those names are points of contact with ancestors, they awaken reminiscences and preserve memory. Writing out the past they actually also write out some sort of new, different geographical map.

Appellations in local legends most frequently start from the meanings or audio similarity of the two words. One story tells the tale of two brothers in Vitaljina, called Đura and Višnja. Đura went to a village which was later called Đurinići, while Višnja went to Višnjići (MS IEF 394:95). The village of Krajevo below Sniježnica Mountain owes its name to kings [*kralj* = king], "there were forty-nine of them, and they travelled south on horse-back with their attendants to spend the night there. That is where the name Krajevo comes from" (MS IEF 171:120-121). The village of Popovići got its name from a priest [*pop*] (MS IEF 171:119). It is said that it was the Franciscans who first lived in Popovići, where they reared goats; when they ran out of water, they moved to today's Gabriele. The legend assumes that the name came "after these goats, because in, Italian, the word for goat is *capra*, and so the village was called Gabriele" (MS IEF 394:96).

The river, Rijeka Ljuta (or Juta, which is in fact the Trebišnjica River, disappearing in chalk formations) owed its name to its nature: it is an *angry* river; there is a separate legend about its origin: it used to emerge from the ground in Zubci in Herzegovina. A lamb being looked after by a young shepherdess fell into the source of the river, the

³ *Crlijene stijene*, *Plat* and *Mali Obod* are all contemporary toponyms in Konavle.

shepherdess followed in an attempt to save it, but she was drowned. Out of grief, her mother started begging for wool which she then used to block up the source. The river "disappeared and came out of the ground in Konavle". When the river was forcing its way out, the ground trembled so terribly "that pregnant women lose their babies. And that is why it was given the name Juta [Angry]" [MS IEF 171:89). The legend dates this event in its own way and sets it into the flow of history: there was no river when the Illyrians lived in Konavle, but the Juta came from the mountain before the Greeks and before the Franks (MS IEF 394:96).

To narrators, historical reality issues from the relationship between the visible and the invisible; a legend is a story which is not ruled by chronology but by the similarities expressed in comparison or metaphor, in order to present history as it happened. To the narrator, the figures of etymology, comparison and compressed analogies are the structure and proper expression of the historical world. The accent in legend is not given by history; instead it is formed by the interest of the narrator.

An example of local history shaped in that way is also found in Matković's text *Povies sela Duba* [The History of the Village of Duba]. This naively written chronicle dating from the beginning of this century compresses all the centuries of history of the village of Duba. The history starts with the naming of the village, the etymological game with *dub* [bay oak], *hrast* [oak tree], and the name of the village. The authenticity and long life of the legend and the place are confirmed by the existence today of the oak-tree in question: "it is said that there was a large forest, bay oaks and oak trees, and so it was from the forest that the village of Duba got its name (...) And today you can still find large bay oak trees here and there".⁴ This play with words and names is continued in the description of the mountains: *Snježnica* [Snow Peak], *Glavno brdo* [Main Hill], *Javorova dolina* [Maple Valley] *Borova glava* [Pine Head]. There is an intertwining of the fate of families with historical legends, historical with local legends, local with the mythical, in the order which the narrator preferred. The incursions by the Turks and the robber-raids by the Montenegrins were interwoven with the evil deeds committed by certain people in very ancient times who left behind them piles of stones and buried gold, and the footprints of fairies; this history told with no visible

⁴ *Dub* is the local synonym, and also the literary expression for *hrast*, or oak (*Quercus*). Oral tradition also interprets the genesis of the Slavic name of Dubrovnik in the same etymological way, linking it with the *dub* (bay oak) and *dubrava*, (oak) forest or woods.

order is a reproduction of the personal experience of history, compressed, summarised, condensed and emotionally charged.

Today's name of the town of Cavtat is also interpreted by historians mainly etymologically from the word *civitas*; "The name *Epidaurum* disappeared from ordinary speech, and was probably replaced with *Ragusa* (*vecchia*), and in the language of the Dalmatian Romans with *civitas* (*vetera*), the source of our Cavtat" (Medini 1935:159). The origin of the name *Konavle* is explained by the old aqueduct, the *konal*, which led from Vodovada to Cavtat, parts of it still being preserved today (Medini 1935:162).

Oral history speaks of the origins of the name of Cavtat, most frequently assuming the prior fall of Epidaurum; Cavtat was founded after its fall. However, in some texts both names — Epidaurum and Cavtat — appear at the same time on an equal footing.

The loveliest and most poetic legend of the origin of the name of Cavtat was noted down by Maja Bošković-Stulli in Cavtat in 1954. The inhabitants of the destroyed city of Epidaurum ran away into the mountains and one man "looked down and he saw weeds, acacia and some mountain flower in bloom in the ruins. And he said: - Look how it blooms [*cavti*]! And that's how they called that place Cavtat".⁵

The old *Konavle* aqueduct and the etymological interpretation of the name, *Konavle*, according to the *konal*, or canal, is so direct and obvious that it is sometimes difficult to believe that a legend is in question. Both the aqueduct and the origin of the name of *Konavle* are mentioned in stories — and not only in legends — with other motifs.

Written literature about the aqueduct and the *Konavle*'s direct naming after it was mentioned by Ilija Crijević in his epic poem, *De Epidauro*.

But still one famous and proud memorial remains:
The aqueduct of the City not yet consumed by time.
Of such material it was made with great effort,
A path as hard as iron which no weather
Could destroy despite its persistent flow.
So where the aqueduct was, a road now stands,
And by that road *Konavle* got its name.

⁵ This notation is the only recorded variant of the legend. It was recounted by Stana Gulijemović, a housewife by profession; in 1954 she was 52 years old. The legend was then published in three books by Maja Bošković-Stulli (Bošković-Stulli 1963, No. 154; 1993, No. 113; and 1997, No. 151).

It went from Vodovada to the old city,
And now it is twice seven miles in length.
Here, if tenacious, you can see the traces,
The old city's glory, the view which survived...⁶

How Mrcine got its name

The legend of the origins of Mrcine (called Dubravka today), the aqueduct, the canal, and Konavle and Cavtat, in an etymological manner, is the best known and most frequently referred to story from Konavle. There is no doubt that it was known in oral tradition in the middle of the 19th century, because two variants of it are included in Bogišić's collection (Bogišić, MS IEF 189:37; 106).

The published text most probably followed oral tradition — as least that the claim of the editors and those who noted down the story for those first editions. That does not mean that the story was not orally preserved and passed on at the same time, nor that it did not return from the print medium to the oral medium. It was noted down and published in diverse and imaginative variants in which only the protagonists changed, in that they corresponded in name and occupation directly with the period in which the story was written down, and with the ruling conditions in Konavle; the final text of the story, comments upon it, and the interpretation was also dependent on the publisher.

As far as I know, the oldest published text is that of Vid Vuletić-Vukasović (after 1896).⁷ According to Vuletić-Vukasović, a malicious and rich Roman called Valerius ruled in Latin Cavtat (Epidaurum). He had an only child, a daughter, and although she had many suitors her father would give her hand to none of them. She was courted by the rich Duke Stjepan, who was the master of Soko Fortress in Vrsine, and Fabius, a rich Roman, who would have been acceptable to her father, and was not unacceptable to the daughter. Valerius called both the

⁶ This verse by Crijević was translated from the Latin into Croatian by Rafo Bogišić (Bogišić 1982:113).

⁷ The story was published in a separate booklet: *Kako su postale Mrcine u Konavlima*. It was printed in Vladimir M. Radović's printing shop in Mostar. Written at the end of the story is the year 1896, and I assume that was the year in which the author handed over the manuscript for printing. The story was almost certainly written down earlier, and, as he himself said, he heard it for the first time "from the late Father Augustin Pavlič in Pridvorje — in Konavle". The same text was then also published in Vuletić-Vukasović 1923:102-109. The quotations given here are from that publication.

suitors to him and said he would give his daughter in marriage to the one who performed the best deed. Fabius went out into the world to become rich, while the duke announced that in a period of two months he would bring living water to Tiha at the entrance to Cavtat. And he started to build a *vodovar (kono)* [aqueduct, canal] from the Vodovada stream to Cavtat. On the agreed day, the duke arrived with his wedding party. The girl was holding a vessel for water in her hand, but there was a large lizard in the pipe which jumped upon her, and she died of fright. Even then, Stjepan did not want to give her up, and he carried her dead body to Soko Fortress, where he loved her for three days, and then he buried her. "And he met his fate, because he tortured the poor, so from then on the place was called Mrcine [Worthless People and/or Carrion] because the duke had made love to the dead girl here..." The story says that the lizard — a *blavor*, glass snake or lizard snake — had been pushed into the canal by the vengeful Fabius, because he had thought that it would ruin the beauty of the girl's face. "So he got his revenge in that way, and then disappeared, and after that those rich fields were called *Konavle*, either from the *Konal* [canal] or the aqueduct where the water flowed..." (Vuletić-Vukasović 1923:106).

I have given the detailed content of this story because it appears in numerous variants which change only certain elements.⁸ In the first part, the story is similar to a fairy tale: the selfish father does not want to give his daughter, his only child, to any man, and when he does agree to do so, then he will do so only if his almost impossible wish is fulfilled. In a fairy tale, the story would have ended as in a fairy tale: they would have married and lived happily ever after; legend, however, punishes all the tyrants: the father, the duke and the proud daughter.

The legend was commented upon in detail by V. Vuletić-Vukasović who recorded it, acting in this aspect as a narrator who wants to convince

⁸ The story from Bogišić's collections took place in distant times when the islands were still connected, and the King of France and "a prince from Epidaurum" were in competition for the hand of the lovely Cavtislava (from which comes the name Cavtat). To fulfil Cavtislava's wishes, the King of France was to bring a great deal of marble from the land of Marmoria to build a palace, while the prince, who was not to her liking, was to bring living water to Cavtat in a period of eight days. Since the prince brought the water to Cavtat before the king arrived from Marmoria, Cavtislava grabbed a snake which was brought by the flowing water, placed it under her throat, and the snake bit her and killed her. Here the story ends. There is no mention of the origins of the Mrcine place-name in Konavle. It is possible that the published texts mentioned could have been based on some other oral model.

his listeners in the actual nature of the described event; he confirms its authenticity by the actual existence of the remains of the old aqueduct, which went from the Ljuta River through Konavle to Epidaurum. So he says: "On *Kokotova glavica* in Pridvorje, I saw excavations, wells, and the like, and you could see the guttering of the aqueduct, the pipes, and so on, and the same also in Drvenik, in the Pridvorje parish" (Vuletić-Vukasović 1923:106;107).

All that we know about the story *Odakle je došlo ime Cavtat, Konavle, Vodovalja i Mrcine* [The Origins of the Name of Cavtat, Konavle, Vodovalja and Mrcine] is that it was written down by Paulina Bogdan-Bijelić "according to the folk narration" and that it was "passed on with great pleasure without changing the language", which is not quite exact; it was published in a magazine which was published by the *Teachers' Club* in Zagreb, which means that it was meant primarily for children, so that its educational and edifying message was emphasised. Therefore, the changes in language and the literary mode are quite understandable. The story commences in an even more fairy tale fashion, with a real introductory formula: "Once upon a time, there lived a King Kodrun and a Queen Armuža; they lived in an old city on the top of the Konavle Cliffs, which had been built by fairies, who gave it to them as a gift." They, too, had an only child called Cavtislava. The king built a new city beside a sea cove and called it Cavtislav-City". This is followed by a story about suitors, in which a rich seigneur from Vrsine promises to bring living water to the city. Here, too, a *blavor* leaps from the pipe before the water starts to flow and the girl falls dead; this sad news kills the king; the young man from Vrsine carries them both off to Vrsine, where he guards their dead bodies for three days, until his heart breaks from sorrow. The people bury the three of them together "and since then they have called Vrsine Mrcine because of the three dead bodies which had been displayed there; while the fertile land through which the suitor from Vrsine had built the aqueduct, was called Konavle." The people believed that one of the suitors had put the *blavor* in the aqueduct so they all boarded a ship and sailed out to sea. "So that the city would not be empty any longer, God sent a great earthquake, which destroyed it to its foundations. Later, a small town was built on the same place which was called Cavtat after Cavtislav-City" (*Domaće ognjište* 1906:206).

The historical facts around which legend grows and which should obviously be known by school-children are found in the notes and, in fact, comment upon the legend, bearing witness to its authenticity. In this

respect, they have the same function as the comments of the narrators themselves, or the commentator V. Vuletić-Vukasović. They indicate that once Epidaurum stood on the site of today's Cavtat, and that Konavle comes from the Latin word *canalis*; Vodovalja is the place from which the water came to Epidaurum, and the remains are still in existence and visible today; an earthquake is suggested as being the cause of the destruction of Cavtislav upon whose ruins Cavtat is to grow.

There is indirect data in Maja Bošković-Stulli's manuscript collection about the story having also been published in certain Dubrovnik and Split newspapers after World War I, and this is reliable information. The oral narration which she noted down at that time is, in fact, a condensed recounting of that text (MS IEF 171:89-90).⁹

Variants noted down in field research during the 1950s and the 1960s have all the features of orally transmitted stories: they are shorter, and more compressed in both composition and expression. The descriptions of the torments which the masses had to endure while the aqueduct was being built are picturesque, and naturalistic in some places.

It is certain that this motif was particularly well-known and productive in the oral literature of Konavle. In the historic "truths" which it desires to recount in a more or less imaginative manner, it also corresponds with historical texts, and with written literature.

Junije Palmotić (1606-1657) wrote *Captislava*, a play, which takes place at the court of the king of Epidaurum, Krunoslav, one of whose daughters is called Captislava. The content of Palmotić's play has nothing do with the story referred to above. There is a link, however, in the name of the heroine, Captislava, and the name of the town, which, according to Palmotić, too, originated from the girl's name.¹⁰ Just as in the oral

⁹ The legend was noted down in 1954 in Čilipi, the narrator was Kate Novaković, who was literate and was 57 years old at the time. The legend commences with an introduction in which the narrator tells of where she learnt the story: "It was in some Dubrovnik and Split newspapers after the first war".

¹⁰ *Djela Gjona Gjora Palmotića, II* [The Works of Gjono Gjore Palmotić]; 1883. Cf. the verses 84-87; 3307-3313, and the verse 3878. Comparing the Captislava text according to four manuscripts — three from the Franciscan Library in Dubrovnik and one from the "Academy Library" in Zagreb edited and published by Armin Pavić — with the Captislava manuscript preserved in the *Public and Rumjancev Museum Library* in Moscow, Roman Brandt produced additional variants and differences from Pavić's text, which he believed would contribute to the understanding of the text. What is important for our story is that the name of the heroine Cavtislava is written with a *v* and not a *p* in the Moscow manuscript, so that "the name of the city is written accordingly, which (as Palmotić claims) got its name from her: Cavtat" (Brandt

legend, Palmotić establishes a direct etymological link between the verb *cavti* [to bloom] and the name of the town.

The following commentary demonstrates just how intriguing the theme is of the names given to places, and attempts made to establish "the truth" about how the names came about. In his review of "folk elements" in Palmotić's works, M. Milas also considers the origin of the name of the town of Cavtat. Milas believed that *Captislava* was written to celebrate the city of Epidaurum and the *Slav language*, which King Krunoslav introduced instead of Latin, so it was natural that the Latin name, Epidaurum, was changed into the Slavic Cavtat. Milas, however, was bothered by just this poetic link between the name of the city and the verb *to bloom*, which was completely without foundation according to the Latin language, as was later confirmed by oral tradition. "Here it can be seen that the poet derived the name Cavtislav and Captat from the verb *cavtati*, while the word in Dubrovnik is either *capćeti* or *cavćeti*; and that, of course, is not true, rather the name Cavtat is non-Slavic and derives from the Latin *civitas* [town], but it was dearer to the poet's heart that the name of that town be of folk [origin] and not Romanic" (Milas 1902:340).

Did Saint Hylarion kill the snake-like Cadmus?

We shall interrupt this review of Konavle legends with a brief reminder of the myth about Cadmus and Harmonia. They shall return us again to our tales.

Doing research into the literary and mythological traces of Antiquity on the Adriatic coast, R. Katičić discusses the people called the Encheleians, who appear in the oldest geography of the eastern Adriatic coasts and are a direct link with the myth about Cadmus and Harmonia. The oldest starting-point of the legend of Cadmus and Harmonia among the Encheleians and of their end somewhere on the Adriatic coasts is a lost source, and was probably the writings of some logograph which was drawn on by later authors. On the basis of preserved writings by logographers, historians, mythographers, geographers and Greek and Latin writers, Katičić reconstructed this legend and documented it in detail (Katičić:1995).

1904:153). This quotation is interesting only as a note, as a contribution to the analysis of the text.

It would seem that the myth about Cadmus and Harmonia on the Adriatic coasts corresponds with the oral legends about them in Konavle. The fate of Cadmus and Harmonia is of particular interest to us from the moment when they left Thebes and came to the Encheleians:

According to tradition, Cadmus and his consort Harmonia left Thebes when they were already in advanced years. Travelling on an ox-cart they reached the land of the Encheleians and there founded the city of Butou, today's Budva. Leading the army of the Encheleians, Cadmus defeated the Illyrians and became their king. When ruling over the Illyrians, a son was born to him and he called him Illyrius. Later, he led the Illyrians and the Encheleians against Hellas. He conquered and destroyed many cities, right up until the time that his army offended the Oracle of Delphi. Then, according to the old prophecy, the Illyrian army and the army of the Encheleians were destroyed. Cadmus and Harmonia did not die with their armies but were transformed into snakes, as the gods had decided, and were transported to the Elysian Fields, the dwelling-place of the blessed, to whom the gods had given happy immortality (Katičić 1995:232).

R. Katičić lists and considers in detail the historical and literary confirmations and the possible common sources and similarities in the description and interpretation of the legend of Cadmus in the land of the Illyrians. These fragments show that the Encheleians lived together with the Illyrians on the coasts of the Adriatic. It is also certain that Cadmus and Harmonia, according to legend, were transformed into snakes somewhere in that area.

A particular place in the group of legends about the Encheleians is taken by the information about Cadmus's and Harmonia's grave and about their "stones" on the Adriatic coasts, where it is obvious that a shrine was erected to them and dedicated to the couple. Later mention in geographical and historical handbooks and also in literature confirm these legends. According to sources, their grave was situated in the Keraunian mountains "which are often heard of in connection with danger to ships. (...) But the ruler of the celestial regions also produced another type of miracle. Two cliffs stand nearby, and when a gloomy event is looming so that destiny wearies the heart of the people and lack of fate's mercy strikes the population, those stones move in the ground and their peaks draw near to one another" (Katičić 1995:285).

This legend which has come down to us unites both mythic elements: the transportation to Elysium, the land of the blessed, and the

transformation into snakes, by which the Adriatic regions undoubtedly entered into the Greek horizon.

An important role was no doubt played in all this by the old "domestic Adriatic cults, especially the snake cult in the southern part of the eastern Adriatic coast". This indicates a possible connection between the story of Cadmus and Harmonia and their transformation into snakes, and the cult of the snake which is "well documented and established without any doubt among the ancient Illyrians" (Katičić 1995:255-303). Within the mythological and religious system of the southern Illyrians, the snake has been confirmed as an old cult animal with a focal role. The Illyrians regarded the snake as their protector and their divinity. It survived Hellenization and the later prolonged process of the Romanization of these regions as their tribal symbol. Christianity would try — with only partial success — to drive this Illyrian symbol out of folk belief. It would be preserved in the consciousness of the inhabitants of those parts, together with many other relicts from pre-historical times, right up until the present day.¹¹

The Illyrian snake cult left an indirect mark in Konavle tradition in the legend about Saint Hylarion. The oldest known record of this legend is found in *The Life of the Blessed Hylarion*, which was written at the end of the 4th or the beginning of the 5th century by Saint Jerome, a Father of the Church born in Stridon in Dalmatia.

"So Saint Jerome tells us that Saint Hylarion came to Epidaurum in the year 365 AD to free the Christians there from a great threat. A huge snake which the people called *Boas* in their own language (...) swallowed not only live-stock but also villagers and shepherds. Saint Hylarion came to liberate them from this evil, and he soon overcame and killed the snake. This wondrous undertaking by Saint Hylarion made a strong

¹¹ Since the 5th century B.C., snakes have often been depicted in jewellery (as the ends of bracelets, necklaces, *fibulae*, and decorative pins); the snake also appears as the guardian of the home and hearth, and the threshold (remnants of such legends still exist today), as a symbol of fertility, the chthonic divinity, apotropaic animals, totems, demons, water... For more on this point, see: A. Stipčević 1974:180-190; 1973:413-417. And on the cult of the snake in: R. Ferri, "A Contribution to Knowledge of Illyrian Mythology", in *Anali historijskog instituta u Dubrovniku* 2 (1953):419-429. Archeological finds from the Late-Roman era have given clear evidence about snake cults in the region in which snake symbolism prevailed in ancient times. Still, only a small amount of such evidence of local significance has been preserved, and it is obvious that the snake was no longer an Illyrian divinity during the Roman era. However, the fact remains that the cult, although suppressed, was maintained.

impression on the Christians there, and later many writers wrote about it, while the inhabitants of Epidaurum and their descendants recounted the story with pride and showed the cave in which Boas the Snake had lived" (Stipčević 1973:183-184). The legend is also mentioned in the Dubrovnik *Annals*, but its contents were not given (Medini 1933:19).

The English archaeologist Arthur J. Evans wrote about the legend at the end of the 19th century (Evans 1877).¹² He wrote that the legend had remained alive until the new era. "At the end of the last century a cave in Cavtat in which a dragon lived was still being shown, and a church has been consecrated since ancient times to that saint (Saint Hylarion) at the spot where the Blessed Hylarion burnt it, while the village of Mlini is nearby, which is mentioned as early as in Jerome's *The Life of the Blessed Hylarion*. The victory of Christianity over the snake cult which has remained deeply rooted in the souls of the indigenous peoples is symbolised in that legend. Another cave which was connected with the transformation of Cadmus and Harmonia, and later with the cult of Asclepius, was also shown in the mountain above Cavtat". (Katičić:1995:257).

Evans saw the conflict between Saint Hylarion and the Dragon as a symbolic struggle between paganism and Christianity, which is an expected interpretation. Christianity had brought its own miracles with it and probably wanted to stifle the religious content of the mythology of Antiquity and the non-Christians miracles by denying their magic. Thus, Evans leaves the Dragon and Saint Hylarion in one cave, but also points to another cave to which the transformation into snakes of Cadmus and Harmonia is connected. He does not inter-relate the two stories.

Illyrian Epidaurum is not mentioned anywhere in the literature of Antiquity as being the city of Cadmus. Nor is there any mention of the cave in which the Dragon lived, nor that the peoples of that region were called descendants of the Snake (Katičić 1995:298-299). These localisations obviously came later and included the religious judgements of their time, and their own knowledge and experiences in the old legends.

¹² R. Katičić mentions the translation by Milutin Drecun and points out that it should be used with reserve because the translator changed the sense of the original in a number of places. Cf. also: Evans 1883:17-19. The legend about Saint Hylarion and the Dragon of Epidaurum is also found in the work of Adelheim (died 709), who was a Canterbury student and the first writer of Anglo-Saxon ethnicity (Praga 1938; Katičić 1995:257-258).

However, Thomas the Archdeacon wrote in the 13th century about Epidaurum as Cadmus's city in the introductory chapter to his work *Historia Salonitanorum pontificum atque Spalatensium*.

According to the stories of poets, it is said that Cadmus came to the same province when he was transformed into a snake. And his city was Epidaurum, which is situated near Ragusa, in which there are large caves. And up to the present it is believed that a dragon lives there and that is why the poet sings: Why do you look so sternly at the errors of your friend, like the Snake of Epidaurum? That is why these peoples were called the kinfolk of snakes. And one also reads about the Blessed Hylarion, that he killed a great dragon there. According to the history books, the same Cadmus really was a king in Greece, and, driven out of his kingdom, he came to Dalmatia and, becoming a very cruel pirate, he began like a slimy snake to sail the seas, setting up ambushes for seafarers and suppressing the weak whenever he got the chance (Ivić 1992:19).

The Cadmus of Antiquity is a snake; in Thomas's time there were no longer transformations which would be considered normal and accepted without objections, but in Thomas's time stories did exist that the malicious dragons had moved into the Epidaurum caves so they could probably have been there in ancient times. The then current, ostensible fact that there were dragons in Epidaurum is carried back into the past, in order to corroborate the ancient sources: "The Bible, Saint Jerome, Saint Izadore, Boëthius and Saint Augustine confirm that dragons did exist and that the saints killed them and thus attained glory, that heroes and people, because of their sins, transformed into beasts or into dragons" (Ivić 1992:24). The voices of the Church authorities and Thomas's contemporaries used to confirm that ancient times hide miraculous transformations and stories about them. Oral legend says that snakes existed in the Epidaurum region; poets spoke about Cadmus transformed into a snake and in their own way, through transformation, described the link between Humankind and snakes.

For mediaeval man, being transformed into a snake had a completely different meaning and could only have been punishment for a sin committed, because the suppression of the interpretation of the ancient work through its metaphors, works and destinies of the ancient heroes gave a new, Christian interpretation. Thomas sought a Christian interpretation and found that the Snake meant the Devil, sin and evil. So

the snake-like Cadmus became a figurative expression of the Devil's malice.¹³

We have already said that we are interested in when Cadmus could have come to Epidaurum, and if there is a connection between Cadmus and Saint Hylarion. As Cadmus's city, Epidaurum is directly mentioned only in Thomas's text. Ivić cites Priscian's Latin translation of *Periegesis (Guide Through the World)* by Dionysius Periegete, the learned 2nd century Greek poet, as the source of Thomas's story about Cadmus and Harmonia. The graves of Cadmus and Harmonia are actually described in that work, the transformation into snakes is mentioned, and cautions are issued about "the time of the event and the danger foretold by the thundering issuing from those graves"¹⁴ (Ivić 1992:30-32). However, neither the Latin text by Priscian I had access to nor its translation into Croatian say anything about a link between Cadmus and Epidaurum, so, either Ivić had some other text or the source was somewhere else. R. Katičić, who analysed in detail the antique sources about Cadmus and Harmonia, is of the opinion that "Illyrian Epidaurum is not mentioned anywhere in the literature of Antiquity as being Cadmus's city" (Katičić 1995:298-299), and it is in that detail that Thomas's variant of the legend differs in essence from the sources from Antiquity. Whether the source which initiated such connection in Thomas's work originates from Antiquity or only from the Middle Ages, is not crucial for the theme herein.

In Thomas's version, however, there really could rise a connection between the snake-like Cadmus and the snake which would become the Dragon in the legend about Saint Hylarion. The poet from Antiquity speaks of the dangers foretold by the thundering of the stones from

¹³ For sources and quotation from the Bible, the works of Saint Augustine and others whom Thomas probably referred to for such an interpretation of the snake, see: Ivić 1992:19-40.

¹⁴ Priscian's text (according to Katičić 1995:286): "and it comes widely spread [i.e. the sea] to the Illyrian fort which looms high on the peak of the Keraun Mountains. Here you can see a grave-mound of which it is said that it belongs to Cadmus and Harmonia together: namely, the story goes that after a long time their bodies changed into snakes, in their old age, after they had left their homeland and Thebes. And here the gods also performed another miracle: namely, the two mounds draw close to each other when some pestilence is looming, each time when it foretells terrible misfortune for the settlers. In that area there is a spring of miraculous water which old people rightly called Holy, namely, it is icy and exceeds the coldness of all water, and whoever draws near with a burning torch, it puts out the fire; but it catches alight again, when one uses one's right hand to point the torch at the spring."

Cadmus's and Harmonia's grave site, which the mediaeval Thomas the Archdeacon seems to have understood and interpreted as an omen of danger, future plague or misery and the most extreme damnation of the people. Thomas applied his own — Christian — comprehension to the meaning of the words from the Antique sources. The life of Hylarion, the dragon-slayer from Epidaurum, shows the type of pestilence he faced: "Hylarion's fire-spurting Dragon swallowed oxen, it devastated the entire region and its breath consumed not only small and large livestock but also field labourers and shepherds."¹⁵ Thomas does not directly mention that the snake-like Cadmus fell as Hylarion's victim, but Ivić saw an obvious connection: in Antiquity, Epidaurum was known to be a snake-prolific area; its lizards and dragons originate from the same breeding-place; Cadmus was not the only Epidaurian dragon, but he could have been one in a series of dragons which did evil. Priscian's foretelling of future pestilence and plague and the most violent damnation of the people were Thomas's mainstay for recognising the evil activities which transform a man into a snake in the devastations described by Saint Jerome (Ivić 1992).

This mediaeval legend also found a place in Palmotić's *Pavlimir*. With his comrades, Pavlimir disembarked somewhere near Cavtat on a day of when the people were rejoicing and celebrating the memory of Saint Hylarion and their salvation from the Dragon. The legend is mentioned as early as the Prologue, which is uttered by Epidaurum itself. The descriptions of the evils which the Dragon *Voaz* did to the people are similar to those in Thomas the Archdeacon's descriptions: *Voaz*, as Palmotić called the Dragon, was feared by "all the flocks and shepherds"; *Voaz* lived in Šipun, a great cave, and gulped down whole oxen, flocks and people. Saint Ilar (or Hylarion) liberated the people and his saint's day had been celebrated from that time onwards. The story of the ominous cave and Hylarion's great miracle spread everywhere.

The legend is told once more in great detail in the play. On the eve of the celebration of the saint's day, Dubravko reminds the shepherds of the miracle performed by Ilar, and celebrates it at the same time. The description here of Ilar's miracle is identical to the recorded oral legend because it includes the journey across the sea which the Dragon made murky and poisonous in passing, and the church in which Saint Ilar

¹⁵ Saint Jerome, *Vita*, 28.3, P.L. 23, Col. 50B-C = Bastiansen: 130. The translation is according to Ivić 1992:31.

burned the Dragon and the image which remained, not of ash but of poison (Palmotić 1965:275-280). According to Palmotić, Ilar became the permanent protector and patron saint of the people of Cavtat and showed himself again in his cave to Srd, instructing the people to accept Pavlimir as their king.¹⁶

I assume that Palmotić knew both the written and oral legends about Saint Ilar. This was indirectly confirmed by the English historian Evans, and by Milas, at the beginning of the 20th century. In their references to the actual cave of Šipun and the small church in Mlini, they wanted to give the legend a frame of reality. In doing so, Milas evokes the oral tradition of that time in the Dubrovnik area. "The story about Vojas the Dragon in the Šipun abyss and about Saint Ilar are folk stories, and they are known today around Dubrovnik. The Šipun abyss is near Cavtat (old Epidaurum), and the people say a dragon lived there who did much evil to the people, but was killed by Saint Ilar. Saint Ilar, or as they call him here, Ilarijun, came to Župa, Mlini near Dubrovnik, after he had killed the Dragon, and the people built him a church, which is now the central church in Mlini. The story about Saint Ilar is certainly an old one, and our Palmotić adopted it from the people" (Milas 1902:340).

The mediaeval legend has been preserved in local oral tradition up until the present day. During the mid-1950s, M. Bošković-Stulli noted down three short, single-episode variants of the Saint Hylarion legend in Obod and Cavtat. Hylarion is called *Ilar* in the Konavle linguistic form. All three stories testify to the oral transmission of the stories: two of them commence with the usual introductory formulae "It used to be said..." and "Old people say...", while the third variant evokes family tradition: "My grandfather used to tell of...". They say that there was a Dragon/Devil living in Šipun. Saint Ilar came, killed the Dragon, and then raised his hand and made a journey across the sea, and then Ilar brought the Dragon to Mlini across dry land and there he burned it. A church was built in Saint Ilar's honour in Mlini, and it contains a picture of the saint. When the sea calms down, you can see from Šipun to Mlini, the way along which Saint Ilar dragged the Dragon.

¹⁶ In *Captislava*, Bojnislav saved Ljubica, Captislava's sister, from the Dragon. The Dragon grabbed Ljubica and took her across the sea to the small island of Mrkan. Palmotić probably took this story of saving a maiden from a sea monster from Ariosto (who on his part took the story about Perseus and Andromeda from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*); these have no connection with oral tradition and the legends about the saints who killed dragons (Pavletić 1910).

These contemporary writings contain nothing about the Dragon's evil deeds which would justify it being killed; in one of the texts, the narrator falters because some say that Hylarion killed the Devil, while others say it was the Dragon; this would be the only trace which could associate to the above-mentioned mediaeval idea about the connection between the Dragon and the Devil. Cadmus is not mentioned at all. On the basis of these contemporary notations of orally narrated legends, I am inclined to believe that the English archeologist and historian, Evans, really did listen to oral legends about Saint Hylarion and the Dragon: Evans also mentioned the cave near Cavtat, and the small church in Mlini, and the still visible track in the sea left by Saint Hylarion.¹⁷

The questions remains of whether there is a connection between the stories about Cadmus and Hylarion. The reason for that could also be that fateful lizard (the *blavor*)¹⁸ which sprang onto the breast of the lovely Roman lady (or Cavtislava) and consequently inadvertently inspired the naming of Mrcine, Konavle and Cavtat. In oral tradition, this creature could easily have grown from a lizard into a snake, and then into the Dragon which took refuge in Šipun. The etymology and meaning of these words in different languages also allows for such a supposition, although the written notation of oral narrations does not directly support it. There undoubtedly exists a link in Illyrian tradition between the motif of the snake and Cadmus and Harmonia transformed into snakes. The question is: does Cadmus have a link with Konavle.

Konavle oral tradition says nothing about the snake-like Cadmus and Harmonia having really lived in Konavle. This is spoken of only in

¹⁷ Šipun Cave is also mentioned in other mythic Konavle legends as a place in which strange things happened: Ivo Palikuća, who was from Cavtat, was walking home one night along the sea-front where he met a white horse, mounted it, but he realised that the horse must be "some sort of monster" which was going "near Šipan, whence Saint Ilar lead out the Dragon". The horse disappeared into the Šipun abyss. The same legend speaks of Šipun being full of fairies, but that they are disturbed by the prayers of the congregation. When the wind weakened, they would appear again. Fishermen spoke of "hearing in the depths of Šipun the sounds of a violin and some sort of voices were singing. So they would hear the fairies and witches calling to them by name." *Pustolovice* take men's voices away; they have given fortune to some, but, at the same time, blinded them (Bogišić, IEF Ms 189:30-31 and 98).

¹⁸ The term *blavor* is similar to the Albanian *bullâr*, of the same meaning, and also meaning "blind one" (confirmed only in Ulcinj) and the Romanian *balaur*, which means dragon. *Blavor* is a rare pre-Slavic relict in the Balkans which is in common with the Romanian and Arbanas [Albanian] term (Skok 1971:170).

historical sources and editorial comments on the oldest written notations of the story.

In the comment to the story *Odkle je došlo ime Cavtat, Konavle, Vodovalja i Mrcine* [The Origins of the Names of Cavtat, Konavle, Vodovalja and Mrcine], the name of the king, Kodrun, and of his queen, Armuža, are taken to be associated with Cadmus and Harmonia. The commentary invokes a legend — although we do not know which one, or anything about its origins — and points to the legend of their graves being in Konavle: "King Cadmus and Queen Harmonia were driven out of Boeotia and took refuge in Echilaea. According to one old legend, Cadmus's grave is at the foot of Sniježnica Mountain while Harmonia's is at the foot of Ilija's [Elias] Hill in Konavle" (*Domaće ognjište* 1906:296). Both Sniježnica and Ilija's Hill are mentioned in later oral historical legends in a completely different context: the mythical legends about fairies are connected with Sniježnica, while the legend of the moving of the church is linked with Ilija's Hill.

V. Vuletić-Vukasović, too, directly joins the story of Saint Hylarion's Dragon with Cadmus; to him, Cadmus was a giant who "had killed the Dragon somewhere near the Konavle cliffs, and as ordered by the goddess, Athena, he has sown its teeth which sprouted from the ground as genies and devastated the surroundings" (Vuletić-Vukasović 1923:107). This quotation could indicate that the legend about Cadmus and his connection with Saint Hylarion in Konavle did perhaps exist, or it is possible that Vuletić-Vukasović simply added to or, in fact, described the motif from Greek mythology; Vuletić-Vukasović does not link Saint Hylarion with Cadmus transformed into a snake, but with the snake dedicated to Aesculapius, the god of medicine. In Epidaurum "the god Aesculapius was deeply revered (...) and the snake was dedicated to him", while, according to Vuletić-Vukasović, Saint Hylarion was in fact in the wrong when he killed the snake which "made every inhabitant healthy again". This interpretation is without foundation and not supported by any evidence.¹⁹

¹⁹ Vuletić-Vukasović, of course, wanted to give real credence to his claim and linked the legend with the Aesculapius's image carved on one of the Dubrovnik palaces; he also mentioned that below Sniježnica there was "a cave on the eastern side, and it is said that this is where Aesculapius's great snake lived. (...) Around the cave all sorts of spell-casting aromatic herbs can be found, and it is said that there is no sign of them in our parts, but that wizards planted them in ancient times, when the people bowed down to Aesculapius's snake" (Vuletić-Vukasović 1923:108). Mythic legends of fairies are also connected with Sniježnica, and are mentioned by Vuletić-Vukasović, but I

So Saint Ilar liberated the people of Cavtat from the Dragon and, metaphorically, brought them the protection and miracle of the Christian saints. Oral legends from Konavle also speak of that later period.

The Church of the Holy Cross stands in the village of Pičete (near Mrcine, now Dubravka), and the origins of its bell — which protects the entire parish from stormy weather, hail and wind — is unknown. According to legend, the bell was stolen and transported to Sutorina where it was hidden in a barrel. However, at Christmas time the bell began to ring itself. The young people did not believe that this had happened so they stole it again and buried in the ground in a field. "And an old woman whose field it was went out to pick cabbage and she found the clapper, the tongue of the bell, and was frightened and told the master of the house, and he told the family and the bell was returned again" (MS IEF 394:90-91).

In legends, historical time is compressed and condensed and actual historical events are fictionalised. The enemies of Konavle came from the sea or came down the neighbouring mountains and robbed and burned Konavle. They designate and symbolize all the misfortunes which have been experienced by the region. At the same time, these texts describe the part of the world of which they speak. The long history of Konavle can be read off from the short and concise texts of the legends.

The story of the moving of the Church of Saint Elias [*Ilija*] and the origin of the name of the hill named after the saint is linked with the Turks. They were camping on Bjelotina Hill and they turned the church into their stable. One day a painting of Saint Elias disappeared and was found on Ilija's Peak in the village of Poljice in lower Konavle. "The painting flew there itself. A church was built on the spot where the painting was found and it still stands today and is called *Ilija's church*, while the entire mountain is called *Ilija's Hill*"²⁰ (MS IEF 394:87-88).

found no mention in any written material about Aesculapius. I see this as Vuletić-Vukasović's concoction taken over from the traces of Evans's work.

²⁰ There is a remark beside the notation that the narrator's son amplified what his father had said: "It is also said that the church flew over". An older variant of the legend was noted down by Nike Balarin, a teacher. It has not been published but is preserved in the *Čaramanije* manuscript (MS ONŽO HAZU, SZ 50, p. 8). There is no information about the year of notation.

A story is told of how the Turks came by boat to Cavtat one night to slaughter or poison the people. The inhabitants of Cavtat were saved by the Blessed Virgin who "came out at the gates with a distaff in her hand, broke the hawsers on the Turkish ships and "smashed their vessels, sinking them all". However, the story goes even further. One young Turk escaped and, travelling through Konavle from lodging to lodging, made his way to Constantinople. In a tavern, he met some seamen from Cavtat who "at that time were sailing on ships to Constantinople" and asked them if the woman was still alive who stood "at those large gates, holding a distaff" (Bošković-Stulli 1997, No. 277; and 1963, 1993).

The Konavle sea-faring tradition can be read off in the legend (ships sailing to Constantinople), the fact that the hinterland was in the hands of the Turks (it only being possible for the young Turk to undertake his journey from lodging to lodging all the way to Constantinople, travelling through friendly territory), as well as the pirate attacks from the sea and the long Christian tradition (the Blessed Virgin saving the people of Cavtat from the pillagers).

According to tradition, it was not only saints who had to save Cavtat and Konavle, but also wise women. A story noted down in Cavtat, also at the mid-century, is not about miracles. It tells of Montenegrin brigands who used to come down from the mountains into the Konavle plain in times past "in order to plunder in Cavtat". And there was one old lady "who was so angry that she snarled at her husband" because he took them in for the night. And when the Montenegrins settled down for the night, the old lady started peeping at them, and she saw that they were well-dressed, but also that they had a great deal of ammunition and she realised that they would probably kill their hosts in the morning. "And then she baked coffee [beans] and went to wake them in the morning (...) And they left her all the gold coin and money they had, because she had been such a good host to them" (MS IEF 171:115).

There is a similar legend which tells of the Montenegrins who "robbed, and burned through Konavle and reached the village of Kuna": A female visitor from the line of Bogišić gathered up and put on all "the gold costumes they had, the *koret* [male sleeved jacket], the *kružat* [sash] and the *čerma* [female weskit], all made of gold, (...) and she collected all the money and put it all on her person." She put on old clothes over all this and when the Montenegrins arrived, and searched through the house, they found nothing (MS IEF 394:53).

The recent tragic events of war in Konavle seem to be a continuance of former ones. What happened, unfortunately, was much more bitter than the events in these legends.

(Translated by Nina H. Antoljak)

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POVIJEST I FIKCIJA U KONAVOSKIM PREDAJAMA I LEGENDAMA

SAŽETAK

Tekst razmatra usmene povijesne predaje i legende iz Konavala te polazi od pretpostavke da u njima ne treba tražiti povijesnu vjerodostojnost (ili otklon od znanstveno dokazane povijesne istine) pojedinačnih zapisa, već pokazati kako ti tekstovi pamte i čuvaju lokalnu povijest, ali je i reinterpreteraju i mijenjaju prema zakonitostima usmenoknjiževnoga žanra u kojemu se ostvaruju. Opisuju, tumače i prilagođuju povijest znanjima, spoznajama i doživljajima doba u kojemu su zapisane. Po svojem su jezičnostilskom ostvaraju dakako mnogo bliže živom, svakidašnjem govoru od povijesnoga teksta te se upravo u tom bogatstvu sličnih a ipak veoma raznolikih pojedinačnih iskaza raskriva veća gustoća i doživljaja i podataka.

Prema povijesnim i književnim izvorima, a prije svega prema negdašnjim i suvremenim zapisima usmenih priča analiziraju se predaje o postanku imena mjesta Cavtat i ostalih konavoskih toponima, o navodnom boravku Kadma i Harmonije u ovim krajevima i njihovoj preobrazbi u zmijske, te mogući utjecaj tog antičkog mita na kasniju usmenu tradiciju, posebice na lokalnu legendu. Analizira se lokalna legenda o sv. Hilarionu (Ilaru) i upućuje na njezin kontinuitet u tom kraju; stoga se navode najstariji srednjovjekovni zapisi te legende, književne njezine obrade i usmeni zapisi.

Ključne riječi: hrvatska usmena književnost, legende, Konavle