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## TRACKING DOWN *TURICA*

*Turica*, *Čoroje* and *Vila* are famous but insufficiently researched old Dubrovnik masks. These are not insignificant masks, mere casual personages in Carnival festivities. The author assumes their participation in sword dances, in some variant of the *moresca* or chain-dance during the period of the Dubrovnik Republic, arguing this through comparison with similar phenomena around the Mediterranean. If the assumption is correct, it becomes clear why these masks enjoyed special privileges bestowed by the secular and ecclesiastical authorities in Dubrovnik, and why they also appeared on certain occasions outside of the Carnival period. In this light, the "masked trio" are seen as part of the pre-Christian ritual nucleus which, transformed by various dance and literary influences throughout the centuries, served as a starting-point of professional dance and the drama theatre in Croatia.

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The title indicates a discourse which has many of the features of a hunting story, and perhaps a prolonged hunt at that, through murky mythological waters. The beast whose trail we are following is perhaps an animal, or perhaps not — perhaps it is Tur, the pagan god of war, as "Dubrovnik writers"<sup>1</sup> would like, a demon of fertility or a creature of myth, or perhaps only a tall, strange, masked Carnival personage owing its name to the ancient Dalmatian word *turin* (the term for probiscus, snout or

<sup>1</sup> See Academy's Dictionary (*Rječnik hrvatskoga ili srpskoga jezika*), s.v.6. *turica* and Karadžić 1957:24. Due to the confusion reigning in the Slavic Pantheon, it is difficult to say with certainty which god is in question here. The nearest name to Tur is the Slavic god of war, Turupid, who belongs to the younger deities of the Baltic order (see Leger 1984:132). According to the Academy's Dictionary, the Slavic equivalent of Mars was Davor — Vuletić Vukasović (1923:108) identifies *Turica* with Davor, and Nodilo also mentions a possible connection (Nodilo 1981:259).

muzzle) or even to the word for tower, and not to the female of an extinct breed of cattle.<sup>2</sup> *Turica* is not even secure in the orthographic sense: only if we catch it — which I doubt — will we know if it is written with a capital letter. I am choosing to do so, as a sign of respect to its personality and its age.

### *Turica's Portrait*

What does *Turica* look like? Let us start from a picture. A reproduction of an 18th century engraving appeared in *History of the Croatian Theatre* (Batušić 1978:32) with a note that the mask has been appearing in Dubrovnik Carnival customs since as early as the turn from the 15th to the 16th century. This information is not quite accurate, as there are earlier mentions of *Turica*. At the beginning of the 15th century, the Dubrovnik Republic's Minor Council discussed *de donando ioculatoribus Turice ippos quatuor* [the payment of 4 perpers to the *Turica* dancers] (Rešetar 1934:79; Batušić 1978:69). Batušić took the engraving from Appendini's book (Appendini 1802), in which three other illustrations of Dubrovnik masks were published, in addition to *Turica's*.<sup>3</sup> The mysterious creature is shown from the front standing on bare ground with its head turned to the right. The background is uncluttered, with a cloudy sky shown in the upper half, darkening slightly to the top of the engraving. The displayed left profile shows an elongated, stylised bare skull similar to that of a horse, but with an emphasized eye socket and a small, shining eye with a piercing gaze. A small nostril similar to the eye of a needle is placed unnaturally on the most protruding part of the skull. The ears are large and pointed, widely-spaced and very large sharp teeth can be seen in the gaping mouth, through which a pointed tongue darts.

<sup>2</sup> *Tur* (Lat. *taurus*, *Bos primigenius*, *Bos Urus*) is a type of wild ox, extinct in Europe since the 17th century, with a similar name in all the Slavic languages. The German and English name for the *tur* (*Auerochs*, *auerochs*) is still used incorrectly today for the European bison (*Bos Bison*) which has managed to survive in the Baltic region. Croatia's *Turica*, the Slovakian *Turoň* and their other kinfolk probably derived their names from the wild ox (see Gavazzi 1988:14, 15, 220; Bošković-Stulli 1991:24; Slivka 1990:170). The authors of the Academy's Dictionary, however, questioned the connection between the Dubrovnik masks and the female *tur* (*Riječnik hrvatskoga ili srpskoga jezika*, s.v.6. *turica*).

<sup>3</sup> *Čoroje*, *Vila* and *Turica* appeared at Carnival time and on the feast day of St. Blaise, while *Bembelj* was not a Carnival mask and appeared on May 1 at the dance of the cobblers' guild. He was mentioned early by Sasin in the masque *Muzika od crevljara* (Bošković-Stulli 1991:34).

The tongue is stuck out and is long and thin. There is a thin goat-like beard on the lower jaw. The creature's neck is similar to that of a giraffe, but it is overgrown with thick long hair like sheep's fleece which also covers the cylindrical upright torso. *Turica* has neither hands, wings nor front legs. The two visible legs are bare and bird-like, like those of a chicken, but have thicker toes with emphasized sharp claws. *Turizza, ovvero Marte* is written below the picture, which only serves to deepen the frightening impression which the portrait leaves on the viewer. What looks out at us is not a grotesque or funny Carnival mask, but rather a cruel and evil pagan god of war.

The engraving in Appendini's book is not the only surviving portrait of *Turica*. Water-coloured sketches of the same four Dubrovnik masks — *Čoroje, Vila, Turica* and *Bembelj* — have also been preserved in an album compiled by the 19th century Dubrovnik printer and miniaturist, Petar F. Martecchini (see Demović 1981:17, 21, 24, 27 and 72). Even a superficial comparison between the water-coloured sketches from Martecchini's album and the engravings in Appendini's book reveal the direct link between them. The placement of the figures is the same, and the details are similar. Although there are two pictures, it is clear that they both show the same *Turica* in identical poses.

On the trail of *Turica*, we shall commence from the name and for the moment ignore the picture. We will summarise a review of dressing up in the *tur* mask from the pen of the Slovenian scholar N. Kuret.<sup>4</sup>

### A changeable species

The first information on putting on *tur* masks comes from Russia. In 1166, Ilja-Joan, the bishop of Novgorod, ordered his priests to forbid their flock to take part in processions with the *tur*, calendal processions and banned military games. A 1636 complaint by Nijninogorod priests to Patriarch Josif contains data about household and village customs during the Christmas to Epiphany period, in which they dressed up as horses and *turs*; with data on hairy and animal masquerades, masks with tails and obscene display of sexual organs; about processions with music and noise in which the people joined in and thus lost their souls, even making gifts to these diabolic creatures.

<sup>4</sup> I shall not list again here Kuret's sources. See: Kuret 1984:44-48.

Kuret stresses that the *tur* in Poland (Polish: *turon*) remains the main animal mask today, and it is also found in Slovakia, the Ukraine, and in Moldavia. At the beginning of the 18th century a certain Demetrius Cantemir described a masked personage called the *turca*: the masquerader placed a deer's skull with large horns on his head, and covered his face with linen ribbons which reached to the ground. According to Kuret, this was a contamination of the deer and *tur*, with the deer personage taking over the *tur's* name. This could also explain the Dubrovnik example with *Turica's* horse-head and the mobile lower jaw. Appendini saw the Dubrovnik *Turica* at the turn from the 18th to the 19th century. In 1819, Vuk Stefanović Karadžić also described *Turica* in his dictionary — he, too, probably took Appendini's illustration and description as his source, because he claimed that *Turica* had the legs of a bird. Otherwise, it is unlikely that a fast-moving and mobile Carnival mask would have such feet. This is surely an imaginative touching-up, a case of artistic licence in the interpretation of pagan gods which Father Appendini identified in *Čoroje*, *Vila* and *Turica* and which (in the Romanizing, classicist manner of members of a learned culture citing Herodotus) he found Thracian equivalents: *Liber*, *Diana* and *Mars*.<sup>5</sup> (In passing, it could be added that the artist condemned *Čoroje*, too, to those chicken legs, but was more merciful with *Vila* and *Bembelj*, planting them on bare human feet.)

In 1807 in Požarevac — at the court (or in the courtyard) of Prince Miloš Obrenović-Karadžić saw a masked personage similar to *Turica* during Carnival time — a young man dressed in such a manner that nothing human was visible, while he clattered with a *klocalica* [rattle] positioned above his head, frightening women and children (Karadžić 1957:24). The rattle in Požarevac has somehow been grafted onto the Dubrovnik *Turica*, which is not surprising in view of Vuk's authority. The two most important printed sources on this type of mask — Appendini and Karadžić — are near to each other in time. At first glance, it is easy to merge the two pieces of information and conclude that *Turica* and the described rattle are closely related or even in a cause-and-effect relationship. However, from what has been learned from the claims laid to Dubrovnik as the Serbian Athens we need to be cautious and give unto *Turica* what is *Turica's* and unto the rattle what is the

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<sup>5</sup> "Deos autem hos solos colunt (Thraces) Martem, Liberum, Dianam. [Lib. 15]" (Appendini 1802:56).

rattle's.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, for truth's sake, it has to be emphasized that *Turica's* ancient tracks do not lead only eastwards.

### *Turica* dancing

Bans issued in western Europe as early as the end of the 4th century on dressing up in animal masks, particularly deer, doe and heifer masks (*vitula*), have been preserved to the present day. It seems that the masks were used in presentations which were obscene and connected with magic stimulating fertility; St. Augustine in his tract *Sermo de tempore* demands strict punishment for perpetrators of shameless acts with a doe: ... *illam sordidissimam turpitudinem de hinnicula...* (Kuret 1984:28). We do not know exactly how our three Dubrovnik masks behaved, but we do know that they appeared on official demand "during Carnival and on certain other days of popular festivities", and that they danced some village dance to a flute and drum accompaniment and made the audience laugh heartily (Appendini 1902:56-57; Bošković-Stulli 1991:23-24). They did the rounds of the entire city, arriving "three hours before nightfall" on the square in front of the Regent's Palace and joined "in a wild dance, after which the grand muster began" on February 3, the feast day of Dubrovnik's patron saint, St. Blaise (Kaznačić 1881:95; Bošković-Stulli 1991:23-24). Rešetar assumes that *Turica* "probably entertained [onlookers] with all sorts of more or less 'witty' i.e. spicy jokes" (Rešetar 1934:79). There probably would not have been any serious obscenity on the very day celebrating the patron saint, because it seems that our three masks already walked through the church on the first day of Carnival (Karadžić 1957:24), and written sources show that the authorities permitted, commissioned and rewarded their performance. This gracious attitude towards the three masks on the part of the regent and the seigneurs prompts the question of the social class to which they belonged.

<sup>6</sup> The mask type with a head on a stick and mobile jaw belongs to many peoples. Mirjana Ilić's quotation about the dancers with the *klocalica* at the Obrenović court will be helpful in refuting such usurpations: "Those young men could easily have been Vlachs, who live in the broad Požarevac region" (Ilić 1964:60). In her richly documented study, the author showed that Serbs in Banat adopted the *klocalica*, *šerbulj* or *curka* mask from Romanian settlers: "The authentic bearers of the customs of *šerbulj* processions are the Romanians, whose joint life with the Serbs on the researched territory date, as has been previously mentioned, mainly from the 18th century. Preserved elements of the customs and traditions similar to them are processional elements with masks of this type which have been preserved, or with data existing about them in regions from which these Romanians have emigrated" (Ilić 1964:64).

Miho Demović, the musicologist, mentions mythological plays prescribed by Dubrovnik court ceremonial. They have Italian and Croatian names: *Bacco*, *Sileno*, *Diana*, *Marte* and/or *Turica*, *Bembelj*, *Čoroje*, and *Vila*. The musical accompaniment to these plays has been lost but sketches of the costumes have been preserved in Martecchini's album (Demović 1981:17).

If we follow Demović, these plays would have been some sort of court entertainment in the presence of the regent and the archbishop, made up of four separate choreographed shows which belonged, in all respects, to learned culture. However, we have already seen that the water-colours in the Martecchini family album seem to be closely related to the engravings in Appendini's book, and the mentioned written sources represent them as masks from the same Carnival group, personages which perform together.<sup>7</sup> This points to popular tradition and not to court ballet.<sup>8</sup> I would thus agree with Rešetar: there were a number of dancers in the dance with *Turica*, and I think that we can reliably assume, on the basis of the above information — at least as far as the 18th century is concerned — that *Čoroje*<sup>9</sup> and *Vila* were among them.

Maja Bošković-Stulli claimed that the masked trio belonged originally to another type of celebration — the Carnival festivities — and that they found their way into the saint's celebration because of the time proximity factor "and were in no way by their nature linked particularly to St. Blaise" (Bošković-Stulli 1991:26). I have already responded at some length to the above claim (Lozica 1997:183-184). Briefly, I cannot agree that *Čoroje*, *Vila* and *Turica* were "borrowed" from the Carnival. The wisely chosen St. Blaise was already the patron saint of Dubrovnik in the 14th century, when the division into two social groups — the *nobiles* and the *populus* — was only in the process of coming about; with his character St. Blaise unified the City and its hinterland — which is obvious from celebrations of St. Blaise's Day, both in the past and in the present. I would incline more to the view that strict separation of the celebration of the ecclesiastical patron from the masked Carnival celebration was the result of many centuries in the process of

<sup>7</sup> "The saying goes: *Čoroje, vila i turica, maskarani sva trojica*" [*Čoroje, Vila* and *Turica*, all three masked] (Karadžić 1957:24).

<sup>8</sup> This does not refute Demović's information as will be seen later.

<sup>9</sup> See Gavazzi 1988:14-15; and Bošković-Stulli 1991:24 on the similarity between the name *Čoroje* (possibly of Romanian origin) and the Dinaric mountain region custom, *čarojice*.

Christianisation, testified to by numerous bans and very precise time limitations for dressing up in masks in old Dubrovnik. *Turica* held out for a long time, but finally she, too, had to flee from the City, together with *Čoroje* and *Vila*, like Dubrovnik's most famous writer, Marin Držić, who died abroad after a conflict with the aristocrats.

However, even if we assume possible tolerance, a co-existence of pagan and Christian elements as part of the feast day of the Dubrovnik patron saint, there still remains the slightly strange entry of the masked trio into the church, while their wild dance in front of the Regent's Palace just before the commencement of the great muster is also unusual. Ordinary Carnival masks could not have had such privileges. Consequently, we have to establish what was so special about the masked trio which provided them with free entry to both the church and state festivities.

In *Croatian Carnivals* (Lozica 1997:222) I put forward a theory in the form of a question in connection with *Turica's* dance through Dubrovnik on St. Blaise's feast day. In his book about the *kumpanije* groups, sword dancers from the island of Korčula, the ethnochoreologist Ivan Ivančan — discussing the classification of weapon dances — mentions the masked personage of a horse in the dance of the Romanian *kalušari*, elsewhere in Europe, and even in the eastern part of Asia (Ivančan 1967:103; Sachs 1957:337-340).

*Turica* is related to the horse mask: could she perhaps in the past have been part of a sword dance? It is not easy to answer this question on the basis of available Dubrovnik data. Like *Turica* on the engraving, my hypothesis rests somewhat on chicken legs. Still, I think that it should be put forward and an attempt made to support it using the comparative method.

Let us return to the evil gaze from the horse's skull on the engraving. *Turizza, overro Marte!* Why did Appendini's *interpretatio romana* see the Thracian god of war in the tall Carnival personage which roamed the streets of Dubrovnik, making the people laugh?<sup>10</sup> Why did

<sup>10</sup> True enough, Frazer does mention the ancient Roman custom of sacrifice of a horse to the god Mars, but this used to take place in October. He also mentions that on March 14 every year a man covered in skins was led in procession through the streets of Rome. He would be struck with long white canes and run out of the city. He was called *Mamurius Veturius* — Old Mars — and this custom was obviously linked with the beginning of the Roman New Year (Frazer 1951:669). As described by Frazer, the

Appendini write that the masked trio also appeared outside of the Carnival period at some other popular festivities? Is that not identical to the practice of the Korčula *kumpanjoli* and *moreškanti*, who have always performed their sword dances both in the Carnival period and on certain holidays not connected with Carnival time? In Kaznačić's description of the feast day of St. Blaise, *Turica* dances. Immediately after her St. Blaise's Day dance in front of the Regent's Palace — in which she is joined by the two other masks — the military procession of villagers from the regions of Rijeka Dubrovačka and Župa begins, divided into units lead by the *chief of police* who performs exercises of skill and strength with a banner at important places in a threefold parade through the city, while four decorated banner-bearers perform obeisance and games with weapons in the Spanish manner. All the festivities are managed by a captain, elected by the citizens. After the third procession through the city, a feigned and figurative battle takes place in which the captain's troops defeat the opposing group (see Kaznačić 1881:93-99; Ivančan 1967:97). The scenario is similar in many ways to the Korčula *kumpanije* customs and points to a sword dance, and also perhaps to the old Croatian custom of "choosing the king", which is similar to the Roman Saturnalia (Ivančan 1967:155-170; Lozica 1997:43-46).

Kaznačić's description, based on the manuscript by Mato Ksaver Zamanja, is not the first description of the celebrations of the Dubrovnik patron saint. The earliest one dates from 1440 and was written by De Diversis, Razzi's dates from 1587, Quiclet's from 1658, the one by the Turkish travel writer, Evlija Čelebija from 1664, and Appendini's was published in 1802.<sup>11</sup> On the basis of the majority of the descriptions — which we will not be able to deal with in detail here — there is no doubt that the feast day of St. Blaise had military significance: village units from the territory of the Republic took part in the military games. For example, the Frenchman, Quiclet, mentioned several military exercises in Dubrovnik in 1658 — *moresca* was one of them (Demović 1981:15). Foretić mentions guest-appearances by the Korčula *moreska* troupe in Dubrovnik during the 18th century (Foretić 1964:158-159).

The old *moresca* sword dance (*moreska*, Moorish Dance) known among all Mediterranean and the majority of European peoples, is in fact a dance and drama form, a military exercise somewhere between ritual,

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custom was similar to the doubtful 14th century Dubrovnik custom, *džudijata* (Novak 1985:296, 302; Lozica 1997:182).

<sup>11</sup> See: Demović 1981:13-16; Bosković-Stulli 1991:21-26.

dance and theatre, between "learned" and popular culture. The dramatic action in the *moresca* often deals with the freeing of an imprisoned maiden, while more recent research has uncovered a superstructure of that motif in a series of drama and monodrama texts from older Croatian literature. Lucić's *Robinja* [*The Slavegirl*] is only one in a series of slavegirls in Croatian drama. It could even be said that the *moresca* is a starting-point of Croatian drama: *moresca* was also danced as a composite part of Držić's *Tirena* and Palmotić's *Ipsipile*, leaving its mark, too, in the works of Gledević and Kanavelić. (Novak and Lisac 1984:63-64, 135; Lozica 1990:195).

Admittedly, not everything that was called a *moresca* or is called a *moresca* is always a dance with swords. In *Pavlimir*, Palmotić uses the term *moreška* (*moresca*) for a military dance which is performed with "bows and arrows" (Foretić 1964:157). Choreologically, not all dances with swords are *moresca* dances. A usual division is into *moresca* and chain dances, so that Ivančan mentions the *moreška* dances in Korčula, Split, Vis, Hvar, Zadar, Pag, Trogir, Dubrovnik and Budva; and chain dances — with swords and their derivatives — in the place of Milje near Trieste, and then in Buje, on the island of Krk, in Zadar, Trogir, Split, Hvar and Putniković on the Pelješac peninsula. The *kolo* or round-dance from the island of Lastovo and all the Korčula *kumpanije* dances, and even the dance from Kotor, all belong to the same group of chain dances. The Whitsuntide dance, the *kraljice* [the queens] from north-eastern Croatia is also included in the chain dances group, as well as some processional dances from south-eastern Europe: the *kalušari*, *rusajli-kalušari* and *rusalije* dances (Ivančan 1967:118).

The sword-dancing tradition existed around the Mediterranean from as early as the ancient Greek weapon dances — the *pyrrhiche* [dressed in red] and *embateria*, the anapaestic dance march with which the Spartans entered into an engagement (Sachs 1957:240). Old ritual elements exist in the *kumpanije* and other chain dances which could have subsequently absorbed diverse elements as latter influences. Here we are not interested in the differences between the *moresca* and the chain dances, nor in the development of drama from the *moresca*: we are interested in the personages which could have accompanied the sword dances. Available sources do not directly mention the participation of *Turica*, *Čoroje* and *Vila* in the military parade, but only just before the beginning of the manoeuvres. If the masked trio was also part of the sword dance, this could have been the case at the beginning of the 15th

century (see Rešetar 1934:79) when the Minor Council was deciding about the fee to be paid to the *Turica* dancers, or it could have been earlier. Of course, the possibility should not be excluded that later chroniclers overlooked that detail, regarding it as unimportant. We have seen that the three masks danced in the procession through the city — we can assume that they did not dance alone in times past but in company with the sword dancers, which could later have been excluded from their performance. However, all this is sheer guesswork without any evidence.

If we return to the information about separate mythological plays called *Bacco*, *Sileno*, *Diana* and *Marte* (Demović 1981:17) in the light of the hypothesis presented, we will see that it is fully possible. European ballet grew out of the court entertainment in which the *moresca* had a special place. During the 15th century in France, *entrée de morisque* and ballet were almost synonymous. Battles with the Moors also appeared in Italian ballet, while there were frequently swordsman personages with small bells on their costumes.

Under the name and in the form of the Moorish dance the ancient mysteries of growth and life from the masques and mummeries penetrated the entertainments of the court (Sachs 1957:341).

The fact that there were also subtle choreographies accompanying the *Turica* performances at St. Blaise festivities, such as the *Trznice* or *Pećarice* dances, mentioned by M. Bošković-Stulli,<sup>12</sup> also indicates the possibility of a subsequent adaptation of the four masked personages as folk motifs within the elite culture. *Interpretatio romana*, the use of equivalents from Antiquity for *Čoroje*, *Vila*, *Turica* and *Bembelj*, fits into the general tendencies in the development of European ballet.<sup>13</sup> More intensive folklore (ethnochoreological) research into archive sources could augment our perceptions about the role of popular tradition in the culture of the Dubrovnik Republic. All this only serves to confirm my frequently repeated thesis of the proximity and permeation of the culture of the nobility and the culture of the common people, particularly in the open Mediterranean horizons of old Dubrovnik, or even smaller

<sup>12</sup> See: Bošković-Stulli 1991:25; Appendini 1802:178; Vučetić 1924:39-40; Bersa 1941:114; Novak 1987:47.

<sup>13</sup> "The Renaissance and humanism imposed a stricter dramatic unity upon the ballet and substituted themes from classical mythology for those of mediaeval romance" (Sachs 1957:341).

communities — such as the Hvar commune — on the Croatian coast of the Adriatic.<sup>14</sup>

### Vila and Mayde Maryan

Endeavouring to establish the order of the Moorish dance, Curt Sachs applies the statistical method of comparison of variants by mutual similarity. The result is surprising: despite expectations, the journey starts in Romania, continues in England, returns to Mallorca, and only then ends in Spain. We will not argue against or check Sachs's results (Sachs 1957:339). The migration of the Moorish dance is not the subject of our discourse, while navigation of its journey gives full reign to the imagination and puts wind in the sails of an imaginary Dubrovnik argosy full of *moreška* which proudly sails westwards, carrying along information about the coasts of Illyria — which Shakespeare will need at a later date.

If we travel along Sachs's maritime way in search of the masked personage of a horse, we will come across some interesting information. I shall briefly recount Sachs's description of the dances and his interpretation, so as not to burden the text with the integral quotation:

At Whitsuntide, and as part of other annual festivals, in Romania and Bulgaria we find ritual dances performed by an uneven number of men connected in a kind of brotherhood. One of them is the dance leader, another the fool with a sabre or whip in his hand. He is masked and sometimes carries a phallus and makes indecent gestures. A third carries a horse head on a pole. All have bells on their legs. Some, the *Arapi*, have blackened faces. Occasionally, some of the young men disguise themselves as women, cover their faces with a veil and speak in a falsetto voice. The dance is executed in vigorous movements and leaps in a circle around the fool. As a rule, it seems, a fencing game is connected with this dance, real swords once being used while only wooden ones are used today. When two such groups meet, bloody combat ensues. If someone dies in the battle, he is buried on the spot without a priest, while the murderer goes unpunished. Many legends also exist in Croatia about combat between masqueraders, *koledari* [carol singers], wedding party members and similar opposing groups of procession members. Even entire graveyards filled with the dead from such conflicts are mentioned. These bloody

<sup>14</sup> See: Lozica 1990:194-195; 1997:133; Folklorno kazalište 1996:19-20.

encounters have been interpreted as the sundering of a magic circle, but that does seem to be somewhat farfetched. The group of ancestor masks certainly did have a protective function, guarding from external penetrations into areas which communities thought of as being solely theirs. However, these conflicts in the recent past should not be mystified — a hostile encounter between two warmed up male groups is easier to explain by competition and a show of strength rather than by forgotten magic (Lozica 1997:235-236).

According to Sachs, the *joc de călușari* is a dance which is definitely connected with defensive magic and the magic of fertility. This is supported by the annual festivities as special occasions for performance of dances, the fool, the phallus, the whip, the horse head as the fertility demon, the leaps, the bells, the feminine disguise and the sword games — all of which are well-known defense and fertility motifs. This interpretation is further supported by data about the sick being brought to watch the dance and of mothers placing their newly-born babies in the arms of the dancers. The age of the dance is not deduced so much by the seriousness of the battle, as much as the denial of Christianity (the exclusion of the priest from the burial) and the denial of State authority (the freeing of the murderer). An important detail which indicates a cult is the destruction and burial of the fool's props after the dance, while the exclusively male participation and the uneven number of dances is indicative of masculine culture.

We sail on to England. Curt Sachs describes the English Morris Dance, a famous dance dating from the 15th century, performed by a group of six men. Today, too, they are accompanied by three others: Mayde Maryan (a boy dressed up as a woman), then one more man who wears the cardboard figure of a horse around his waist, and a musician who has a flute and small drum (or bag-pipe). They are dressed in fantastic costumes covered with many small bells. The dancers are in double files which move here and there in numerous variations, combining in a chain or performing opposite each other. In some figures, when the partners meet, they rhythmically strike sticks together. They rarely form a circle: however, the circle could testify to ritual sources. There is data which speaks of the Morris Dance being danced in church — at Whitsuntide — up until the Elizabethan era.

If we return now to the Balearic Islands, we find a dance which is reminiscent of the Morris Dance in two classical forms of Moorish dancing (the *cośsiés* and *cavalets*). In the first form, there are six male

dancers as in England, and there are male personages disguised as women (*dama*) and the devil (*diablo*) all decked out with bells. The second dance, the *ball de cavaletts*, is a contradance with six dancers taking part, all richly ornamented with bells and with hobby-horses around their hips, and also a man dressed as a woman. The musical accompaniment is again similar: a flute and a small drum.

Reaching Spain, we enter directly into the cathedrals in Toledo and Seville where the choir boys dance strange church dances. They stand opposite each other in rows and perform a rich succession of figures which are typical to the contre. Still, there are some details here which remind one of the Morris Dance: the boys have bells on their clothes, and in Toledo stick-dance figures and female disguise are sometimes introduced. Even today, although there are ten performers — and not six — they are still referred to as *los seises*.

Dances based on sword fights between Christian and Muslims have been performed in the ancient manner up until our times in Toledo and elsewhere in Spain. In 1665 in Milan, Signor Locatelli was extremely surprised to see twelve Spaniards dancing a *moresca* in the Corpus Christi procession, striking blows with their swords in front of the monstrance. A large-scale *moresca* was performed in Corsica right up until the 19th century. It was a dance battle with a hundred and sixty participants in two groups. The performance lasted for up to four hours to the musical accompaniment of a single violin. (Sachs 1957:333-341).

In the chapter about the *moresca* Sachs also notes other dances with masked hobby-horse personages in the Rhone valley, in the Basque regions and in Greece, the *Schimmelreitermaske* in Germany, and also some examples outside of Europe, on Java and among the Tadjiks of the Pamir.<sup>15</sup>

Let us summarise the results of our journey, strictly adhering only to our planned route. *Čoroje* has kinfolk in Romania (the fool with the sabre, the whip and phallus) and on Mallorca (*diablo*). *Vila* shares similarities with the disguised men in Romania (the young man in female attire with his face veiled), in England (Mayde Maryan and her

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<sup>15</sup> Sach's source for the Javanese comparison is Jaap Kunst who put forward the theory about the connection between Balkan and Indonesian equine masks. This theory was fundamentally challenged by Leopold Kretzenbacher (Kunst 1953; Kretzenbacher 1966; Kuret 1984:47).

forebears),<sup>16</sup> in the Balearic islands (*dama* and that other disguised man in the contradance, the *ball de cavaletts*) and in Spain (men dressed up as women who sometimes appear in the cathedral in Toledo). *Turica* is nearest to the Romanian horse-head on a stick, but the masked horse personages appear also in England (the hobby-horse) and in the Balearic Islands (*cavaletts*). Sachs does not mention horse masks in the Spanish cathedrals. This is quite understandable, bearing in mind the power of the Roman Catholic Church in Spain and the various bans on animal masks. The musical instruments playing the accompaniment to the dance are almost identical in England, on the Balearic Islands and in the Dubrovnik dance of the masked trio: a flute (or bagpipes) and a small drum.

Starting from the conflict between the two sides, Curt Sachs sees the roots of the *moresca* in fertility rituals which transfer into the sphere of sword dances. He contends that the basic characteristics of the *moresca* were developed in the early tribal cultures of the Miolithic period. The mutual contacts between the Middle Ages and ideas from the Orient lead to a re-interpretation of the two motifs which had become unintelligible: the blacking of the face and the conflict between the two sides. Sachs claims that face-blackening is known among all European peoples, while only in the western part of the Mediterranean is the combat between the two sides interpreted in the light of the seven hundred year period of war with the Moors. So to Sachs the idea of the *moresca* is merely a reevaluation of ancient fertility rites (Sachs 1957:340-341).

It is clear that Sachs's interpretation reduces the polysemic importance of the sword dances through the centuries to only one dimension, but the plausibility of his claims cannot be denied. Despite the extent to which today's ethnochoreologists and folklorists are interested in the contemporary context of each performance — which must not be ignored — I think that Sachs's thesis is on firm ground and can usefully serve as a starting-point for new research.

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<sup>16</sup> I believe that the name of *Mayde Maryan* in the English Moorish Dance, or *moresca*, is a more recent phenomenon than the man disguised as a female personage.

## The second dimension: the masks of ancestors, *koleda* [carols], Carnival and Whitsuntide

In his work on chain dances, Ivančan drew attention to many elements which link Carnival and some other customs, particularly those connected with Whitsuntide (which is called *Rusalje* in the south of Dalmatia). The similarity between the Korčula *kumpanije* dances and the dance from Lastovo Island with the *kraljice*, *kalušari*, *koleda* and *rusalije* is more than merely choreographical. There are particularly marked similarities between the Korčula *kumpanije* and the Macedonian *rusalije*, which even lead Ivančan to the assumption of a direct link between Macedonia and Dalmatia (Ivančan 1967:123-127). However, Ivančan also puts forward another assumption by which the *kumpanije* and the dance from the island of Lastovo were made up of simple figures, perhaps parts of old ritual dances in which the swords had an apotropaic role and symbolised fertility. Later more complex, typically chain-dancing figures could have been added as fashionable innovations to the simple original figures.<sup>17</sup>

The differences in dates for performance of the sword dances are particularly interesting because these differences could clarify Appendini's information on the appearance, on official demand, of *Čoroje*, *Vila* and *Turica* outside of Carnival time (Appendini 1802:56). If the masks were part of the sword dances, or were firmly linked to them, they would have had to appear on all occasions at which the dances in question were performed.

We can roughly divide the sword dances by date of performance<sup>18</sup> into two groups. The first group is made up of dances which are performed at Carnival time — the most numerous group — and the second of dances which belong to the cycle of Whitsuntide customs. Some dances e.g. the Korčula *kumpanije* are performed at Carnival time and at Whitsuntide. The *kumpanije* were also performed on St. Peter's Day, Candlemass and the day of St. Philip and James (May 1), which was also the date for the performance of the *cerchiata* in

<sup>17</sup> Ivančan's third assumption of the connection of sword dances with the *koleda* procession and the choosing a king custom only links on further to the theory of the older ritual basis of these dances (Ivančan 1967:120-121).

<sup>18</sup> This refers, of course, to the sword dances of the Croats and neighbouring peoples which Ivančan mentions in his book (Ivančan 1967). More precisely, this refers to chain dances with swords, and their derivatives.

Dubrovnik and the dance in Buje. The *kraljice* and *kalušari* dances also belong in the Whitsuntide customs group — they were performed only at Whitsuntide (Ivančan 1967:120-121).

Whitsuntide does not have a fixed date, and the intermingling of spring customs is a commonplace in ethnological literature. It should also be noted that Carnival time had attracted many pagan masks which were driven out of the Christmas customs cycle with broader Christianisation; earlier they had appeared between Christmas and Epiphany.<sup>19</sup>

During that period peasants believed in the wolf, the bear, and the *turon*, underworld spirits transformed into animals who emerged at that time of the year and in whose honour people from the villages prepared festivities and made sacrifices (Baumel 1954:87).<sup>20</sup>

The activities of the forces from the underworld during the *dodekahemeron* twelve-day period between Christmas and Epiphany included nocturnal processions with masks which represented the souls of ancestors. Traces of these processions can be seen in the oral tradition of many European peoples (the wild hunt, *chasse Hellequin* or *Maisnie Hellequin*, the processions of souls called *Perchten*, *kallikántsaroi*, *karakóndžule*, etc.). The participants in the processions were masked members of secret male societies (Lozica 1997:28-29). Winter masquerades of that type during the period leading up to Christmas have lived on only in traces, in places where the influence of the ecclesiastical authorities has been weaker. During the 20th century the *čarojice* have lived on in the Dinaric mountain region, mainly among the ethnic Serbian population (Lozica 1997:29), while data about the *čarojice* among the Serbs of Banija during the 19th century describes strictly *nocturnal* processions of an *uneven number* of male participants. What is interesting for our theme is the prescribed composition of the group. Usually an additional three protagonists performed along with the musicians: the *bride* (with a white veil over her face), the *best man* (carrying a bag to collect presents) and the *billy goat* (wearing a reversed sheepskin, with a bell hanging from his belt, a blackened face and a beard made of hemp or wool). The musicians played double flutes and drums,

<sup>19</sup> "In the folklore of the Germanic and Slavic countries, the period between Christmas and Epiphany (the twelve-day period, *Zwölften*, *Rauchnächte*, *svjatki*, *svjatije večera*, *voléje noći*, *nekršteni dani*, *dodekahemeron*) is known as a time in which the future is foretold, spells are cast and fortunes are told, and in the Roman world it was a time filled with numerous festivities — always under masks" (Lozica 1997:27).

<sup>20</sup> Baumel's text pertains to the Slavic and Germanic peoples.

and in more recent times tamburitzas have been included (Muraj 1992:206). Aleksandra Muraj puts particular emphasis on the combat — sometimes only feigned — the fight being a mandatory part of the ritual when two groups of *čarojičari* meet in the same village. Quoting Liungman, the author compares the combat between the *čarojičari* with the clashes between the Bulgarian *kukeri* and links the *čarojice* custom with the masked processions seen during the twelve-day Christmas period in the broad south-eastern European regions, from European Turkey, through Greece, Bulgaria and Romania as far as Besarabia. A factor common to all these processions is the participation of young men, some of whom are disguised in women's clothing, while others imitate various animals. The participants interpret these customs as a fertility rite, while Liungman sees their ancestry in the cult of Dionysus and other vegetation cults (Liungman 1938:845; Muraj 1992:208). Although there are no masks on a stick in the *čarojice* procession, there is obvious similarity between the three masked protagonists and our masked trio, and between the musical instruments played. There is no dance with swords, but there is combat. The texts spoken and sung by the *čarojičari* are near in content to the texts of the *koledari*, or carol singers. When given a gift they sang their thanks, when not — they sang a curse.

As early as in the Middle Ages, the Church tried to replace the nocturnal pagan processions with priests making the rounds of their flocks' homes and blessing their houses to the singing of sacral songs at Christmas, New Year's Eve and on Twelfth Day. When — and where — this ecclesiastical practice was abandoned, the *koledari* continued to sing their carols and Christmas songs (Kuret 1986:13-14). There is no doubt that the *koleda* [carol-singing] custom continues the ancient rituals of Indo-European people at the time of the Winter solstice and contains the remnants of paganism. The sword dance, the election of a king and the sacrifice of a bull in the Korčula *kumpanije* customs can also be interpreted in this light. The link with the *koleda* within the *kumpanije* customs is also confirmed by the obligatory practice of *kolendanje crkve* [carolling the church] (Ivančan 1967:15-17).

Let us return to the two groups of sword dances — those at Carnival and Whitsuntide. The Carnival dances are connected with the ancestor cult through their adoption of ancestor masks from the *dodekahemeron* twelve-day Christmas period. It also seems that Whitsuntide is connected with the ancestor cult. The Roman *rosalia* — *dies rosae* — from which the holiday in Dalmatia takes its name

*Rusalje*, was connected with the memorial feasts in May and June during pagan times (Gavazzi 1988:71-72). However, it is interesting to note that the *rusalije* in Macedonia do not perform their dance at Whitsuntide, but during the twelve-day Christmas period, which could indicate the melding of patriarchal and matriarchal cult holidays (Ivančan 1967:121).

### *Turica's* sexual and national identity — the games with a mare

*Turica's* gender is an important factor — an ostensible god of war bears a female name, and also the name of a female ox, like the *vitula* from antiquity. And on the equine side, *Turica* has female kinfolk: the horse masks of the Croats, the Slovenians, the Czechs, the Poles and the Russians are all mare masks.<sup>21</sup> Three Russian sources from the 17th century mention *kabilka* or *kobilka*, and even *besovskaja kobil'ka* [the Devil's mare] and the making of *kobilka* and *tur* masks (Kuret 1984:47). As early as 1893, Čenek Zibrt, the eminent Czech folklorist, wrote that these personages were common to the Slavs, but that they existed in numerous variants (Zibrt 1893:349). We have seen that they are not common only to the Slavs.

The diffusion and variation points to the longevity of the European games with mares, *turicas*, heifers and roes, to ancient times which supersede the political, linguistic and religious divisions of Christian history. If we chase after the wild cow, she turns into a mare or a roe, or she develops chicken feet. If we look for a female of the species, we soon come upon rare — but not infrequent — male variants. If we catch sight of her Carnival nature, she appears at Whitsuntide. If we search for her throughout the Roman Empire or Europe, there she is deep in Russia, in Tajikistan or even on Java. If we accuse her of being pagan, she shows up in a cathedral. If we notice her peasant dance or her importance as a fertility demon, she immediately steps out in a military parade in front of the Regent's Palace in Dubrovnik or joins the court ballet!

Appendini's *interpretatio romana* had its problems with this long-necked creature: the author spent a good six pages of fine, closely printed text on mythological analysis, and in the end made Mars out of *Turica* (Appendini 1802:57-63). And it has not been any easier for more

<sup>21</sup> Kuret included the Croatian *buse* masks among equine masks, but this is a debatable point. It is true, however, that certain Slavonian and Medimurean wooden masks have a mobile lower jaw, although it is not moved with a string (as is the case with *Turica's* closer relatives).

recent interpreters. For example, at the beginning of the 20th century, Vid Vuletić Vukasović, intoxicated with the ideas of southern Slavic unification, was at a loss with *Turica*. First of all, he gave her the name of the Slavic god Davor and — perhaps — altered her gender,<sup>22</sup> and then he welcomed her disappearance as the victory of the southern Slavic population over that Early Illyrian anomaly (Vuletić Vukasović 1923:108-109).

I can spy *Turica*'s taunting smile as she looks out from the engraving. The capricious beast defies all attempts to tame or domesticate her, and to put on her the yoke of petty scholarship at the end of the second millennium. Her archetypal power does not fit into solar, lunar or earthly national myths, she is immune to philological acrobatics and cultural and historical interpretation, being too long-lived for structuralistic dissection and not modern enough for post-modern hunters.

**Mares, horses, cows, bulls, oxen, donkeys, camels, goats, birds,  
herons, ostriches, giraffes and the conclusion.**

Following Sachs's report on the *moresca*, I left out one important detail, the differences in the construction of the masked horse personage.

Zoomorphic masked personages are usually divided into two-legged and four-legged creatures.

The four-legged mask is created with the participation of two players built into the animal personage, and they are often accompanied by a third — in the role of the trader or driver of the animal. The two players inside are covered with fabric, and sometimes linked with short ladders or strips which they carry across their shoulders. The ladders or connecting strips stabilise the construction, so that it can even bear the weight of a light rider for a time. The animal's head pokes out above the fabric and is carried on a stick by the first player. He manipulates the mobile lower jaw using a string, while the other player's arms are freely in use to perform obscene jokes.

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<sup>22</sup> Natko Nodilo, too, supports the theory about *Turica* being a male creature, possibly connected to the Scandinavian Tyr or Davor. The following sentence is the key to Nodilo's solar and lunar linking of *Turica* with ancient religions: "The miraculous horse head as the sign of a buried celestial light is known in the Vedanta religious tradition as *dadhyanca*, and we have also heard of it more than once in connection with our own" (Nodilo 1981:259).

Two-legged masks can be divided into two types. In the first case, the player merely covers his own head with the animal mask, while in the second he also carried a head on a stick, thus creating the giant-sized vertical image of the animal. *Turica* and Sachs's Romanian horse belong to this latter category.

The English mask — the hobby-horse, the Morris-horse — and the masks from the Balearic Islands — the *cavaletts* — cannot be categorised into either of the above-mentioned groups of horse masks. The hobby-horse is a disguised horseman. These are combined masks which represent a rider on a horse, and not the giant personage of a riderless horse like *Turica* or the Romanian variants. The French call the structures which leave the player visible from the waist *cheval-jupon* (Baumel 1954). Similar masks are known in Croatia and in other places throughout Europe. When only one man takes part in the presentation of the horseman, he wears a wooden or wire structure either in front of or behind him, around his waist or between his legs. It was usually made of wooden strips, sticks, rushes and goatskin — although in more recent times cardboard, wire and synthetic material is used and the entire mask is covered with fabric. The head is at the front, and this can be effected in various ways, more or less similarly to a real horse head, sometimes with a mobile lower jaw. The combined human/horse mask of the *cheval-jupon* type can be identified in Croatia in the *kobilice* masks from Garčin in Slavonia and, for example, in the horse called *Krnjevara* in the village of Kosore near Vrlika, in the Carnival horse from Ivandol near Slavonska Požega and in the horse from the *Hajduk* games in Herzegovina (*Folklorno kazalište* 1996:38, 115-116, 261-265). Bonifačić Rožin mentions such masked personages in Nerežišće on the island of Brač, on the Pelješac peninsula and elsewhere (Bonifačić Rožin 1975:380-381).

Nikola Bonifačić Rožin, a tireless researcher of popular drama in Croatia, published these lines in 1963:

A recent horse mask from Čilipi in Konavle had teeth of garlic cloves on mobile jaws, similar to *Turica*, and is an example of how some traditions and accompanying opportunities for comedy are firmly adhered to by the people (*Narodne drame, poslovice i zagonetke* 1963:9).

It could seem that the Konavle horse is a direct descendant of *Turica* which had fled from the City of Dubrovnik, but Bonifačić Rožin himself — in notes on the same page — mentions similar masks in the Croatian

regions of Banija and Medimurje.<sup>23</sup> The possibility of *Turica* having offspring and exerting influence should not be rejected *a priori*, but we will probably never be able to establish this with certainty. In any case, I would say that the matter is not of crucial importance to *Turica's* story: parallel existence and cause-and-effect links are equally fascinating.

It is interesting that two-legged and four-legged personages similar to *Turica* — with or without a mobile jaw — can also be seen today in Carnivals and at traditional wedding celebrations. At weddings — but also at Carnivals — we meet the mainly four-legged masks of cows, bulls, oxen, mares, horses and — more rarely — donkeys. "The animal" is usually lead by a trader and offered for "sale" at weddings, which parodies real haggling over prices at fairs. At the end of this game, the trader sometimes ostensibly kills the "animal", because of dissatisfaction with the price achieved. The appearance of *Turica's* kinfolk at weddings confirms Sachs's hypothesis about the magic of fertility rites.<sup>24</sup> The Carnival picture is much more colourful: two-legged zoomorphic disguises with a head on a stick appear more frequently than at weddings, and, apart from the animals already mentioned, one also sees camels, goats, herons, birds, ostriches and giraffes (Lozica 1990:267-270; 1997:221-222). Similar combinations of a man and a puppet allow the creation of various Carnival giants which do not have to be particularly zoomorphic. Sometimes the head is carried on a stick, but there are also structures which are carried on the shoulders of the dancer who is hidden by fabric, leaving the hands free. Such a mask called *telal*<sup>25</sup> appeared

<sup>23</sup> In three other articles, Bonifačić Rožin repeats his claim on the similarity between *Turica* and other kindred masks in the recent folklore of the region around Dubrovnik (Bonifačić Rožin 1965:65; 1966:156-157; 1973:240-244). In passing, the masked personages with heads on sticks in Medimurje are usually found in a village called Podturen. I shall leave research on whether the name of the village has anything to do with *Turica* or *turon* to scholars of toponomasiology.

<sup>24</sup> There is additional evidence on the role of cattle in fertility rites associated with weddings than merely the games with the sales of cows, bulls or oxen. Zorica Rajković compared this game with the Lobar village wedding custom of "slicing the beef". This custom alludes to the deflowering of the bride: it feigns the distribution of the meat of a heifer and includes jocular comments. The principle of the game is that the allocation of a certain part of the animal refers to a certain characteristic or shortcoming of the person or family named, or reminds those present of some event connected with that person or family (Rajković 1985:253).

<sup>25</sup> *Telal* (Tur. *tellâl*, *dellâl*) means proclaimer, crier, or messenger. The *telal* in the Grude Carnival procession announced the bishop who followed on after him. The similarity with *Turica* lies not only in the structure of the mask but also in its function. With their street dance to the accompaniment of a flute and a drum, *Turica*,

before World War II in Grude (Bonifačić Rožin 1966:162-163). Bonifačić Rožin saw a similar mask on the island of Lastovo in 1960. I did not encounter this personage in my research between 1981 and 1985 of the Lastovo Carnival, but it was remembered under the name *čombo* (It. *ciompo* — harmless or naive person). In light of the hypothesis of this article concerning the participation of the masked trio in the sword dance, the actual similarity between that mask and *Turica* is perhaps more than coincidental: the Lastovo *pokladari* dance the *kolo*, a chain dance with swords. And not only that — according to tradition, their Carnival puppet is connected with the Catalonian pirates and has a blakened face.

If we return to the portraits of the masked trio in Appendini's book and Martecchini's album, we will notice some other details which do not fully tally with the verbal descriptions. *Vila* does not have a bow — as described by Appendini — nor a triangular bow all decorated with flowers — as Karadžić would have it.<sup>26</sup> The verbal descriptions do not match the illustrations; there are no weapons in the picture. In both the water-colour and the engraving, *Turica* is carrying an unusual floral triangle in her left hand with the peak of the triangle turned downwards. I would rather not enter into the doubtful area of interpretation of the symbolics of that object — preferring to adhere to the possible choreological interpretation. Ivančan mentions the chain dance called *cerchiata* which is often danced along with the *moresca*: all the dancers in that dance hold in their hands a bow or hoop of flowers.<sup>27</sup> In the northern Adriatic region, such dances were called *della verdura* (Ivančan 1967:98-100). *Vila* holds in her hand an equilateral triangle of flowers. If that triangle is a prop for the *cerchiata* dance, we must assume that *Vila* did not — at least not always — dance alone i.e. that there was more than one *Vila*. We can find confirmation of this in the writings of Držić.

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*Čoroje* and *Vila* were in fact announcing the afternoon festival for the feast day of St. Blaise. Karadžić even mentions only the drum. Announcers and criers once used only the drum to attract attention.

<sup>26</sup> Lord only knows where Vuletić Vukasović found the marrow which he added to the bow (Vuletić Vukasović 1923:108-109).

<sup>27</sup> The *cerchiata* dance was performed on May 1, near to the day of Whitsuntide. The flowers on the hoops and *Vila's* triangle perhaps are connected with the Whitsuntide roses to which Gavazzi allocates influence from the Roman *dies rosae* (Gavazzi 1988:72).

In his comedy, *Džuho Kerpeta*, Držić complains of the small number of poets (comedy writers) and puts forward the following as one of the reasons:

For the people blew out all the laughter, and that could be seen during this Carnival, when the *vilas* in wether-bells danced (Držić 1930:432).

At Carnival time, the *vilas* danced in bell-bedecked costumes. We do not know if Držić's *vilas* danced the *cerchiata*. Nor do we know which *vilas* they were. They could have appeared in the performance of a certain theatre group at a wedding party during Carnival, they could have been part of an unsuccessful attempt at refined choreography of the court type, and they could have danced with *Turica* and *Čoroje*. I assume that they were disguised men, because women would probably not have invoked such laughter. I am, by profession, a *dottore di Carnevale*, and I must ask myself whether female fairy dancers — or male fairy dancers — have any connection with the so called "beautiful (or white) masks" which appear in so many Carnivals in Croatia, in opposition to the "ugly (or rough) masks". Today, girls and children are the main participants in the beautiful mask — or white mask — processions, but in the past on the Adriatic coast the participants were usually men disguised as women (Lozica 1997:225-226). So we gradually add a few more lines in the still unclear sketch by which *Vila* belongs to the beautiful masks group, similar to female personages in the Carnival and *koleda* productions of weddings, associating with the personage of the false bride in actual traditional weddings, and approaching the slavegirl motif in the *moresca*, in oral poetry and in early Croatian drama literature. Enactments of weddings in the Dubrovnik Carnival were mentioned by the Latin Croatian writer Đuro Ferić as early as the 18th century (Ferić 1970:654).

According to Karadžić's description, *Vila* had a doubly hidden face: her face was covered with mask, and the mask was again covered by a piece of "dark homespun" which she lifted during the dance.<sup>28</sup> The veils

<sup>28</sup> It should be added that Vuk placed the masked trio in the chapter about wedding guests and the bride, together with the Carnival enactment of a wedding in Risan near Kotor (Karadžić 1957:23.24). Nodilo, too, interprets them as "a human imitation of a divine act" and "the transition of masked gods from gloomy winter into the blooming days of early summer". However, Nodilo bravely ventures further in his interpretation: to him the three masked personages represent a divine pagan family — father, mother and son. According to Nodilo, *Čoroje* and *Turica* are of the male gender, so it remains for us to determine which is the father and which is the son. From the fox-

over the faces of today's slavegirls — in the Korčula *Moreška* and the Carnival presentation of *Robinja* [The Slavegirl] on the island of Pag — remind us of the hidden faces of the disguised men in the case of our Croatian *vilas* and Sachs's *kalušari*. However, the role of the slavegirl on Korčula is played by a girl, and on Pag by a disguised man. The gender of the folk and theatrical actors is an intriguing theme for further ethnotheatrollogical research.<sup>29</sup>

If we recognise the disguised man from the sword dance and the beautiful mask in *Vila*, it becomes even easier to perceive the rough mask similar to Sachs's Romanian fool in *Čoroje*. In the portrait, *Čoroje* holds a strange posy in the form of a cudgel in phallic form decorated with flowers,<sup>30</sup> similar to the props of the *zvončari* and other — often horned — masked members of Carnival processions attired in animal furs with bells at their waists — among which we also include *Čoroje*. These personages are part of Indo-European heritage — manistic masks representing ancestors. They are the remnant of the cult of the dead which (combined with defence and fertility magic) forms the forgotten ritual background for the variegated picture of today's Carnivals. During the Christian period, they have also been used in some places as the model for the personage of the Devil — a source for *Čoroje's* possible equivalent in the Balearic Islands term, *diablo* (Lozica 1997:198-200, 224-225).

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tails in Nodilo's description of *Čoroje* and his claim that "among the Aryans the wily fox is Evening incarnate", I assume that he sees *Turica* as the son, while *Čoroje* and *Vila* would have been *Turica's* divine parents, akin to the Carnival grandpa and grandma personages (Nodilo 1981:258-260).

<sup>29</sup> A particularly interesting custom in connection with research into the role of gender is the custom variously called *kraljice*, *kraljevi*, *kraljičari* or *ljelje*, known mainly in the north-eastern parts of Croatia, in the Slavonian Drava River region and among the *Bunjevci* and *Šokci*, Croats in Vojvodina. This is a Whitsuntide custom in which girls participate almost exclusively, performing a chain dance with swords which is very similar — or even choreographically identical in some figures — with the dance of the *kumpanije* dancers on the island of Korčula (Ivančan 1967:147). For more information on women and female personages in Slavonian folklore and popular theatre, see Čale Feldman 1997. I would only add that women in the Whitsuntide customs also have a dominant role among some northern Slavic peoples. Gavazzi emphasized the Czech *královničky* or *králove* custom (Gavazzi 1988:83).

<sup>30</sup> The Italian word *tirso* appears in Appendini's verbal interpretation, which should be Bacchus's cane overgrown with vines and ivy. Karadžić sees a green branch or a posy of flowers, while Vuletić Vukasović is more precise: *Čoroe* had a posy in his hand. What the picture actually shows is a powerful club with small flowers stuck into it.

We know little about the masked trio — but what we do know shows that these are not insignificant masks, mere casual personages in Carnival festivities. In this text I have assumed their participation in sword dance, in some variant of the *moresca* or chain dance during the era of the Dubrovnik Republic. I have tried to make a case for their comparison with similar phenomena around the Mediterranean, using only the scant literature available. If the assumption is correct, which could only be proved by further field and archival research, it would become clear why *Čoroje*, *Vila* and *Turica* enjoyed special privileges bestowed by the secular and ecclesiastical authorities in Dubrovnik, and why they also appeared on certain occasions outside of the Carnival period.

If these Croatian masks really were personages in some sword dance, this would not call into question their ritual or mythological importance, nor their age. On the contrary, in such a case they would be part of the ritual nucleus<sup>31</sup> which, transformed through the centuries by various dance and literary influences, served as a starting-point of professional dance and the drama theatre as we know them today in Croatia.

I realise that such a conclusion is very premature: there is still much serious work to be done and who knows whether we will ever be able to say that the job is finished. Let us not forget that taunting smile on *Turica's* face!

So I will conclude in less pretentious fashion, again with a picture. Three reconstructed masks returned to the City of Dubrovnik in February 1997. Two centuries had passed: *Čoroje*, *Vila* and *Turica* had forgotten what it was they did. I watched the masked trio as they walked shyly and in confusion down the empty Stradun, the walled mediaeval city's main thoroughfare, and posed for photographs in front of the Regent's Palace. I wrote these lines in haste, to be of some help to them.

(Translated by Nina H. Antoljak)

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<sup>31</sup> As *dramatis personae*, our three masks would join other ritual elements of chain dances which Ivančan identifies in simple movements with a primarily magic objective, linking them with similar ritual movements in the processions of *kraljice*, *lazarice*, *kalušari*, *pokladari*, *rusalije* etc. (Ivančan 1967:138).

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## TURIČINIM TRAGOM

### SAŽETAK

Turica, Čoroje i Vila znamenite su, ali nedovoljno istražene stare dubrovačke maske. To nisu beznačajne maskare, neobvezni likovi pokladnih veselja. Autor pretpostavlja njihovo sudjelovanje u oružnom plesu, u nekoj inačici moreške ili lančanoga plesa u vrijeme Republike, argumentirajući to usporedbom sa sličnim pojavama na Mediteranu. Ako je pretpostavka točna, postaje jasno zašto su te maske imale posebne povlastice kod dubrovačkih svjetovnih i crkvenih vlasti te zašto su se pojavljivale i u nekim prigodama izvan pokladnoga razdoblja. U tom svjetlu "maškarana trojica" dio su pretkršćanske obredne jezgre koja je, transformirana različitim plesnim i književnim utjecajima kroz stoljeća, poslužila kao ishodište profesionalnom plesnom i dramskom kazalištu u Hrvatskoj.

Ključne riječi: maske, karneval, ples, koreologija, Dubrovnik