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Ala from Zeljin. Results of the Recent Research of Folk Mythology in Zupa*

The paper presents the results of the recent ethnological research, conducted in Aleksandrovacka Zupa and other areas. In this paper, the emphasis has been placed on notions on mythical beings, i.e. *alas* and dragons, which in the context of the materials collected take up one of most prominent positions, indicating the specific nature of the micro-regional unit, but also a symbol of the local identity. Namely, there are recordings of numerous and extremely interesting variations of the myth and ideas on the ala from Zeljin which, as the definitely most exposed mythical entity, is certainly a Zupa-specific property.

General framework

The goal of the paper is to provide an illustrative presentation of preliminary results of the recent ethnological research of spiritual cultural heritage of Aleksandrovacka Zupa and nearby areas – in the context of studying separately emphasized Serb mythological-religious and identity-related patterns.¹ The research was focused on some exceptionally interesting semantic units, ranging from mythical and religious folk beliefs to specific ideas on the origin, past, historical figures, etc. (compare Markovic 2002), etc. Here we can find some very picturesque ideas about mythical beings, i.e. *alas* and dragons.² In the papers to follow we shall present

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folk mythology, recent ethnological research, Aleksandrovacka Zupa (district) and nearby areas, conceptions on mythical beings, *alas* and dragons, the *ala* of Zeljin, specific content, identity

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¹ About Aleksandrovacka Zupa in general, see, for instance: Lutovac, 1980; Lutovac 1976; Milincic and Sandic 2006; Milincic and others 2007.

² In the research conducted in 2011, plentitude of information was compiled from a large number of story-tellers from various villages from Aleksandrovacka Zupa district. Apart from this, the paper also presents and discusses materials kindly extended to the author by the County Museum.

even more complex results of the recent research of the said area, which is, for various reasons (and from various sides) especially interesting for Serb ethnology, starting from the fact that Zupa has so far been subject to impermissibly little research.³

Among other things, Aleksandrovacka Zupa is a zone which, in many aspects, occupies the central position from the standpoint of Serb ethnic space – primarily if it is regarded in diachronic context – marking a cultural and geographic unit in which Dinaric influence from the Serb West was hybridized with (non-Dinaric) influence from the Serb South (compare with Lutovac, 1980, 20). Apart from this, the Zupa district, regarded in broader sense, was at the same time the epicenter of Serb culture and state in the period of reign of Lazar Hrebeljanovic⁴, immediately prior to the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, which determined the history, i.e. future of the Serb state and Serb people in the following centuries. In any case, there are numerous indicators which direct us to the potential of Aleksandrovacka Zupa, which is also the case with mythical patterns, i.e. mythical entities.⁵

Conceptions about mythical beings

Diversity of mythical entities and content

During the research, numerous notions on mythical beings have been observed in Akeksandrovacka Zupa District, starting from the conceptions about the *ala*, dragon, *azdaja* (basilisk, water dragon), home-protecting snake (*baja*), fairies, vampires, *sandjamas/djamas*, *karakondzulas*, *zdrekavcis*, *cumas*, witches, etc. Various folk conceptions on God and the devil, saints, St. Sava, Prince Lazar and Milos Obilic were also recorded. As it has already been hinted, conceptions about the *ala* and dragon, primarily on the *ala of Zeljin*, are especially numerous and revealing; thus, this paper – in accordance with the relevant limitations of space – will primarily treat records of different content of the given type. Also, the fact that this entity simultaneously – through various expressions of manifestation – became one of the

The said materials have been collected over the period of several previous years, under the auspices of the said Museum.

³ In the context of the stated fact, we deem all available texts treating the issue of folk mythological conceptions of the area extremely important (see Kostic 1994).

⁴ For example, in Aleksandrovacka Zupa, apart from considerable content on Milos Obilic and Car Lazar (see Lutovac 1980, 17, 23; Miletic, 2004, 9–22; Markovic 2002) contemporary notions were collected about the importance of Drenca Monastery in the Serbia of the Emperor/Prince Lazar and Stefan Lazarevic as the cultural, spiritual and educational centre (compare: Markovic, 2002, 236). In any case, “after a long period of historical and archeological research (I. T.: see footnote 60 in the paper of M. Maric) on this site, it was proved that Drenca was the court church of Prince Lazar at the time of construction of Lazarus’ church in Krusevac” (Maric 2006, 40). Also compare Tosic and Bulic 2006.

⁵ Namely, “in Zupa as a geographical unit, numerous archaic elements were separately preserved in folk customs, traditions and toponyms, as traces of life in medieval Serbia”. (Stojancevic, 1972, 144). Also see direct examples in: Markovic 2002, 231–232 etc.

symbols of the local identity was yet another reason to study the mythological complex developed around the *ala of Zeljin*.

The ala of Zeljin

The common motif in the very widespread folk stories of the Zupa district is the existence of an *ala* in Lake Zeljin, located at the mountain of Zeljin. Numerous conceptions about the *ala of Zeljin* were recorded, quite versatile in meaning; here we state but a few (which are especially illustrative from the stand point of this paper), classified in several basic semantic categories.⁶

The ala of Zeljin and the ala of Tutin (conceptions on the two alas)

From the standpoint of observing the *ala of Zeljin* as a local symbol of Zupa (and a mark of the local identity), conceptions in which the *ala* – as the protector of Zupa – confronts other hostile mythical beings are especially interesting. In these terms, content in which the *ala of Zeljin* is mentioned together with the *ala of Tutin* are most frequent (compare Kostic 1994, 12). (1a) For example, according a story, the *ala of Zeljin* was in Lukarevina to take some wine. When it took off from Lukarevina with bellows full of wine, it was attacked by the *ala of Tutin*, and the two *alas* fought. The *ala of Tutin* ruptured a bellows and the red wine leaked out of it onto a hill, which is nowadays called *Crveni Breg* (Red Hill), after the wine which was spilled from the bellows of the *ala of Zeljin*. And all this happened because the *ala of Tutin* had ordered the *ala of Zeljin* to send it grapes, plums, and apples. The *ala of Zeljin* flapped its wings and sent it hawthorn berries, dog-rose hips, and sloe berries, leaving grapes, apples, and plums in Zupa. This is why, according to the legend, “how this argument between the two women, i.e. *alas*, started”. This is one of the typical stories about the *ala of Zeljin* in which it is depicted as the one who brings plentiful yields and the good protector of Zupa (comp. Radenkovic 2001v, 446-447). (1b) On the other hand, there are variants in which both *alas* are said to have requested animal and human sacrifice (1b1). Thus, the *ala of Zeljin* was periodically offered a sacrifice of a young girl, while (1b2) the *ala of Tutin* was offered rams as sacrifice to pacify it, so it would start flapping its wings and making rain, so as to keep pastures green (1a). However, there are numerous different conceptions on the existence of the two *alas*. According to one version, there was one *ala* in Zeljin and another one in Lju(k)ten. The first one wanted to have a fight, while the second did not. So they “crashed” (the one that wanted to have a fight went to the other one to fight) at a place which is nowadays called Polom (covered in meadows below a hill in Rogavcine district). This is how the three places got their names (1b). According to another story, there was a lake in Kopaonik near Trestenica, populated by an *ala*, a friend of the *ala of Zeljin*’s. The two of them frequently called one another. The *ala of Trestenica* would roar, the *ala of Zeljin* would roar back. Thus, they brought success to Rogci and Kriva reka from all sides. After the

⁶ As it has already been said, apart from the versions given in this paper, there are numerous other variants recorded, with a range of most versatile motifs. In accordance with the relevant limitation of space, other versions and additional analysis of the issue will be presented in future studies.

ala of Zeljin was killed, a rock slid downhill and killed the *ala of Trestenica*. While they were alive, yield was plentiful – “an ear of wheat would weigh one liter”.

Even though it is frequently directly associated with the wine produced in Zupa, it should be emphasized that, according to numerous folk conceptions, the *ala of Zeljin* is the protector of the whole district, not only the vineyard (Kostic 1994, 12). According to a story, “the *ala of Zeljin* and the *ala of Tutin* are always fighting”; in the stories of this type, the *ala of Zeljin* is presented as the local protector, while the *ala of Tutin* is always wicked. For example, according to already recorded conceptions, when the *ala of Zeljin* would have to go there for a longer time (“to a place somewhere in Kopanik”), evil forces would have their vengeance against Zupa and there would be storms with hail (Kostic, 1994, 14). Generally, we can say that numerous conceptions of the *ala of Zeljin* describe a state of general welfare and ideal weather conditions, that is, a certain paradise-like state from the Golden age.⁷ However, this “paradise-like state” in folk conceptions is most frequently disturbed by either similar hostile entities (other *alas* and related entities) or excessive gluttony of the *ala* (it is frequently said that it requested sacrifice) which, in the end, causes its destruction.

Conceptions about the ala of Zeljin and its destruction (conceptions about the ala with dual traits)

In the content recorded, that speaking of the death of the *ala* in the lake due to its dual traits which led to the decision that it should be killed is especially frequent (2a). To illustrate this, according to a source, the mountain of Zeljin is shaped as a saddle, on top of which there was a lake, populated by the *ala* which was inflicting damage. This is why the people went to an old witch to ask her how to get rid of the *ala*. The witch told them to sharpen a stake and put it in water with the point turned downwards, and to nail some boards on top of it. Thus, when the *ala* wanted to come out at night, it impaled itself onto the stake. They say that blood, not water, was flowing in the river Rasina for a week, and this is how this version explain the end of the *ala of Zeljin*. (2b) According to another story, there was an *ala* in Zeljin lake, which brought success and good yield here, so that some people nailed it down in the lake, and it could not come out any more; this is how it died; and the Konjska river was made from its blood. Here is where once wheat was best, because the *ala* brought good yield from far away (2v). According to the third version, the *ala* once lived in the mountain of Zeljin, in the lake which was once there. It devoured people, cattle, and everything it could reach, but wheat was plentiful in the vicinity of the lake. People wanted to make a good use of the place, so they found a way close the lake so that the *ala* can no longer go out. In Jelakci, on a hill named Borje, there was a pine forest, so they decided to cut it down, make boards and bring them down to the lake and cover it. They did as planned. They needed 12

⁷ According to a story, at the time when the *ala of Zeljin* was the protector of Zupa – a grape was as big as an ox’s eye, pumpkins were so big that standing on one hill you could see a pumpkin on the other; also, in several versions it is emphasized that the *ala* “pulled good yield to Zupa from other places and from other states”.

pairs of oxen to pull a board, two pairs to pull a nail; finally they managed to cover the lake. When it realized it was closed in the lake, the *ala* started jumping and that is how it fractured its head; two rivers of blood were running out after that for a week. The *ala* was not seen after this; however, the yield in the place was also not as good as it used to be.

Non-typical conceptions about the ala of Zeljin

There are also non-standards conceptions about the *ala of Zeljin*, i.e. on related mythical entities. To illustrate various strata of the discussed mythical complex, it is necessary to state some of those versions (3a). According to a source, his great-grandfather, while traveling on a horse, heard some bellowing noise. When he looked closer, on the road was a 30-meter long snake with a star on the forehead. Where it passed the road was clean, as if wiped. He also saw it take off and fly away. The great-grandfather was scared to death and wan in bed sick for the following month. According to this source, ‘he did not know this was an *ala*, and this one was the *ala of Zeljin*. (3B) A story was also recorded of how long time ago an *ala* used to live in a big cave, ‘up there in Vrbnica’. It was dangerous and “as big as half the transformer station”. It was the reason why the people could not leave their homes at night, because it would wait for the victim somewhere in the dark and eat them up. One day, the people from the village agreed that they should get it and kill it. They started towards it, taking their scythes, pitchforks, and hoes with them. When they got there, they found the *ala* sleeping in front of the cave. They almost fainted when they saw it, but they did not want to give up their plans. A man hit it with a how, “just like that, to knock it out”, but “how can you knock out a head like that? It was as big as a barrel! They just woke it up”. Then everyone started hitting it and stabbing it, and it started running away towards Sebici. As it was running, the earth was crumbling from its strength, which is how the canyon was made. And “when it reached the bottom, where the church is, this is where the *ala* died”. (3v) According to a story, up the hill from the village of Rznice “there was a volcano”, which is where later on a lake emerged. In this lake there was an *ala*, that is, “a snake with legs”. This *ala* was devouring animals which came to the lake for water, as well as insufficiently cautious people. In the village of Drenca (below the lake), there was a man who had a strong bull-calf which – when going to the lake – had fights with the *ala* which would confront him. The *ala* could not harm the bull-calf, because it was itself of *ala* origin. To help the bull-calf win over the *ala*, the blacksmith from the village of Drenca had an idea and attached two knives to the bull-calf’s horns. With his horns thus reinforced, the bull-calf went to the lake, and the *ala* came out of water and started fighting with it. In the battle, the bull-calf stabbed the *ala* which roared frighteningly and went back into the lake, stabbed. After that, water mixed with blood was flowing out of the lake for a long time. And the *ala* was never seen from that moment on. (3g) The *ala of Zeljin* left the Zupa and went to the lake in the vicinity of Blace. For a long time there was no news about it; however, after a while wheat became more plentiful in that region, and the farmers harvested more yields. It is believed that this was thanks to the *ala*, as once used to be in Zupa, when an ear of wheat weighed as much as 100 grams. The villagers did not know where the *ala* was located until one day a giant flower surfaced

in the lake. No one could pick this flower. When the first storm started, the first lightning struck in the lake. Fish was more plentiful than ever, and the people started fishing using boats. But, as soon they would set off, the water would start sending sparks, and there was something which pulled them in the water and tried to drown them, so they barely came back alive. This gave rise to stories about the *ala*. There was also a conception that Nemanja's fortune was dug in at the bottom of the lake; many tried to find it. However, nobody got to the bottom, and the *ala* would drown all visitors to the lake, to punish them. There is a story that the "heavenly forces" became angry with the *ala* because of this, so that the nearby hills started moving and squeezing the lake water out, so that the lake shrunk. According to this source, it is possible that this is how the *ala* perished, as it never emerged on the surface again, "and fish stopped breeding like it used to".

Dragons

In Zupa district there are also numerous conceptions about dragons, which semantically frequently coincide with the conceptions of *alas* – but also *azdajas* and *miraculous snakes* – which is why it is necessary present and discuss them as well.⁸

Conceptions about the flying dragon, without other elements

(A1) According to a source from Leskovica, his grandfather was a farrier, but used to trade in copper for a while. One night, in the village area of Brezovica (municipality of Trstenik), he was walking after midnight with his cows. In a moment the cows stopped, and there was some light going in their direction. It stopped some 2-3 meters away from them. After that, the light went up and over the mountain towards Vrnjacka Banja. The source said that his grandmother (who had witnessed the event with his grandfather) "still calls it the dragon".

Conceptions about the dragon-child and related motifs

(B1) There is a belief that nobody (except for his mother) may see a dragon child for seven years. If there are two children of the kind, the mother must not put them together so that they can see each other. In other words, if one son comes back, the other one has to go away. If this is not so, they would kill each other. According to a source – "these are dragons and they must not know about each other", (B2) According to a source from Latkovci, the woman's aunt had had a dragon-child. The boy had wings under his armpits, and old women told his mother not to bring him out, so that nobody could see him for 17 days. However, some women were curious, and one of them was especially persistent, requesting to see the child. And when she set her eyes on him, the boy died. And had it lived, it would have flown away at the age of 7. And there would be no hail, because the child would be

⁸ About *alas* and *dragons* in the general Serb and Slav mythological context see in: Radenkovic, 2001a, 559–561 (*hala*) and Radenkovic 2001b, 206–211 (*dragon*). Also see in: Zecevic 2008, 256–260, 260–265; Cajkanovic 1994, 256–262, 266–272; Bandic 2004, 162–164, 164–168; Petrovic 1998, 6–7; Pantelic 1998b, 200–203.

protecting the village. (B3) The same source said that she “recently heard that a child was born – his toes are like a frog’s”, but, “he lived for 17 days only and then perished”.

General conceptions about dragons

(Y1) In Zupa there is a belief that there are “ala-people”, as well as “ala-snakes” that were called dragons. Clouds will follow the snake where it leads them, and cannot pass where it does not allow them. It also leads outside waters in floods. There is also a notion of the dragon as a snake with a cross on its forehead, which drives clouds away. It was believed that the dragon protects the fields from hail and major floods, and that it resides in the sky. According to some conceptions, the dragon has a head, a body, and a very long tail, and “looks like a fat snake with a square head”. (Y2) On the other hand, in Zupa there is also a belief that dragons are created from human beings, but that there are animals which may also have this dragon quality (there are interesting stories about dragon-oxen or dragon-horses). There is also a general belief that eagles as personification of dragons fight against the *ala*). Dragon-men also protect their whereabouts from natural disasters, primarily from hail. They mostly do not get in touch with human beings and live alone; they can be destroyed by cutting off their wings. There is also a conception that a woman might not be a dragon, while a newborn may be a dragon. It is also believed that dragons are great lovers who – however – may be very dangerous for their wives. According to the folk conception, dragons frequently appear by water springs and water-mills.

Final considerations

The conceptions about *alas* (*azdajas*) and dragons⁹ – as it has already been emphasized – are certainly one of the most frequently occurring aspects of mythological beliefs in Zupa; in this sense, they are also fraught with synthesis (com. Bandic 2004, 163; Zecevic 2008, 260). In these terms, here we have stated especially illustrative and inspiring content, starting from specific conceptions (first of all characteristic of Zupa and nearby districts) about the *ala of Zeljin*¹⁰, which – in qualitative terms – rely on the conceptions about dragons (comp. e.g. Petrovic 2000, 70). In the context of data available and collected, the *ala of Zeljin* is primarily perceived as the force behind atmospheric phenomena, with protection of the popula-

⁹ In some conceptions in Zupa, the *ala of Zeljin* is called the *azdaja* which is ascribed identical properties (comp. Cajkanovic 1994, 261). In analogy to this, “people in East Serbia believed that the *azdaja* leads clouds with hail (replaced the *ala*)” (Pantelic 1998a, 5). Also, in mythological conceptions of the Balkan Slavs, there are frequent motives of the *azdaja* guarding a water spring or a lake, not allowing anyone to drink from it (Krstic 1984, 24).

¹⁰ When it comes to related mythological conceptions, see firstly: Radenkovic 2001a, 559–560; Pavlovic 1941, 295.

tion of the area as its primary function.¹¹ It brings fruitful yield, (see 1a, 1b, 2b, 2v, 3g) and protects Zupa from hostile mythical beings (1a),¹² which is why it is a significant feature of the local identity.¹³ Furthermore, conceptions about it grow to a sort of a representative and protector of the nation,¹⁴ in analogy to the well-known relations of mythical language which identify Turks as *alas* and Serbs as dragons (see Cajkanovic 1994, 261, 272), which is transferred easily – both in the stories of story-tellers themselves and through an appropriate semantic analysis – to the qualitative essence of the relationship between the *ala of Zeljin* and *ala of Tutin*. In these terms, the conceptions about the *ala of Zeljin* may in many aspects be related to the standard Serb conceptions about dragons as nationally aware beings (compare Petrovic 2000, 354; Cajkanovic 1994, 272). On the other hand, they may be linked to general Slav conceptions which are also based on direct links between dragons and water (compare Gura 2005, 216–219). At the same time, dragons, as well as the *ala of Zeljin*, defend their territories and fight against ill-meaning (complementary) mythical beings, rulers of neighbouring/other regions, who bring bad weather and kill crops (compare, for instance, Petrovic 2000, 361).¹⁵

Apart from that, Zupa traditions and conceptions about the *ala of Zeljin* (as well as about dragons) include a whole range of versatile motifs and mythical stories with certain cosmogonic elements (compare conceptions 1a, 1a, 3b, 3g, about how certain places were conceived – hills, meadows, rivers, canyons – in Zupa district). For example, the motif of several rivers flowing out (of the water/lake on top of Zeljin/cosmic mountain)¹⁶ which were made from the blood of the *ala of Zeljin* (see 2a, 2b, 2v, 3b, 3g) is in these terms especially illustrative. These motifs are continued with the content presenting mountain Zeljin (at the same time the source of mythically significant river of Rasina; compare Milincic and others) as a sort of a cosmic mountain as the centre of the world (compare Eliade 2003, 87–103; Eliade 1999, 28–63), habitat of a supernatural being of exceptional importance (also compare Cajkanovic 1994, 268). In these terms, we can also interpret other mythical connotations of the *ala of Zeljin*; for instance, according to one of the recorded versions, it is said to have lived in the lake on Mount Zeljin, which was small, albeit very deep”; according to another, “the *ala of Zeljin* lived in a bottomless lake”.

¹¹ According to one folk conception, all bad clouds go down the Ibar and the Morava, because the *ala* does not allow them to pass over Zupa.

¹² Apart from the examples stated in this paper, there are recordings of numerous conceptions in which the *ala of Zeljin* confronts other, hostile beings, such as *ala of Stanisic*.

¹³ For example, numerous stories include the *ala of Zeljin* as the symbol of Zupa wine (compare conception 1a), as the most recognizable product/landmark of Zupa.

¹⁴ According to a version, the *ala* brought plentiful crops to Serbia from all other states (which the Romans did not like; which is why they came to kill it).

¹⁵ On the other hand, even when speaking about negative aspects, characteristics of *alas* and dragons frequently overlap. Among others, “a human-devouring dragon is most frequently located in deep still waters (compare: the *azdaja*, *water ox*, *lamia*, *hala*)” (Radenkovic 2001b, 208).

¹⁶ Different variants speak about a different number of rivers, from one to more of them. According to one story, “all three rivers flowing out of the lake in Zeljin – Rasin, Konjska Reka and Pre-dolska – contained blood for three months after the *ala* had died.”

Apart from directly commanding the stormy wind, the *ala of Zeljin* is also perceived as the ruler of water, i.e. corresponding wealth (3g)¹⁷ and – similarly to the dragon – overall water asset in the broadest sense (compare Y1).¹⁸ Apart from more recent elements, conceptions on it also contain very archaic content of universal kind¹⁹ (which, certainly, surpass the borders of local geography and emphasize general mythical relations, for instance, *culture/nature* and *own/others'* (compare Bandić 1997, 193–201), while in Zupa there is a significant number of obviously archaic conceptions about dragons were recorded.²⁰ On the other hand, certain elements connect the *ala of Zeljin* with the ancient conceptions about the ruler of the atmospheric phenomena (the characteristics of which we may already observe in old proto-civilizations from the Balkans (compare Todorovic 2005, chapter VII: 289–291, 310 etc; Cajkanovic 1994, 262; Todorovic 1997; Todorovic 2004b, 212–215; Todorovic 2004a, 172–174).

In any case, the discussed complex, the fragments and variants of which are presented in this short paper, consists of several semantic strata. The issue of discovery of the *origin* of different content and mythical stories comprising the given mythical complex is especially inspiring. In this sense too, the plentitude of materials collected²¹ are quite corresponding for analysis, same as in the context of analyzing the basic mythical *structure* of the given complex, the geographical centre of which is the western part of Zupa. On the other hand, the given mythological framework in some segments overlaps with the complex of traditions on the dragon of Jastrebac,²² Milos Obilic, Princess Milica, Prince Lazar, and other heroes from the Kosovo battle (compare Markovic 2002, 46), which is rather characteristic of the eastern part of Zupa. This area is also connected to the versatile conceptions on direct origin of Milos Obilic from the area (primarily in Mrmos and Lacisled).²³ It is

¹⁷ Similarly to this, according to one story, rams, horses, and oxen were coming out of the lake (while the *ala* was alive).

¹⁸ According to one story, near the village of Budilovina, the *ala* of Zupa came out and caused the water from the lake to flood and destroy the village the inhabitants of which were forced to leave. In another one, the *ala* of Zupa forecasts that there would be much hail the following year, and that many people would be killed by lightning. Apart from this, in a large number of conceptions, there is belief that the *ala* leads storms, hail, pouring rain. About water in archetypal mythical context see Todorovic 2004a, 181–193.

¹⁹ Among others, “our epical poetry has the psychological leitmotif of symbolic killing of the snake” and “this is about the conception well-known in almost all ancient mythologies” (Petrovic 2000, 341). And for mythology and the symbolic swallowing/devouring (see 1b1, 2v, 3b, 3v) also compare Cajkanovic 1994, 258; Prop 1990, 345–346.

²⁰ For example, the conceptions about the dragons that are at the same time both siblings and sworn enemies (B1) are very archaic (Prop 1990, 336; also see Todorovic 2009, 75–77). Also, the use of number 17 (B2, B3) also points to very archaic beliefs (compare Budimir 1969, 216) etc.

²¹ Here we stated but a few illustrative examples. See note 7.

²² Concrete examples (when it comes to the dragon of Jastrebac) will be treated in a more extensive study. According to S. Petrovic, “Jastrebac is the centre of new Serb mythology” (Petrovic 2000, 351). Also compare Cajkanovic 1994, 271–272.

²³ About mythological content talking about Milos Obilic as a dragon-hero (in Serb folk conceptions), see, for instance in: Petrovic 2000, 354–356, 361–362, 352–353 etc.

the analysis of semantic relations of the two given key mythological complexes of Zupa – as two main symbols and pillars of local identity – which is one of the most important tasks of future research.²⁴

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²⁴ In any case, the collected materials already reaffirm the importance of research conducted in Zupa (in concrete, local sense), as well as the importance of direct ethnological field research (in the broadest sense of the syntagm).

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