SLOVANSKA MITOLOGIJA –
VIRI IN REKONSTRUKCIJE

MITOLOGIA SLAVA –
FONTI E RICOSTRUZIONI

SLAVIC MYTHOLOGY –
SOURCES AND RECONSTRUCTIONS

Potočka zijavka
Fertility Rites in *The Raining Cave*

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In memoriam Mitja Brodar

Potočka zijavka is one of the most mysterious Palaeolithic cave sites in Europe. For the first time it is proposed that in this cave 32-36 thousand years ago fertility rites were performed, worshipping a cave bear as totemic animal. Interestingly, we will not find any other archaeological traces in the cave, not even from the youngest historical periods, except of a rock-bowl that was hand-carved with chisel. Though there is no reliable information about the origin and meaning of the rock-bowl, another Slovenian cave site offers a very intriguing explanation about an old Slovene faith and fertility rite. At least in the Late Middle Ages the fertility rite was abandoned in Potočka zijavka, but the cave itself continued to play an important role in Christian religious thought as a sacred place until the 20th Century. The most exciting is the idea about the interplay of three basic elements, important for life: earth, water and sun. Thus we can follow the concept of trinity most probably far back into Palaeolithic times.

Keywords: Potočka zijavka, Palaeolithic, Middle Ages, fertility rites, trinity

Research history

Along the Slovenian – Austrian border the mountain ridge of Olševa runs directly from west towards the east. Mount Olševa belongs to the Eastern Karavanke and is part of the Kamnik-Savinja Alps. On the most western side of Olševa the cave of Potočka zijavka (***zijavka*** [**zijauka**] (**fem.**) - a gaper) is positioned at an altitude of 1630 m. The cave was named after one of the previous owners of the cave, a certain Potočnik **(fig. 1)**.

Potočka zijavka is well known among people and mountaineers from both sides of the state border between Slovenia and Austria. J. C. Grosz of Austrian-Slovenian roots from Bela (Bela - Bad Vellach, Austria) was the first who investigated Potočka zijavka. He met his fortune at the rear of the cave, where he came across cave bear bones, one fireplace and one bone point. As winter was near, he dug out only a shallow trench, 4m3 in size. He carried on excavations the following summer, in 1927, and stopped his excavations in September 1928.To prevent further illegal excavations by Grosz in the cave on the Yugoslav side of the border (then Kingdom of Yugoslavia), S. Brodar started with excavations by himself with the financial support of Celje's community and the Museum of Celje. He began to excavate at the rear of the cave, where Grosz had left the trench open. Excavations took place from 16 September till 6 October 1928. On 21 September Brodar found the first bone points. He was aware of discovering a Palaeolithic site. In the next

Figure 1. Southern slope of Mount Olševa with Potočka zijavka entrance in the centre of the circle.
Slika 1. Južno pobočje gore Olševe z jamskim vhodom Potočke zijavke v sredini kroga.

years Brodar excavated also at the entrance of the cave. After completing the excavations in 1935, Brodar handed all artefacts over to the Museum of Celje. Paleontological material, samples of sediments and charcoal from fireplaces were deposited in the building of the old Gymnasium (Grammar school) in Celje. Just before the end of the Second World War, on 14 February 1945, a bomb hit the old school in an air raid by Allies. The material stored in that building was destroyed. Only stone artefacts and bone points that were stored in the museum, survived the Second World War untouched.

The new excavation campaign took place between 1997 and 2000.[1] Six bone points were directly dated with radiometric method AMS 14C. They showed the uncalibrated age of around 30,000.[2] In calendar years these bone points show the time span between 32 and 36 thousand years before the present.[3]

Finds and their context

Potočka zijavka represents a complex site with three micro-locations: the front of the cave, the bright part of the cave at the entrance and the rear of the cave where total darkness reigns **(fig. 2)**.

The most promising area for the archaeological research was surely at the cave entrance and in front of it. The front of the cave is exposed to sunshine and is the warmest place, especially on sunny days. The cave itself is very wet and muddy because of

[1] Pacher *et al*., 2004.
[2] Pacher 2001; Rabeder and Pohar 2004.
[3] Turk 2007.

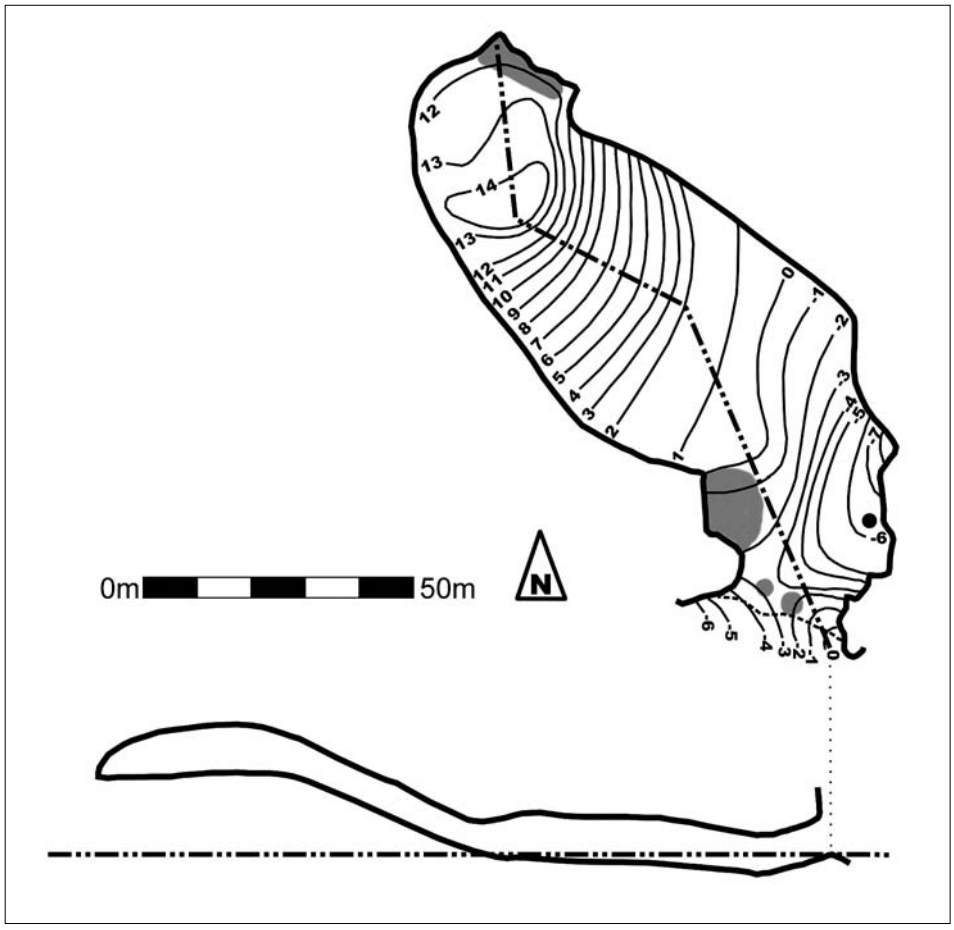

Figure 2. Ground plane and longitudinal section of Potočka zijavka. Areas with the greatest density of bone points, stone tools and fireplaces are marked in grey. The black dot represents the position of the rock-bowl.
Slika 2. Tloris in presek Potočke zijavke. Območja z največjo gostoto koščenih konic, kamenih orodij in ognjišč so označena s sivo. Črna pika predstavlja lokacijo skalne sklede.

permanent water dripping from the cave roof and is quite cold. The temperature in the cave does not rise over 10° C even on the hottest summer days in the last years (25°C 1700 m above sea level). Unfortunately we do not have any archaeological traces from the area in front of the cave because of erosion caused by snow and ice during the last glacial maximum (OIS 3).

At the cave entrance, which is illuminated by indirect daylight, the situation was totally different. The oldest occupation horizon is represented by layer 8 with sparse traces of human activities; one small fireplace was found in the centre of the cave entrance. The richest was the cultural horizon in layer 7 that yielded 16 fireplaces in total. Around the fireplaces the concentration of bone points and stone artefacts was the biggest: 31 bone points in different states of preservation originate from this horizon. A huge fireplace was set in the most intensively used part of the cave that has produced more than

2m^3 of pure charcoal. Many charcoal pieces were bigger than a human fist.[4] In layer 5 three fireplaces were set at the cave entrance; 11 bone points were found a bit deeper in the cave. The youngest traces of human activities belong to layer 3; two bone artefacts and two stone flakes were found near the cave entrance. Many pieces of red pigment and six jawbones with holes made by a human hand were found at the cave entrance in occupation layers.

But nobody would expect cultural remains to be found in the complete darkness at the rear of the cave that is lying 15 metres higher than the cave entrance and spreading to a distance of 100 m from it. Even today it is difficult to approach the rear of the cave, though we are equipped with the modern type of artificial light. The path is indeed rocky, very muddy and full of puddles: 81 bone points that were left behind in the complete darkness represent almost two thirds of the whole collection (128 pieces). All bone points were concentrated near the eastern and northern cave wall in layers 4 and 5 according to Brodar. But only two small fireplaces were set in the area without any natural light. The first fireplace was documented by Grosz together with a bone point. It was a part of layer 5 if compared with the profile of Brodar. The second fireplace was discovered by Brodar in layer 4. Both excavators noticed a lot of the smallest particles of charcoal scattered all over the place in both cultural layers. Particles of charcoal might provide evidence for the intense use of torches during some activities in complete darkness. Most probably the two small fireplaces served the function of maintaining the fire on torches. Brodar unearthed a unique needle of tubular shape and two jawbones with hand-made holes. Both Grosz and Brodar failed to find stone tools at the rear of the cave.

The list of faunal remains confirms the almost total lack of animals that are traditionally human game. Of all animal bone remains in Potočka zijavka 99.9% are derived from the cave bear. Other animals are represented only with several bones or teeth.[5] The new excavation campaign in 1997–2000 did not essentially change the list of faunal remains.[6] At the rear of the cave only cave bear bones were found. A few bones of deer (*Cervus elaphus*), chamois (*Rupicapra rupicapra*) and rabbit (*Lepus europaeus*) could bear witness to human hunting. But even these animals could have fallen prey to other predators such as cave hyena or wolf. Therefore we have to be cautious in determining human prey only by the presence or absence of game in cultural layers. Even cut marks on bones, made by stone tools, tell us little about predators themselves. This is true also for cave bears from Potočka zijavka, on whose bones very rare cut marks appear.[7]

Bone artefacts

In total 128 bone points in different states of preservation originate from Potočka zijavka. This collection offers a complex view of how bone points were made and how they were used. [8] Except for three to five bone points made of horn-cores of chamois, all the others were made of cave bear bones. The biggest one is 19 cm long, the smallest only 4 **(fig. 3)**. Bone points were a substantial part of composite hunting weapons. Extensive

[4] Brodar S., Brodar M. 1983, 159.
[5] Brodar S., Brodar M. 1983, 90-94.
[6] Rabeder *et al.* 2004.
[7] Pohar 2004, 212-213, 215.
[8] Odar 2008.

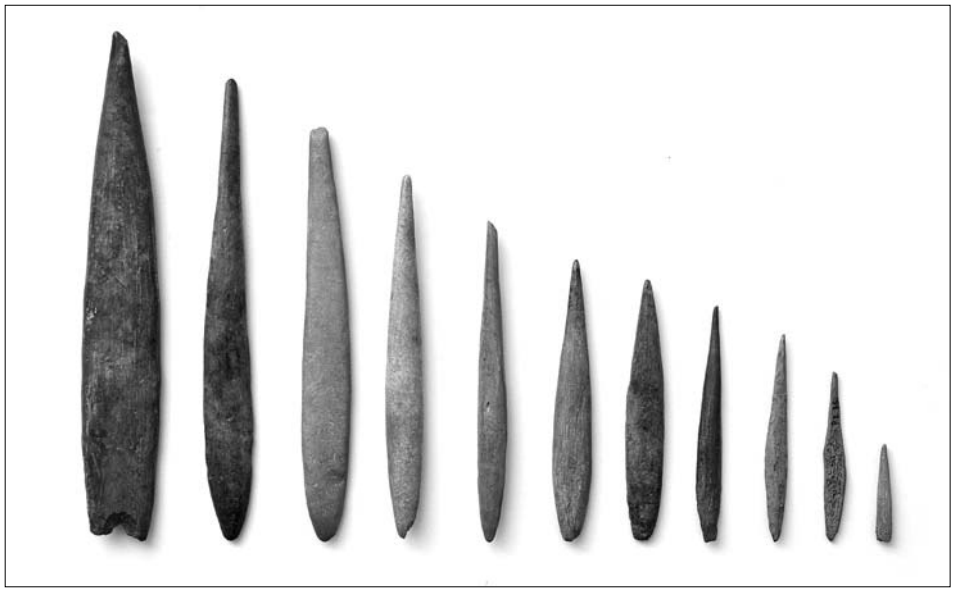

Figure 3. Points were made of cave bear bones. Bigger points were used as lance-heads and smaller as arrow-heads. Damaged bone points were reshaped anew and consequently their function was changing.
Slika 3. Konice so bile izdelane iz kosti jamskih medvedov. Velike konice so bile uporabljene kot sulične osti, majhne pa kot puščične osti. Poškodovane konice so bile ponovno priostrene in tako se je njihova uporabnost spreminjala.

and thorough experimental research on bone points has shown that hunters, who were visiting Potočka zijavka around 30,000 years ago, were equipped with lances and bows.[9]

Especially interesting are the jawbones of cave bears with one or more holes above the jawbone channel. Eight such jawbones of different preservation were unearthed.[10] Three of them were lost during the Second World War. Two jawbones were found at the rear of the cave, one with three holes and one with a single hole. There is no doubt that these perforations were made by people, as there is a complete absence of carnivore gnawing marks. Both jawbones lack the jawbone branch (*ramus mandibulae*) that was intentionally removed. From the cave entrance three jawbones with a single hole have survived till today. Two of them lack the jawbone branch while on the third it is only partly broken. When the first jawbone with three holes was found, Brodar already assumed that it was a certain type of flute **(fig. 4a)**. Seven other specimens only fortified his belief. Interestingly, such jawbones appear only in the Slovenian Alpine region. Much later, in the 1980's the first experiments with replicas were carried out. Ethno-musician Mira Omerzel and flautist Matija Terlep unambiguously proved that these perforated jawbones give a wide range of sounds, which are easy to be transformed into music.[11]

One more interesting jawbone was found at the cave entrance. The unusually big jawbone is perfectly preserved and has a single hole on the upper end of the jawbone branch **(fig. 4b)**. The hole was made with a puncher. The rounded and polished edge of

[9] Odar 2008a, 180-229; Odar 2011.
[10] Brodar S., Brodar M. 1983, 155-158.
[11] Brodar S., Brodar M. 1983, 82, 155-158; Omerzel-Terlep 1996.

Figure 4. a) The cave bear jaw with three holes above the mandibular channel represents a certain type of flute. The jaw-branch was removed intentionally to make sounds and music more easily. b) The cave bear jaw has a hole on the top of jaw-branch. The hole was made with puncher, probably a bone point. The edge of the hole is nicely rounded and polished as the jaw would hang on a rope.
Slika 4. a) Čeljustnica jamskega medveda s tremi luknjami nad čeljustničnim kanalom predstavlja poseben tip piščali. Veja čeljustnice je bila odstranjena namenoma za lažje izvablajnje zvokov in glasbe. b) Na zgornjem delu veje čeljustnice se nahaja luknja. Luknja je bila narejena s prebijačem, verjetno koščeno konico. Rob luknje je zaobljen in spoliran, kot da bi čeljustnica visela na vrvici.

the hole indicates that the jawbone was hanging by a rope. Brodar thought this jawbone could be in the function of a totem.[12]

Rock-bowl

»*On the hot summer day (1st of August) this year I visited Olševa for the first time. On the return, Ms. T. from Maribor suffered from thirst. In the hope of finding some drops of water, I went into the mentioned gaper. Indeed, I found in it old totally blackened rock bowl that was made ages ago and deepened in newer times by human hand. I became attentive and I began to observe the cave. I noticed diluvial layers and began to suspect that here must be a nice part of very old history, a dwelling place of diluvial mammals and maybe even of man.*« So begins Brodar with the story about his discovery of Potočka zijavka on the third page in the newspaper Jutro that came out on Wednesday 17 October 1928. He mentioned an unusual rock-bowl that was hand-carved. This rock-bowl is still there and is always full of fresh water that is constantly dripping from the cave roof **(fig. 5)**. There is no information as to when this bowl was carved, nor do we know who made it. Until recently this rock-bowl seemed to be the only such cave item known in Slovenia.

Interpretation

Ice Age sanctuary

During his excavation campaign 1928–1935 Brodar made an astonishing conclusion. Due to the numerous bone points and plenty of cave bear bones he assumed that Palaeolithic hunters climbed up to the highland Alpine cave to slaughter cave bears with aim of getting fur for clothing and meat for food. But he did not try to explain the total lack of burnt bones in the fireplaces and around them. Why would people want to climb up to the cave on a mountain that is far away from the vast plains, if cave bears lived

[12] Brodar S., Brodar M. 1983, 54.

Figure 5. The rock-bowl is full of water from spring till late autumn. Water constantly drips from the cave roof until the winter, when water begins to freeze.
Slika 5. Skalna skleda je od spomladi do pozne jeseni polna vode. Voda nenehno kaplja iz jamskega stropa vse do zime, ko voda zamrzne.

all around in the lowland? The statistic has clearly shown that only one bear every 50 years encountered death in Potočka zijavka.[13] What was, then, the reason for so many fireplaces if not for preparation of food? And why so many fireplaces at the cave entrance that is open to daylight and not at the rear of the cave where a total of 81 bone points was discarded? These are only a few of the questions that raise suspicion and curiosity.

There is no doubt that Palaeolithic hunters developed a special attitude to cave bears in the case of Potočka zijavka. This attitude is reflected both in the flutes made of cave bear jawbones and in the bone points that are made of cave bear bones. These artefacts were left behind in the cave bear den. Therefore I began to think about the once very popular cave bear cult theory that was initiated by the Swiss E. Baechler in the early 1930s.[14] He thought to find traces of the immolation of cave bears in the Swiss Alpine cave of Drachenloch. His idea was followed and further developed by P. W. Schmidt and W. Koppers.[15]

Once it became recognized, the idea of massive slaughter of cave bears for ritual purposes in many Alpine caves was not so easy to dismiss. It was B. Kurtén who attacked the old fashioned idea in the now classic book from 1976, *The Cave Bear Story – Life and Death of a Vanished Animal*. Today we know that cave bears encountered natural death in caves during the hibernation period due to insufficient food supply. Ethnographic

[13] Information from Irena Debeljak; Debeljak 2004.
[14] Baechler 1920/1921.
[15] Schmidt, Koppers 1924; Schmidt 1964.

sources reveal that bear hunt was practised only on special occasions. The hunt took place during the hibernation period. A bear awakened during hibernation was much less dangerous. The chosen bears didn't weight more than 200 kg. It was too dangerous to hunt bigger bears.[16] The average weight of cave bears was much bigger than the weight of bears that live today. Adult cave bear males weighted over 500 kg, females around 300 kg.

If we abandon the idea of bear hunt in the case of Potočka zijavka, then there has been some other reason for human activities in the cave bear den. We should not think that bone points were just lost in the cave. Experimental work led me to the conclusion that much time and effort is needed to produce bone point. Bone points were too precious objects to be lost in the cave. Everybody would try to find lost bone points even if they were broken. It seems most probable that bone points were intentionally left in the cave either alone or attached to the wooden shafts of lances and arrows. Interestingly, indigenous people who live around the circumpolar north once used bone points, made of bear bones, as tips on hunting weapon. These tribes believed that the outsized power of the bear would be transmitted to the hunting weapon. They also believed that bears are distant ancestors or close relatives and that people are able to have common successors with bears.[17]

Potočka zijavka was surely perceived as shelter by Palaeolithic hunting communities. They were also aware that this cave was a cave bear den. To the traditional hunters hunting and shelter could represent two general principles, of man and of woman **(fig. 6)**. Many indigenous people all over the world explain hunting as an act of sexual interaction between the hunter and his prey. Piercing the prey with hunting weaponry and consequently bleeding is compared to the first sexual experience of a girl with a man. Therefore hunting does not mean exclusion from the cycle of life, rather it is an act to renew it. Hunting enables the circulation of living powers between people and animals. Animals offer their body and powers to people. On the other hand people ensure that the animal remains will be handled with respect. From the vast regions near the circumpolar north many bear burials with all their bones lying in an anatomical position are well known.[18]

At their visits to Potočka zijavka hunters set fires, played music on flutes made of cave bear bones and one of the members might wear the big cave bear jawbone hanging around her or his neck. Bone points or hunting armoury and bone flutes would play an important role in hunting rites and were intentionally left in the cave as part of the rite. Traces of red pigment, ochre and iron oxide in Potočka zijavka indicate its use during the ritual practices: painting the clothes, parts of a body or cave walls. Rites in the cave bear den must have been connected with these animals. Cave bears were born in caves, they used caves during their life and they died therein.

But not only the cave, the mountain of Olševa itself seems to have an important role in the whole setting. The mountain ridge is oriented in east – west direction, and the cave is oriented in south – north direction with the entrance opening to the south. Both orientations indicate that Mount Olševa with Potočka zijavka was ***axis mundi***, the centre of the world, for Palaeolithic communities. A position in front of the cave entrance gives one the impression of standing at the top of the world.

[16] Pacher 1997; Binford 1997.
[17] Binford 1997; Ingold 2003, 114-115.
[18] Kurtén 1976, 91; Zachrisson and Iregren 1974. Ingold 2003, 13, 113-115.

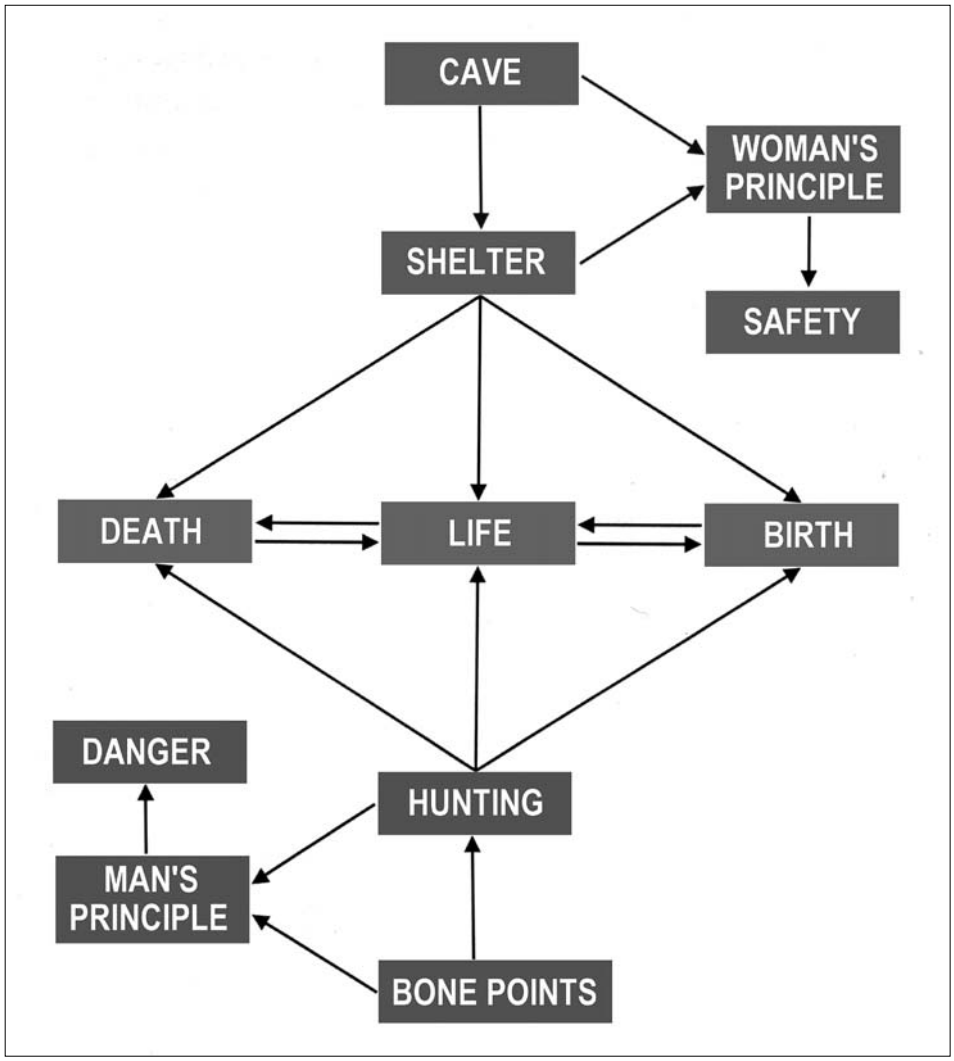

Figure 6. The meaning of the bone points and cave could find explanation in this scheme. Both items were constantly present in the everyday life of Palaeolithic communities.
Slika 6. Pomen koščenih konic in jame je mogoče pojasniti s to shemo. Oba pojma sta bila prisotna v vsakdanjem življenju paleolitskih skupnosti.

At higher symbolic level bone points could represent a link between **EARTH** and **SUN**, the two of three essential elements that contribute to the life on our planet (**fig. 7**). The third element, that was already mentioned, is **WATER** from ***The Raining Cave***. There is, thus, an indication for incorporation of animism into a geo-solar cosmological principle in the case of the Palaeolithic cave site Potočka zijavka. Otherwise said, we can observe the interplay of cave bear cult with the fertility cult and worshipping of **Earth**, **Sun** and **Water** at the same time.

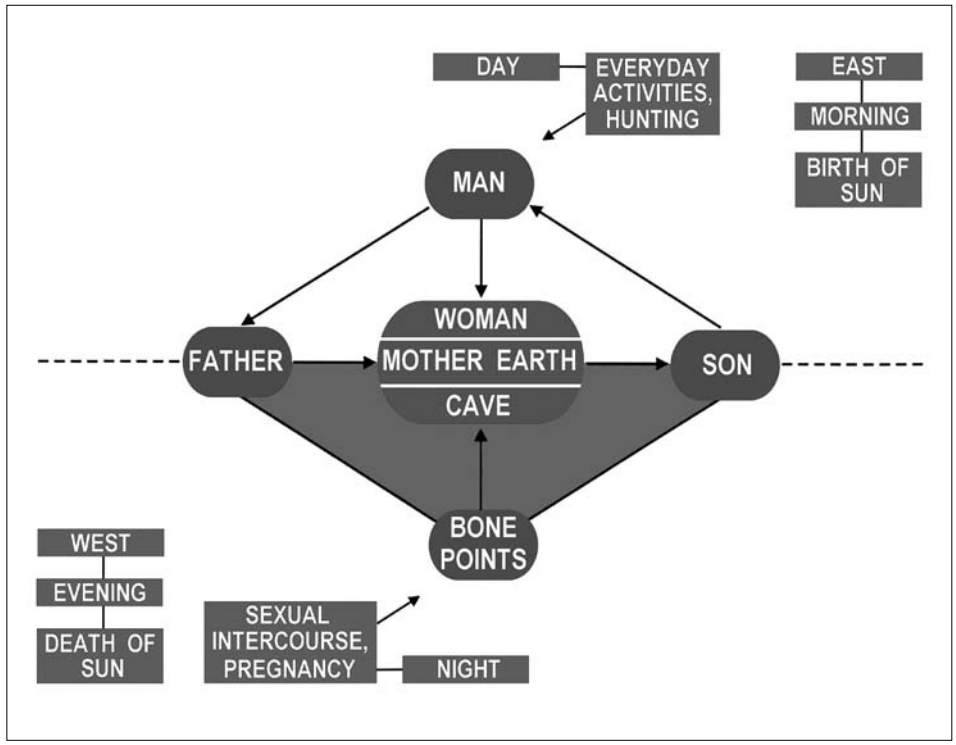

Figure 7. A slight recombination of the previous scheme leads directly towards a geo-solar cosmological principle. Potočka zijavka seems to be the axis mundi in the Ice Age.
Slika 7. Preobrazba prejšnje sheme nas vodi prav do Zemeljsko-Sončevega kozmološkega principa. Zdi se, da je Potočka zijavka bila axis mundi v ledeni dobi.

Slovene sanctuary

I was occupied with the mystery of the rock-bowl in Potočka zijavka for a long time. Oral tradition tells that in the summer sheep were hiding in the cave to avoid the sweltering heat. The sheep pasture on the top of Olševa has a long tradition that might be rooted in prehistoric times. The locals believe that shepherds had carved the rock-bowl in order to water the sheep. However, this conviction does not withstand critical judgement. The rock-bowl is far too small to water flocks of sheep. It is shallow, and it contains not more than a litre of water. If shepherds had intended to water the flock, then they would have needed to place a wooden drinking trough in the raining cave. For themselves shepherds would easier gather water with pots rather than from the rock-bowl. Traces indicate that the bowl was carved out with a metal chisel, most probably with an iron one. Thus the rock-bowl has wide time span of existence, lasting from the Iron Age until recent times.

Then, in the year 2010, two papers were published in *Studia Mythologica Slavica* 13, describing an old Slovene fertility rite.[19] This rite was still in practice in the early 19th century in the Slovene Karst region. It took place in the rock shelter of Triglavca near Divača each autumn after the buckwheat was harvested. The rite was led by a chief, a sort of holy

[19] Čok 2010; Placer 2010.

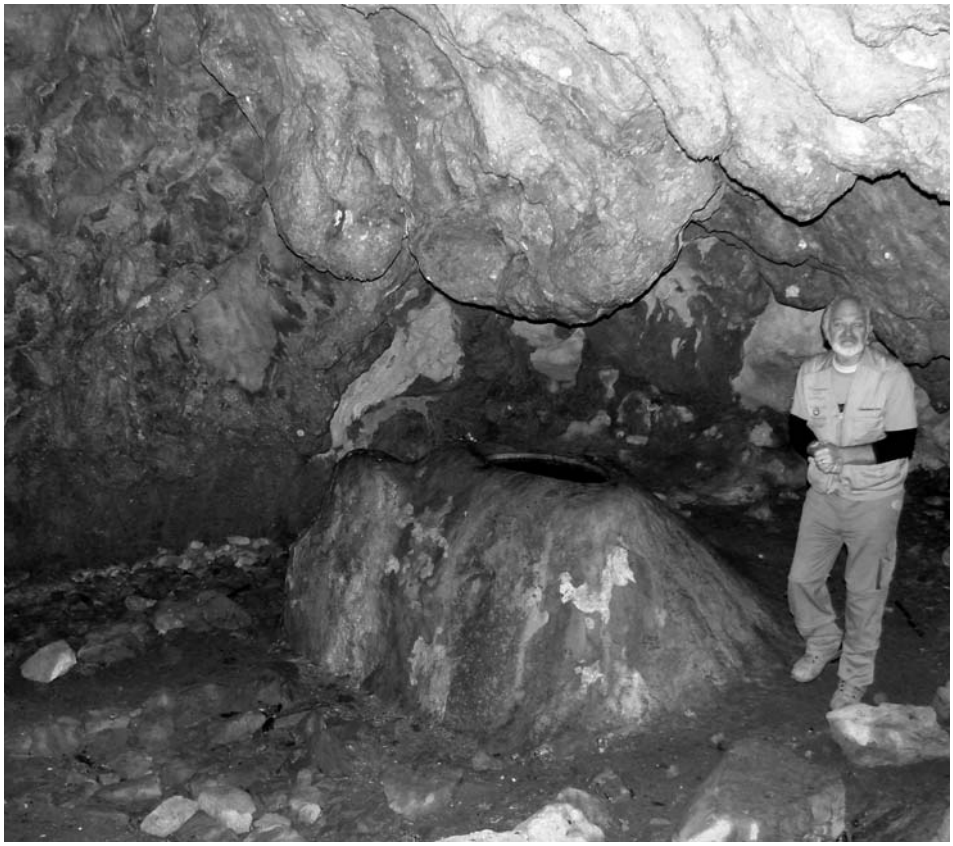

Figure 8. Triglavca rock-shelter near Divača village. In the centre of the small shelter stands a big stalagmite with a bowl full of water. Above the bowl hangs a stalactite that permanently supplies the bowl with water.
Slika 8. Jamsko zavetje Ttriglavca blizu vasi Divača. V sredini majhnega zavetja stoji velik stalagmit s skledo, polno vode. Nad skledo visi stalaktit, s katerega nenehno kaplja voda.

man, who was accompanied by four young priestesses. The event was performed secretly during the night. The catholic church has, namely, eagerly persecuted the old Slovene faith. The company entered the rock shelter and surrounded the elongated stalagmite with the hand-carved bowl full of water. Nearby the bowl another hole was drilled in the same stalagmite into which the torch handle was most probably inserted. The stalagmite formation is remarkably reminiscent of a vulva. The elongated stalactite above the stalagmite can be compared to a penis that supplies the bowl with dripping water **(fig. 8)**. The chief carried with him the seeds of three types of cereals: wheat, rye and buckwheat. When gathered around the rock-bowl the chief carefully laid the seeds into the water and began calling either the female mythological being *deva* or the divinity Deva (***deva*** (**fem.**) – a girl ready for wedding) to protect the crop on the fields in the forthcoming year from the evil female demon *mora*. Thereafter the company left the shelter and went quietly home. A few days later the chief carefully returned to the shelter during the day. Instead of cereals he already found sprouts in the bowl. He took the sprouts with him and planted them on the newly ploughed fields of the confidants, exclaiming: »Jari!« (»Let germinate!«).

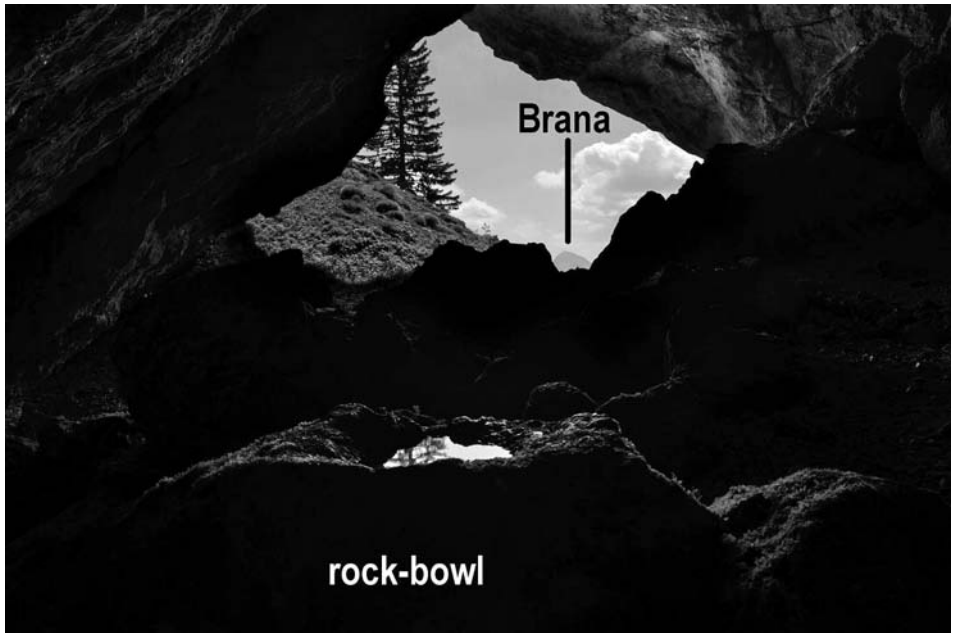

Figure 9. Standing behind the rock-bowl in Potočka zijavka, we can see the mighty Mount Brana far away .
Slika 9. Ko stojimo za skalno skledo v Potočki zijavki, lahko vidimo v daljavi mogočno goro Brana.

The ritual was most probably forcibly terminated in the mid 19th century. When the story came out first in 1967 and once again in the 1970's from two granddaughters of priestesses, the fear of disclosure of the old Slovene faith within a catholic milieu was still present. In order to prevent any harm to those people, the confidant Boris Čok kept this valuable historic information to himself until recently.

Although the real meaning of the rock-bowl in Potočka zijavka is unknown today, its function seems to be the same as in the case of the rock-bowl in Triglavca. The position of the rock-bowl itself in Potočka zijavka is unusual. It is situated near the eastern cave wall and is not easily seen while examining the cave. From that position the mountain Brana (**brana** (**fem.**) - harrow) on the other side of the Logarska valley dominates the centre of the cave entrance **(fig. 9)**.

What was just a suspicion in previous visits to the cave became evident one day after the midwinter solstice. On 22 December 2011, I climbed to the cave with the local Marko Slapnik, who took some pictures. The path was covered with 30–50 cm snow and sunshine was protruding through clouds. We arrived at the cave at 13.45 CET just a few minutes before the Sun became aligned vertically with Mount Brana. At the time of midwinter solstice the Sun is low enough to illuminate the eastern part of the cave entrance with the rock-bowl in the centre when slowly moving above the peak of Brana **(fig. 10)**. A harrow (**brana** - object or **Brana** - name) is as important a tool in agriculture as the plough. After ploughing and before sowing the fields have to be harrowed. In agricultural communities ploughing and harrowing is likened to the sexual act.[20] For

[20] Teržan 2001.

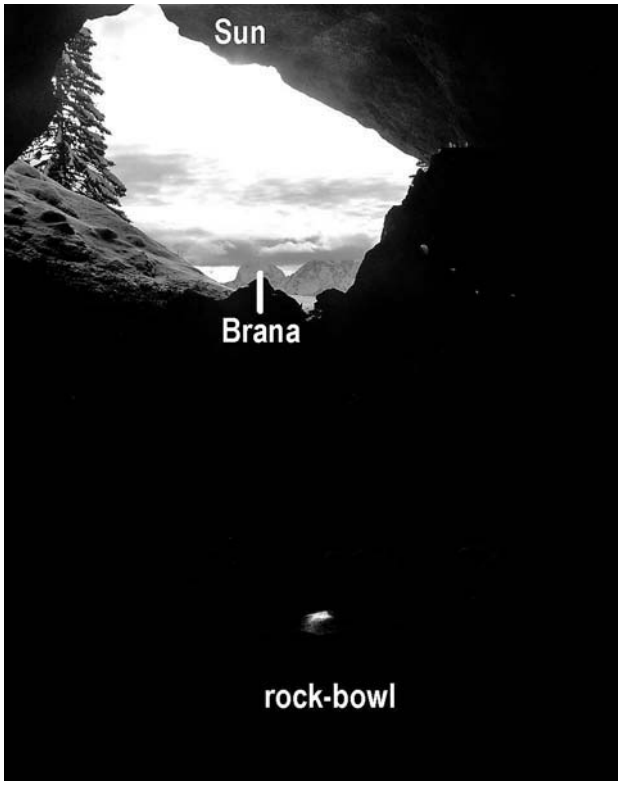

Figure 10. At the time of mid-winter solstice the rock-bowl, Mount Brana and the Sun are aligned. We see the reflection of the Sun from frozen water in rock-bowl.
Slika 10. V času zimskega sončnega obrata so skalna skleda, gora Brana in Sonce poravnani. Od površine zamrznjene vode v skalni skledi se odbija sončni žarek.

the fertility success in agriculture the Sun and plenty of water is needed. Potočka zijavka is ***The Raining Cave*** that is visited by the Sun each year at the time of the midwinter solstice. In that period of time the rock-bowl containing ice is directly illuminated by the Sun. After midwinter solstice the days become longer and longer, and soon ice in the cave will slowly begin to melt. The sunny illumination of ice in the rock-bowl could be an allegory for the starting of life anew.

It is not clear if the old Slovenes inherited the concept of the sacred landscape of Olševa and the cave sanctuary from the previous inhabitants together with the fertility rite. Although there is no archaeological or ethnological evidence for such heritage, it seems to me most probable. But for certain I do not think that there was a direct inheritance from the Palaeolithic times. Rather we should think about the continuity of *mental landscapes* that are shaped in the human mind by the complexity of life in particular landscapes: the same places in different times but with almost the same lifestyle result in the same or almost the same perception of these places.

The Christian sanctuary

When I was sitting in front of the cave in 2009, and enjoying the picturesque sight over the landscape around me, I remembered the local tale that long ago people were gathering white sinter from cave walls. The sinter from Potočka zijavka was used as a remedy for animals and even people took it sometimes. The locals named this sinter,

Figure 11. The church of the Holy Spirit was built in the 15th century, but underwent several renovations. Before raising the church, big white stones were standing on the top of the hill according to oral tradition.
Slika 11. Cerkev Svetega Duha je bila zgrajena v 15. stoletju, a je kasneje bila večkrat obnovljena. Pred izgradnjo cerkve so na vrhu hriba stali veliki beli kamni, kot pripoveduje ustno izročilo.

looking like a curd, Mary's milk. Though the name itself must have a symbolic meaning, the tale does not tell us more. After several hours just before descending, I was quite sure to recognize the presence of the Virgin Mary in the tale. The Virgin Mary could produce milk only after giving birth to Jesus Christ. But before that event the Holy Spirit was on the scene according to the Bible. Playing with the idea, I became aware of the real presence of the Holy Spirit in the vicinity of Potočka zijavka. At the foothills of Olševa there stands a church of the Holy Spirit, which is in direct eye contact with the cave itself (**fig. 11**).

The church of the Holy Spirit was built in the 15th Century on the same place where once big white stones were standing according to oral tradition. The spot with the stones was a sacred place to the locals, but later these stones became an allegory for the appearance of the white dove. Therefore the stones underwent the transformation into the church of the Holy Spirit. The modest inventory in the church consists of a gothic chalice, a bell with an inscription in gothic majuscule, and a wooden relief from the year 1425 showing the Holy Trinity.

The idea about the presence of the Virgin Mary in the mountain cave is indeed not something new. In 1483–1485 Leonardo da Vinci executed the painting of the Virgin Mary with her child, the infant St. John and an Angel in the rocky shelter. This picture was commissioned the Franciscan Confraternity in Milan in 1483, and is today on display in the Musée du Louvre known under the name ***The Virgin of the Rocks***. Leonardo painted also the second version of ***The Virgin of the Rocks*** in the period between 1495–1499 and 1506–1508, which is in the possession of the National Gallery in London. The most striking fact is that the rocky scenery on both paintings is reminiscent of the scene

as seen through the cave entrance of Potočka zijavka with the surrounding mountains and Logarska valley behind. The impressive waterfall, named Rinka, is a water source for the river Savinja, which runs through the Logarska valley. But instead of the valley, Leonardo depicted a broad river, looking like a valley, between the mountains. It seems almost as if the painter were standing at Potočka zijavka during execution of the two paintings.

Leonardo's depiction of ***The Virgin of the Rocks*** is a vivid reflection of the perception of the Virgin Mary at the time of the great discoveries of Columbus.[21] The sight through the rock shelter towards the river on both pictures might represent a »*vein of the most beautiful water*« (*vena di aqua bellissima*), a metaphorical image through which, in the 14th century, the Dominican Domenico Cavalca sought to convey the purity of the Virgin. Marian symbolism may also be seen in the rocky shelter itself. In the ***Song of Solomon*** **(2:14)**, Mary is described as a »*dove ... in the clefts of the rock*« (*columba in foraminibus petrae*) and »*in the cavities of walls*« (*in caverna maceriae*). The Virgin Mary was also considered to be »*a rock cleft not by human hand*« (*lapis sine manu caesus*; *lapis abscissus de monte*) and »*the exalted, untouched, crystalline mountain and the cave in the mountain*« (*montagna ecclesa, intatta, cristallina, cavita nella montagna*).[22] Marian epithets of this kind were also transferred to Christ himself, who was considered the Son of God born out of the rock, as the »*mountain hewn out of the mountain not by human hand*« (*mons de monte sine manu hominis excisus*). Thus the mountain, rock and cave were able to symbolize not only Mary, her virginity and thus the Christian paradox of virgin birth, but also Christ as the incarnation of God born out of the rock.

The final note

At one of the visits to Potočka zijavka in the year 2011, I was involved in longer conversation with the owner of the estate, where the church of the Holy Spirit is standing. He was complaining over the changing environment because of global warming. Once when winters were cold and abundant with snow, a huge icicle, looking like a pillar was formed during the winter at the cave entrance splitting it in two parts. On sunny days the icicle would reflect the sunshine far and wide. This natural occurrence must have looked impressive and it might be a vivid allegory of the visit of the Holy Spirit (sunshine reflection) to the Virgin Mary (the cave). Interestingly, the encounter of Holy Spirit with Virgin Mary can be easily compared with symbolism from the Palaeolithic times. It can also be seen as another expression for worshipping fertility and praising of **Earth**, **Sun** and **Water**.

I can only imagine how mighty must have looked the icicle in front of the cave in the last Ice Age more than 30 thousand years ago. But we can still admire hundreds of icy stalagmites at the cave entrance in early spring that can grow over 2 metres high and resemble phalli.

[21] Zöllner 2011, 64-76.
[22] Zöllner 2011, 67-76, 223-224.

Ice Age fertility rites: music, dancing and eroticism?

Slovenia

The cave site of Divje babe I is positioned on the northern slope of the Šebrelje plateau, and above the river Idrijca in western Slovenia. The Šebrelje plateau is part of the foothills in the most southeastern part of the Alps. The cave entrance is hidden in the forest and is thus not visible from the Idrija valley.

The first systematic excavations by Mitja Brodar ran at the cave entrance in 1978 and from 1980 to 1986. Ivan Turk began a new excavation campaign in 1989, which continued until 1999. He decided to excavate in the inner part of the cave with the new methods developed by him. More than 80 ESR and AMS 14C dates for all sedimentation levels were done. They showed a time span between 115,000 and 40,000 years before the present.[23]

Very rare but important finds indicate that people only occasionally visited the cave. Fragments of bone points were found in the deepest layers. A fragment of the earliest bone point was found in the 115,000-years-old layer, whilst the youngest bone points originate from the 40,000-years-old layer.[24] However the most interesting is a large fireplace from layer 8, that is around 60,000 years old. The Neanderthal bone flute was found nearby **(fig. 12)**.[25] In close proximity, two cave bear skulls were found together facing away from each other.[26] The male skull was oriented to the west, the female to the east. Both skulls were turned around on the crown of the head and were supported with smaller stones. The male skull has unusual symmetrical holes in both massive spurs behind the mandibular articular depression (*fovea articularis mandibulae*). The two holes were probably made for the purpose of strongly attaching or hanging the skull.

But what is the real context of the fireplace with the flute and two cave bear skulls nearby? The secret is to be found in the old Slovene name of the northern slope of Šebrelje plateau. The toponym ***Divje babe*** means ***Savage women*** in English. An incredible sight can be seen if one stands on the other side of the Idrija valley and looks towards Divje babe. A natural rock formation in the form of a large vulva is visible directly below the cave **(fig. 13)**. And this is exactly what the Neanderthals probably saw. The two skulls of adult cave bears are the most complete skulls in the cave. The female skull was oriented to the east, where the Earth gives birth to the Sun, whilst the male skull was oriented to the west, where the Sun goes down. Nearby the flute made from the thighbone of a young premature cave bear was found. The position of cave bear skulls indicates the same geo-solar cosmological pattern, as that previously defined in Potočka zijavka. The fireplace, two intentionally oriented cave bear skulls, and the flute were all together positioned in the womb. The rock formation beneath the cave entrance is visible only in winter when the trees are without leaves. The cave was not appropriate for living. It is almost without sunlight and it has tricky access, even dangerous due to the steep slope. Rare stone tools and fragments of bone points confirm this supposition.

[23] Turk 2007.
[24] Turk *et al.* 2001; Turk 2007, 159-165.
[25] Turk 1997; Kunej, Turk, 2000; Turk, Dimkaroski 2011. Tuniz *et al.* 2011.
[26] Turk 2003; Turk 2007, 338.

Figure 12. The original bone flute from Divje babe I (above) and the reconstruction of the flute by Ljuben Dimkaroski, the academy musician – trumpet player.
Slika 12. Originalna koščena piščal iz Divjih bab I (zgoraj) in rekonstrukcija piščali, ki jo je izdelal Ljuben Dimkaroski, akademski glasbenik – igralec trobente.

France

The most important region with Aurignacian rock art depictions in Europe is certainly the Dordogne in France. There are to be found many blocks of limestone with engraved pictograms. One of the best known sites with Aurignacian art is Grand Abri La Ferrassie near Les Eyezies-de-Tayac. In the sediments from the Lower Aurignacian more than 20 engraved blocks from rock fall were found. In the most cases sexual symbols in the form of *vulvae* and *phalli* were depicted on them. Such depictions from the Aurignacian are also known from Abri Castanet, Abri Blanchard, Abri Cellier in Tursac and from caves Chauvet and Cosquer.[27]

Upper Palaeolithic rock art in caves was a substantial part of rites. The presence of bone points in the caves, weather as objects or depicted as hunting armoury on cave walls, indicate a wish of Palaeolithic hunters after renewing the living world. The presence of hunting weapon in the caves, either as object or depicted on walls, must be considered as *phalli* in *vulvae*. In one of the passages in the cave of Niaux an arrow was depicted on an

[27] Clottes 2001; Clottes, Lewis-Williams 1996; Floss 2009; Le Guillou 2001.

Figure 13. During the winter the northern slope of Šebrelje plateau discloses the secret of its strange name, Savage women (Divje babe). Directly beneath the cave a huge vulva was formed out of the rocky slope by natural forces. The cave entrance is encircled.
Slika 13. Pozimi severno pobočje Šebreljske planote razkrije skrivnost njegovega imena – Divje babe. Iz skalnega pobočja tik pod jamskim vhodom so naravne sile izoblikovale velikansko vulvo. Jamski vhod je obkrožen.

elongated stalactite, resembling the *phalli*. The big rocky hill protruding from the earth at the nearby village of Niaux gives one the impression that the Mother Earth is close to giving birth.[28] Thus depicted animals and other significant human remains in such caves were actually positioned in the womb. Several beautifully ornamented bone points were found in the famous French cave of Lascaux.[29] In many cases simple projectiles were depicted over different animal species as in Niuax or Lascaux, for example.[30] Clottes and Lewis-Williams (1996) have connected cave rock art with trance and magic that occurs during shamanistic practice in ornamented caves. Music and dancing are a substantial part of shamanistic practice, so the presence of musical instruments in such caves should not surprise.

Germany

In the first place the oldest known Venus figurine from Hohle Fels, South Germany has to be mentioned.[31] The figurine, made of ivory, was found in 2008 on the base of an Aurignacian layer that was roughly dated with radiometric method AMS 14C to an age between 31,000 and 40,000 years. Until this discovery, there was an assumption that the tradition of making figurines with denotation of sexual parts of the body first appeared in Gravettian. This figurine is something special because of the explicit exaggeration of *vulvae* and breasts. In the same year the second surprising find from the lower Aurignacian layer came to the light. The flute made of bird bone was found in the same horizon

[28] Clottes 1997.
[29] Allain 1979.
[30] Clottes 1997; Leroi-Gourhan and Allain 1979.
[31] Conard 2009a.

as the Venus figurine and only 0.7m away.[32] The composition of both – Venus and the flute – indicates some ritual practice in Hohle Fels 30,000 – 40,000 years ago. Three flutes were also found in the Aurignacian layer of Geiβenklösterle, and are 32,000 to 36,800 years old.[33]

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[32] Conard 2009b.

[33] Münzel and Conard 2009.

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Potočka zijavka
Obredja plodnosti v *Deževni jami*

Boštjan Odar

Odkritje in najdbe

Potočka zijavka je eno od najbolj skrivnostnih paleolitskih jamskih najdišč v Evropi. Zijavka, ki leži na skrajnem zahodnem delu gore Olševe, je postala mednarodno znana leta 1928, ko je v njej začel raziskovati Srečko Brodar. Pred njim je v zijavki nepooblaščeno kopal Avstrijec slovenskega porekla J. C. Grosz in najdbe, predvsem ogromno kosti jamskega medveda, odnašal v Avstrijo **(sl. 1)**.

Srečko Brodar je kopanje nadaljeval v zadnjem delu jame, kjer kraljuje popolna tema in kjer je kopal tudi njegov predhodnik. Že po nekaj dneh so kopači poleg velike količine kosti jamskega medveda prinesli na svetlo koničasto izoblikovano kost. Brodar je v njej prepoznal človeški izdelek – koščeno konico. V popolni temi je bilo izkopanih 81 koščenih konic in dokumentirani dve zelo majhni ognjišči **(sl. 2)**. Kamenih orodij ne Grosz ne Brodar nista našla. V svetlem, vhodnem delu jame je bilo odkritih 17 velikih kurišč, ob katerih so bila raztresena kamena orodja in koščene konice. V debelih slojih jamskih usedlin je Brodar zaznal veliko drobcev rdečega barvila, okre, in večji kos železovega oksida. V ledeni dobi je bila Potočka zijavka medvedji brlog, saj kosti jamskega medveda predstavljajo več kot 99,9 % vseh živalskih kosti. Potočka zijavka je zelo mokra in blatna jama, ker v njej nenehoma kaplja voda z jamskega stropa. [1-3]

Koščene konice, ki so stare 32–36 tisoč let, so bile sestavni del lovskega orožja, sulic in puščic **(sl. 3)**. Konice so bile izdelane iz kosti jamskih medvedov, velikih in zelo nevarnih zveri. Iz čeljustnic jamskega medveda pa so ledenodobni obiskovalci izdelali nekaj piščali z eno ali več luknjami nad čeljustničnim kanalom **(sl. 4a)**. Nenavadno velika čeljustnica jamskega medveda z luknjo na zgornjem delu pa kaže, da je nekoč visela na vrvici **(sl. 4b)**.[4-12]

Zanimivo je dejstvo, da v jami ni bilo odkritih nobenih človekovih sledi iz mlajših obdobij, razen nenavadne skalne sklede, ki je vselej polna vode **(sl. 5)**. O tem, kdaj je bila skleda izdelana in kdo jo je naredil, ni podatka. Sledi v njej kažejo, da je bila skleda izklesana s kovinskim dletom, najverjetneje železnim. To bi pomenilo, da ima skalna skleda dolg časovni razpon obstoja, vsaj od železne dobe naprej.

Interpretacija

Ledenodobno svetišče

Brodar je domneval, da so paleolitski lovci pred 30 tisoč leti v jamo prihajali lovit jamskega medveda. Bodarjeva domneva pa je malo verjetna, saj so jamski medvedi živeli vsepovsod, tudi v nižinskem svetu. Neverjetno se zdi, da bi se lovci povzpeli do odmaknjene jame 1500 m visoko samo zaradi medveda in bi potem težki tovor – meso in kožuh nosili v dolino. Poleg tega danes vemo, da je v Potočki zijavki en jamski medved poginil

1-3

4-12

le na vsakih 50 let, pa še to povsem naravne smrti. Etnološki viri poročajo, da so lovci, opremljeni s sulicami ter loki in puščicami, le ob posebnih priložnostih uplenili medveda, ki ni bil težji od 190 kilogramov. Večji medvedi bi bili prenevarni. Odrasli jamski medvedi so tehtali bistveno več, samice okoli 300 kilogramov, samci pa več kot 500 kilogramov. Konice in piščali iz kosti jamskega medveda kažejo, da so ledenodobni ljudje imeli poseben odnos do teh mogočnih zveri. Zato tudi ni naključje, da so ljudje zahajali v brlog jamskega medveda. Ker teh zveri niso lovili, so bili obiski povezani z neko drugo dejavnostjo, ki se je ne da pojasniti z vsakdanjo praktičnostjo ali ekonomijo. V vhodnem delu jame je bilo odkritih 17 kurišč, v katerih ni bilo ožganih kosti jamskih medvedov, ki bi kazale na obilne pojedine. Ta ognjišča so potem imela povsem drugačno vlogo. Skupaj s piščalmi so bile koščene konice po vsej verjetnosti sestavni del obredja, v katerem so ljudje častili jamskega medveda. K obrednim praksam je sodila tudi poslikava oblek in teles. Poleg glasbe in plesa je bil osnovni element obredja tudi ogenj. [13-18]

Potočka zijavka je bila v ledeni dobi zavetišče najmogočnejših zveri v alpskem svetu in je na simbolni ravni verjetno predstavljala ženski princip. Lovske skupnosti, ki so jamo obiskovale, pa so lov, ki je zelo nevarna dejavnost, dojemale kot moški princip. Lov je pri mnogih prvobitnih ljudstvih po vsem svetu na simbolni ravni predstavljal ljubezenski akt med lovcem in plenom **(sl. 6)**. Ta ljudstva so enačila prebadanje plena z lovskim orožjem in posledično krvavitev s prvim spolnim odnosom mladenke. Zato ulov zanje ne pomeni prekinitve življenja, temveč njegovo obnovo.

V sistem obredja pa ni bila vključena le jama, temveč celotna gora Olševa, čigar greben poteka točno v smeri vzhod-zahod. Skupaj s Potočko zijavko, ki je usmerjena v smeri sever-jug, sta ledenodobnim lovcem po vsej verjetnosti predstavljala axis mundi – svetovno os **(sl. 7)**. Zatorej lahko v Potočki zijavki prepoznamo prepletanje čaščenja jamskega medveda z dvema osnovnima elementoma, ki sta potrebna za življenje: **ZEMLJA** in **SONCE**. Tretji element, ki ga prav tako nahajamo v ***Deževni jami***, je **VODA**. Prav ti trije elementi pa tvorijo koncept, ki je znan pod imenom **TROEDINOST**.

Slovensko svetišče

Dolgo časa se je zdelo, da skalna skleda iz Potočke zijavke predstavlja edinstven jamski primerek v Sloveniji. V letu 2010 pa sta bila V *Studii mithologici Slavici* 13 objavljena dva prispevka o skledi, ki je bila vklesana v stalagmit in se nahaja v jami Triglavca pri Divači **(sl. 8)**. Jama je bila še v prvi polovici 19. stoletja obredni prostor, kjer se je vsako jesen odvil **slovenski obred plodnosti**. Tudi v tem primeru je stalagmitna skleda, ki spominja na vulvo, vselej polna vode. Voda nenehno kaplja iz podolgovatega stalagmita nad skledo, ki bi ga lahko enačili s penisom. Obred, ki se je zaradi sovražnega odnosa katolicizma do starih običajev izvajal skrivoma ponoči, je vodil svečenik v spremstvu štirih deklet – svečenic. Svečenik je v jamo prinesel seme pšenice, rži in ajde. Vse tri vrste žita je skrbno položil v vodno skledo, nato pa so svečenice opravile svoj del obreda. Obredni kraj so nato skrivoma zapustili, svečenik pa se je čez nekaj dni vrnil in iz sklede pobral zelen šopek vzklitega zrnja. Tega je odnesel na njive zaupnikov in jih zagrebel v zemljo v spremstvu vzklika: »Jari!« [19-20]

Čeprav danes ni znan resničen pomen skalne sklede v Potočki zijavki, lahko njeno vlogo enačimo s tisto, ki jo je nekoč imela skleda v Triglavci pri Divači. Lega skalne sklede

13-18

19-20

v Potočki zijavki je izjemno nenavadna. Postavljena je namreč blizu vzhodne jamske stene in je povsem neopazna. Je pa iz tega položaja vidna izstopajoča gora Brana onkraj Logarske doline, ki jamski vhod Potočke zijavke navidezno deli na dva dela **(sl. 9)**. Kar je bila sprva domneva, je postalo očitno en dan po zimskem sončnem obratu. 22. decembra 2011 sva z Markom Slapnikom iz Solčave splezala do Potočke zijavke. Pot je bila posuta s 30–50 centimetri snega in sončni žarki so se prebijali skozi oblake. K jami sva dospela ob 13.45, le nekaj minut preden je bilo sonce navpično poravnano z goro Brana. V času okoli zimskega sončnega obrata je sonce dovolj nizko, da izpod svoda jamskega vhoda osvetljuje vhodni del jame neposredno. Ko je sonce navpično nad Brano, je osvetljen vzhodni del jame s skalno skledo v središču **(sl. 10)**. Brana je tako pomembno poljedelsko orodje kot ralo. Po oranju in pred setvijo se polje pobrana. Poljedelske skupnosti oranje in brananje na simbolni ravni primerjajo s spolnim odnosom. Za rodovitnost v poljedelstvu je potrebno sonce in obilo vode. Potočka zijavka je ***Deževna jama***, ki jo obišče sonce vsako leto v obdobju zimskega sončnega obrata. V tem času je skalna skleda, ki vsebuje led, neposredno obsijana s soncem. Po zimskem sončnem obratu postajajo dnevi vse daljši in kmalu se bo začel led v jami taliti. Sončna osvetlitev ledu v skalni skledi je lahko alegorija za ponovni začetek življenja.

Krščansko svetišče

Leta 2009 sem ob slikovitem razgledu izpred Potočke zijavke premišljal o tem, da so nekoč domačini strgali z jamskih sten belo sigo. Sigo iz Potočke zijavke so uporabljali kot zdravilo za živali in včasih so jo zaužili tudi ljudje. Domačini so to sigo, ki je podobna skuti, imenovali Marijino mleko. Čeprav ima poimenovanje simbolni pomen, ustno izročilo o tem molči. Po nekaj urah, tik preden sem odšel v dolino, sem bil povsem prepričan, da se za poimenovanjem skriva Devica Marija. Devica Marija je mogla proizvajati mleko le po rojstvu Jezusa Kristusa. A pred tem dogodkom nastopi v zgodbi Sveti Duh, kot poroča Biblija. Posvetilo se mi je, da se Sveti Duh resnično nahaja v neposredni bližini Potočke zijavke. Ob vznožju Olševe namreč stoji cerkev Svetega Duha, od koder se odlično vidi Potočka zijavka **(sl. 11)**. Cerkev je bila zgrajena v 15. stoletju na mestu, kjer so predhodno stali veliki beli kamni, kot pravi ustno izročilo. Ta prostor je bil za domačine sveti kraj, kasneje pa so kamni postali alegorija za pojav belega goloba. Zato so beli kamni doživeli preobrazbo v cerkev Svetega Duha. Skromno notranjost sestavljajo gotski kelih, zvon z napisom v gotski majuskuli in leseni reliefi leta 1425, ki upodablja Sveto Trojico.

Ideja o prisotnosti Device Marije v gorski jami v resnici ni nekaj novega. V letih 1483–1485 je Leonardo da Vinci naslikal Devico Marijo z majhnima Jezusom in svetim Janezom ter z Angelom v skalnem zavetju. Sliko je naročila Frančiškanska bratovščina iz Milana leta 1483, danes pa je slika, znana pod imenom ***The Virgin of the Rocks*** (***Skalna Devica***) na ogled v Musée du Louvre. Leonardo je naslikal še drugo inačico ***Skalne Device*** v obdobju med leti 1495–1499 in 1506–1508. Slika danes krasi National Gallery v Londonu.

Najbolj bode v oči dejstvo, da je celotno okolje, v katero so postavljene biblijske osebe, skoraj identično s Potočko zijavko in z razgledom po okolici. Zdi se, kot da bi Leonardo v času nastajanja ***Skalne Device*** stal pred vhodom v Potočko zijavko. Le da je Logarsko dolino, skozi katero teče Savinja, zamenjal z velikansko reko med gorskimi vršaci. Leonardovi sliki v celoti odsevata dojemanje Device Marije v času velikih Ko-

lumbovih odkritij. Pogled skozi skalno zavetišče na reko predstavlja »*žilo najlepše reke*«. Gre za metaforo iz 14. stoletja, s katero je dominikanec Domenico Cavalca poskušal prikazati čistost Device. Simbol Marije je moč zaznati tudi v skalnem zavetju. V Salomonovi pesmi (2:14) je Marija predstavljena kot »*golobica ... v skalni jami*« in »*v stenskih jamah*«. Devica Marija je bila prikazana tudi kot »*skala, ki ni odcepljena s človeško roko*« ali »*vzvišena, nedotaknjena kristalna gora in jama v gori*«. Takšno prikazovanje Marije je bilo preneseno tudi na Jezusa. Sin Boga je bil rojen iz skale, kot »*gora, iztesana iz gore, ne s človeško roko*«. Gora, skala in jama torej niso le simbol Marije, njene nedolžnosti in posledično krščanskega paradoksa o deviškem rojstvu. Ti elementi simbolizirajo tudi Jezusa kot inkarnacijo Boga, rojenega iz skale. [20-22]

Ledenodobni obredi plodnosti: glasba, ples in erotika?

Slovenija

Jamsko najdišče Divje babe I se nahaja na severnem pobočju Šebreljske planote nad reko Idrijo v zahodni Sloveniji. Jamski vhod je obdan z gozdom in zato ni viden iz doline Idrijce. Arheološke raziskave v Divjih babah I so potekale med leti 1978 in 1999, ki sta jih vodila Mitja Brodar (1978–1986) in Ivan Turk (1989–1999). Najstarejše jamske usedline so nastajale pred več kot 115 tisoč leti, najmlajše pa so se odložile pred 40 tisoč leti. Izjemno redke, a pomembne najdbe kažejo na občasno prisotnost ljudi v jami. Najstarejši ostanek koščene konice izhaja iz približno 115 tisoč let stare plasti, najmlajše koščene konice pa so stare 40 tisoč let. Človeške sledi, ki prihajajo iz plasti 8, pa so izjemne, saj spreminjajo podobo neandertalcev v temeljih. V plasti 8, ki je stara približno 60 tisoč let, se je nahajalo večje kurišče, ob katerem je ležala koščena piščal. Piščal je narejena iz stegnenice jamskega medveda, dve leti starega mladiča **(sl. 12)**. V bližini sta ležali na teme obrnjeni lobanji jamskih medvedov, ki sta pripadali odraslima samcu in samici. Lobanja samice je bila usmerjena točno proti vzhodu, lobanja samca pa točno proti zahodu. Obe lobanji sta bili podprti z manjšimi kamni. Kakšen bi lahko bil pomen teh najdb?

Odgovor se skriva v samem imenu severnega pobočja Šebreljske planote – ***Divje babe***. Če z druge strani reke Idrijce od daleč opazujemo severno pobočje v zimskem času, ko so drevesa brez listja, se nam prikaže neverjetna podoba: neposredno pod jamskim vhodom zagledamo iz skale izoblikovano vulvo izjemnih razsežnosti **(sl. 13)**. In prav to so verjetno videli tudi neandertalci. Omenjene najdbe so bile odložene v maternico Zemlje. Jama ni bila primerna za življenje, saj je jamski vhod usmerjen na sever in je jama skoraj brez svetlobe. Dostop do jame iz doline Idrijce pa je zaradi strmine zelo težaven. [23-26]

Francija

Francoska regija Dordogne je ena najpomembnejših regij z jamsko umetnostjo v Evropi. Raziskovalci so v začetku 20. stoletja odkrivali številne piktograme, vgravirane v skale. Tako so na skalnih blokih iz spodmola La Ferrassie odkrili upodobitve falusov in vulv, ki sodijo v aurignaciensko obdobje (starost 37–32 tisoč let). Tovrstne upodobitve so znane še iz drugih spodmolov (Castanet, Blanchard, Cellier in Tursac) in jam (Chauvet in Cosquer).

20-22

23-26

Mlajšepaleolitska skalna umetnost v jamah je bila sestavni del obredov. Prisotnost konic v jamah, ali kot samostojni predmet ali kot upodobitev lovskega orožja, nakazuje željo paleolitskih lovcev po prenovi živega sveta. Prisotnost lovskega orožja smemo primerjati s falusi v vulvah, torej spolni akt. V enem od prehodov v jami Niaux je puščica naslikana na podolgovatem stalaktitu, ki spominja na falus. Velik skalnat hrib, ki se dviguje nad vasico Niaux, daje vtis, da bo Mati Zemlja vsak hip rodila. Živali v jamskem sistemu Niaux so torej upodobljene v maternici. Več lepo okrašenih koščenih konic je bilo najdenih v znameniti jami Lascaux. V mnogih primerih so konice ali lovsko orožje narisane čez različne živali, kot v primeru jam Lascaux in Niaux. Raziskovalca Clottes in Lewis-Williams sta povezala skalno umetnost s transom in magijo, ki se odvijata med šamansko prakso v okrašenih jamah. Glasba in ples sta sestavni del šamanizma, zato prisotnost glasbil v jamah ne sme presenečati. [27-30]

Nemčija

Na prvem mestu je potrebno omeniti doslej najstarejši znani kipec paleolitske Venere iz jame Fels v južni Nemčiji. Venerin kipec z izrazito poudarjenim oprsjem in vulvo je izrezljan iz slonovine in sodi nekam v zelo širok časovni razpon med 31 in 40 tisoč let, torej v obdobje aurignacien. Do odkritja v letu 2008 so bili Venerini kipci pripisani obdobju gravetien, ki je mlajše od 30 tisoč let. Še isto leto so v neposredni bližini Venere arheologi našli piščal, narejeno iz ptičje stegnenice. Sklop Venere in piščali nakazuje na možnost, da so se v jami Fels pred 30–40 tisočletji izvajali obredi plodnosti. Tri piščali, ki so stare 32–36 tisoč let, so bile najdene prav tako v aurignacienskih plasteh v jami Geiβenklösterle. [31-33]

27-30

31-33