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THE PRE–ENLIGHTENMENT FORMATION OF THE EMERGING MODERN SCIENTIFIC EPISTEME AND BUILDING COMMUNITY FROM MYTHICAL DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT

The pre-Enlightenment scholars from the Land of Carniola explored the region, its past, sociality and nature in order to give it praise. They aimed to produce knowledge based on rational reasoning in accordance with the emerging modern scientific episteme. They encountered mythical discourse which they attempted to overcome, yet, as the author of this article argues, they also drew from mythical discourse. Through case studies the author shows how ancient myths played a role in consolidating identity and building community. She argues that pre-Enlightenment scholars built collective memory in reference to the mythological establishment of the city of Ljubljana.

Keywords: pre-Enlightenment, Janez Vajkard Valvasor, Janez Ludvik Schönleben, mythical discourse, collective memory, modern scientific episteme, Emona, Ljubljana, Land of Carniola

LA FORMAZIONE PRE-ILLUMINISTICA DELL'EMERGENTE EPISTEME SCIENTIFICA MODERNA E LA COSTRUZIONE DELLA COMUNITÀ PARTENDO DA UN DISCORSO MITICO

SINTESI

Gli studiosi pre-illuministi dell'era dell'antica regione di Carniola esplorarono le sue terre, il suo passato, la sua socialità e la sua natura al fine di esaltarla e con l'obiettivo di produrre un corpo di conoscenza basato sul ragionamento razionale, in accordo con l'emergente episteme scientifica moderna. Nelle loro ricerche si imbatterono nel discorso mitico, che non solo cercavano di superare, ma da cui, come sostenuto da questo articolo, attingevano anche. Difatti, l'autrice dell'articolo illustra, attraverso casi di studio, il ruolo che gli antichi miti ebbero nel consolidamento dell'identità e nella costruzione della

comunità, sostenendo che gli studiosi pre-illuministi costruirono una memoria collettiva legata alla fondazione mitologica della città di Lubiana.

Parole chiave: pre-illuminismo, Johann Weichart Valvasor, Johann Ludwig Schönleben, discorso mitico, memoria collettiva, episteme scientifica moderna, Emona, Lubiana, Carniola

INTRODUCTION: THE FUNCTIONING OF MYTHICAL DISCOURSE[1]

The purpose of this paper is to show through case studies how ancient myths played a role in consolidating identity and building community in the pre-Enlightenment era. Myths played an important political role. In general, it does not make much sense to approach myths with the question of whether the events described in the myth actually happened, or whether the myth is therefore true with regard to reality, external to the discursive reality. Accordingly, here too the objective is not to establish the division between true and false. This question, which is related to belief in the reality of the myth, is not an appropriate question even in relation to classical mythical discourses. Instead of questioning the "truthfulness" of mythical discourse, Michel Foucault rather asked, what is this "will to truth," which crossed so many centuries of our history, and what type of division governs our "will to know." He ascertained that what takes shape is "a system of exclusion, a historical, modifiable, and institutionally constraining system" (Foucault, 1981, 54), a discourse which is governed by a set of rules, systems and procedures. The "order of discourse" is not only what was thought or said per se, but comprises the discursive rules and categories that are a constituent part of discourse and of knowledge: "in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality" (Foucault, 1981, 52). Accordingly, for the Greek poets from the sixth century BC, the true discourse was the one "to which one had to submit because it ruled, […] the discourse which in prophesying the future not only announced what was going to happen but helped to make it happen, carrying men's minds along with it and thus weaving itself into the fabric of destiny" (Foucault, 1981, 54). The "will to truth" is a system of exclusion, which requires "an institutional support: it is both reinforced and renewed by whole strata

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of practices, such as pedagogy, […] the system of books, publishing, libraries; learned societies in the past and laboratories now" (Foucault, 1981, 55).

Following Foucault's conclusions about the order of discourse, as well as during a friendly discussion with Foucault, Paul Veyne formulated a research question: did the Greeks believe in their myths? With his research, he showed that belief in a certain claim or "truth," which is brought, for example, by the authority of a tradition, but in which we cannot believe on the basis of a rational explanation, is not as unambiguous as we may sometimes easily imagine. Veyne decided that instead of "beliefs" he would talk about "truths." "Realities" themselves are "imagination." "People do not find the truth: they make it, just as they make their history" (Veyne, 1998, 9). The Greeks knew that poets "lie," it is only necessary, as Plutarch suggested, "to purify the myth with reason" (Veyne, 1998, 11). In myth, according to this belief, there is a historical source that must be deciphered because "mythic tradition conveys an authentic core that has been surrounded by legends over the centuries; only the legends, not the core, make problems" (Veyne, 1998, 11, 29). "If only we could get what belongs to myth to submit to reason, after it has purified it and thus assumed the appearance of history," Plutarch deliberates and adds: "But when *mythical* will boldly resist credibility and will not be able to reconcile with probability, we will ask listeners for leniency and patience in listening to these old stories" (Detienne, 2008, 117).

Thucydides, however, added important caveats about oral tradition and the order of myth in relation to memory. Using the example of the Peloponnesian War, he reflected upon acting on the basis of power, and concluded that a surprised, defenseless opponent could only submit to the law of the victor, locked up in silence and forever imprisoned. The conceptual apparatus of memory, adapted to the present without archives, seems to operate in the same field as oral tradition.[2] The ear is not reliable and the mouth is its patron. The memory has flaws, blank sheets and neither can it create an accurate report. As an example Thucydides cites the speeches given by one or the other either just before or during the war – it is difficult to remember the exact text of the speeches (Datienne, 2008, 117–118). Memory is fallible, weak and deceptive: it selects, interprets and reconstructs. In an accident, the memory is even weaker. Then there is also time at work, through which apodictic opinions, which are unverifiable facts, gradually become definitive myths. When poets begin to sing about events and embellish them in order to glorify them, and when logographers string together unverifiable facts to please the listener more than the truth, what can no longer be believed becomes completely incredible (Detienne, 2008, 117–123). Not only improbability, Marcel Detienne also points out that myths often contain dirty, wild, disgusting and repulsive content (Detienne, 2008, 18–19).

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2   At this point, we can understand this criticism of the unreliability of memory in the absence of written sources in such a way that it approaches myth, because for the Greeks "to know from telling" means to know from myth (Veyne, 1998, 11); where the oral tradition contains both historical data and additions: "The criticism of Pausanias, Aristotle and even Herodotus is that they see in the myth the oral tradition, a historical source that needs to be criticized" (Veyne, 1998, 29).

Mythical discourse is constructed to meet the needs of society. It is real in the sense of its embeddedness in society and its threefold temporal embeddedness: the connection with the past, the tradition from which it draws and the contents to which it relates, the present in which it functions constitutively, and the future, where it has actual effects on the life of the community.

When the pre-Enlightenment scholars from the Land of Carniola explored the region, they aimed to produce knowledge based on rational reasoning, in accordance with the emerging modern scientific episteme. Their goal was to present the history of the region, its social and natural features in order to praise the land and bolster its political importance. They encountered mythological discourse, however, which they aimed to overcome. Although they aimed to purify myth with reason, they also built it into their knowledge production, as well as making good political use of the ancient mythology related to the region. When Janez Vajkard Valvasor (Johann Weichard Valvasor, Freiherr zu Galleneck und Neudorff, Herr zu Wagensperg und Liechtenberg, 1641–1693) explored the karst natural phenomena, he also encountered mythical explanations which he mocked, yet at the same time he paid attention to them and translated them into the emerging scientifically rational explanation.

THE DRAGON BECOMES PROTEUS ANGUINUS AND FINALLY A STATE SYMBOL

Many folk tales tell of the frightening dragons that live in the mountains of Slovenia. A dragon from the underground cave of Menina Planina in Styria was believed to be the cause of much strife for the people of Bočna as the Dreta River would flood when the dragon opened its mouth (cf. Zupanc, 1960). The dragon from Žirovski Vrh (Žiri in the Upper Carniola) was said to be the enchanted lord of the castle – under a spell which caused the heavy flooding of the Sora River – and was still waiting to be released from the cave (until which time he frightens children) (cf. Občina Žiri, 2022). Another tale recounts how a bandit was given the choice between a death sentence and a visit to the Huda Luknja cave in Peca, Carinthia. He chose to go to the bottom of the cave where he met the dragon and was only just rescued from its clutches (cf. Brenkova 1992, 31–32).

Enlightenment doctrine, which demanded a rational explanation, in principle placed itself in epistemological opposition to mythical thought. This doctrine was also already followed by a group of intellectuals working in Ljubljana during the Baroque era before the Enlightenment and before the founding of the *Academia operosorum Labacensium*, which was the first scientific academy in Ljubljana. It was founded according to the model of the Italian academies in 1693, that is precisely in the year, when Janez Vajkard Valvasor (Johann Weichard Valvasor, Freiherr zu Galleneck und Neudorff, Herr zu Wagensperg und Liechtenberg, 1641–1693) passed away. Valvasor aimed to scientifically study the intermittent Cerknica Lake. Based on this research, the results of which were published in his encyclopedic work *The Glory*

of the Duchy of Carniola (first published in German as *Die Ehre dess Hertzogthums Crain*, Nürnberg, 1689) he became a member of the Royal Society, which gathered the world's best scholars.

While Valvasor was conducting field research, he searched for water stream called Bela in a deep valley. The intermittent spring does not flow constantly, but only once at night at about midnight and once at about nine in the morning. At those times, the water only runs for about fifteen minutes. Valvasor wanted to try the water the day he was there, but the hole had been plugged following a rockslide caused by digging a tufa nearby for the vault of the Vrhnika's church. Valvasor was not equipped with suitable tools, but nevertheless tried to thrust a pole among the rocks, but there was no water. "This raised a great doubt in me about the truth of what I was told," he wrote (Valvasor, 1977, 95). Valvasor was told by the locals that the hole had only been plugged for two years. They themselves, when they were grazing cattle and the sun was hot, "stirred up and irritated the water in this way, that they poked into the hole with a stick or a pole, howled and shouted; then the water appeared and flowed at once, but was completely white" (Valvasor, 1977, 95). They gave it to cattle to drink. It is said to be healthy to drink and to cure scabby and itchy livestock if they were washed in it. Valvasor asked why they would not unplug the hole and use the water. They replied that no one dared, for they were sure that there were dragons in that mountain. "Surely there is a dragon inside – said the simple people – which could not get out because the hole was too small; but if they thrusted and stirred with the pole, the dragon would outrage and foam" (Valvasor, 1977, 95). A farmer explained to Valvasor why the water runs every night and every day for a good quarter of an hour: "I see that you are not educated enough if you do not know this, when you already know that the dragon is inside. The reason is this: There is a well where the dragon lies; when the water accumulates and becomes so high that the dragon has too much, he pours it out" (Valvasor, 1977, 95). Valvasor could hardly hold back his laughter, nonetheless he wrote in the book that he was astonished that such a rough peasant, who could neither read nor write, had enough "salt" (intellect) to state something completely wrong and empty, and at the same time bright and clever enough for such an uncouth fellow. In his quest for a scientifically rational explanation of natural phenomena, Valvasor, as a scholar, mocked the uneducated countryman. But at the same time, he understood that his mythical thinking also had its own internal logic for the formation of knowledge and was consistent in its rationalization.

It is understandable that Valvasor, in accordance with the requirements of the emerging modern scientific epistemology which he himself anticipated, called on the farmer to present evidence. He asked him how he knew there was a dragon in the mountain. The peasant replied that he himself had already seen three; two years ago, a young dragon came out of that hole, and then the hole was filled up, because the rocks burst and fell from the hill. The farmer even referred to witnesses, and confirmed, wrote Valvasor, the old proverb: "no lie is so shameless as to lack a

witness" (Valvasor, 1977, 96).[3] The story was then confirmed by the postman Hoff-mann from Vrhnika, who took the young dragon home, where it was seen by many other people. "Although I considered all this to be a myth – because it is nothing else – and it would have been easier to convince myself that a worm had nested in the brain of this plow philosopher than the dragon in the aforementioned hole, I nevertheless sent for the postman as soon as I arrived in Vrhnika" (Valvasor, 1977, 96). Valvasor concluded: "it turned out, as I had already conjectured myself: that the alleged dragon was barely a foot long and resembled a lizard. In short, it was a kind of worm and vermin […]. And simple folk want to create a dragon out of it, by all means!" (Valvasor, 1977, 96).

Then, in the same year 1684, when Valvasor discovered the spring of the Bela stream, the peasants, following his instructions, removed the rocks and large stones to reach the hole about a foot in size. He poked into it himself with a pole, snarling and yelling at the same time, until the water suddenly rushed up to his astonishment. It was white and frothy. Valvasor then offered a "scientific" explanation of the "natural wonder," as he called it:

> The hole does not go straight into the rock or rocky hill, but is slightly inclined, about 22 degrees. From the very beginning I was careful whether I might have reached the water with the pole; so I quickly pulled it out, and it was completely dry. As the water could not be traced in any way, it occurred to me that the cause must be the dilution or rarefaction of the air, which is produced by motus or impetus, namely, a rushing, strong and violent movement, so that the water can also be pulled out by growling and shouting; and the water runs through a siphon or strainer in the same way as I will explain in more detail below at lake Cerknica (Valvasor, 1977, 96).

In Valvasor's explanation of the phenomenon, the dragon as the least probable element for the modern episteme is removed and replaced by an explanation that seeks to rely on the physical laws of nature. However, the lack of scientific knowledge, which was just emerging, is obvious, and even today Valvasor's "scientific" knowledge in some cases does not seem essentially different from the one he had mocked, as for instance the idea that the water can be pulled out by growling and shouting, which he actually took over from the peasant and which he also did himself, now seems humorous.

Valvasor's writing about the dragon creature from the mountain found by locals, is believed to be the first mention of *Proteus anguinus*. The first scientific description and the name *Proteus anguinus* were given by Joseph Nicolai Laurenti in 1768. The first anatomical examination was conducted not much later by Carl Franz Anton Ritter von Schreibers, in Vienna, to whom the specimens were sent by the Slovenian Enlightenment scholar, Žiga Zois. In 1801 Schreibers presented the species to the Royal Society. The scientific explanation of natural phenomena banished the dragons from the mountains and waters. The species was first scientifically discovered

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3   Latin: "nullum mendacium tam est impudens, ut teste careat."

Fig. 1: Primož Pislak and Dragan Živadinov, Patch for Slovenian Space Agency with Proteus anguinus, 2000 (Photo archive: DELAK Institute). This use shows that today, Proteus anguinus is a signifier of Slovenia.

in Slovenia, where it was also most often found and most studied. Further scientific research also proved that it only lives in an unpolluted karst environment. In reference to these facts, *Proteus anguinus* has gradually become a hallmark of Slovenia's natural heritage. Today, it represents the natural beauty of the country and of Slovenia's pristine nature. Its usefulness now applies mostly to touristic objectives and political goals – it is the hallmark for a mountainous unpolluted country. Linked to that, and also because of its rarity, it is also a national signifier. Furthermore, it serves political strategies to promote the protection of natural heritage and a sustainable economy.

THE MYTHOLOGICAL ESTABLISHMENT OF ÆMONA

The founding of today's city of Ljubljana has mythological origins. It is connected with the ancient story of the Argonauts. The story is mythological. Here, the two constituent terms of the concept of mythology are significant: mythos and logos. If the first refers primarily to oral tradition, the second is related mostly to rational thinking. The mythological founding of the city still causes embarrassment to researchers regarding the question of whether it is a myth or history, although it is also evident that the mythological establishment is accepted as a collective memory: "'Mythical beginnings' – which may be invented at any time and for any reason – are, so to speak, the irrational side of history: not yet history proper. The 'ancient history' of the Nauportus–Emona region is closely connected with the story of the return journey of the Argonauts" (Šašel Kos, 2006, 13).

Fig. 2: Charles de La Fosse, Jason and the Argonauts Arriving at Colchis, *circa 1672. The painting depicts a scene from Appolonius Rhodius' epic poem* Argonautica, *which was written specifically for Ptolemaic Alexandria, but which has long been a resource for other dynasties seeking to illustrate their power and ambitions, as well as it was a source for the ancient and baroque historians, when writing about the establishment of Emona. The painting is located in the Château de Versailles (Wikimedia Commons).*
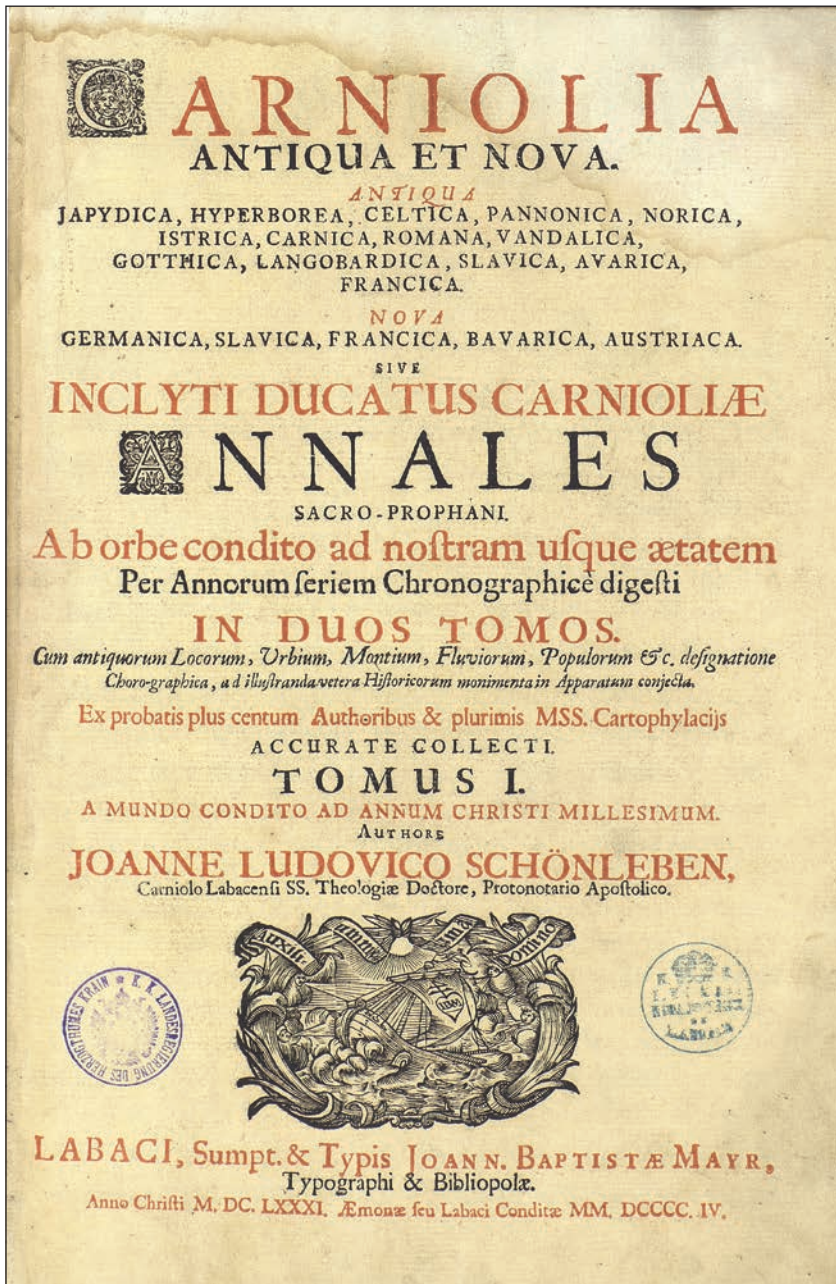
Fig. 3: Janez Ludvik Schönleben, Carniolia antiqua et nova, *1681. The first historical work on the ancient history of Carniola (National and University Library of Slovenia).*

Fig. 4: Janez Vajkard Valvasor, The Argonauts are Building Emona*, 1689 (Valvasor, 2009–2013, Part 4, 9) (National and University Library of Slovenia).*

In 1680–1681 Janez Ludvik Schönleben (1618–1681), the first historian from the Land of Carniola, published his best and most important historical work Carniola antiqua et nova,[4] in which he described the ancient past of Carniola.

The main goal of his historiographical research was the glorification of the Carniolan region, the Habsburg ruling house, the birthplace of Ljubljana (with the work of Aemon vindicata)[5] and noble Carniolan families (Deželak Trojar, 2017, 256). According to Schönleben's findings, the city of Emona, today Ljubljana, was founded in 1222 BC (Schönleben, 1681, 45). In his historiographic research of ancient history, Schönleben referred to various ancient historiographers such as Pliny, Strabo, Tacitus, Ptolemy and others (Deželak Trojar, 2017, 260), and he had no reservations about using Greek mythology – when writing about the founding of the city of Emona, the central role was played by the

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4   The complete title is: *Carniolia antiqua et nova: antiqua Japydica, Hyperborea, Celtica, Pannonica, Norica, Istrica, Carnica, Romana, Vandalica, Gotthica, Langobardica, Slavica, Avarica, Francica. nova Germanica, Slavica, Francica, Bavarica, Austriaca: sive inclyti Ducatus Carnioliae annales sacro-prophani. Ab orbe condito ad nostram usque aetatem per annorum seriem Chronographice digesti in duos tomo.*

5   *This is reprinted in the second part of the second chapter of the first volume of Carniola 's work antiqua et nova.*

epic poem *Argonautica* by Apollonius of Rhodes (Weiss, 2021, 88). Schönleben directly referred to the historian Sozomenus the Greek and Zosimus when he connected the founding of Æmona with the sailing of the ship Argo along the Danube, Sava and Ljubljanica to the city of Nauportus, today Vrhnika, where the Argonauts, fleeing from the Colchians with the stolen golden fleece and Medea, spent a winter (Schönleben, 1681, 45, 46). Jason is said to have gathered the scattered inhabitants of Iapodia in 1223 and founded the city of Emona the following year.

Janez Vajkard Valvasor, who brought knowledge on the organization of water systems in the Ljubljana Basin and the Karst and whose goal was – like Schönleben's –, to praise the Land of Carniola, was as well illuminating the ancient history of the city of Ljubljana. In *The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola* (Part 4, Book XIII, Chapter 1) Valvasor wrote extensively about the sailing of the Argonauts and the establishment of Emona by Jason. He referred to several ancient authorities such as Greek geographer and historian Strabo, Roman scholar Plinius (Pliny), Roman historian Justinus, Greek scholar Eustathius of Thessalonica, Greek historian Zosimus, Byzantine historian Sozomenos (Valvasor, 2008–2013, Part 4, 8), but also to Apollonius of Rhodes' or Appolonius Rhodius' *Argonautica* (Valvasor, 2008–2013, Part 4, 4). On their way home, running away with the stolen Golden Fleece, the Greek Argonauts sailed along the rivers Danube (Ister),[6] Sava and Ljubljanica (Nauportus)[7] up to the spring in Vrhnika, to the port Nauportus,[8] where they spent the winter and then continued their return journey toward the Adriatic Sea in the spring. The city was called Æmona, which later inhabitants distorted into Emona. Jason's native land, Thessalonia, was previously called Aemonia, so he wanted to name the city after it (Valvasor, 2008–2013. Part 4, 8).

Greek historiographer Zosimus wrote about the Argonauts in the years 498–518 (*New History* Book 5, Chapter 29) (Zosimus, 2006, 114). He referred to Olympiodorus of Thebes who echoed the poet Peisader. Salaminius Hermias Sozomenos

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6   In antiquity, the Danube was called the Ister (Valvasor, 2008–2013, Part 4, 8; Strabo, 1903, 9). Apollonius of Rhodes writes that the long river on which Jason sailed into the interior of the continent, the Istros, is wide and deep and navigable even for cargo ships (Clemenz, 2008, 92; Green, 1997, 159; Schwab, 1990, 189). According to Strabo (circa 63–24 BC), the Istrians were the first people on the Illyrian coast (Strabo, 1903, 483). Pliny the Elder (circa 23–79 AD) wrote that "[i]t has been stated by many authors, even including Nepos, who lived on the banks of Po, that Istria takes its name from the stream called Ister flowing out of the river Danube (which also has the name of Ister) into the Adriatic" (Pliny, 1942, 95). Darko Darovec ascertained that the naming of Istria is connected with the story of the Argonauts (Darovec, 2009, 27).

7   The name Nauportus is not only used for the port, but also for the Ljubljanica River, according to Valvasor (Valvasor, 2008–2013, Part 4, 8).

8   Nauportus, yet the name Pamportus is also mentioned twice in Strabo's geography (Strabo, 1903, 309, 482). According to Strabo, the area was inhabited by the Iapodes, about whom he writes: "They were warlike people, but were completely subdued by Augustus […] The country is poor, and the inhabitants live chiefly upon spelt and millet. Their armour is after the Keltic fashion. Their bodies are punctured, like those of the other Illyrian and Thracian people" (Strabo, 1903, 483). The commentator of Strabo's translation stated that according to Pliny the Elder, "the name of this place is derived from the fable of the ship Argo, which was brought up to Danube and the Save, and then carried on men's shoulders to the Adriatic" (Strabo, 1903, 482).

wrote down the same history in the first half of the fifth century and referred to the same source (Olympiodorus). In the ninth century, Byzantine chronicler Nikephoros Kallistos took the story after Sozomenos (Bratož, 1992, 270), as did Valvasor's colleague-researcher, Janez Ludvik Schönleben, who first made a detailed analysis of the myth of the Argonauts and out of this created a real mythogenesis of ancient Emona (established in 1222 BC, which was long before Rome, according to his calculations) (Deželak Trojar, 2017; Škamperle, 2019, 58).

Another version of the story also reports how before establishing Emona, Jason vanquished a dragon – the swamp monster that frightened the local people. In reference to this legend, the dragon became the symbol of Ljubljana (Županek, 2010, 31), thanks to the endeavors of early scientific researchers. The three intellectuals, Janez Ludvik Schönleben, Janez Vajkard Valvasor and Janez Gregor Dolničar (1655–1719, Johann Gregor Thalnitscher von Thalberg), consolidated the myth of the Argonautic establishment of Ljubljana as historical fact (Žmuc, 2010, 52). The references used by Schönleben served as the basis for the efforts of several intellectuals of that period to connect the establishment of Ljubljana with the story of the Argonauts (Županek, 2010, 28). Dolničar, who was Schönleben's nephew and the mayor of Ljubljana at the time, also aimed to commemorate the genesis of the town by installing Baroque public monuments and supporting art works mirroring this past (Kokole et al., 2006).

Ljubljana was first mentioned under the name Laibach in 1144, and in 1146 under the name Luwigana. It acquired the status of a city around 1220. The oldest use of the city seal is known from 1280, when an image of the Ljubljana castle from the Spanheim (Španhajm) era appears as a symbol of the city. In the mid-15th century Gothic-style city seal, a snake-like monster appears above the castle, and a bent-winged dragon serves as the handle of the seal. The dragon appears next to the coat of arms, i.e. outside of it, in the sixteenth century and for the last time in 1667. Valvasor placed the dragon, which is a copy of that from Klagenfurt, in the city coat of arms itself, namely as a "sign of vigilance" (Otorepec, 2001, 164).

By using the dragon as a heraldic device of the city, the dragon becomes a symbol of the kind that builds community identity, testifies to the noble origins of the city and its inhabitants, and thus contributes to the recognition (distinction) and relevant political status of the city, which has a rich and important history. As a symbolic image, the coat of arms represents belonging, activity and an idea; it is connected with the design of coats of arms in the European tradition which dates back to the Middle Ages when knights whose shields were painted with symbols achieved greater recognition. The coat of arms is intended to identify the bearer and testify to their importance (Allcock, 2012; Thiry & Duerloo, 2021). In the Book 9, XII. Chapter, Valvasor presented the Carniola families and their coats of arms, and also the Valvasor family tree. The ancient Slovenian term "rodbina", denoting a "family", is significant because it is etymologically linked to the term, "rod", which means a family lineage, a provenance. The term "narod", which means a nation, has the same root. The family coat of arms accordingly testifies
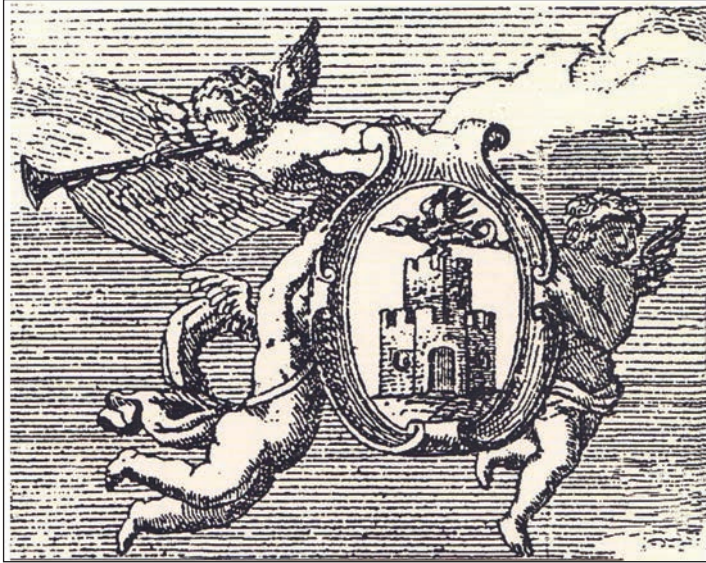
Fig. 5, 6, 7: Heraldic device of Ljubljana in Valvasor's veduta of the city from 1689 (above) (Otorepec & Jurečič, 1995, 51). Janez Vajkard Valvasor, coat of arms of the city of Ljubljana, 1689 (left) (Valvasor, 2009–2013, Part 3, 121). Today's coat of arms of the city of Ljubljana (right) (Wikimedia Commons).

to the important provenance, and the city's coat of arms has a similar function. By designing the dragon as an emblem, a recognizable sign of Ljubljana, which also entered the city's coat of arms, the dragon as a symbol plays a relevant political role in asserting the importance of the city of Ljubljana. With this, the dragon as a symbol of Ljubljana, in connection with the myth of Jason who defeated a dragon and established this city in the very distant past, also has the function of building the consciousness of the important provenance of the citizens of Ljubljana.

Scientific thought aimed to overcome the permeability of the world and consciousness as to be found in mythical thought. In the scientific world view representations are formed by acts of "objectivization". The opposition of "image" and "object", of the representation and the real thing is established. The ideal is separated from the real, the world of immediate reality is distinct from the world of mediated signification. This distinction is, as ascertained by Ernst Cassirer, alien to the mythical consciousness (Cassirer, 1955, 38). The case of Valvasor and his research colleagues, their scientific endeavors and the establishment of the dragon as a heraldic device of the city of Ljubljana, speaks to a rupture between mythical thought and the enthronement of the modern scientific episteme. The latter moves away from the mythical consciousness, establishes a distance towards it and builds its own comprehension of the world which is grounded in rational and instrumental reasoning. In this context the dragon is instrumentalized to serve as an emblem of a political unit.

CONCLUSION

When the recent school of mnemohistoriography emphasized memory as something that classical historiography aimed to be rid of, in order to communicate the factuality of the past, the new school has begun to pay attention to elements that refer to the past, which are not necessarily factual, but which are actual, which have some political relevance for the community that remember them in the present time. This approach also revives the interest in the mythical, which links collective memory to the ancient Greek understanding of myth as it is tied to oral tradition, which is not oriented towards presenting the factuality of the past events, the "truth" about what actually happened, but to transmitting messages related to the past, based on particular interests in the present time.

If the pioneers of critical historiography discredited memory as a rival of history (Assmann, 2008, 60) and historical positivism consists of separating the historical from the mythical elements in memory, the objective of mnemohistorical study is not to ascertain the possible truth of traditions, but lies "in analyzing the mythical elements in tradition and discovering their hidden agenda." The "truth' of a given memory lies not so much it its 'factuality' as in its 'actuality'" (Assmann, 1997, 9–10). Accordingly, "the processes of memory are frequently, if not always, manipulated and intervened for sometimes urgent purposes in the present" (Said, 2000, 179). Herein institutions and social groups, such as nations,

do not possess a memory, "they 'make' one for themselves with the aid of memorial signs such as symbols, texts, images, rites, ceremonies, places, and monuments. Together with such a memory, these groups and institutions 'construct' an identity" (Assmann, 2008, 55; Assmann, 2006). Memories that are made need not be authentic, but rather *useful*. In service of local patriotism, tradition can be invented, wherein "[t]he invention of tradition is a method for using collective memory selectively by manipulating certain bits of the national past, suppressing others, elevating still others in an entirely functional way" (Said, 2000, 179). If in the context of historiography, "myth" is that which must be debunked, in memory studies, it acquires a different meaning – it may refer to a narrative that has acquired symbolic value and is engraved and transmitted in memory. "While in the discourse of rational enlightenment, myth is used to distinguish between truth or lie (or authenticity and fiction), in the discourse of memory research it is used to distinguish between the object of historical knowledge on the one hand and collectively remembered events on the other." Myth can in this sense be defined as a "collectively remembered history" (Assmann, 2008, 68). Not only fictive events create myths, but historical events in their transformation into collective memory do as well.

The interest in Greek and Roman antiquity was strong in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and also echoed in "the spread of methodical archaeological exploration across Europe," says archeologist Neil Asher Silberman, wherein "antiquarian enthusiasm often reflected and reinforced emerging feelings of local patriotism" (Silberman, 1996, 254). According to the renowned scholar of nationalism, Anthony D. Smith, this was the first great age of nationalism (Smith, 1986). Although instrumental reason is associated in particular with the formation of an industrial society (Schecter, 2010), the very emergence of modern scientific knowledge is not only a matter of creating explanations of the world from the natural phenomena to the past, but also an instrumental understanding of the world is inherent in this aspiration. Scientific episteme comprises instrumental reason – it is not only aimed at understanding phenomena, but also strives to find the usefulness in what it attempts to understand. Valvasor did not only think about why the spring of the Bela stream runs intermittently and why the water is white and foamy, but at the same time he deliberated on how this natural resource can benefit man and his livestock, how man can intervene in the natural state and change it, turning the situation in their favor. Likewise, Valvasor, Schönleben and Dolničar searched for stories about the past of the Carniola region and presented them with the aim of worshiping and celebrating the region, the city of Ljubljana and their rich past, thereby building the collective memory of a political community.

PREDRAZSVETLJENSKO OBLIKOVANJE MODERNEGA ZNANSTVENEGA EPISTEMA IN GRAJENJE SKUPNOSTI IZ MITSKEGA DISKURZA

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POVZETEK

Namen tega prispevka je skozi študije primerov pokazati, kako so starodavni miti igrali vlogo pri utrjevanju identitete in izgradnji skupnosti v obdobju pred razsvetljenstvom. Zanimanje za grško in rimsko antiko je bilo v sedemnajstem stoletju veliko. Miti so imeli pri tem pomembno politično vlogo. Avtorica članka zagovarja tezo, da so trije intelektualci, Janez Vajkard Valvasor, Janez Ludvik Schönleben in Janez Gregor Dolničar, gradili kolektivni spomin na argonavtski nastanek Ljubljane, z namenom čaščenja in slavljenja dežele Kranjske. Valvasor je raziskoval tudi kraške naravne pojave, pri čemer je naletel na mitski diskurz, ki ga je želel preseči in svoj znanstveni pristop zgraditi na racionalnem mišljenju nastajajočega modernega znanstvenega epistema, a je pri tem prav tako, kot so izvajali zgodovinopisno raziskovanje, črpal iz mitskega.

Ključne besede: predrazsvetljenstvo, Janez Vajkard Valvasor, Janez Ludvik Schönleben, mitski diskurz, kolektivni spomin, moderni znanstveni epistem, Emona, Ljubljana, dežela Kranjska

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