



WHERE HAS ZDUHAĆ GONE?

ZDUHAĆ GONE? • ГДЕ СУ НЕСТАЈИ



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WHERE HAS ZDUHAĆ GONE?

INTRODUCTION

Natural disasters such as storms, hail and heavy rain might destroy fields, orchards and vineyards in a short time, and thus question the material basis of human existence. Atmospheric hazards completely and abruptly interrupt and prevent any practical activity of the community. Since the community could not affect their appearance, nor they could defend from them, they were believed to be caused by supernatural forces, which were presented in different ways. Somewhere it was believed that hail clouds were led by dragons, black birds, non-baptized people, souls of those who committed suicide...

In Serbia, it was widely believed that there were particular people who were able to protect their property, village or region from destructive action of the blind forces. "Their main function was to protect rural households, sometimes even wider areas from hail clouds, storms, floods or droughts. In this way they provided rich harvest, and therefore the existence of their fellow villagers".¹ Such an individual, mostly an adult man, was known as zduhać, zduhać, zduvać, stuhać, zduha, zduva, vetrovnjak, vjetreni vojvoda (wind duke) or gradobranitelj (hail-defender).

"When he felt a disaster getting closer, such a man would seclude himself or fell asleep on the place where he was caught by the disaster. Then, his soul would go and fight with leaders of the disaster. After he had dispelled the danger, he would awake, all sweaty and tired of fighting."²

One could not become zduhać, but was rather born as such. There was no initiation of zduhać, but a child, or an offspring of an animal that was born in the caul (placenta) could have become a hail-defender, provided its caul was preserved.

¹ Dušan Bandić, "Narodna religija Srba u 100 pojmova", Nolit, Beograd, 2004, p.128-129

² Slobodan Zečević, „Srpska etnomitologija“, Službeni Glasnik, Beograd, 2008, p. 688

In Serbian folk religion¹, zduhaćs belonged to the people possessing demonic qualities. Unlike witches, mora or urokljivac who also belonged to the group of people with demonic qualities, zduhaćs did not harm, but helped their community.

“Zduhać does not belong to “evil spirits”, as the other demons, but if he put his strength and knowledge in the service of the devil, he could become a vampire after death”.²

In Eastern Serbia, hail-defenders were known as dragons. A Dragon drove away hail clouds and fought monsters; it could have a human form; however its origin was not human but animal. Dragons, by belief, could occur in two ways: from a catfish or from a snake when they reach a certain age - usually forty. Besides being able to take human shape, dragons were known as great lovers. Children born out of a relationship between a dragon and a woman became great heroes. As descendants of a dragon, people mentioned Miloš Obilić, Marko Kraljević, “Zmaj od Noćaja” or Stojan Čupić, “Dragon – The Fiery Wolf”, Despot Vuk Branković, etc.

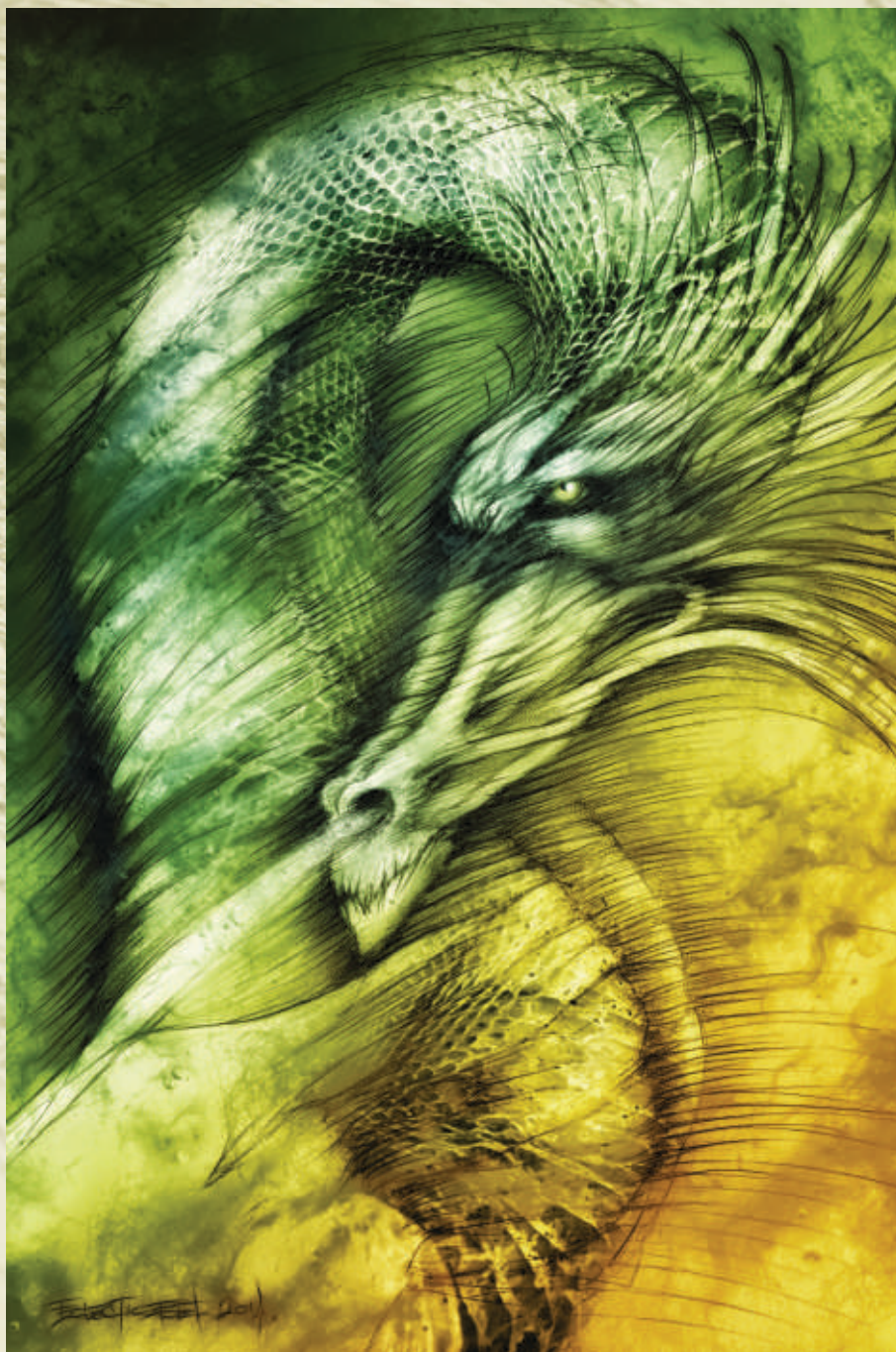
People had different views about zduhać and dragons' enemies, hail-carriers who brought disaster. They might have been souls of the deceased people died by violent death (drowned, hanged, suicided), or mythical creatures known as ala, or even zduhać or dragons from neighbouring regions.

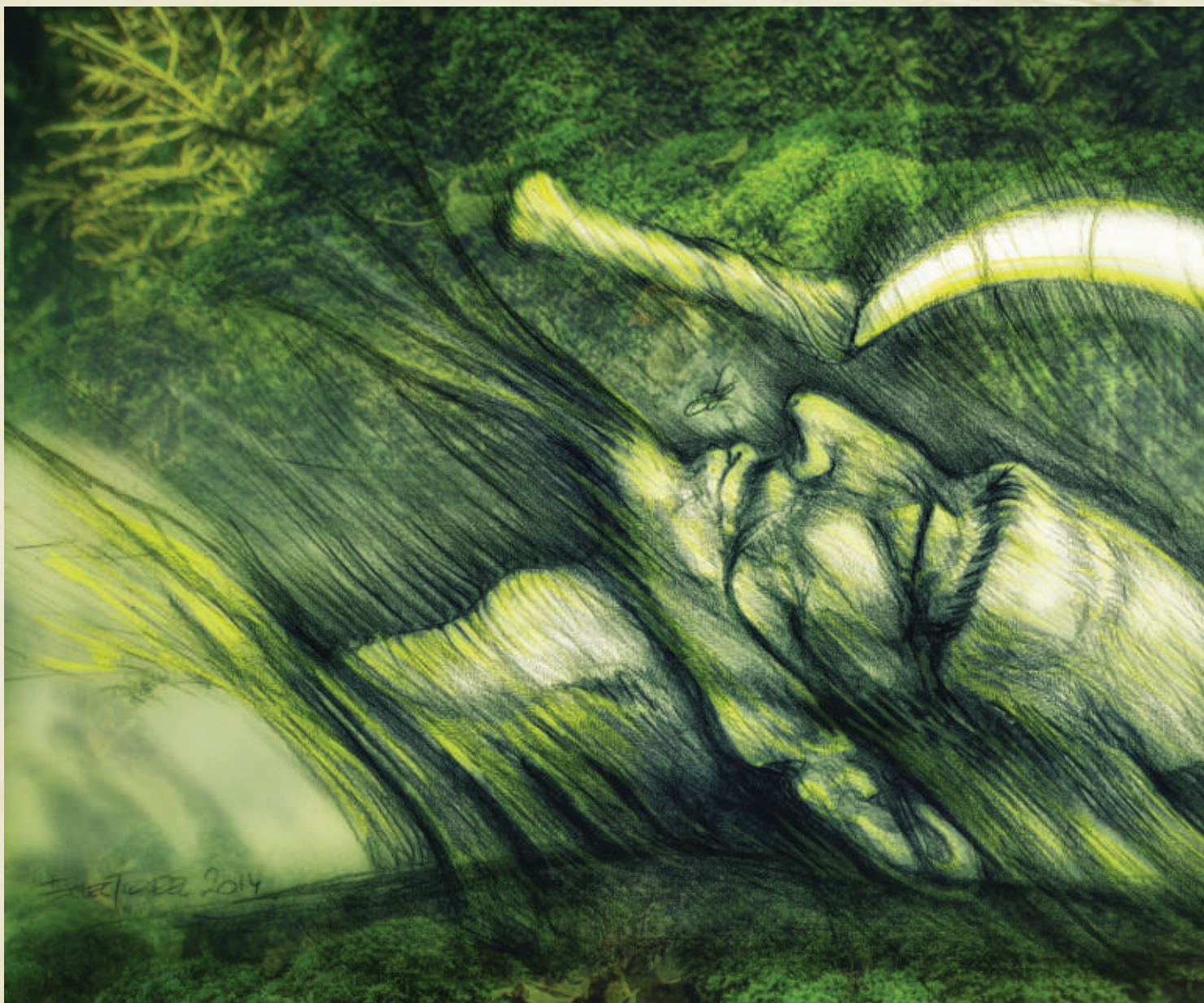
¹ Dušan Bandić, “Narodna religija Srba u 100 pojmova”, Nolit, Beograd, 2004, p.11-14

² Kulišić Špiro, Petrović Ž Petar, Pantelić Nikola “Srpski mitološki rečnik”, Etnografski institut SANU, Beograd, 1998, p. 198

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Acting of zduhać was manifested in a dramatic way. When the disaster approached, he would be “mortified” at the place where he found himself



THE ACTING OF ZDUHAĆ

“Once, there was an old man, named Milutin. Whenever it got cloudy, when there was thunder, storm or hail, he would immediately fall asleep. Thus fallen asleep, he would sleep and snore, sleep and speak: “Wow, Agh! I'm all broken.” “Why?” “Well, they destroyed”, he would say “that village with hail. I went out and I met the man running, the ram running, the bull running, the one that was born in the caul.” ... “And when the calf was born, dropped from the mother, it was like in a nylon sack. If it does not happen that a man is there to cut up the sack with a knife, or take it firmly and tighten, it may die fast.” ... “Such animal we vow, not sell. We keep it to old age. It is good because it defends us from the clouds. Whenever it is gloomy, it bends its legs immediately and falls sleep; its soul then goes out and fights demon forces.”¹

According to an old belief, zduhać was a man with extraordinary supernatural powers, but only when sleeping. While he slept, the spirit got out of his body and directed the winds, drove the clouds, brought and took away hail and fought other zduhać creatures.

People once thought that each region, tribe and family had their zduhać who fought for them, and even died for their own good in battles with neighbouring zduhać or other hail-bringers. Zduhać was a "good spirit" who fought for its region but, at the same time, caused damage to another village or county. Awareness of them was noted in all areas where Serbs lived. In Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, as well as in the villages where immigrants from these regions lived, people believed in zduhać most. In addition to the term zduhać, they also used the names zduhač, zduvač, stuha, stuva, vetrovnjak.

“Acting of zduhać was manifested in a dramatic way. When the disaster approached, he would be “mortified” at the place where he found himself. In other words, he would fall into a deep swoon. It was believed that his soul had left the body (usually in the form of a fly, pigeon, lizard, snake or other animal)

¹ Dimitrije O Golemović, “Krstivoje”, Gradac, Valjevo, 2009, p. 8

and flew to the clouds to counteract beings that carried storm. Body and soul of zduhać are thus separated. But there was also an unbreakable bond between them. While the soul was fighting demons, the sleeping body was sweating, shaking and twitching as it inflicted and received heavy strikes.”¹

The battles were mostly fought in spring and autumn, when the weather changed. They were also active in summer during the field work, when they guarded crops. It is interesting that they did not act knowingly and intentionally like in shaman people; instead, they fell asleep not being able to keep awake.

The sleeping body of Zduhać had to be handled very carefully, because such state of his body could take a long time and there was a danger to bury him, thinking he was dead. “For the time when he wants to fly like Stuva, his soul first slips out of his mouth like a fly (muva). If someone turned a head of such man where his feet were, the soul would not know how to return, so a man would die, without waking up.”² Therefore, changing position of his body could lead to tragic consequences. The soul could get lost and not return to its natural abode. A sudden awakening of zduhać was also dangerous. Some evil spirit or demon could retract in it. To prevent this, farmers used to plunge a scythe into the land on top of zduhać head or waved with a kind of razor over it. “In Leskovac Morava they rumoured that a local Zduhać (or, as they called it there, a dragon - man) lay down and fell into a deep sleep during a thunderstorm. His friend stayed there to guard him. As the storm passed, the friend noted that a lizard underscored zduhać's body. He swung his scythe and cut off its tail. When zduhać woke up, he told his friend that he had cut off his little finger, because his soul was in the body of that lizard.”³

¹ Dušan Bandić, “Narodna religija Srba u 100 pojmova”, Nolit, Beograd, 2004, p.130

² Sima Trojanović, “Glavni srpski žrtveni običaji”, Prosveta, Beograd, 1983, p. 152

³ Dušan Bandić, “Narodna religija Srba u 100 pojmova”, Nolit, Beograd, 2004, p. 130-131

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC POSITION OF ZDUHAĆ

“For their heroic qualities, but also supernatural abilities, people with zduhać properties were living in a privileged position. It was thought that zduhać people were “lucky” for their home or village. “Stuhe are born per strain and blood only from a pure and righteous heart. Stuhe are good and honest; they often meet with angels and behave by the laws - even better than the ascetics, and the angels advise them and tell them all sorts of things. This conversation of theirs can be elided beautifully by night on the leaves of high and thick branches...”¹

Zduhać were the “best people” both in the tribe and the village. Within the tribal organization, they were dukes and best military leaders, as well as persons of influence and power. They knew how to resist various misfortunes, they were brave in war and because of their wisdom and wealth of experience, their relatives and other members of rural communities often sought advice from them. Mostly, they were economically very well off, and had some sort of pre-emptive rights compared to those who were entitled to enjoy the current norms.²

The exquisite Montenegrin hero, Marko Miljanov, then Petar I Petrović, a famous military leader Mića Martinov and others were considered as zduhać people. One of the most famous zduhać was herbalist and Prophet Mato Glušac (1774-1870) from Korito near Bileća in eastern Herzegovina. This is what people talked about Mato Glusac:

“Both young and old, both rich and poor, both Serbs and Turks respected and gladly welcomed him. They knew he was one of the leaders of good mountain stuhać and would not allow those evil, coastal people take over harvest in the mountains, or make any kind of damage... The truth was, there were women who used to hide children, youth, calves or foals from his eyes. For - it

¹ Sima Trojanović, “Glavni srpski žrtveni običaji”, Prosveta, Beograd, 1983, p. 152

² Ivan Kovačević, “Semiologija mita i rituala 1”, Srpski genealoški centar, Beograd, 2001, p. 78



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happened that a cub only when met his gaze, eye to eye with a single view, immediately, “got down”. He would shoot him like lightning, in the midst of the heart!”¹

People avoided conflicts with zduhaćs because they were afraid of their supernatural powers. One never knew if they could reverse the blind forces onto a house or a field of those who criticized them. “No one should be against stuva, but must always be nice to them, for they would revenge, cut off their leaders, ruin the houses and make any other kind of harm.”² It was believed that they could predict future, and often foresee their own death. The animals that were thought to have zduhać features were kept and fed till the end of their lives.

According to all the features and capabilities they had, we can conclude that belief in zduhać has nothing to do with Christianity. Although some of them were considered to be pious, that they were able to talk to angels or could foretell the future, they could not be connected with Christian beliefs. Since non-Christian elements, contained in the ethnographic material, are not necessarily pre-Christian, so zduhaćs belong to a particular religion, which, among Serbian people, existed and developed in parallel with Christianity, the Serbian folk religion.³ “It is proved by the fact that in parallel with the existence of cohesive rural organization, the clearly defined rural religious official – hail-defender participated equally in the religious protection of the hail, and his duty was performed in parallel with a Christian religious official - priest, and a non-Christian one - Zduhać.”⁴

Zduhaćs are ambivalent beings. The community is afraid of them and respects them. They consider them wise and fear of their arbitrariness. All the benefits and the respect zduhać enjoyed in its community, in fact, derived from the fact that it was their “religious official”, and protector of its community, being a neighbour, relative or a friend at the same time. Zduhać was, in fact, a representative of the community in struggle with the supernatural, an individual to whom the community allowed to come into direct contact with

¹ <http://mojahercegovina.com/sr/feljton-mato-glusac-najveci-hercegovacki-saman-1/>

² Sima Trojanović, “Glavni srpski žrtveni običaji”, Prosveta, Beograd, 1983, p. 153

³ Dušan Bandić, “Narodna religija Srba u 100 pojmova”, Nolit, Beograd, 2004

⁴ Ivan Kovačević, “Semiologija mita i rituala 1”, Srpski genealoški centar, Beograd, 2001, p. 71

the supernatural, and thus reached the power and knowledge that were inaccessible to an ordinary man, as well as the collective. "It is, in fact, the only possibility to find out (un)reality of the "other side" and so to extend the scope of the social." ¹

Unfortunately there is no information about the individuals who falsely represented themselves as zduhaćs, possessing no power, nor do we know how people referred to them while expecting their action to prevent disasters.

PSYCHO-PHYSICAL FEATURES

Zduhaćs could be grown men, or, in rare cases, women or children. It was believed that some animals might have zduhać features, such as herding dogs, oxen, cows, rams, horses, goats...

By outward appearance they did not differ from other people. When they were not asleep, they seemed meditative and serious, sleepy and tired, with swollen face and bleary eyes. However, they were thought to possess some physical characteristics that distinguished them from other people. Some characteristics were real, such as hair on shoulder and arm, long nails, even a small tail. It was believed that there were some imaginary zduhać physical characteristics, such as "wings under the arms".

The main difference between "ordinary" people and zduhać ones was not in physical appearance and characteristics, but in behaviour, namely in the state of trance in which they fell during storms when their spirit left the body. Its discrepancy, which need not be physical, contributed to the belief of the community that zduhać was of "another world", i.e. chosen by fate or deity to protect the community.

Thus, the direct contact with "the beyond" is what separates these hail-defenders from the profane world. Therefore, the relationship of the

¹ Dobrila Bratić, "Gluvo doba", XX vek, Beograd, 1993, p.193

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community to zduhać people was similar to that the eastern people had to their shamans or Indians and Aborigines to their physicians or medicine-men. There was always a mental or physical feature that distinguished them from the others, a certain "sign" that marked them and gave them a kind of legitimacy. "He might be chosen by gods or spirits to speak on their behalf, or he destined such a role for his physical disabilities; he might also have carried legacy that corresponded to a vocation with magic and religious characteristics – anyway, medicine-men are separated from the profane world precisely because they have direct contact with the holly and handle its manifestations in more effective way. Weakness, nerve disease, inner inclination or inheritance are equally external signs of a certain "choice".¹

The fights also involved zduhać animals. The defence of herds and well being of livestock depended on their fight.



¹ Mirča Elijade, "Šamanizam", Izdavačka knjižarnica Zorana Stojanovića, Sremski Karlovci, 1990, p.48

HOW DID ONE BECOME ZDUHAĆ?

A child who was born in the caul (the placenta) was destined to become zduhać. "Somewhere it was believed that zduhaćs were born in red, and somewhere in white caul. It was considered very important to keep the caul in which the child was born, so that when it became zduhać, it could always be with him, especially when it came to action; however, it had always to be hidden from anyone's view. In Kuči, people once believed that zduhać hid his caul "under the cover of his relatives' graves, from where he took it when going to the war".¹

There is no initiation ritual for zduhaćs, such as for shamans. The birth in the placenta is a prerequisite, but one could not become zduhać voluntarily - his fate was determined by the parents. Whether a child will become a zduhać or not depended on their decision regarding the caul. If the parents did not want their child to acquire zduhać properties, they could burn the caul. However, the caul carried many positive properties. In addition to the fact that it kept zduhać powers and brought good luck, people often used it as a good luck charm, as well. "It is believed, in fact, that if the caul protects baby in the mother's womb, it can also be good protection later. Sometimes the amulets, made of the caul, were worn in human body."² In Bosnia, for example, they sewed it in the child's arm, so "the rifle could not kill him." Hajduk Veljko was said to have been born in a caul because he was a great hero.

Since zduhać had no power to decide on whether to become one or not, so his "going out" to fight for the protection of crops is not voluntary either. He simply could not resist the dream that "led" him to the battle for the good of the village.

¹ Kulišić Špiro, Petrović Ž Petar, Pantelić Nikola "Srpski mitološki rečnik", Etnografski institut SANU, Beograd, 1998, p. 197

² Tihomir R. Đorđević, "Životni krug", Prosveta, Niš, 2002, p. 89



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ZDUHAĆ ACTIVITIES

- ZDUHAĆ BATTLES

Beings that brought storm clouds were called “hail-bringers”. They could have been mythical beings, “dragons” or souls of the unbaptized and those who committed suicide, animals, “dragon-like” people, even some Christian saints. However, the most common enemies of the “hail-defenders”, i.e. zduhaćs, were their “colleagues”, also zduhaćs from other villages or areas. They drew the storm clouds from their territory to the neighbouring ones. Therefore, the effect of local zduhać was observed as its fight with zduhać from the neighbourhood.

“Stuve always fight against stuve from the other region, for example, those from Upper Herzegovina with those of Rudine, mostly over the clouds: who will attract more rain clouds and drive away the hail ones. They fight over crops, as well. Their weapon is the broom from threshing floors, so the ones that lose the brooms in the struggle have to succumb to death.”¹

“It could be a clash of two zduhaćs, but also the war between zduhać armies fought over a vast territory. Conflicts between the Montenegrin or Serbian and the Albanian, between the mountain and the coastal, those of Boka and the Italian zduhaćs are mentioned.”² Zduhać Groups were organized as military units with an officer in command. Zduhaćs of one area were struggling with the ones from other areas or other countries. “Thus, for example, “the overseas zduhaćs (from Italy) jointly fight against those from the hills of Montenegro and Albania.”³ Winners of the battle drive clouds and hail from their area to another, and thus save the village and crops from destruction.”

The fights also involved zduhać animals. The defence of herds and well being of livestock depended on their fight. “People, bulls and dogs - stuve, all of them connected in body and spirit in the disaster, and the latest one fly in the

¹ Sima Trojanović, “Glavni srpski žrtveni običaji”, Prosveta, Beograd, 1983, p. 152

² Dušan Bandić, “Narodna religija Srba u 100 pojmova”, Nolit, Beograd, 2004, p. 131-132

³ Kulišić Špiro, Petrović Ž Petar, Pantelić Nikola “Srpski mitološki rečnik”, Etnografski institut SANU, Beograd, 1998, p. 197



WHERE HAS ZDUHAČ GONE?

Battles between Zduhač were held in high places, on the mountains, by the seashores, at certain times of year and day when strong winds blow, in early spring or during the long autumn nights

heavenly heights to fight the opponent stove and to keep their village, and often the entire tribe. A girl (calf or lamb) is the strongest before being nursed (unlactated yet), i.e. for this short time when she sees the world.”¹

Battles between Zduhač were held in high places, on the mountains, by the seashores, at certain times of year and day when strong winds blow, in early spring or during the long autumn nights. These struggles caused terrible and strong winds and whirlwinds of dust, destroying crops, ruin houses, they can even kill a man who found himself in the middle of the battle.

In their struggles, as in every battle, there were many dead and wounded. Hence the belief that a man who suddenly died was zduhač arose actually. “Also, it was believed that a zduhač who was “wounded” or “killed” in the battle could not live long after return of the spirit to the body which it left while sleeping. Generally, after a hard battle, they are exhausted, and many suffer from fatigue as long as they fully recover.”² Sometimes it took them several days to recover and regain strength. Injury or death of zduhač soul caused the wounds on his body, even death.

Živko Lažetić from the village of Dobrelja is another famous Herzegovinian zduhač. Živko often narrated about the Zduhač fights:

“Well, my brother”, Živko Lažetić used to say, “When we fight against Rudine (Rudine in the district of Bileća) stuhe, you can see great miracles! We always beat them if their coastal stuhe do not come to rescue. And if they come, we run away to the highest mountain - only to lure them, for we do not want them to make harm in our fields!”³

¹ Sima Trojanović, “Glavni srpski žrtveni običaji”, Prosveta, Beograd, 1983, p.153

² Kulišić Špiro, Petrović Ž Petar, Pantelić Nikola “Srpski mitološki rečnik”, Etnografski institut SANU, Beograd, 1998, p. 198

³ <http://mojahercegovina.com/sr/feljton-mato-glusac-najveci-hercegovacki-saman-7/>



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ZDUHAĆ WEAPONS

In their battles, zduhaćs used different weapons that were very specific. "It's a piece of beam sharpened at the ends, the spindle and the like. Others fight with large trees: beech, fir trees, elms or oaks, which they uproot by one hand, together with the roots. If there are no trees nearby, they beat with huge stones, so large that a number of people would not have been able even to rise. Zduhać most powerful weapon is a firebrand ray frayed at both ends, or any frayed wooden chip. In addition to weapons, when going to fight, they regularly carry milk dishes, a shovel and a broom from the wheat threshing floor. These items are usually the main goal to be reached in the fight, i.e. stolen from the enemy, because they supposedly bring fertility and prosperity until they win again."¹ The weapons also included straws, pointed twigs, leaves, etc. Often the weapons would be contrary to the nature and size of the battle. According to one belief, every zduhać was required to take broom into battle, as well as a dish in which milk was stored or cooked, or other vessels. At the end of the battle, the winners took things from the defeated and thus robbed the following year harvest, as well.

Zduhać fights ran powerful forces; devastation remained on the battlefield as fighting was accompanied by strong winds. "When one side wins, then the other one reverses several times around in a whirlwind with the greatest force, so if it is over the trees, over the wood or a house, everything lay back and collapsed to the ground."²

¹ Kulišić Špiro, Petrović Ž Petar, Pantelić Nikola "Srpski mitološki rečnik", Etnografski institut SANU, Beograd, 1998, p. 198

² Dušan Bandić, "Narodna religija Srba u 100 pojmova", Nolit, Beograd, 2004, p. 132

ZDUHAĆ BELIEFS IN UŽICE REGION

Dr. Slobodan Zečević, during the field research in Užice region, paid special attention to the customs and beliefs related to atmospheric phenomena. The research was carried out during 1960s and 1970s. We got from him the most interesting information on the beliefs in zduhać:

“A few examples will be enough to determine the prevalence of this belief. In the village of Šljivovica, people talked about a shepherd who lived over the age of 100; he was vetrovnjak. Before the storm, he would fall into a trance and went to fight with the “black bird”, which was thought to have led the clouds. Having finished the fight, he would lean somewhere back and rested for a long time. What happened to him during the fight, no one knew – he never told. In Ribaševina, Karan, Godljevo, Radanovci, Seca Reka and other villages, vetrovnjaks were thought to be kinky people. If hail still fell, it was believed that vetrovnjak lost the battle. In Kremna, they thought that Milija Nešović was vetrovnjak. When he had a dispute with someone, he would threaten with wind. Even today there are people who are believed to be vetrovnjaks. Such is, for example, R. S. from Ražana. Drobnjaković says that such a man was also Branko Šišović from Čajetina. His estate and the surrounding area, there were rumours, had never been stricken by the hail. It was difficult to find out from him how he achieved that.”¹

Zecević also recorded an interesting belief and a custom that were performed in Zlatibor village of Drežnik and in some other villages. It is a belief in “vjetreni vojvoda”(wind duke), which was linked to the Holy Prophet Elisha holiday, which is celebrated on June 27. “If someone moved the ax on St. Elisha's Day, there they believed that a mythical creature called “Vjetreni Vojvoda” will come, take the roof from the house and dispel the hay. In order to propitiate this mythical creature, people gathered at the crossroads or by the river of Rzav, where they performed a sacred meal. Food was brought to certain

¹ Slobodan Zečević, „Srpska etnomitologija“, Službeni Glasnik, Beograd, 2008, p. 688

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places, and candles were lit, people were venerating themselves eating from the common dining table. The custom was performed in order to prevent storm, flood and hail. In Makovište, they celebrated Elisha, as well; people also lit candles.”¹ Moreover, the folks believed that the Holy Elisha received the mantle from St. Elijah (who was his teacher) and hence obtained the power to be able to manage the weather.

Today, belief in *zduhać* that was strongly rooted in Western Serbia has completely been forgotten. Only a few people can remember some talks from forty years ago, in which *zduhać* or *vetrovnjak* were mentioned. For example, a woman originating from Kremna, remembers that one *vetrovnjak* threatened her father that he would dispel the hay if he got into a dispute with him. That *Zduhać* was called Milun and was said to be of a bad temper and that he “blew off haystacks” of many people from the village. An old woman from Bioska reported that Milun had told her to remove seeds under the eaves which she prepared for planting, because he would blow everything away when he “starts off”. In Bioska, they remember some old woman, Višnja, who is rumoured to have been *vetrovnjak* during the fifties of the twentieth century.

ANALYSIS

There are no references that could show us where belief in *zduhać* comes from. It is assumed that the belief itself is very old and was very widespread in the Serbian nation. “The origin of the name and certain *zduhać* characteristics can be linked to a belief in *stuhije* - the goddesses of storms in northern Albania, which originated from Greece.”² According to some theories, *zduhaćs*, as guardians of their community, represented a kind of incarnated ancestors that protected their offspring from evil. This “reborn” soul moved into an animal and defended village crops.³



¹ Slobodan Zečević, „Srpska etnomitologija“, Službeni Glasnik, Beograd, 2008, p. 689

² Kulišić Špiro, Petrović Ž Petar, Pantelić Nikola “Srpski mitološki rečnik“, Etnografski institut SANU, Beograd, 1998, p. 198

³ “Privatni život u Srpskim zemljama u osvit modernog doba“, (Ljubinko Radenković, “Obogotvoreni predak”), Klio, Beograd, 200, p. 465

Belief in Zduhač contains some similarities with shamanism. For example, managing atmospheric circumstances is one of the techniques of shamanism, which gifted individuals dealt with - from Native American shamans to those of Chukotka and the Altai. "Siberian, Inuit and North American shamans can fly. Throughout the world, the same magic power has been attributed to healers and medicine-men. In Malekuli, wizards (Bwili) can be transformed into animals, but they prefer to turn into chickens or hawks, because they become like ghosts for their ability to fly."¹ According to the belief, zduhač soul can also take shape of a bird and soar into the clouds. However, the difference between zduhač and shaman is great. Shamans learn falling into a trance, they are familiar with the effects of plants, ritualistic movements and dances, they use willing and magical techniques to achieve the desired goal. In addition to managing the weather, they can also "talk" to the dead, predict future, heal... Then, they act in the wakeful state, causing ecstasy on the basis of learned knowledge.

Zduhačs are considered to be the creatures that live in two worlds and two epochs. In the waking state, they are respected members of their communities, while in dreams they are fighters in the world of spirits, supernatural beings that protect the community from atmospheric phenomena. Even zduhačs themselves think that they have divided minds, two lives and two souls, one in a dream – another when awoken. The loss of the soul during the fight makes zduhač body die, as well. In psychology, this phenomenon is known as "dissociation of consciousness". Carl Gustav Jung believed that one of the most common mental disorders among primitive people was what they called a "loss of soul", and it represented noticeable destruction (dissociation) of consciousness. "Many primitive people believe that a man, besides his own, has also a "wild soul", and that the wild soul is embodied in wild, an animal or a tree, with which a given human individual psychologically identifies to a certain extent."² "Violation of the wild soul, whether it is an animal or a tree, is interpreted as violation of the human. Perhaps one of the ways to socialize people with this kind of mental disorder was their recognition as zduhačs by the community, or the reverse - the process of socialization for zduhač "duty" caused neurotic or even psychotic disorders? We have no data on how an individual, who was believed to be zduhač, accepted this role. "Also, we have

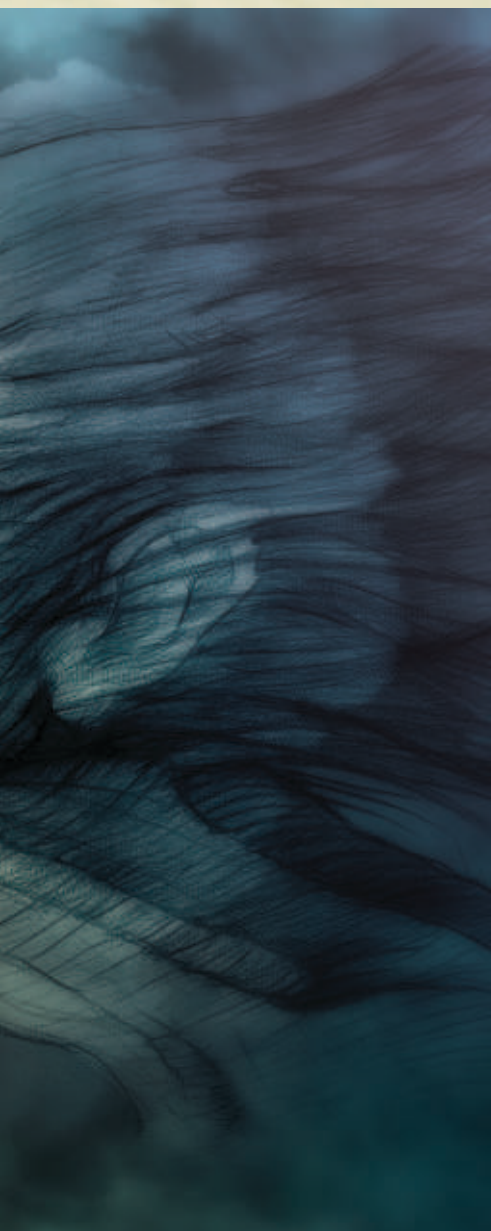
¹ Mirča Elijade, "Šamanizam", Izdavačka knjižarnica Zorana Stojanovića, Sremski Karlovci, 1990, p.339

² Karl Gustav Jung, "Čovek i njegovi simboli", Narodna knjiga-Alfa, Beograd, 1996, p.18-19



WHERE HAS ZDUHAĆ GONE?

Even zduhaćs themselves think that they have divided minds, two lives and two souls, one in a dream - another when awoken.



no information about the dreams zduhać dreamt during his “fights” with other zduhaćs, nor can it be inferred what reasons, often individual, cited zduhać to deceive the community deliberately, if the deception was of that kind.”¹

Today, belief in zduhać has almost entirely disappeared. There are few more memories of the old country people. Mostly, they remember the old stories where someone was believed to be zduhać. In Serbia, upon the initiative of individual industrial farms, cooperatives and insurance companies, hail protection began in 1953, and since 1967, it has been entrusted to the Republic Hydrometeorological Institute. Perhaps this period was beginning of the end of belief in zduhać creatures and zduhać activities. This was also the period of villages' electrification. Radio and television replaced the old beliefs and legends. Nowadays, a modern man is increasingly getting rid of impurities of fantasy, both from language and mind. In this way, we absolutely forget that in the former world, things did not have “such sharp borders as in our “rational” societies. What psychologists call mental identity, or “mystical participation” has been ripped from our world of things.” However, as Jung says, it is the shining crown of unconscious associations that creates picturesque and imaginative aspect of this disappearing world, but the thirst for irrational still exists and continues to live in fantastic literature, movies and television serials.

¹ Ivan Kovačević, “Semiologija mita i rituala 1”, Srpski genealoški centar, Beograd, 2001, p. 84

² Karl Gustav Jung, “Čovek i njegovi simboli”, Narodna knjiga-Alfa, Beograd, 1996, p.44-45

SUMMARY

Natural disasters such as storms, hail and heavy rain may destroy fields, orchards and vineyards in a short time, and thus question the material basis of human existence. Atmospheric hazards completely and abruptly interrupt and prevent any practical activity of the community. Since the community could not affect their appearance, nor they could defend from them, they were believed to be caused by supernatural forces, which were presented in different ways. Somewhere it was believed that hail clouds were led by dragons, black birds, non-baptized people, souls of those who committed suicide...

In Serbia, it was widely believed that there were particular people who were able to protect their property, village or region from destructive action of the blind forces. Their main function was to protect rural households, sometimes even wider areas from hail clouds, storms, floods or droughts. In this way they provided rich harvest, and therefore the existence of their fellow villagers. Such an individual, mostly an adult man, was known as *zduhać*, *zduhač*, *zduvać*, *stuhać*, *zduha*, *zduva*, *vetrovnjak*, *vjetreni vojvoda* (wind duke) or *gradobranitelj* (hail-defender).

When he felt a disaster getting closer, such a man would seclude himself or fell asleep on the place where he was caught by the disaster. Then, his soul would go out and fight with leaders of the disaster. After he had dispelled the danger, he would awake, all sweaty and tired of fighting.

It could be a clash of two *zduhaćs*, but also the war between *zduhać* armies fought on a vast territory. The winners of the battle forced clouds and hail out of their area to another one, and thus saved the village and crops from destruction. Battles between *zduhaćs* were fought on high places, mountains, seashores, at certain times of year and day, when strong winds blow - in early spring or during long autumn nights. These struggles caused terrible and strong winds and whirlwinds of dust; they destroyed crops, ruined homes, they could even kill a man who found himself in the middle of the battle.

One could not become *zduhać*, but was rather born as such. There was no initiation of *zduhać*, but a child, or an offspring of an animal that was born in the caul (placenta) could have become a hail-defender, provided its caul was preserved. *Zduhaćs* could be grown men, or, in rare cases, women or children. It was believed that some animals might have *zduhać* features, such as herding dogs, oxen, cows, rams, horses, goats...



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