

Kratko o knjigi

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Potem ko je krščanstvo najprej preplavilo Sredozemlje, nato Evropo in navsezadnje ves svet, se je njegovo zmagoslavje zdelo tako zelo samoumevno, da ni bilo nikakršne osnove za vprašanje, ali morda obstaja vsaj majhna možnost, da je kje v evropskih deželah mnogo stoletij po pokristjanjenju predkrščansko verovanje na organiziran način vendarle preživelo do sodobnosti. Tako vprašanje bi bilo pač podobno vprašanju, ali lahko na katerem od velikih alpskih smučišč srečamo jetija. Noben resen človek se ga ne bi drznil postaviti.

Ko je najprej leta 2012 izšla knjiga izročil Borisa Čoka *V siju mesečine* in nato leta 2015 še mnogo obsežnejša *Iz nevidne strani neba* Pavla Medveščka, se je strokovna javnost znašla pred velikanskim izzivom, kako se odzvati. Obe knjigi namreč prinašata vrsto pričevanj o organiziranem obstoju še v 20. stoletju tega, kar so pripovedovalci imenovali naša stara vera s starimi bogovi in molitvami po starem. Tehnični izraz staroverstvo se zdi v skladu s temi navedbami. Vsekakor se kaže izogniti zaničljivemu izrazu poganstvo. Ali pa se bosta v prihodnosti morda uveljavila izraza naravoverstvo ali celo rodnoverstvo, to bo pokazal čas.

Osuplosti strokovne javnosti je sledilo po eni strani iskanje kontekstov predstavljenih izročil, po drugi strani pa sistematičen dvom o njihovi avtentičnosti. Vsekakor se je zgodila tudi pomembna spodbuda pri razvoju novoreligijskih skupin v Sloveniji, ki pa jih pričujoča knjiga ne obravnava. Posveča se namreč drugim vprašanjem. Da to lahko stori, uvodoma razpravlja o vprašanju avtentičnosti in nanj pozitivno odgovori.

Na podlagi informacijskih ključev, ki jih prinašajo Čokove in Medveščkove objave, danes že vemo, da je bilo staroverstvo ohranjeno široko po Evropi najmanj do 19. stoletja, ponekod do 20. stoletja, precej verjetno je, da je kje živo tudi še v sedanjosti. V naši knjigi se ukvarjamo s staroverstvom v Sloveniji, podrobneje v zahodni Sloveniji, najpogodbeje s skupino starovercev v osrednjem Posočju, pri kateri si je Pavel Medvešček pridobil največje zaupanje in največ sogovorcev. Količina informacij, ki jih je zbral, je tolikšna, da omogoča in hkrati zahteva interdisciplinarni pristop. To skupino starovercev delovno imenujem hostarji, ker so živeli v teritorialnih enotah, ki so se imenovale hoste. Kolonizacijsko zgodovino prostora njihove naselitve obravnava posebna študija, ki nakazuje naselitev na začetku novega veka. To se ujema s hostarskim izročilom, ki hkrati pripoveduje, da so se tja priselili z vzhoda. Beseda hosta in ikonografske vzporednice religioznih upodobitev kažejo, da so prišli iz Dolenjske ali s Kozjanskega. Ker so

prišli že z izoblikovanimi priimki, obstaja možnost bodoče obsežne rodoslovne raziskave, ki bi lahko omejila prostor njihovega izvora.

Za hostarje je dovolj podatkov, da je mogoče opisati njihovo politično organiziranost. Ta ustreza obliki politične skupnosti s svojim družbenim redom, ki vključuje tako organizirano izvajanje avtoritete, tudi s prisilo, kot vzpostavljanje in vzdrževanje sodelovanja navznoter in neodvisnosti navzven. Vse to se dogaja na organizirano upravljanem skupnostnem ozemlju. Politološki koncept heterotopije kot družbenega prostora "drugosti", za katerega je značilna celota odnosov, ki etično močno presega in s tem problematizira večinski družbeni model, pojasnjuje hkratni obstoj "nevidne" družbe starovercev ob prebivalstvu in med prebivalstvom ter strukturami uradne državne oblasti, vse v istem prostoru in času.

Potem ko sprejmemo verjetnost stoletnega obstoja družbe starovercev na ozemlju krščanskih držav, se seveda postavi vprašanje, kako daleč v preteklost sega staroverstvo v Sloveniji. To bo vsekakor predmet številnih bodočih raziskav. Pričujoča knjiga raziskuje dve izhodišči. Eno je keltski Belen, ki so ga v rimskem času pogosto enačili z Apolonom. V ljudskem izročilu zahodne Slovenije pa nastopa bog Belin. Enačenje Belena in Belina se ponuja kar samo, vendar je treba upoštevati, da je Belin koledarsko povezan s krščanskim svetnikom sv. Albinom. Enačenje z Belenom zaradi procesov sinkretizma v minulih stoletjih torej ni tako zelo premočrtno, kot se zdi.

Drugo pregledano izhodišče je verovanjski sistem starih Slovanov. Mogoče je bilo izvesti primerjavo. Staroverska izročila v jugozahodni Sloveniji opisujejo sistem božanskih entitet, ki se združujejo v enotnega boga. Trije bogovi sestavljajo Triglava, štirje Svetovita, Triglav in Svetovit pa Dajboga. V vidni obliki se je Triglav ohranil med pustnimi šemami v Cerknem (zahodna Slovenija). Del njihovih odnosov je opisan in se v celoti ujema s strukturo odnosov v mitični zgodbi, ki so jo poznali stari Slovani. Ob tem tudi skrbna analiza sicer redkih srednjeveških pisnih virov o verovanjskem sistemu starih Slovanov enako pokaže vero v enega boga, ki ga sestavljajo posamezne entitete, ki zastopajo posamezne funkcije narave in življenja. Tako sestavljeno entiteto pa kažejo tudi zgodnjersrednjeveške in novoveške upodobitve iz Slovenije. Staroslovansko izhodišče staroverstva se kaže kot zelo prepričljivo. Hkrati s svojo strukturo opozarja, da je ni mogoče razložiti z znano evolucionistično teorijo o razvoju religije od animizma preko politeizma do monoteizma.

S tem smo pri religiološkem vidiku staroverstva v Sloveniji, ki ga knjiga obravnava z vidika postkrščanske teologije. Opozori na teorijo pramonoteizma, ki mnogo bolje pojasni obstoj vrhovnega boga pri starovercih. V nadaljevanju pa se analiza usmerja v povezave med človekom, naravo in njenimi silami, o čemer so staroverci nenehno govorili. Gre za to, da sebe enačimo z vsemi živimi bitji, ki živijo okoli nas in z nami, in da je med nami tudi tisto, česar ne vidimo ali ne razumemo, a to še kako deluje. Staroverci so poznali vidike okoljske etike, ki jih danes štejem za najnaprednejše.

Etični vidik staroverstva je vsekakor pomemben za preživetje človeštva tukaj in zdaj. A ob tem ima tudi svojo praktično plat. Ta kaže, da pri svetih kamnih, drevesih, vodah, gorah ni šlo samo za češčenje, ampak so imeli tudi zelo uporabno funkcijo. Ker so bila vsa našeta mesta določena ali postavljena na način, ki bi ga danes poimenovali radiestezijski, knjiga na enak način analizira nekaj izbranih lokacij v dolini Soče, ki ustvarjajo prostor, ugoden za živa bitja, ki v njem živijo. Staroverci v Posočju so pripovedovali o tretji moči, ki prihaja od spodaj, in o peti moči, ki prihaja od zgoraj. Misel, da gre za magnetizem, ze-

meljski in tisti, ki prihaja iz vesolja, preverja zadnji del knjige. Staroverci so tretjo in peto moč urejali s tročani, trikotniki svetih mest, ki jih je bilo najlažje vzpostavljati s kamni. To je bilo izhodišče za merilni poskus. Z razpoložljivo merilno opremo na geomagnetnem observatoriju z mednarodno kodo PIA (Piran, Slovenia) je bil v času enakonočja 2020 na samem začetku novega 25. solarnega cikla izmerjen vpliv treh monolitov na lokalno magnetno polje. Monolite, ki so sestavljali tročan, so postavili trije poznavalci monolitov po izročilu starovercev. Obravnavan je bil kot pasivni element za stabilizacijo lokalnega magnetnega polja ob pojavu geomagnetne nevihte. Meritve so pokazale, da obstaja možnost te stabilizacije. Natančnejše merilne naprave bodo lahko dale še bolj oprijemljive rezultate. Če vemo, da je v času magnetnih neviht precej več samomorov in infarktov, potem je skrb za tročane svetih mest vprašanje preživetja. Učinka tročanov staroverci niso znali pojasniti z izrazi sodobne fizike in medicine, vendar so ga poznali. Tako postane jasno, zakaj so ljudje tako vztrajno spravljali v obup tiste krščanske duhovnike, ki niso mogli razumeti, kaj ljudem sveta mesta pomenijo, in so bili prepričani, da gre za nagajanje hudiča. Če razumemo staroverstvo, razumemo čas in način življenja, v katerem sta bili religija in znanost še eno in isto.

Briefly about the book

(Translation)

After Christianity had swept first the Mediterranean, then Europe, and finally the whole world, its triumph seemed so self-evident that there was no basis for asking whether there was even a remote possibility that somewhere in European lands, many centuries after Christianization, the pre-Christian faith might have survived in organised form to the present day. Such a question would be comparable to asking whether one can find a Yeti on one of the great alpine ski slopes. No serious person would dare to ask it.

When first Boris Čok's book "*V siju mesečine*" (= In the Glow of the Moon) was published in 2012 and then Pavel Medvešček's much more comprehensive work "*Iz nevidne strani neba*" (= From the Invisible Side of the Sky) was published in 2015, the professional public was faced with the great challenge of how to react. Both books provide a series of testimonies of the organised existence of what the narrators called our old faith with old gods and old prayers, even in the 20th century. The technical term '*staroverstvo*' (= The Old Faith) seems consistent with these references. It is certainly worth avoiding the pejorative term paganism. Time will tell if the terms 'Nature Worship' or even 'native religion' will gain importance in the future.

The astonishment of the professional public was followed, on the one hand, by a search for the contexts of the presented traditions and, on the other hand, by a systematic questioning of their authenticity. The development of the New Religion groups in Slovenia, which are not the subject of this book, has certainly received an important impetus. It deals with other issues. To this end, it first discusses the question of authenticity and gives a positive answer to it.

With the help of the information keys from the publications of Čok and Medvešček, we now know that the Old Faith continued throughout Europe at least until the 19th century, and in some places until the 20th century, and it is quite likely that it is still alive in some places in the present. In our book, we deal with the Old Faith in Slovenia, more precisely in western Slovenia, and in particular with the group of the Old Faith people in central Posočje, where Pavel Medvešček gained the greatest trust and the most interlocutors. The amount of information he has gathered is so great that it both allows and requires an interdisciplinary approach. I refer to this group of the Old Faith people as *hostars* (sgl. *hostar* = a man of *hosta*) because they lived in territorial units called *hostas* (sgl. *hosta* = the forest). The settlement history of the territory where they lived is the subject of a separate study, which points to a settlement at the beginning of the modern period, which is consistent with the *Hostar* tradition, which at the same time states that they migrated from the east. The word *hosta* and the iconographic parallels of the religious representations suggest that they

came from Dolenjska or Kozjansko (eastern Slovenia). Since they came with surnames already formed, there is a possibility of future extensive genealogical research that could narrow down the place of their origin.

There is enough information about the *hostars* to describe their political organisation. This corresponds to a form of political community with its own social order, involving both the organised exercise of authority, including through coercion, and the creation and maintenance of internal cooperation and external independence. All this takes place in an organised and managed communal territory. The political science concept of heterotopia, as a social space of “otherness” characterised by a web of relations that ethically far exceeds and thus problematizes the social majority model, explains the simultaneous existence of an “invisible” society of the Old Faith people alongside and between the population and the structures of official state power, all in the same space and at the same time.

Having accepted the probability of the centuries-long existence of an “Old Believer” society on the territory of the Christian lands, the question naturally arises as to how far back the Old Faith goes in Slovenia. This, of course, will be the subject of much future research. The present book examines two starting points. One is the Celtic Belenus, who in Roman times was often equated with Apollo. However, in the folk tradition of western Slovenia, the god Belin is represented. The equation of Belen and Belin is obvious, but it should be remembered that Belin is calendar-linked with the Christian saint Albinus. Thus, the equation with Belen is not as strong as it seems due to the processes of syncretism in the past centuries.

The second starting point studied is the belief system of the ancient Slavs. It was possible to make a comparison. The ancient belief traditions in southwestern Slovenia describe a system of divine entities that unite into a single god. Three gods form Triglav, four form Svetovit, and Triglav and Svetovit form Dajbog. Triglav is preserved in a visible form during the carnival celebrations in Cerklje (western Slovenia). Part of their relations is described and fully corresponds to the structure of relations in the mythical story known to the ancient Slavs. At the same time, a careful analysis of the admittedly sparse mediaeval written sources on the belief system of the ancient Slavs likewise reveals a belief in a single god composed of individual entities representing the separate functions of nature and life. Such a composite entity is also shown in early mediaeval and modern representations from Slovenia. The ancient Slavic starting point of The Old Faith proves to be very convincing. At the same time, its structure indicates that it cannot be explained by the well-known evolutionist theory of the development of religion from animism through polytheism to monotheism.

This brings us to the religious aspect of the Old Faith in Slovenia, which the book discusses from the perspective of post-Christian theology. It draws attention to the theory of primordial monotheism, which much better explains the existence of a supreme God among the Old Believers. The analysis then turns to the connections between man, nature, and its forces, of which the Old Faith people spoke constantly. The point is that we identify with all living beings that live around us and with us, and that there is also what we don't see or understand among us, but it still acts. The people of the ancient faith knew aspects of environmental ethics that we now consider the most advanced.

The ethical aspect of the ancient faith is certainly important for the survival of humanity here and now. But it also has a practical side. It shows that sacred stones, trees, waters, mountains were not only for worship but also had a very useful function. Since all the sites listed were designated or built in a way that nowadays would be called radiesthetic, the book analyses in the same way some selected places in the Soča Valley that create a favourable space for the living beings that inhabit them. The ancient believers in Posočje spoke of a third force coming from below and a fifth force coming from above. The idea that this is magnetism, which comes both earthly and from space, is confirmed in the last part of the book. The ancient people of faith arranged the third and fifth forces on the basis of *tročans* (sgl. *tročan* = the structure of the three elements - water, earth, fire, often in the form of a triangle) sacred places, the easiest to build with stones. This was the starting point for the measurement experiment. Using the available measuring instruments of the geomagnetic observatory PIA (Piran, Slovenia), the influence of the three monoliths on the local magnetic field was measured at the 2020 equinox, i.e. exactly at the beginning of the new 25th solar cycle. The monoliths that composed the *tročan* were erected by three monolith experts according to the traditions of the Old Believers. They were considered a passive element to stabilise the local magnetic field in case of a geomagnetic storm. Measurements have shown that the possibility of such stabilisation exists. More precise measuring devices could provide even more tangible results. If we know that suicides and heart attacks are significantly higher during magnetic storms, then caring for sacred sites is a matter of survival. The people of the ancient faith did not know how to explain the effect of the *tročans* in terms of modern physics and medicine, but it was known to them. Thus, it becomes clear why people were so persistent to drive to despair the Christian priests, who could not understand what the holy sites meant to people and were convinced that it was a trick of the devil. When we understand the ancient faith, we understand a time and a way of life when religion and science were still one and the same.