

mirila

NEMATERIJALNA KULTURNA BAŠTINA
INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE



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Stara vjera velebitskih Podgoraca, uklesana u kamen

Andrej Pleterski

Na mirilištu naselja Kruščica, na lokaciji *Među klancin* u Tribnju (velebitsko Podgorje), najveća je koncentracija mirila s natpisnim pločama na dosad poznatim mirilištima. Izdvajaju se dvije ploče koje pripadaju mirilima MK56 i MK21 (oznake prema izdanju: Pleterski 2010, 137–148). One nisu važne samo zato što je riječ o najstarijem i najmlađem natpisu na mirilima, nego još više zbog bogatog sadržaja koji se odnosi na staru vjeru u okviru koje se razvio običaj gradnje mirila. Simptomatično je što još uvijek ne nalazimo opise tih običaja u crkvenim pisanim izvorima, što o njima postoje samo folklorni zapisi iz 20. i 21. stoljeća. Jednostavno, čini se kao da je riječ o svojevrsnoj javnoj tajni, koju znaju svi mještani, ali se o njoj ne govori. Zato nije iznenađujuće što su spomenute ploče pune slikovnih, broječnih i abecednih simbola, razumljivih svima koji su bili upoznati s pojedinostima stare vjere i istovremeno nerazumljivih onima koje te pojedinosti nisu znali. Krenemo li od premise da ispred sebe imamo natpis koji su kipari sastavili kao zagonetku, u kojoj isti znakovi istodobno imaju različita značenja, otvaraju se brojne mogućnosti. Tumačenje koje slijedi temelji se na trenutnom poznavanju starog vjerovanja i predstavlja jednu od mogućih interpretacija. Međutim, time, zbog simboličkog bogatstva obaju natpisa, njihovo značenje nikako nije iscrpljeno. Vjerujem da natpisi prikazuju više no što u ovom trenutku razumijemo. Prije svega, svjestan sam da je bitno što je autor želio reći, a ne moje razumijevanje njegovih namjera. Međutim, kako su me moji iskusniji kolege nekoć uopzorili, da bi se mogla započeti diskusija bolja je ikakva interpretacija nego nikakva, stoga predstavljam prve rezultate.

Mlađe mirilo, kako kaže natpis, pripada Ivanu Trošelj. Na lijevoj strani starije uzglavnice uklesano je slovo T. Budući da u Tribnju postoji samo sedam prezimena, a samo Trošelj počinje na T, očito i T starijeg mirila znači Trošelj. Stoga se i duga ravna crta na desnoj strani starijeg natpisa čita kao I, inicijal imena Ivan. Udaljenost između dva mirila je samo 5 m što, također, ukazuje da je riječ o pripadniku iste obitelji. To odgovara lokalnoj predaji po kojoj je u svakoj generaciji obitelji Trošelj uvijek jedan sin bio Ivan. Muškarci su glasili za odlične, prirodno nadarene zidare, graditelje koji su znali raditi s kamenom i drvom (informacija: Mira Trošelj). Stoga ću daljnje tumačenje graditi na pretpostavci da se u obitelji, iz generacije u generaciju, nisu prenosila samo obrtnička nego i bitna duhovna znanja. Ako je ta pretpostavka točna, možemo između dvaju natpisa očekivati određene sličnosti, koje se ne odnose samo na ime i prezime pokojnika.

Uzglavnica starijeg mirila MK56 izrađena je od lokalnog kamena, površina s uklesanim znakovima je neobrađena, dok je kod mlađeg mirila MK21 od dovezenog kamena, a natpis je na umjetno obrađenoj površini. Natpis mirila MK56 sastavljen je od slova, brojeva i drugih znakova koji su, zbog starosti, već prilično izbrisani i teško vidljivi (sl. 1). No, nema sumnje da je riječ o različitim simbolima. Suprotno tomu, natpis na mirilu MK21 je oskudan, formalan, s uobičajenim podacima: ime, prezime, godina rođenja, godina smrti. Ti podaci raspoređeni su pokraj prenatlaženog latinskog križa. Slova, brojke i križ obojani su crnom bojom zbog čega se prilično ističu naspram bijele podloge kamena (sl. 2). To je dnevni pogled na natpis. Približimo li mu se noću i osvjetlimo ga, uočićemo zanimljive detalje koje dnevna svjetlost i sugestivna crna boja na slovi-



sl. / Fig. 2

Mirilo MK21 podne, natpis.
Mirilo MK21, noon, inscription.

sl. / Fig. 1

Mirilo MK56, natpis.

Mirilo MK56, inscription.

sl. / Fig. 3

"Greške" u natpisu MK21

"Mistakes" in the inscription on MK21.

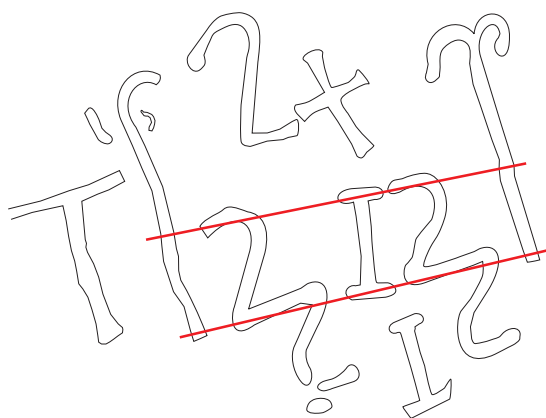
sl. / Fig. 4

Natpis MK56. Tri kozmičke razine i kruženje kozmičke vode.

Inscription on MK56. Three cosmic levels and the circling of the cosmic waters.



1



4

0 10 cm



3

ma i brojkama prikrivaju, preusmjeravajući pozornost. Sada postaju jasni oni dijelovi natpisa koji se čine kao klesareve greške ili bar nespretnosti (sl. 3). To su: popravljani N, iznimno neujednačen i ubogi Š, L i J se dodiruju, iako ima dovoljno prostora da to nije bilo nužno, spojeni R i U i posljednji broj 1 napisan vodoravnom umjesto kosom crtom. Mirilo je izradio pokojnikov sin Ivan (sada također pokojni). S obzirom na znanu spretnost Trošeljelih, potpuno je nevjerojatno da mu je, na toliko mjesta, pisanje izmaklo kontroli. Puno je vjerojatnije da „greške“ skrivaju neki sadržaj i time omogućavaju, prema pravilima anagrama, različita čitanja.

Struktura kozmosa

Prema starim predodžbama svijet je trodijelan: gornji svijet, središnji svijet gdje žive ljudi i donji svijet, podzemlje, u kojem teku vode. Vode na istoku teku prema gore i na nebu se prelijevaju u nebesku rijeku. Na zapadu, kroz otvor, prodiru u podzemlje gdje pod našim nogama nastavljaju prema istoku. Tako kruže.

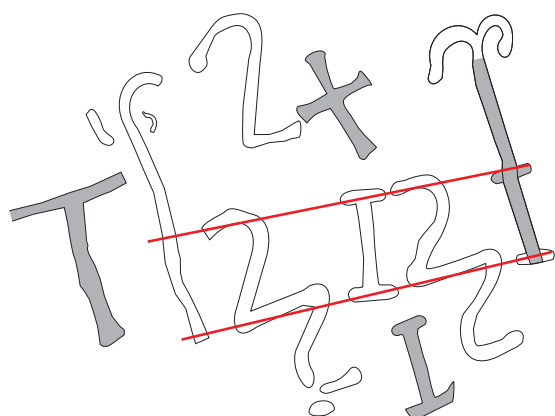
Prikaz na mirilu MK56 možemo, pomoću uklesanih poprečnih crta, rasčlaniti na tri razine (sl. 4). Donja je vodena, što pokazuje zrcalnost znakova. Volute na vrhu dugačke desne crte možemo objasniti kao izvor nebeske rijeke, što nije rijedak motiv u Dalmaciji (sl. 5). Na lijevoj strani prepoznajemo glavu zmije, s roščićem svojstvenim poskoku i otvorenim ustima koja proždiru ono što se spušta s neba. Gore, na sredini je znak koji prepoznajemo kao latinski križ i koji natpisu daje kršćanski izgled. Znak je izrazito nakošen, što ukazuje na kretanje od izvora na desnoj do otvora na lijevoj strani. Takvo je kretanje sunca od istoka prema zapadu. Međutim, čini se da postoji još jedno skrivenije značenje. Možda je, zapravo, riječ o ligaturi IT. Križ, istovremeno i slovo T, javlja se na obližnjim mirilima Krčevine u imenu KATA (sl. 6). I, ako je riječ o inicijalima IT na nebu, i zato što imamo IT također u srednjoj, zemaljskoj razini, tomu se može dodati neuobičajen oblik najnižeg znaka (sl. 7). I njega, zbog nejednakosti poprečnih crta, možemo objasniti kao ligaturu IT koja, gledano zemaljskim očima, stoji na glavi jer je to podzemni svijet. Značenje tog trostrukog zapisa inicijala IT (Ivan Trošelj) bio bi: kao što vode kozmosa nose sunce koje se uvijek prikazuje, ali i nestaje, tako će biti i s dušom Ivana Trošelja koja će se ponovno roditi u svijetu živih.

Razni Indoeuropljani znaju za troglave mitske likove. Pisac Ebo, sredinom 12. st., opisuje život bamberskog biskupa Otona kome su svećenici u Szczeczinu (Poljska) rekli zašto bog Triglav ima tri glave: *ideo summum deum tria habere capita, quoniam tria procuraret regna, id est celi terre et inferni*. - Najviši bog (Triglav) ima zato tri glave jer upravlja trima kraljevstvima, to jest nebeskim, zemaljskim i podzemnim (prijevod R. Katičić).

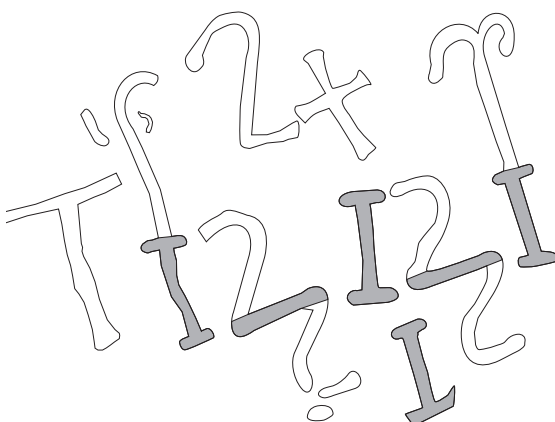
Na brojnim mirilima uklesan je trozub koji prema mišljenju mještana predstavlja trojstvo. Trozube imaju već i najstarija mirila Kruščice, a posljednji su bili uklesani najkasnije u drugoj polovici 19. st, nakon čega motiv izlazi iz uporabe. Drugi oblik prikazivanja trojnog jedinstva najvjerojatnije je bio trokutasti kamen (sl. 8). Natpis mirila MK56 ima arapske i rimske brojke. Posljednjima su zapisane jedinice. Ako ih tumačimo samo kao ravne crte, u kombinaciji s vodoravnim crtama, prikaže nam se trozub (sl. 9).



sl. / Fig. 5
Žrnovnica kod Splita. Sv. Mihovil,
reljef iznad ulaza.
Žrnovnica near Split. St Michael's,
relief above the entrance.



7 0 10 cm



9 0 10 cm

sl. / Fig. 7

Natpis MK56. Tri inicijala TI.

Inscription on MK56. Three initials TI.

sl. / Fig. 8

Mirila Kruščice. Mirilo MK26,
trokutni kamen kod glave.

*Mirila of Kruščica. Mirilo MK26,
triangular headstone.*

sl. / Fig. 9

Natpis MK56, trozub.

Inscription on MK56, trident.

sl. / Fig. 10

Natpis MK21. Datum smrti i trozub.

Inscription on MK21. Date of death and trident.



8



10

Natpisna ploča mirila MK21 nema trozuba. Noćno razgledavanje, ipak, ponovo donosi iznenađenje. Na podnožju betonske „postelje“ mirila vidimo urezan datum smrti, ali je na godini (19)71, između 7 i 1 dodana crta, koja ovdje nikako ne pripada. „Greška“ poprima smisao upravo ako ta sedmica također prikazuje trozub (sl. 10).

I kada ustanovimo da upravo „greške“ tog mirila zapisuju skrivena značenja, otvaraju se neke daljnje znakovne kombinacije koje bi mogle biti skriveni zapis. Spajanje R i U u B potpuno je očito. Ako je to istina, onda i L i J nisu spojeni zbog nespretnosti, nego najvjerojatnije oponašaju malo G (kombinacija malih i velikih, te tiskanih i pisanih slova višestruko se ponavlja na mirilima). Dodamo li samo još srednji O iz prezimena, dobit ćemo riječ BOG (sl. 11). Nakon toga možemo i neobično Š, jako naglašenog gornjeg dijela i posve zakržljalog donjeg, čitati kao G. Početak donjeg reda tada glasi TROG. I ako nastavimo dalje, u smjeru kruženja kozmičkih voda pružaju se još L, A i V (sl. 12), što čini TROGLAV. Ili u kombinaciji s prijašnjim čitanjem i trozubom: BOG TROGLAV.

Brojevi (sl. 13)

Natpis mirila MK56 ima četiri rimska I i više arapskih brojeva. Ako poprečnu crtu na I tumačimo kao da ima vrijednost jedinice, upadljivo je ponavljanje 1 i 7: 17171717. Možemo ih rastaviti na 17 17 17 17 (sl. 14). Može se čitati u svim smjerovima. Broj 17 pojavljuje se i zbrojimo li, jednostavno, sve brojke na natpisu: $(1 \times 2) + (4 \times 1) + (4 \times 7) = 34 = 2 \times 17$. Popis mogućih matematičkih i simboličnih značenja broja 17 bio bi dug više stranica. Ovdje navodim samo dvije zanimljivosti. Prema *Knjizi ravnoteža*, alkemičara i sufija Jábira ibn Hayyâna, broj 17 osnova je teorije ravnoteža; u Italiji je 17 nesretan broj jer anagram rimskog 17 - XVII glasi VIXI „živio sam“, dakle preneseno, „mrtav sam“.

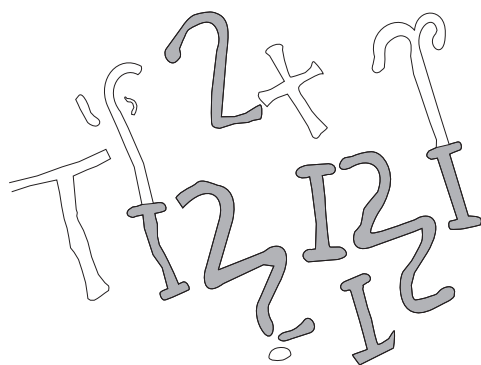
Ipak, treba priznati da sedmice ideograma možemo čitati i kao dvojke, što otvara niz različitih čitanja, u kojim su sedmice, kao i dvojke, uspravne ili okrenute naglavačke te u različitim rasporedima 22, 77, 27, 72 (sl. 15), 121212 (sl. 16). Možemo ih rastaviti na 12 12 12. To bi moglo objasniti izdvojeno 2 na vrhu ideograma. Odlučimo li se za simetrično čitanje, dobit ćemo datum zimskog solsticija 12 21 (sl. 17) koji uzima u obzir i opća orijentacija mirila.

Na mirilu MK21 vidimo da je „ispravljeni“ N sastavljen od IXI (sl. 18). Dodamo li tomu i slovo V iz imena, čitamo VIXI, u anagramu XVII ili 17, isti elementi koje smo imali na mirilu MK56. Oba natpisa stoga poručuju da je Ivan Trošelj umro. Međutim, „ispravljeni“ N nudi još mogućnosti. Pogled na I ukazuje da bi ime Ivan trebalo čitati i s desna na lijevo, dakle NAVI. I nastavljamo u sljedeći red s „nespretnima“ L i J kao G, dobivamo GE. Za gramatički ispravan oblik 3. lica konjunktiva prezenta latinskog glagola *navigare* sada nam nedostaje samo T, što je, naravno, početak prezimena (sl. 19). Izražava se htijenje: *neka plovi* - isto kao križ, odnosno IT, koji plovi po nebeskim vodama, kako nam kazuje mirilo MK56. Vjerojatna veza riječi je sljedeća: [Ivan Trošelj] VIXI, [Ivan Trošelj] NAVIGET. Isto tako, mirilo MK21 izjednačava pokojnika sa suncem, onaj koji umre (VIXI) i ponovo se rodi te zaplovi nebom (NAVIGET).



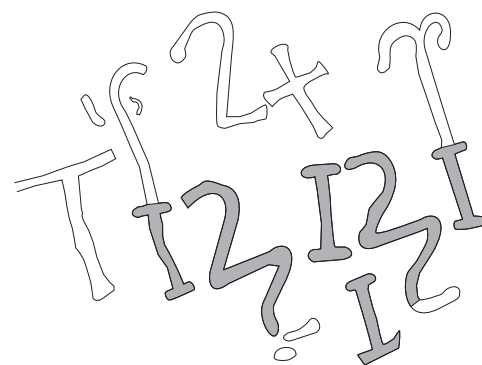
sl. / Fig. 6

Mirila Krčevine. Križ, istodobno i T u imenu Kata.
Mirila of Krčevina. Cross, also the T in the name Kata.



13

0 10 cm



14

0 10 cm

sl. / Fig. 13

Natpis MK56. Brojke.

Inscription on MK56. Numbers.

sl. / Fig. 14

Natpis MK56.

Ponavljanje broja 17.

Inscription on MK56.

Repeating the number 17.

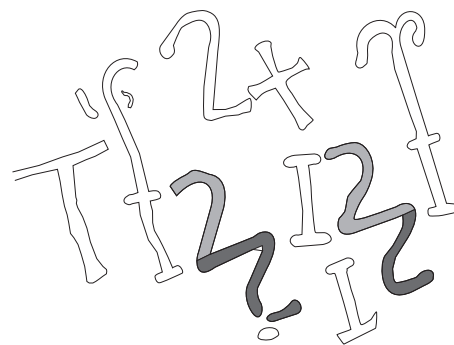
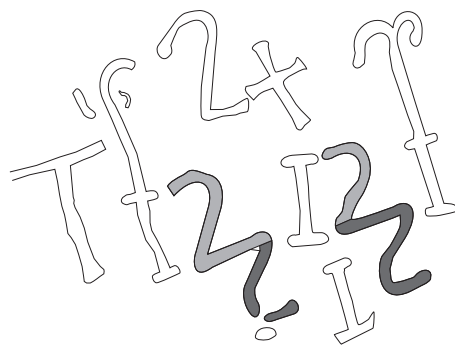
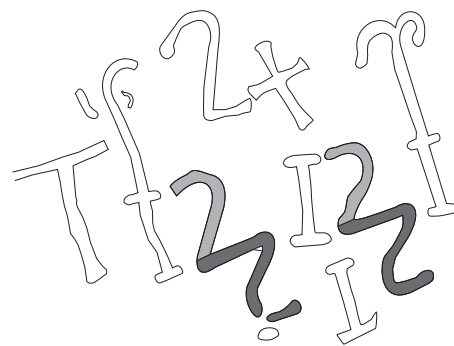
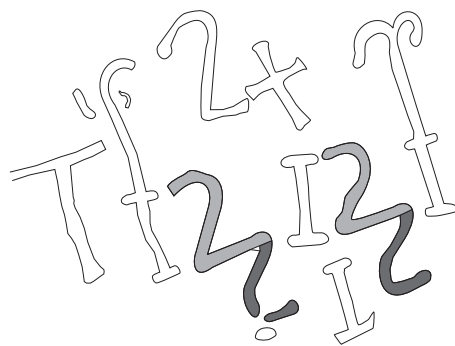
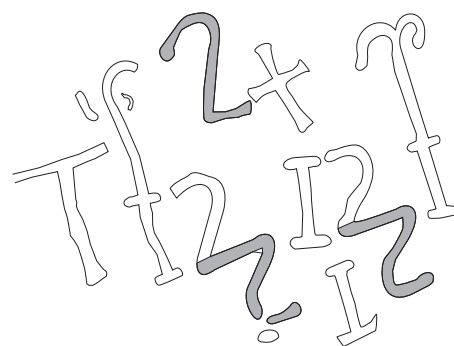
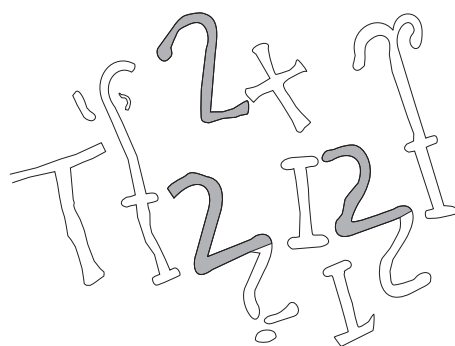
sl. / Fig. 15

Natpis MK56.

Različite kombinacije brojeva.

Inscription on MK56.

Various combinations of numbers.



15

0 10 cm

Kako Podgorjani znaju latinske riječi, ako ih nisu učili u školi? Zanimarimo li mogućnost da je nešto latinskih riječi usvojio svatko tko je išao u crkvu, znanje primitivnog latinskog očuvalo se i kroz generacije. Podgorci i danas broje ovce na tom jeziku (informacija Mira Trošelj).

Graditeljstvo

Istraživanja ranosrednjovjekovne arhitekture u Dalmaciji pokazala su važnost broja 17 u graditeljstvu. Prvi je na nju ukazao Mladen Pejaković, a dokazali su je Željko Peković i Ante Milošević kod modularne analize crkve Sv. Spasa na Cetini. U kvadratu sa stranicom od 12 stopa, dijagonala iznosi skoro točno 17 stopa. Zapravo je 16,97 stopa, što je tako mala razlika da su je tadašnji graditelji odlučili zanemariti. S polumjerom kružnice dužine 17 rimskih stopa moguće je sastaviti graditeljski nacrt po kojem je bio izgrađen Sv. Spas (Milošević, Peković 2009, 248–255).

Saznajemo li time i značenje brojeva 12 i 17 na natpisnom kamenu mirila MK56? Postoje stvarne indicije za potvrdu ove teze. Okomite i vodoravne crte natpisa postavljene su tako da stvaraju privid pravokutnika (sl. 20). Njegova je osnovica jednako duga kao i udaljenost između vrha križa i donjeg kraja najnižeg znaka, nebeskog i podzemnog IT-a (pogledaj gore). Pri tome vodoravna crta siječe okomicu kod $1/3$ visine i dijeli ju na dva dijela koji imaju omjere $1/3 : 2/3$, što je jednako omjerima koje ima prelomljena prostorna os obaju mirilišta (sl. 21). Tako definiramo kvadrat čija je dijagonala jednaka širini cijelog natpisa i iznosi 1 rimsku stopu, *pes romanus*. Danas je širina natpisa od dužine rimske stope (296,20 mm) kraća par milimetara, a najvjerojatnije je pri klesanju slova T odletio rub ploče. Dakle, planirana širina bila je potpuno pravilna. Natpis, stoga, nema samo algebarsku već i geometrijsku poruku.

Uzmemo li sada kao množitelj broj 2, i s njim pomnožimo 17, dobijemo 34, što je isti broj koji smo dobili zbrajanjem svih brojeva. Govori li nam natpis da obratimo pozornost na kvadrat sa stranicom 34 rimske stope? To znači kvadrat sa stranicom od 10,07 m, a to je pak veličina kvadrata na kojem leže najstarija mirila Kruščice (sl. 22). Ako je ovo podudaranje namjerno, onda je natpisna ploča ujedno i plan izgradnje mirilišta.

Čine li nam se gornja objašnjenja moguća i natpis položimo na nacrt mirilišta, naći ćemo pojašnjenje položaja prvih mirila nastalih izvan zacrtanog kvadrata (sl. 23). Njihov položaj nalazi se na mjestu slova T izvan kvadrata natpisa. Ako je to mjesto dobro za slovo T, dobro je i za mirila. Pojašnjen je izdvojen položaj mirila MK29, MK61, MK62, ali i manjih mirila na sjeveroistočnoj strani. Križ na natpisu stoji u prostoru puta, znači gibanja, susjedno mirilu Ivana Trošelja, što je u skladu s gornjim objašnjenjima tog znaka. Dakle, natpis su upotrebljavali i kao likovni nacrt mirilišta. To nije bilo teško jer ga se još uvijek može vidjeti svaki dan.

Kako su se suvremenici mogli ravnati po nacrtu? Vrlo je vjerojatno da je barem nekoćini ideja nacрта bila znana. Uz to, svoje su znanje mogli obnoviti svaki put kada su prošli pored natpisnog kamena.

Tražimo li sadržajne paralele između natpisa obaju mirila (MK56 in MK21), tada i neuobičajeni 1, mirila MK21 koji po svemu oponaša 7, postane smislen (sl. 18). Stoji ispod 2 i s njim čini 27. Uz to, dobijemo i par 12 i 17, koji kao i 27, sadrži i ideogram prvog Ivana.



sl. / Fig. 11
Natpis MK56. Natpis BOG.
Inscription on MK56.
Inscription BOG (GOD).

sl. / Fig. 12
Natpis MK56. Natpis TROGLAV.
Inscription on MK56.
Inscription TROGLAV
(THREE-HEADED).

Broj 27 simbolično je iznimno moćan jer predstavlja čarobnu formulu **3 x 9**. Pozivanje 27 dana sideričnog mjeseca je urok koji su upotrebljavali i za to da se vrate oni koji su otišli. Naime, radi se o dužini mjeseca koja se ne mjeri mjesečevim mjenama, već „kretanjem“ mjeseca po horizontu. Nakon 27 dana mjesec koji svaki dan izlazi i zalazi drugdje se vrati na staro mjesto. Tako kao što umire i oživljava mjesec, tako kao što se vraća, tako nek se vrate pokojni, odnosno putnici.

Datum smrti

Ideogram mirila MK56 možda sadrži i godinu smrti 1717 i još precizniji datum 7. 17. (sl. 24). Kronološka analiza mirilišta pokazala je da mirilo pripada među tri najstarija i svakako je nastalo oko 1700. godine. U obzir bi došla i 1712. godina. Jesu li u donjem, okrenutom dijelu natpisa doista dan i mjesec smrti, vjerojatno je, ali ne i nužno. I tu je više mogućih čitanja: uz 7. 17. još 21. 2., 2. 12., pa čak i 7. 12. Bilo bi logično da je jedan od navedenih datuma i točan datum smrti ili barem toliko približan da je autor došao na ideju kako prigodne prikladne brojke uključiti u zapis. Je li pri tom neku od njih prepravio, ne znamo.

Po svemu navedenom, više se datum smrti Ivana Trošelj 1717 7. 17. na nadgrobniku ne čini nužno jednoznačan. Odstranimo li iz datuma 1 i 7, odnosno 17, koji se u natpisu ponavlja, dobijemo datum 17. 7. 71. I najmlađe mirilo MK21 na mirilištu, isto tako, pripada Ivanu Trošelju koji je umro - 17. 7. 71 što je urezano u beton „postelje“ (sl. 10). Slučajnost?! S matematičkog gledišta to je jako mala mogućnost. Razlog se mora tražiti u kulturi, odnosno svjesnom utjecaju na podudaranje datuma. Barem u obiteljskoj predaji 17. srpanj 1971. pravi je datum smrti Ivana Trošlja (informacija: Mira Trošelj).

Strukturalne veze između natpisa mirila MK56 i MK21 prilično su uvjerljive i pokazuju stara znanja obitelji Trošelj. Tim znanjima pripadnici obitelji nisu organizirali samo svoj život, nego i život svoje zajednice. Zato se najmanje prvi Ivan Trošelj prikazuje i kao svojevrsni kolega starih rimskih svećenika *Pontifex*-a.

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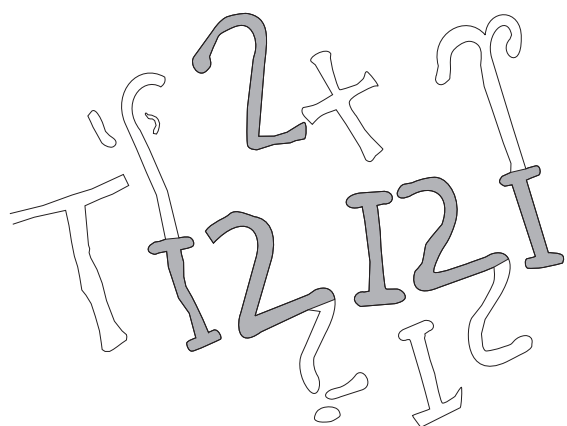
The Old Faith of the People of Podgorje under Velebit, Carved in Stone

Andrej Pleterski

The site of the *mirila* that belong to the village of Kruščica lies on the *Među klancin* locality in Tribanj (in Podgorje, the region of the Velebit foothills). It has the greatest concentration of inscribed *mirila* known so far. Especially outstanding are two stone slabs belonging to the *mirila* MK56 and MK21 (marked according to the book: Pleterski 2010, 137–148). Their importance lies not only in the fact that their inscriptions are the oldest and newest on the site, but even more in the rich content of the inscriptions that refers to the old faith under whose wing the custom of building *mirila* developed. It is symptomatic that written church sources still have no descriptions of this custom, and that the only existing folklore records about them date from the 20th and the 21st century. Their existence seems like a kind of open secret, one that everybody knows about but does not talk of. Thus it is not surprising that the slabs mentioned above are full of picture, number and letter symbols which anyone who knew the details of the old faith could understand, but no one unacquainted with these details could grasp. Many possibilities open up if we assume that we are dealing with inscriptions that their sculptors wrote as an encryption, in which the same signs can have different meanings depending on the context in which they are approached. The interpretation that follows is based on current knowledge of the old faith and represents only one possible reading. It does not in any way exhaust the meaning of either of the two inscriptions, whose symbolical wealth is very great. I believe that the inscriptions show more than we can at this moment understand. Moreover, I am aware that it is what their author wanted to say that is essential, not my understanding of his intentions. Nevertheless, as my more experienced colleagues once told me, for a discussion even to begin any interpretation is better than none, so I present the first results.

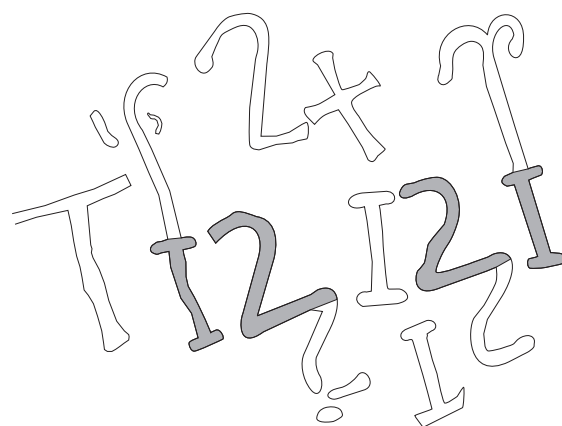
The newer *mirilo*, as the inscription shows, belongs to Ivan Trošelj. The left side of the older headstone has the carved letter *T*. As there are only seven surnames in Tribanj, and only Trošelj begins with the letter *T*, obviously the *T* on the older *mirilo* also means Trošelj. Thus the long straight line on the right side of the older inscription is read as *I*, the initial of the name Ivan. The two *mirila* are only 5 m apart, which also indicates members of the same family. This corresponds with the local tradition whereby one son in every generation of the Trošelj family was always called Ivan. The men of the family were known as excellent, naturally gifted masons who were experts in working with stone and wood (information supplied by Mira Trošelj). Thus my further interpretation will be grounded on the assumption that it was not only skill in craftsmanship that was carried down in families from generation to generation, but also essential knowledge of a spiritual nature. If this assumption is right, we can expect certain similarities between the two inscriptions that go beyond the name and surname of the deceased.

The *headstone* of the older *mirilo* MK56 was made of local stone and the surface with the carved signs was not dressed, while in the case of the newer *mirilo* MK21 the stone was imported and the inscription was made on an artificially smoothed surface. The inscription on *mirilo* MK56 consists of letters, numbers and other signs which are,



16

0 10 cm



17

0 10 cm



18



19

sl. / Fig. 16

Natpis MK56. Ponavljanje broja 12.

Inscription on MK56. Repeating the number 12.

sl. / Fig. 17

Natpis MK56. datum zimskog solsticija.

Inscription on MK56. Date of the winter solstice.

sl. / Fig. 18

Natpis MK21. Natpis VIXI i brojevi 12, 17, 27.

Inscription on MK21. Inscription VIXI and the numbers 12, 17, 27.

sl. / Fig. 19

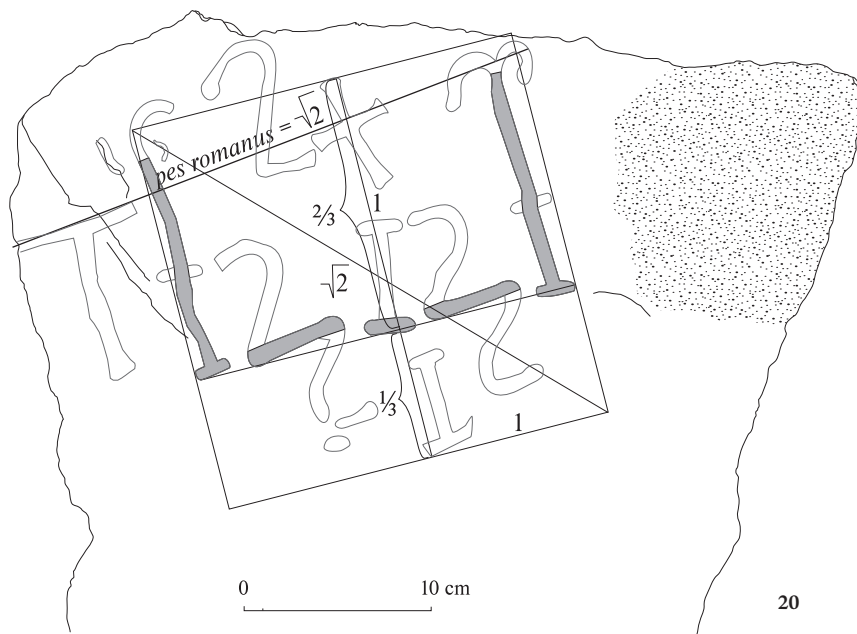
Natpis MK521. Natpis NAVIGET.

Inscription on MK521. Inscription NAVIGET.

sl. / Fig. 20

Natpis MK56. Kvadrat i dužina rimske stope.

Inscription on MK56. Square and length of Roman foot.



20

because of their age, already rather worn and difficult to make out (Fig. 1). However, there is no doubt that the symbols differ. On the other hand, the inscription on *mirilo* MK21 is sparse, formal, and contains the usual data: name, surname, year of birth, year of death. These data are distributed beside an overemphasised Latin cross. The letters, numbers and cross are painted black, so they stand out strongly against the white background of the stone (Fig. 2). This is what the inscription looks like by day. However, if we look at it at night and illuminated, we notice interesting details which the daylight and the strong black paint on the letters and numbers conceal by drawing attention to themselves. We can make out parts of the inscription that seem like the stone mason's mistakes or at least clumsiness (Fig. 3). These are: the repaired *N*, the very irregular and sparse *Š*, the mutually touching *L* and *J* although there is enough room not to make this necessary, the joined *R* and *U*, and the last number *1* written with a horizontal top line instead of with a slanting one. The *mirilo* was made by the deceased's son Ivan (now deceased, as well). Considering the great carving skill of the Trošelj men, it is completely unconvincing that the writing went out of control in so many places. It is much more probable that the "mistakes" hide some kind of meaning and thus enable, by applying the rules for the creation of anagrams, different readings.

The structure of the universe

According to the old understanding, the world is threefold: the upper world, the middle world where people live, and the subterranean underworld, where the waters run. In the east the waters run upward and, reaching the sky, pour into the celestial river. In the west they sink down through a hole and enter the underworld, where they continue eastward under our feet. Thus they flow in a circle.

Using the carved transversal lines, we can divide the scene on *mirilo* MK56 in three levels (Fig. 4). The bottom level is water, as shown by the mirror images of the signs. The scrolls on top of the long line on the right can be explained as the source of the celestial river, which is not a rare motif in Dalmatia (Fig. 5). On the left side we recognise the head of a snake, with a horn like on a nose-horned viper (*vipera ammodytes*) and an open mouth that is swallowing what descends from the sky. In the top level, in the middle, is a sign we recognise as a Latin cross, which gives the inscription a Christian appearance. The sign is visibly slanted, which indicates movement from the source on the right to the opening on the left side. This is like the movement of the sun from east to west. However, there may be another meaning, even more hidden. It may, in fact, be the ligature *IT*. A cross, at the same time also representing the letter *T*, appears on the nearby *mirila* of Krčevina in the name *KATA* (Fig. 6). And, if these are indeed the initials *IT* in the sky, and because we also have *IT* in the middle, earthly level, we may add to this the unusual shape of the lowest sign (Fig. 7). It, too, because of the unequal transversal lines, can be interpreted as the ligature *IT* which, seen with earthly eyes, is inverted because this is the underworld. The meaning of this triple appearance of the initials *IT* (Ivan Trošelj) would be: as the cosmic waters carry the sun, which always appears but also disappears, so it shall be with the soul of Ivan Trošelj, which will be reborn in the world of the living.

Various Indo-European peoples had three-headed mythical beings. In the middle of the 12th century, the writer Ebo described the life of Bishop Otto of Bamberg, who was told by the priests in Szczecin (Poland) why the god Triglav¹ had three heads: *ideo summum deum tria habere capita, quoniam tria procuraret regna, id est celi terre et inferni*. – The supreme god (Triglav) has three heads because he rules three realms, celestial, earthly and infernal.

Many *mirila* have a carved trident which the local population see as a representation of the trinity. The oldest *mirila* in Krušćica have tridents, and the last were carved no later than in the second half of the 19th century, after which this motif was no longer used. Another way of showing triple unity was probably the triangular stone (Fig. 8). The inscription on *mirilo* MK56 has Arabic and Roman numbers. The latter were used to write the *ones*. If we interpret them as straight lines, in combination with the horizontal lines, we get a trident (Fig. 9).

The inscribed slab of *mirilo* MK21 has no trident. However, the night view again brings a surprise. On the concrete “bed” of the *mirilo* we see the carved date of death, but a line was added between the 7 and the 1 in the year (19)71 that by no means belongs here. The “mistake” makes sense if this *seven* also shows a trident (Fig. 10).

Having seen that it is the “mistakes” on this *mirilo* that show hidden meanings, there are some further combinations of signs that could also be a hidden entry. The *R* and *U* joined into a *B* is completely obvious. If this is so, then the *L* and *J* have not been joined because of clumsiness, but probably to imitate the lower case *G* (the combination of lower case and upper case, and printed and handwritten letters is repeated on many *mirila*). If we add to this the middle *O* from the surname, we will get the word *BOG* (Fig. 11).² We can also read the unusual letter Š, with a greatly emphasised upper part and completely miniature bottom part, as *G*. The beginning of the bottom row is then read as *TROG*. If we continue, in the direction of the circling cosmic waters, we then have *L*, *A* and *V* (Fig. 12), which makes *TROGLAV*. Or, in combination with the earlier reading and the trident: *BOG TROGLAV*.

Numbers (Fig. 13)

The inscription on *mirilo* MK56 has four Roman number *I*'s and several Arabic numbers. If we interpret the transversal line on the letter *I* as giving a Roman *one*, we have a striking repetition of *1*s and *7*s: 17171717. We can divide this into 17 17 17 17 (Fig. 14). This can be read in all directions. Number 17 also appears if we simply add up all the numbers in the inscription: $(1 \times 2) + (4 \times 1) + (4 \times 7) = 34 = 2 \times 17$. It would take several pages to list all the possible mathematical and symbolical meanings of the number 17. Here I give only two interesting points. According to the *Book of Balance* by the alchemist and Sufi Jābira ibn Hayyāna, number 17 is the basis of the theory of balance; in Italy 17 is an unlucky number because an anagram of the Roman 17 - XVII - is VIXI, “I lived”, therefore, figuratively, “I am dead”.

¹ Triglav, Troglav means “three-headed” – translator’s note.

² GOD – translator’s note.

We could also read the *sevens* in the ideogram as *twos*, which opens up many different readings in which the *sevens*, and also the *twos*, are upright or turned upside-down and in various combinations: 22, 77, 27, 72 (Fig. 15), 121212 (Fig. 16). We can divide them as 12 12 12. This could explain the separate 2 at the top of the ideogram. If we decide on a symmetrical reading, we get the date of the winter solstice 12 21 (Fig. 17), which is also reflected in the general orientation of the *mirila*.

On *mirilo* MK21 we see that the “corrected” *N* is composed of *IXI* (Fig. 18). If we add to this the letter *V* from the name, we read *VIXI*, an anagram of *XVII* or 17, the same elements that we had on *mirilo* MK56. Both the inscriptions, therefore, say that Ivan Trošelj died. However, the “corrected” *N* offers more options. Its *II* view suggests that the name Ivan should be read from right to left, as *NAVI*. And if we continue into the following row, reading the “clumsy” *L* and *J* as *G*, we get *GE*. All that is still needed for the grammatically correct form of the 3rd person of the present subjunctive mood of the Latin verb *navigare* is a *T*, which is, of course, the beginning of the surname (Fig. 19). This expresses a desire: *may he sail* – just like the cross and the *IT* are sailing on the celestial waters on *mirilo* MK56. The probable links between the words is the following: [Ivan Trošelj] *VIXI*, [Ivan Trošelj] *NAVIGET*. *Mirilo* MK21 also equalises the deceased with the sun, he who dies (*VIXI*) is born again and sails the sky (*NAVIGET*).

How do the people of Podgorje know Latin words if they did not learn them at school? Putting aside that everyone who went to church learned several Latin words, the knowledge of primitive Latin has also passed down from generation to generation. The people of Podgorje still count sheep in that language (information supplied by Mira Trošelj).

Architecture

Research into the early medieval architecture of Dalmatia showed the importance of the number 17 in architecture. Mladen Pejaković was the first to suggest this, and Željko Peković and Ante Milošević proved it in the modular analysis of the church of St Saviour on the Cetina. In a square whose side is 12 feet, the diagonal is almost exactly 17 feet. It is actually 16.97 feet, which is a negligible difference that the architects of that time decided to ignore. Using a circle whose radius is 17 Roman feet, it is possible to compose the architectural design according to which St Saviour was built (Milošević, Peković 2009, 248–255).

Does this show the significance of the numbers 12 and 17 on the inscription stone of *mirilo* MK56, too? There are real indications that confirm this hypothesis. The vertical and horizontal lines of the inscription are placed to create the illusion of a square (Fig. 20). Its side equals the distance from the top of the cross to the bottom of the lowest sign, from the top of the celestial level to the bottom of the underground *IT* (see above). Furthermore, the horizontal line crosses the vertical line at 1/3 of its height and divides it in two parts of 1/3 : 2/3, which is the same as the ratios on the broken spatial axes of the two *mirila* locations (Fig. 21). This defines a square whose diagonal equals the width of the entire inscription and its length is 1 Roman foot, *pes romanus*. Today the width of the inscription is several millimetres shorter than the length of a Roman foot (296.20 mm), and the edge of the slab was probably damaged when the letter *T* was carved. However, the planned width was completely regular. Thus the inscription does not have only an algebraic but also a geometric message.

sl. / Fig. 21

Mirila Kruščice i Korita.

Osnove prostornog uređenja.

1 – mjerna jedinica,

2 – smjer niza mirila,

3 – mjerna linija.

Mirila of Kruščica and Korito.

Basics of spatial plan.

1 – measuring unit,

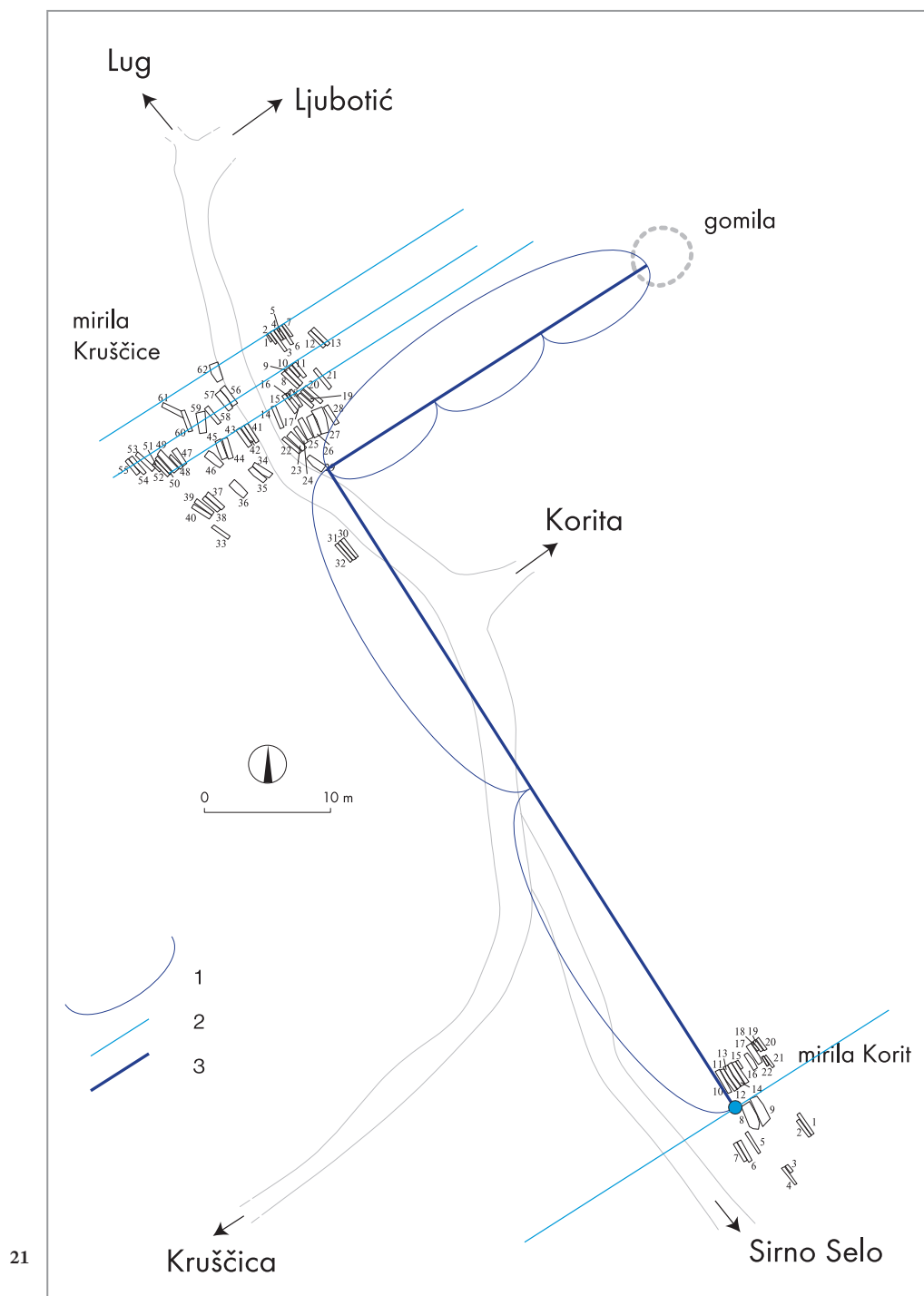
2 – direction of a row of mirila,

3 – measuring line.

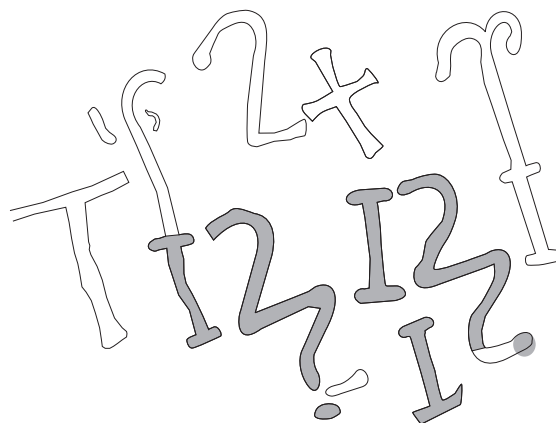
sl. / Fig. 24

Natpis MK56. Datum smrti.

Inscription on MK56. Date of death.



21



24

0 10 cm

If we multiply 17 by 2, we get 34, which is what we got by adding up all the numbers. Does the inscription tell us to pay attention to a square whose side is 34 Roman feet? This means a square of 10.08 m, which is the size of the square within which the oldest *mirila* in Kruščica were made (Fig. 22). If this correspondence is intentional, then the inscription slab also contains the plan for laying out the *mirila* site.

If we find the above explanations plausible, and place the inscription on top of the plan of the *mirila* site, we find a reason for the position of the first *mirila* that were made outside the square (Fig. 23). They were made in the same place as the letter *T* outside the inscription square. If this position is fitting for the letter *T*, it is also fitting for the *mirila*. This explains the detached position of *mirila* MK29, MK61, MK62, and also of the smaller *mirila* on the north-eastern side. The cross on the inscription coincides with the position of the path, i.e. of movement, which is right beside the *mirilo* of Ivan Trošelj. This agrees with the above explanations of that sign. Therefore, people also used the inscription as a graphic plan of the *mirilia* site. This was not difficult, because it can still be seen every day.

How could contemporaries follow the plan? Very probably at least some of them knew the idea behind it. Besides, they could refresh their knowledge every time they passed beside the inscribed stone.

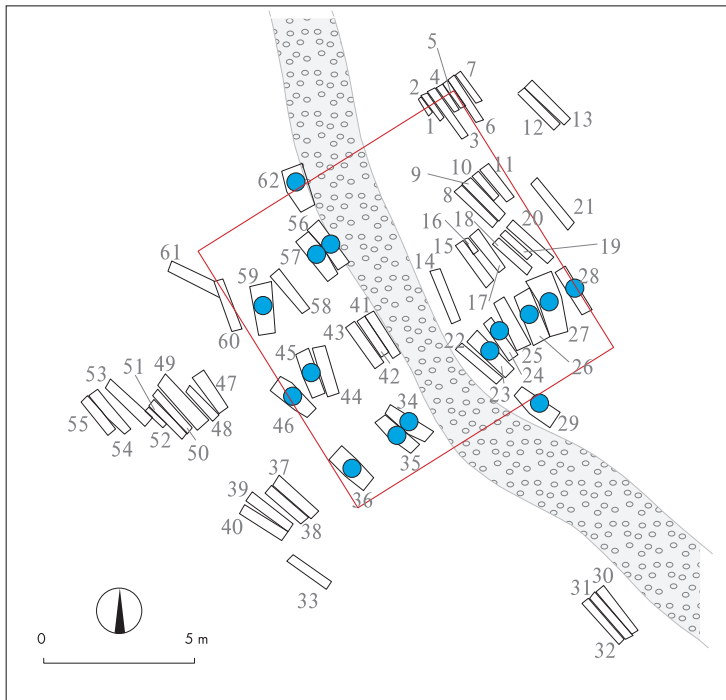
If we seek for parallels in the content of the inscriptions on the two *mirila* (MK56 and MK21), then the unusual number 1 on *mirilo* MK21, which is a complete imitation of number 7, begins to make sense (Fig. 18). It stands under the 2 and together they make 27. Additionally, we get the pairs 12 and 17, which, like 27, are also contained in the ideogram of the first Ivan.

Number 27 has extremely powerful symbolism because it represents the magic formula 3×9 . Invoking the 27 days of the sidereal month is a spell which was also used to bring back the dead. It is the length of the month not measured by the phases of the moon but by the “movement” of the moon on the horizon. After 27 days the moon, which rises and sets in a different place every day, comes back to the original place. Thus, as the moon dies and revives, as it returns, so let those who have died, travellers, return.

Date of death

The ideogram on *mirilo* MK56 may also show the year of death 1717, and an even more precise date, 7. 17. (Fig. 24). A chronological analysis of the *mirila* site showed that this *mirilo* is one of the three oldest and was certainly made in about 1700. The year 1712 is another possibility. It is probable, but not certain, that the bottom, upside-down part of the inscription shows the day and month of death. Here, too, there are several possible readings: besides 7. 17, it could also be 21. 2, 2. 12, and even 7. 12. It would be logical for one of these to be the exact date of death, or at least close enough to give the author the idea of including the apt numbers in the inscription. We do not know whether, in doing so, he changed any of them.

All this suggests that Ivan Trošelj's date of death on the headstone, 1717 7. 17, is not necessarily clearly defined. If we remove the 1 and the 7 from the date, i.e. the 17, which is repeated in the inscription, we get the date 17. 7. 71. The newest *mirilo* on the site,



22

sl. / Fig. 22

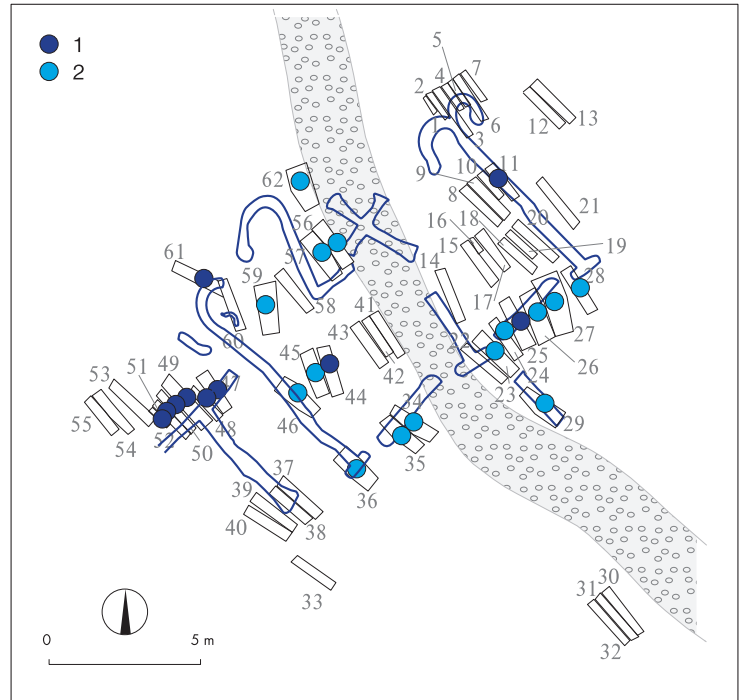
Mirila Kruščica. Kvadrat 10 x 10 m i mirila nastala do 1789.

Mirila of Kruščica. Square of 10 x 10 m and the *mirila* made before 1789.

sl. / Fig. 23

Mirila Kruščica. Ideogram natpisa MK56 i starija mirila. 1 – mirila nastala poslije 1789. i do 1818., 2 – mirila nastala do 1789.

Mirila of Kruščica. Ideogram of inscription on MK56 and older *mirila*. 1 – *mirila* made between 1789 and 1818, 2 – *mirila* made before 1789.



23

MK21, belongs to an Ivan Trošelj who died on 17. 7. 71, which is carved in the concrete of the “bed” (Fig. 10). Coincidence?! Mathematically, the possibility is very small. The reason should be sought in culture, i.e. in the conscious intent for the dates to coincide. According to family tradition, Ivan Trošelj died on 17 July 1971 (information supplied by Mira Trošelj).

The structural links between the inscriptions on the *mirila* MK56 and MK21 are rather convincing and show the old knowledge of the Trošelj family. The family members did not organise only their own lives around this knowledge, but also the life of their community. This is why the first Ivan Trošelj, at least, can also be looked on as a kind of colleague of the old Roman priests, *pontiffs*.

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