

RITUALS AND CUSTOMS ALONG THE KOLPA (BELA KRAJINA)

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When compared to the numerous and thorough studies of other regions of Slovenia, scholarship concerning the rituals and customs of Bela krajina is not at all extensive. Still, there are sources of primary observations and ethnographic analyses which can be consulted. An early description of folklore in this area is found in Johann Weichard Valvasor's *Die Ehre des Herzogthums Crain* (I-IV; Laibach-Nürnberg, 1689); this work contains a wealth of information on ethnic symbiosis of the original Slovene population and the refugees who fled across the Kolpa from the Turkish-occupied territories of Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia (*Uskoci*).¹ And several later Slovene writers, many of them educated Belokranjci themselves, produced a considerable body of literature on this archaic Slovene ethnographic area. For example, the compilations of folklore phenomena by Ivan Navratil, Janko Barle, Ivan Šašelj, Niko Županič, Martin Malnerič, Lojze Župance, offer a storehouse of primary material on this region.² It is their data which was later integrated in such all-Slovene ethnographic-folklore syntheses as Rajko Ložar's *Narodopisje Slovencev*, Metod Turnšek's *Pod vernim krovom*,³ Vinko Möderndorfer's *Verovanja, uvere in običaji Slovencev*,⁴ Vilko Novak's *Slovenska ljudska kultura*,⁵ and Niko Kuret's *Praznično leto Slovencev*.⁶

This paper will treat three aspects of the folklore of Bela krajina and certain corresponding phenomena in the Gorski kotar area just across the Kolpa/Kupa river: (1) remnants of traditional demonology and ritual protection against semi-supernatural village witches; (2) beliefs concerning the future, fertility and death; and (3) domestic rituals and village processions during major holidays.⁷

Not all survivals of traditional demonology have been eliminated by the modernizing developments of the last eighty years. Everyday language contains references to, if not belief in, the devil (*vrag*), e.g., *Kaj, vraga, delaš tukaj!* ("What the devil are you doing here!") or *Vse gre k vragu!* ("Everything's going to the devil!"). And until World War II (and possibly today in the most remote villages) there was residual belief in human witches, called *coprnice*,⁸ who were thought to sneak into stalls, to steal milk from cows, and to be generally harmful to livestock. For this reason hambones from the Easter meal were buried in a cross formation under the stable threshold. If this was done, no *coprnica* could cross the threshold until the bones disintegrated completely. And, conversely, if someone were to dig the bones up and steal them, the farm animals might be in danger of disease or death during the coming year.⁹

Both mythological witches and those "known" in the village were thought to abound during the period between December 24 and January 6. If someone suspected that one or more *coprnice* were active in his village, he had a means to find out the witch's identity (in Croatian Zagorje as well as in Slovenia): he would make a tripod stool (*stolček*) between St. Lucija's Day (*Lucijino*, December 13) and Christmas (*Božič*) and take it to Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve.¹⁰ In Bela krajina, the tripod was made sometimes of three, sometimes nine kinds of wood.¹¹ Carrying three beans in his pocket, the maker of the stool took it to mass. There he placed it in front of the church doors and, when he stood on it, those women who turned their faces to look were thought to be witches. There were alternative methods which could be used; for

example, if a man took a cross from a grave, punched out the knots in the wood, and then went to church and looked through the holes he was supposed to be able to see all the witches there. Still another means of discovering witches reported in Bela krajina involved wearing clothing made during the twelve days between St. Lucija and Christmas. According to local lore, if on Christmas Eve a person wore such clothing inside out and went to the nearest crossroads, witches, who allegedly congregated at crossroads, could be seen immediately. While belief in *coprnice* and the means of learning their identity has all but died out in modern Bela krajina, the use of special magic charms to ward off the influence of the evil eye spell (*urok*) has not altogether disappeared.¹²

There are a number of superstitions concerning the future, fertility and death which are indicative of the folklore of Bela krajina (and to some extent of other areas as well). For example, on All Saints' Day (*Vsi sveti*, November 1), the master of the house used to go to the wine cellar (*klet*) and unwind the wine press so that any lost soul accidentally trapped in might leave. This ritual action may no longer be taken, but certain traditional practices survive. November 2, All Souls' Day (*Verne duše*), has long been an important time for honoring deceased members of the family. In Metlika, the churchbells ring from morning to noon, and candles are lighted on each grave.¹³ The family gathers there and partakes of a ritual ceremony and then goes home for a meal to honor the ancestors. In Gorenci, a small village one kilometer from Lukovdol on the Croatian side of the Kolpa, the girls would make wreaths from evergreen branches (nowadays the wreaths may be purchased), go to the cemetery and place them on the graves of deceased relatives where they remain until spring. Flowers may also be laid on the grave in the shape of a cross.¹⁴

One of the more interesting rituals for determination of the future (which is no longer practised except by groups as parlor games) is that a young girl's marriage might be foretold through *vedeževanje*, or divination.¹⁵ Up to World War I, this was a favorite activity of girls of marriageable age at a number of times in the year, but especially on the eve of St. Andrew's Day (*Andrejevo*, November 30; Andrew is the patron saint of unmarried women). In Bela krajina girls would fast on that day, put a pair of mens' pants, a mirror, and a piece of bread, sometimes even a small glass of water, and a comb under their pillows, and hope to dream of their future husband (*bodoči* [*mož*], or *ženin*).

After *Andrejevo*, the next time for *vedeževanje* was between St. Lucija's and Christmas when in many areas of Slovenia and Croatian Zagorje,¹⁶ a girl of marriageable age would write the names of desirable young men on twelve sheets of paper and, leaving a thirteenth blank, she would make a star. She would then put the star under her pillow, and each time she awoke, would tear off one of the points. Assuming that she awoke twelve times during the night, she would have the name of her future husband on the thirteenth point. If that happened to be the blank one, it meant that she would have to wait another year to get married. If she did not wake up enough times, she had to destroy the star so that no one could discover the remaining names. A similar practice in nineteenth century Bela krajina was for a girl to write the names of possible matches on twelve pieces of paper, wrap or fold them and each day put one in the hearth fire. The paper should not, however, unfold as it burned, lest it reveal the written name; the twelfth, which contained the name of the most desirable one, and which was saved until Christmas, was not put into the hearth, or her wish would not come true.

Still other times for such divination were during the Twelve Days of Christmas

between *Božič* and *Trije kralji* (January 6, Three Kings' Day, or Epiphany); the week before Lent; the eve of St. George's Day (*Jurjevo*, April 23-24); and the night before St. John's Day (*Ivanje*, June 23-24). In Bela krajina, for example, a girl might look into the well on Christmas Eve in hopes of seeing her future husband's face reflected in it. She might also go to the woodpile, carry back an armload of kindling, and then count the pieces: if she had brought an even number of pieces, she would have a good marriage; if the numbers were uneven, fate would not be so kind. Another means to determine the identity of her future partner involved the ceremonial tablecloth (*beli prt*) used to cover the consecrated Christmas Eve meal; after the family had eaten, the girl would take the cloth with its breadcrumbs, go to the threshold, and give them to the chickens, all the while calling out the name of her beloved. If he answered, she would be married within the year. Or the girl might sweep the house floor nine times and put the sweepings (*smeti*) in front of the hearth before going to mass on Christmas Eve. If, when she returned, the dirt was in the shape of a bridal wreath (*venec*), she was to be married that year; but if it was in the shape of a cross, it meant that she would die within the year.

There were equally interesting methods of divination in connection with the Carnival period. For example, a young girl might sweep her room from the four corners to the center, take the *smeti* to the manure pile, kneel, and say the Lord's Prayer (*Očenaš*) three times. Then if she were fortunate, she might see her future husband in her dreams. A second method was for the girl not to wash before going to bed, and to put turnip seeds under her bedding; then if in her dreams she saw a man bringing a turnip, that man would be her *bodoči*.

Divination was also often social in nature: a group of girls could tell their future with the bones left over from the ritual meal before Lent. They would take them to the threshold, call the dog, and the girl whose bone he attacked first would marry during the coming year. These elaborate rituals for determining the future and the identity of one's destined mate have generally died out; nevertheless, in the Metlika region, as elsewhere in Bela krajina, divination using ordinary playing cards or coffee grounds is not uncommon today.

Fertility rituals often had to do with belief in the magic power of cleansing or purifying fire, life-giving water, green vegetation and certain foods (especially those which had been ritually blessed). For example, in many areas of Slovenia, the first male visitor on St. Lucija's Day, called *polazar*, *polazič*, or *polazenik* depending on the region, would greet the head of the household and, calling each by name would wish everyone good health; then, likening the animals and crops to sparks in the fire, he would utter a ritual saying such as *Koliko iskric, toliko teličkov, prasičkov*, etc. ("May you have as many calves, pigs, etc., as there are sparks in the fire..."). While doing so he would name all the animals and crops raised by the household. Likewise, the first male visitor on three important days during the Christmas season, i.e., Christmas, St. Stephen's (*Stefanovo*, December 26), and New Year's Day (*Novo leto*), would come into the house, go to the hearth and, taking an iron utensil such as a poker, stir the burning coals while pronouncing a similar ritual saying. But it was believed to be a bad sign if the sparks flew out and hit someone, for that person might be in danger of serious illness or even death during the coming year.¹⁷

In the folklore of Bela krajina there are actually three *božiči*: Christmas Eve/Day (*badnjak*, *Božič*), New Year's Day, and January 6. On these days special meals are prepared, similar rituals involving use of consecrated water and iron tools may be undertaken, all with the goal of protecting the family, animals, and crops from disease,

and of increasing the fertility of all. An ancient belief associated with Christmas was that it was a time when animals could speak (but could be heard only by the most devout persons); the animals were commonly awakened on Christmas Eve after the family returned from the church service, so that they might know that it was a holiday.

It is doubtful that anyone retains these beliefs today, yet Christmas is still an important time for family celebration, and of course involves special meals consisting of holiday cakes and other foods, especially roast pork. But before the meal is eaten, the table may be decorated with a special loaf of bread (called *župnik* in Bela krajina as in some other regions of Slovenia), seeds from each of the preceding summer's crops, iron objects such as keys (thought to protect the house from thieves), and perhaps a bowl of consecrated water. These objects are then covered by the ceremonial white tablecloth. Various iron farm implements, such as a hoe, an axe, a shovel, and some straw may be put under the table. Later the coals and ashes from the Yule Log (*badnjak*) may be spread on the fields, mixed with the seeds during the spring sowing, or fed to sick animals during the year. Consecrated water is also used to sprinkle the fields. This is done by children; the mother sprinkles the farm buildings and the inside of the family house.

Formerly, a procession involving caroling (*koledovanje*) took place on the three special days of the Christmas season. The songs (*koleda*), quite different from present-day Christmas carols in Europe and North America, were pre-Christian in origin and were intended as a magical means of blessing the family of each house in the village for the coming year. The carolers (*koledniki*), who were usually adolescents, but sometimes accompanied by the school teacher, would bless the household, and they would receive a gift such as a piece of black bread or *potica*. *Koledovanje* was current up to the end of the nineteenth century, but it is no longer practised for its traditional purpose of protection.

While caroling and ritual feasts were common to all three days, there were some differences. For example, New Year's Eve was (and still may be) a time when guns were shot off and churchbells rung, actions which were originally intended to scare away evil spirits the fruit trees might be shaken on this night to ensure fertility in the coming summer. It was also necessary that each member of the family bathe on this night, lest they remain unclean throughout the rest of the year. And, earlier, this was a time for young girls of marriageable age to decorate the farmyard well and give tributes to it in the form of bits of the ritual meal, all in hopes of gaining the favor of the water spirit supposed to dwell there so that he would find them suitable matches. On Three Kings' Day, there was ritual sprinkling of consecrated water and distribution of pieces of the cake eaten by all members of the family to the farm animals.¹⁸

Rituals for fertility and protection of crops include the practice in Bela krajina, long known for its vineyards and wheat crops, of cutting branches from the hazelwood tree (*leska*) on Christmas or New Year's Eve and placing one in each of the four corners of the vineyard, or cutting a branch from a tree in each corner; these actions are thought to prevent birds from eating the grapes during the growing season. Likewise, a special thread made between three a.m. and sunrise on the eve of St. Thomas' Day (*Tomaževo*, December 21) might be strung diagonally from each corner to form a cross. This is a practice believed to ensure the safety of the vines from damaging hail, said in the Metlika region to be brought by the devil (*vrag*), and once thought in Bela krajina to have been caused by the winged serpent, *Zmaj* (Kuret, IV: 61). This thread was also intended to protect the crop from any evil which might be perpetrated by a *coprnica*.¹⁹ Finally, November 11, or *Martinovo*, is an important holiday to honor St.

Martin, the patron of shepherds and in Bela krajina of winegrowers. On this day there is a major thanksgiving celebration during which the harvest is baptized (*vino se krsti*), smoked sausages are cooked, and there is a feast to celebrate the wine produced from the summer's grapes.

Still other ritual uses of vegetation for protection and fertility include the decoration of the inside of the house with evergreen branches during the Christmas season; this is in addition to the decorated Christmas tree, which in Metlika and Vinica, as in certain other areas of Slovenia and Croatian Zagorje, may be hung upside down in a corner of the main room or even over the threshold, so that it moves when a visitor comes in.²⁰ It may also be placed on a table, decorated with candles, and surrounded by a Nativity scene made of figures baked of dough from the previous season's crops. Until recently, evergreen branches were often hung outside, under the eaves of the house. These branches were not normally blessed by the priest as were the consecrated flowers once put there on St. John's Day (*Ivanje*, June 24) or on the holiday known as *Veliki Šmaren* or *Velika maša* (Assumption Day, August 15) as safeguards against evil, sickness, and natural disasters.²¹

Summer lightning was, and still is, much feared. An old protective custom found in Slovenia was to light a candle inside the house during a thunderstorm, lest the lightning itself ignite it. This was true in Bela krajina as well. To this day in Gorenci on the other side of the Kolpa many insist on turning all lights out and unplugging every electric appliance, so as not to draw lightning to the house. This is a practice which sometimes causes problems with the well pump, the refrigerator, television set, etc. Other means of safeguarding against lightning once included putting the plant *netresk* (wall pepper), which grows in thatched roofs, or any hambone left from the Easter meal, under the eaves. Pointed iron utensils such as pitchforks, scythes, and even tripod stools were placed on the ground with their prongs facing the sky as a means of protection from hail.²² And today there are other ritual protections against natural disaster: prayers similar to magic charms may be intoned to prevent hail, and more practically, the ringing of churchbells and the shooting of rifles or rockets into the air to cause vibrations in the clouds and thereby disperse the hail.

The old Slavic beginning of the New Year was the vernal equinox, which was usually celebrated in the first part of March. The beginning of the calendar year was ultimately changed by the Church to January 1, but the special significance of the spring period was then applied to the festivities of the pre-Lenten season before Easter. Called *Pust*, this period is one of preparation for the coming agricultural year. It was once a time for making all the brooms to be used during the year, and even today the house is care fully cleaned and the sweepings are taken to be burned on a neighbor's field, or better yet, on someone else's field farther away.²³ If one neglects to do the spring cleaning, it is thought that the house will remain unclean all year.

A nineteenth-century village spring ceremony in the Metlika region involved ritual plowing (*vlačenje ploha*) between Mardi Gras (*pustni torek*) and Ash Wednesday (*pepelnična sreda*). During the night the young, unmarried men would drag a makeshift plow around the village, and finally stop at the house of the oldest unmarried girl, where they would mark a ritual furrow around it. Then the plow would be left standing against her front door with a written message such as: "Prišla je pepelnica, ostala si samica, oh, oh, še boš vlekla ploh!" (Ash Wednesday has come, you're an old maid, oh, oh, you'll have to pull the plow!" Kuret, II: 81.)

The major village procession at this time of year involved a straw doll called *Pust* (a personified spirit of the end of winter), which was carried on stretchers to the main

square, and set down before the central *gostilna*. After having been sprinkled with holy water and ritually censed with the smoke of burning herbs, Pust was declared the accused in a mock trial, in which he was ritually condemned by the "judge" and carried to the Kolpa where he was thrown in; if the Kolpa was too far away, he might be burned and the ashes tossed in another river, or even on the main square.²⁴

Easter week is the most important time for communal celebration. On Palm Sunday, a special bundle of wood was once carried to church to be blessed by the priest. This bundle, called *drenek* and sometimes *moški žegen*, was made of three or even six types of wood; especially favored were hazel, larch, olive, and juniper. The *drenek* was carried to church by the youngest male child on his shoulders, who was careful to hold it neither too high nor too low, lest the livestock suffer during the coming year. After the priest had blessed it, pieces of the *drenek* were saved to be burned: the ashes were used to purify the stall from evil influences; any olive leaves the *drenek* contained were cut up, mixed with burning coals from the hearth, and used to cense a sick person's room. On Thursday before Easter the village church bells were said to "go to Rome" and the organ to be "tied up" until Easter Saturday (*Velika sobota*) when the bells "returned from Rome" and the organ could be played again. During this week the fruit trees were shaken so that the next crop would be good.

Today, just before the service on Easter Eve (*Velika noč*, or *vuzem* in Bela krajina and on the Croatian side of the Kolpa) the priest builds a small fire in front of the church; he blesses this form of holy fire (*sveti ogenj*) and then uses the burning twigs to light the candles inside. Formerly, young children picked branches from the fire and ran home to put them in the stove or hearth. That fire was then kept burning all year round.²⁵ Easter Eve was also once celebrated by building bonfires on surrounding hillsides and shooting off small cannon and rifles. Today the celebration is marked by a quiet procession to church for ritual blessing of food and water. Special baskets of foods to be blessed, *ženski žegen*, containing bread, cheese, ham, vegetables (and in Metlika, a large Easter cake called *kuglov*), are brought to church on *vuzem* by women and children. When they return home, the family partakes of a ceremonial meal consisting of ham and horseradish, or sometimes in Bela krajina roast lamb (less common in other regions of Slovenia), wine, bread and the various other foods which were blessed during the church service. In Bela krajina and Gorski kotar the domestic animals may also be given bits of the consecrated bread or cake, for such foods are believed to protect the animals from snakes. Other forms of protection of the family and animals involve hanging the decorated Easter eggs (called *pisanice* or *pirhi*) from the ceiling; the eggs may also be put in cracks in the inside walls or even under the outside eaves. After the eggs have been eaten, the shells may be scattered around the house to keep snakes away.²⁶

The special non-Christian holiday in spring is St. George's Day (*Jurjevo*, April 23-24). This was another time which the folk associated with the beginning of the new year. *Jurjevo* was formerly marked by a ritual procession known as *jurjevanje*, which was common in most of Croatia and southern Slovenia.²⁷ *Jurjevanje* began with the selection of a tree, which was stripped bare and dressed with cross beams and kerchiefs. This tree, called *maj*, was then brought to the village square by a procession of young persons led by Zeleni Jurij (Green George), a young boy dressed in leaves and branches to symbolize the principle of new life. The procession would go from house to house, offering greetings to the household and expecting treats in return. This having been done, the family would be given a branch from those worn by Zeleni Jurij to be placed under the eaves, an action which was thought to make the chickens lay more eggs. It

is interesting to note that as in the case of other processions, refusal of the household to give some reward usually meant an additional verse tacked onto the song. In Podzemelj, for example, when there was no treat, the girls would sing: *Vaša vrata polna blata, vaša hiša polna miša, vaši vrti polni krti!* ("May your door be all muddy, your house full of mice, and your gardens full of moles!") In Vinica, the following variant was common: *Pred vrati je borovica, krepala vas polovica. Vaša vrata so iz blata, v vaši hiši sami miši, vaši vrti sami krti!* ("There's a juniper out front, may half of you die. Your doors are of mud, in your family room there are only mice, your garden only moles!") But normally the mother of the house had prepared the gifts beforehand, and the group would sing: *Srečno novo Jurjevo leto!* ("Happy New Georgian Year!"; Kuret, I: 274-275).

The *jurjevanje* procession was usually wild and noisy, and the participants, who included most of the young girls in the village, sang boisterous songs and played the wooden flute (*frula*) as loudly as possible. Once at the square, the tree was again bared, its crossbeams were broken off and the kerchiefs taken back. The *maj* was then placed against a wall, and Zeleni Jurij was led to the river where he was pushed in.²⁸ (Such processions survived in some areas of Gorski kotar into the 1950's.) Afterwards, bonfires were built at crossroads and the gifts collected were eaten; once the fire had died down to smoldering ashes, couples would jump over them, a ritual cleansing action thought to protect persons, and even animals which were driven through the ashes, from sickness during the year.

The major holiday involving bonfires (*kresovi*) was St. John's Eve (*kresna noč*, June 23), at the time of the summer solstice. This celebration, like that on St. George's Eve, also included processions by young girls, called *kresnice* or *ladarice* (from Lada, the patroness of love and health in Bela krajina). Most often, the marchers consisted of four pre-pubertal girls and one *fant*, all dressed in white, the predominant color of national dress in Bela krajina. The group went through the village dancing the *kolo*, visiting each household, singing blessings and requesting donations. For example, the song would begin by praising each person and naming the household's animals and crops, again using traditional ritual formulae, and then sing: *Dajte, dajte, darovajte. Mi nimamo kada stati, mi smo nocoj malo spale, malo spale, rano vstale...* ("Give, give, please give. We have no time to stop, we slept little last night, just a little, got up early...") The gifts included eggs, flour, smoked ham or *klobasa*, a piece of ritual cake (*kolač*, or *pogaca*), or coins. If this were not done, the family not only did not get a blessing from the *kresnice*, but might hear: *Vaša vrata polna blata, vaši hiši sami miši, na vašem vrti sami krti. Da b imeli tolko straha, kok je na vaši peči praha!* ("May your door be all muddy, in your house only mice, and your garden only moles. You should have as much fear as your hearth has ashes!") It was normal, however, for the household to be prepared for the visitors, and then the group would sing: *Lepa hvala natem daru, ki ga ste nam darovali. Mi se od vas potocimo i vas Bogu izročimo: Bog vas varuj in Marija z lepim zdravjem i veseljem.* ("Many thanks for this gift which you have given us. We'll leave you and turn you over to the Lord. May the Lord and Mary keep you in good health and happiness.") It was believed that the *kresnice* must sing the entire way, lest someone die in the house where they stopped. (Kuret, II: 105-106.)

In Bela krajina the procession blessed each farmer's fields and vineyards, and made a ritual circle around his house for protection against demons and *coprnice* thought to be about. To ensure everyone's safety, the girls in the procession were sprinkled with water.²⁹ St. John's Eve was also a time for gathering special herbs, especially fern,

which could then be saved until time for burning or feeding to sick children or animals later in the year. Other forms of vegetation, e.g., the flowers known as *ivanovka* (ox-eye daisy) and *šentjanževa roza* (St. John's flower) were collected and put under the eaves or straw roofs in the shape of a cross as a protective measure against lightning.³⁰

It should be clear from the above that there are many common features linking these seemingly unrelated rituals and beliefs. For example, faith in the power of iron tools and evergreen branches as protective charms is demonstrated at a number of times in the year. Evergreen branches, various flowers and eggs, all symbolic of continued life, were placed under the eaves of the house to ensure the health and safety of those within, and they are still a major component of the Christmas decoration inside the home. Traditional veneration of fire was also shown in the bonfires lighted at numerous times in the year, but especially on the eves of New Year's Day, Easter, St. George's Day, and St. John's Day.³¹ At the same times there were village processions in which the participants greeted each household with ritualistic sayings which are remarkably close in form and content. The magic power of the pronouncements made by the *polazar*, the *koledniki*, Zeleni Jurij, his followers, and the *kresnice* was assumed and such belief no doubt lasted until the Second World War in many rural areas of Slovenia.³² While almost all of the customs describe here are shared by other Slavic peoples, the folklore of Bela krajina is fascinating in its blend of many features found elsewhere in the Slavic world.³³

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REFERENCES

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1. Valvasor's book was translated by Mirko Rupel and recently reprinted in a second edition with excellent reproductions of Valvasor's original maps and illustrations, as *Iz slave vojvodine Kranjske*, ed. by Branko Reisp (Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 1969).

2. For a survey of this literature, see F. Kotnik, "Pregled slovenskega narodopisja," in Rajko Ložar, *Narodopisje Slovencev*, I. Ljubljana: Založba Klas, 1944; II. Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenije, 1952.
3. *Pod vernim krovom: Ob ljudskih običajih skoz cerkveno leto*, I-IV: Ljubljana and Gorica: Družba sv. Mohorja, 1943-1946.
4. *Verovanja, vere in običaji Slovencev*, II: *Prazniki* (Celje: Tiskarna Družba sv. Mohorja, 1948); V: *Borba za pridobivanje vsakdanjega kruha* (Celje, 1946).
5. *Slovenska ljudska kultura. Oris*. Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenije, 1960.
6. The full title of Kuret's work is *Praznično leto Slovencev. Starosvetne šege in navade od pomladi do zime*, Celje: Mohorjeva družba, I: 1965, II: 1967, III-IV: 1970. Kuret's comprehensive, four-volume study of Slovene calendar customs presents findings from his own extensive research, and includes material from most earlier investigations of Slovene folklore as well. Thus while each of the earlier studies is useful, it is his which is the single most rewarding source for study of the folklore of this region.
7. It would, of course, be a simplification to present these three aspects as distinct categories; they cannot be interpreted as isolated phenomena, for they are inter-related and there are certain features common to more than one or another of the categories.
8. The term is derived from German *Zauber* "magic." See Petar Skok, *Etimologijski rječnik hrvatskoga ili srpskoga jezika*, I (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska Akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1971), 272.
9. There is another interesting use of the hambone, and that is: should an animal fall sick, a bone which has been preserved since Easter can be burned, and the ashes mixed with the animal's feed to cure it of the disease.
10. For recent Croatian data, see Ivanka Bakrac, "Neka zapažanja o godišnjim običajima u selima oko Zagreba," *Etnološka tribina. Godišnjak Hrvatskog etnološkog društva*, god 10 (1980), 3: 45-50.
11. In most areas of Slovenia, the woods used had to be only those of masculine gender such as *gaber* (white beech or yoke elm, usually known as *grabar*), and *dub* or *hrast*, "oak," and not those of feminine gender such as *breza*, "birch," *bukev*, "beech," or *lipa*, "linden." But, curiously enough, in another locality, Ortnek, the stool was made only of twelve feminine gender woods.
12. As for the persistence of this belief, Kuret writes (*op. cit.*, IV: 185): *Teško je celo reči, da je vera v coprnice pri nas pravpovsod izginila* ("It is even difficult to say that belief in witches has really disappeared everywhere [in Slovenia]."). For analysis of the forms and functions of magic charms from Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia and Macedonia, see my "Magic Charms and Healing Rituals in Contemporary Yugoslavia," *Southeastern Europe*, volume 9 (1982), a special folklore issue to appear in 1984.
13. My informant, Frank Nahajzer (b. 1939), left his native village of Ertič, ca. two kms. from the Kolpa near Metlika, in 1963.
14. For this information, I am grateful to Marijana Nahajzer (b. 1930), who was raised in Gorenci and immigrated to the U.S. in 1962.
15. Common methods of divination in all the Slavic countries were to heat wax or lead and drop it into a bowl of water; predictions were then made about a girl's future husband according to the shape which the wax or lead took as it cooled. Similarly, an egg might be broken and dropped into the water to see just which shape it would form. There were many such means to foretell the future and what kind of

- husband one might get.
16. See Zorica Rajković, "Narodni običaji okolice Donje Stubice," *Narodna umjetnost*, X (1973): 153-216.
 17. It should be noted that it was very bad if the first visitor on any of these days was a woman (Kuret, IV: 245). Even folk sayings such as proverbs generally take a dim view of women; see my "Metaphorical Images of Women in South Slavic Proverbs," *Balkanistica*, VI (1980): 1447-160.
 18. There was no *koledovanje* as such in Bela krajina on this day, but until World War II, the *fantje* would go through the village singing to the glory of the Three Kings (*hodijo popevat svete tri kralje*; Kuret, IV: 309).
 19. Many of these customs are still practised, or were at least as late as the early 1960's, according to my informant from Ertič.
 20. Kuret, IV: 100. See also Rajković, *op. cit.*, 208.
 21. According to my informants from both the Metlika region and the Gorski kotar side of the Kolpa, the flowers put under the eaves on St. John's Day were then taken down on the day of Sts. John and Paul (June 26) and strewn on the road so that they would be destroyed by passing wagon wheels, and thereby remove all sickness and misfortune from the household.
 22. For related customs in Serbia, see N.I. and S.M. Tolstye, "Zametki po slavjanskomu jazyčestvu. 5. Zaščita ot grada v Dragičeve i drugix serbskix zonax," in *Slavjanski i balkanski fol'klor. Obrjad. Tekst*. Moskva: "Nauka," 1981, 44-120.
 23. In Gorenci, however, those sweepings were normally buried on one's own field.
 24. Jože Dular, "Nekaj zapisov o pustovanju v Metliki," *Traditiones. Zbornik Instituta za slovensko narodopisje* (Ljubljana: SAZU, 1979), 5-6 (1976-77): 89-98.
 25. Many women in Gorenci still keep the fire going in the wood stove during summer despite the fact that they also have an electric range in the kitchen.
 26. In some places eggs may be saved for Easter Monday when the children exchange them with their friends or engage in games involving rolling them down hillsides.
 27. The once traditional *jurjevanje* is an interesting case in that it has disappeared twice during the last hundred years, but has been revived each time. At the end of World War I it was almost forgotten in Vinica, then was resurrected by a school-teacher between the world wars. By the Second World War it had died out again, but was reinstated during the 1960's as a tourist attraction (Kuret, I: 270). Today, in the regional center Črnomelj, the procession and ritual ceremonies are performed in a large field as a folklore presentation. For thorough discussion of this phenomenon in Croatia, see Višnja Huzjak, *Zeleni Juraj*, Zagreb: *Publikacije Etnološkog seminara Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta*, 2, 1957.
 28. Following Sir James Frazer (*The Golden Bough*) Kuret (I: 271) suggests that in this ceremony we may have a ritual involving a two-fold divinity, the tree of nature and the imitation *fant*-tree, performed by a group of child-women (*ženski zbor*) which enacts the ritual killing of the vegetation god.
 29. While by and large the special celebration of St. John's Eve died out after the Church deemed it a major sin (*veliki greh*) at the end of the last century, my informants from Metlika and Gorenci mentioned the sprinkling of water on the *kresnice* as they passed during the 1950-1960's.
 30. Kuret, II: 110. The saints' days after *Ivanje* and until *Vsi sveti* are of less interest in terms of folklore, yet they do call for a number of ritual practices especially as they relate to the harvest.
 31. Today the major time for village bonfires is May Day; though stemming from

- traditional practices, the organized celebrations are normally political in nature.
32. Readers interested in the folklore of this region should visit the Belokranjski muzej which has an excellent collection representing local arts and crafts, decorated Easter eggs, national dress, furniture, tools, etc.—What is needed now is follow-up research on remnants of these beliefs and practices, and on the maintenance of other, more persistent ritual actions, especially those having to do with the annual crops of grapes and wheat, e.g., blessing of seeds, the uses of consecrated water, mixing ashes from the *badnjak* and/or *drenek* with them, and the custom of preserving the first or last sheaf so that its grains may be mixed with those to be sown in the coming season.
33. For a more extensive regional study than the present one concerning traditional beliefs and rituals of another Slavic community, see P.G. Bogatyrev, "Magičeskie dejstvija, obrjady i verovanja Zakarpat'ja," reprinted in his collection *Voprosy teorii narodnogo iskusstva* (Moskva, "Iskusstvo," 1971), pp. 167-296. —General Slavic and particularly Balkan mythology and ritual are treated comprehensively by Spiro Kulišič, in *Stara slovenska religija u svjetlu novijih istraživanja posebno balkanoloških*. Sarajevo: ANBiH, *Dijela*, knjiga LVI, Centar za balkanološka ispitivanja, knjiga 3, 1979. —A thorough introduction to East Slavic mythological and religious beliefs, can be found in S.A. Tokarev, *Religioznye verovanja vostočnoslavjanskix narodov XIX-načala XX v.* Moskva-Leningrad: ANSSSR, 1957. See also V.K. Sokolova's monograph, *Vesenne-letnie kalendarnye obrjady russkix, ukraincev i belorusov. XIX-načalo XX v.* Moskva: "Nauka," 1917.—For surveys of the traditional customs of other Slavs, see S.A. Tokarev, ed., *Kalendarnye obyčaj i obrjady v stranax zarubežnoj Evropy. Konec XIX-načalo XX v. Vesennie prazdniki* (Moskva: "Nauka," 1977), and *Letne-osennie prazdniki* (Moskva: "Nauka," 1978).—Note: Tokarev's *Religioznye verovanja* has an eight-page bibliography, and Sokolova's study contains a nine-page list of sources; the two volumes on calendar customs, while lacking formal bibliographies, have extensive indexes of subject matter.