

Skupna čezmejna turistična destinacija za ohranjanje, varstvo in promocijo dediščine mitske krajine prostora
Zajednička prekogranična turistična destinacija za očuvanje, zaščito i promicanje baštine mitskog prostora

Sculpture 1 - The door to the Perun's world

As you go pass the door you are entering the world of Perun! Oral tradition says that in the palace of heaven live the god Perun, his wife the goddess Mokoš and their children, symbolically represented by the moon, the sun and the stars. Beside the richly decorated heavenly gate stands Mokoš, who opens and closes it. This is the entranceway that leads into an extensive heavenly courtyard in which a sloping path leads down to the valley door via which you can enter another world – the world beyond. The heavenly gate is guarded by the god Perun, while his enemy, the god Veles, rules over the underworld.

Mokoš and the heavenly gate are located beside water, traditionally regarded as the boundary between the worlds of the living and the dead. As the mistress, Mokoš opens or locks the gateway. This means she determines the course a person's life, whether they live or die! According to folklore, as the goddess of fate, Mokoš spins some threads so as to decide the fate of a human

In spring, Mokoš takes her key and opens up the door to the place where the sacred marriage between the divine twins, her and Perun's son Jaril and their daughter Mara takes place, which then restores the fertility of the land. This is Mokoš in the role of mother, mother of the damp soil and the burning sun, a feminine deity who is the embodiment of Mother Nature and fertility. Oral traditions underscore her sexual features; she is the mistress of two gods – Perun and Veles – and also the patron of childbirth. As a mother, Mokoš appears in the landscape as Baba or as the Christian Mother of God. You can recognise her in the nearby Babin grob or Baba's grave on the peak of Učka, in the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Trsat, or at the cape of Volosko. In Istria, Kvarner and the Slovenian Karst, which includes the MYTHICAL PARK at Rodik, Baba appears in the muddy, wet stone monoliths of the same name. The elders used to scare children with these Babas, telling them that they would have to kiss them as they go past.

Sculpture 2 - The millstone

The name of the god Perun comes from the Indo-European root "per-", which originally meant "to strike", while Slavs transformed it to become the word "thunder". The physical expression of the presence of Perun's power at that time was a mill. In various oral traditions, by striking the mill stones that lay alongside each other, the heavenly god Perun would produce thunder and lightning to harass and kill his enemy, Veles. The story of the

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divine battle between Perun and Veles is a story of chaos and the restoration of order. Consequently, this was how the ancient Slavs used to interpret natural phenomena, the changing seasons and many other happenings. This divine conflict reaches a peak when Veles, now in the form of a serpent, emerges from the underworld and climbs a holy tree (or mountain) in an attempt to enter the world of the Thundermaker, a place he doesn't belong. This would break the natural balance, allowing him to take hold of all the sources of water, close and dry them out, bringing a severe drought. The balance needed to ensure fertile soils is restored when Perun chases Veles and shoots him with bolts of lightning and creates thunderstorms in an effort to make sure he returns to the Underworld. A similar motif to the cosmic conflict spoken of in Slavic mythology can also be found in ancient Indian Vedic texts.

In Slavic mythology, the god of thunder is often associated with the names of the mountains called Perun or in other names that suggest a connection with fire, thunder or bonfire etc. Although other hills are named after the Slavic god Perun, the hill that rises above Trebišće is not only associated with storms, but also forms part of a mythical landscape that includes a sanctuary at the top of the hill, water descending in the form of a stream, and a mill denoting a place where thunderstorms occur in the heart of today's abandoned village of Trebišće.

Sculpture 3 - Rye and oat grain

The mythical battle between Perun and Veles is not a one-sided battle between good and evil. Both gods bring people experiences of good and evil. Unlike Perun, who is also associated with war and weapons, Veles is the patron saint of farmers, shepherds and animals, a bringer of prosperity and of plentiful grain. Veles is symbolised by wheat grains, explaining why in their rituals people often call him the "grandfather of grain".

The earliest references to Perun and Veles date from Kievan Rus in the 10th century when pagan Russians and Christian Byzantines swore oaths to each other in peace treaties to the gods Perun and Veles as well as to the Christian god.

In the mythical region of Trebišće, the god Veles is said to be associated with the Voloski Kuk rock at the source of the stream underneath the hill called Perun and in the Potuklica cave. Oral tradition states the Potuklica cave included a place of 'supernatural' forces from where the devil took out gold to dry it in the sun. The wealth of Veles is also gold and the Russians' agreements with the Byzantines also mentioned that Veles was able to turn

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anything into gold. In later Christian interpretations, Veles often became an evil demon, a dragon or a devil due to his connection to the world of the dead, while Slavic mythology does not have such a black-and-white view of good and evil since all deities can be dangerous yet also useful.

Sculpture 4 - Priest's footsteps

'Footsteps' in the rock symbolise "Žrec", a priest in ancient Slavic religions who, while standing at the foot of the Perun hill, would lead a "treba" or sacrifice. Sacrifices to the gods are often described in historical sources. In one of the oldest written records dating from the 6th century concerning the Southern Slavs' ancestors, the Byzantine historian Procopius of Caesarea writes that they did not acknowledge fate but believed in a single god, the creator of lightning and the master of everything. In difficult times, like in the event of death, illness or war, they would vow to offer their god a sacrifice (such as cattle or other animals) in an attempt to ensure a good outcome and thereby redeem themselves.

Researchers state that, while looking at the landscape from the peak of the Perun hill, "Žrec" (the priest) used to determine the locations of the mythical battle between the deities in which Perun chases Veles away and in the process restores the natural balance.

Sculpture 5 - The altar

This stone symbolises the altar on which the sacrifice, in old Slavic "treba", to the gods was to be made. One historical written source from the 18th century, probably a transcript of an older manuscript from the 17th century, states that a pagan priest or "Žrec" should, at the risk of his own life, maintain an eternal fire at the temple dedicated to the god Veles and burn offerings on it; from the way the sacrificial item burned, he was able to prophesise even the intentions of the gods. When cattle were first driven to pasture in winter, the priest would sacrifice a male and female calf, whereas during the rest of the year he would sacrifice wild animals. According to written sources, during hard times even human sacrifices were expected to be made. The priest knew various supernatural secrets and was able to interpret and convey the words of Veles himself through the appearance of the flames that developed as a sacrificial victim burned.

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Still, historical written sources must be treated with caution since pagan practices and beliefs are mainly described by outside observers, often Christian chroniclers. However, when combined with archaeological, linguistic, folkloric and historical sources, they are valuable for reconstructing the Slavic mythology. The path across Trebišće to the Perun hill reveals just one of the scientific reconstructions of (pre-) Slavic mythology. In Europe, not a single original myth is preserved as a sacred ritual text so we do not know the actual original myths. Researchers are trying to reconstruct them by analysing mythical traditions of which only fragments still remain today.