

MITREJ U SELU MOČIĆI



Mitrej u Tominoj jami, Konavle / Mithraeum in Tomina jama, Konavle

Svjedočanstvo kulta Rimskog Carstva u Konavlima

“**Ponajbolje dokaze postojanja Mitrina kulta u Konavlima, odnosno na području rimske kolonije Epidaur imamo u reljefu s prikazom Mitrine tauroktonije, koji je s lokacije crkvice sv. Đurđa (15. st.) prenesen i uzidan u podrumu rodne kuće Baltazara Bogišića te u mitreju u Tominoj jami, prirodnom speleju u selu Močići u Konavlima. Datira u razdoblje 200. – 350. godine.**

Konavle obiluju nalazima iz pretpovijesnih i povijesnih epoha. Premda su još uvijek nepotpuno arheološki istražene, spoznaja povijesno-kulturnog naslijeđa ipak je omogućena u popriličnoj mjeri. Tako, primjerice, znamo da je za Rimskoga Carstva na području Konavala bilo poklonika kultova Jupitera, Minerve, Dijane, Asklepija, cara i Mitre.

Od spomenutih, kult Mitre bio je najrasprostranjeniji, i to poglavito u doba kasnog Carstva, kad je Mitra proglašen državnim božanstvom. Do da-

nas je na području koje je obuhvaćalo Rimsko Carstvo pronađeno pedesetak Mitrinih svetišta. Budući da su prosječno mogla primiti do dvadesetak iniciranih, pokatkad i puno manje (npr. mitrej od 2m² pronađen je na širem području Pariza, također jedan u Londonu), pretpostavlja se da je moralo biti na stotine svetišta.

Ponajbolje dokaze postojanja Mitri- na kulta u Konavlima, odnosno na području rimske kolonije Epidaur imamo u reljefu s prikazom Mitrine tauroktonije, koji je s lokacije crkvice sv. Đurđa (15. st.) prenesen i uzidan u podrumu rodne kuće Baltazara Bogišića te u mitreju u Tominoj jami, prirodnom speleju u selu Močići u Konavlima. Datira u razdoblje 200. – 350. godine. Glasoviti britanski arheolog i povjesničar Arthur

John Evans opisao je i skicirao oba reljefa u svojoj knjizi *Istraživanja starina u Iliriku* objavljenj 1883. godine.

Zasad nije precizno utvrđeno kako je i kada nastao kult Mitre u Konavlima, no po svoj prilici za to su zaslužne vojničke posade koje su povremeno logorovale u Epidauru. Naime, iz kamenih zapisa znamo da su u 1. stoljeću ovdje bile stacionirane posade 6. i 8. kohorte dobrovoljaca, svaka s 400 – 600 vojnika. Rimsko Carstvo skrbilo je o svojim vojnicima, pa bi veterani nakon službe dobivali zemlju i određenu isplatu u novcu (*pensio*). Tako se i nekolicina veterana s obiteljima naknadno nastanila u Epidauru i nastavila kult.

Iako ga spominju neki antički autori (Plutarh, Statij i dr.), zbog činjenice da je bio misterijski, odnosno da se tajno

znanje prenosilo isključivo iniciranim i jedino usmeno, ne postoje nikakvi liturgijski zapisi o rimskom kultu Mitre. Izuzetak tomu nekoliko je stihova upisanih na zidu mitreja kojega su fratri augustinci pronašli 1934. ispod bazilike sv. Priske na rimskome brežuljku Aventin, a kojeg su nizozemski arheolozi u potpunosti pročistili dvadesetak godina poslije. Unatoč nedostatku liturgije, po simbolici u arheološkim dokazima moguće je zaključiti kako je rimski mitraizam poučavao vječno blaženstvo u koje, kao nagradu za vođenje jednostavna i krjeposna života, posvećenoga uvodi iz stijene rođeni bog Mitra.

Do oko 1970. godine tumačenje toga kulta uvelike se, ako ne i u potpunosti, naslanjalo na tezu belgijskog istraživača Franza Cummonta, prema kojoj je



Freska iz mitreja u Marinu, Italija / Fresco in mithraeum in Marino, Italy (Dan Diffendale @ FLICKR)



Skica reljefa iz mitreja u Tominoj jami, Konavle / Sketch of the relief in mithraeum in Tomina jama, Konavle. Arthur John Evans, 1883.

rimski Mitra manje-više izravan vojni uvoz štovanja istoimenog indoiranskog božanstva s istočnih bojišta. Noviji dokazi snažno ukazuju na to da je rimski misterijski kult Mitre zapravo autohtoni religijski sustav Rimskog Carstva. Razlika između zapadnjačkog boga Mitre, koji je u posvetnim zapisima poistovjećen s vrhovnim Nepobjedivim Suncem (*Sol Invictus*), i istočnjačkoga boga Mitre, koji tamo predstavlja sekundarno, manje važno božanstvo dobrih odnosa i dogovora/ugovora, zorno vidimo u prikazu tau-roktonije, odnosno u prikazu mladića Mitre koji ubija bika, preslike s mnogih već postojećih reljefa u spomen pobjeda rimskih legija, a kojega nema kod nijedne inačice kulta Mitre izvan Rimskog Carstva. U prilog tezi autohtonosti kulta ističe se činjenica da su stupnjevi iniciranih održavali jasnu podjelu rimskog društva.

Općenito prihvaćena gradacija duhovnih razina iniciranih uključivala je sedam mističnih stupnjeva simbolič-

nih naziva: Gavran (*Corax*), Zaručnik (*Nymphus*), a ponegdje i Prebivalac u kripti (*Cryphius*), Vojnik (*Miles*), Lav (*Leo*), Perzijac (*Perses*), Sunčev trkač/glasonoša (*Heliodromus*) i Otac (*Pater*).

Iako se nagađa i suprotno, iz većine dosad poznatih podataka čini se da su u kult bili inicirani isključivo muškarci, ponajprije vojnici i trgovci, ali i oni iz svih drugih društvenih strata, od robova do senatora. Među njima se čak našao i car Marko Aurelije Antonin, nadimka Karakala.

Rimski mitraizam utjelovljuje značajke astrologije i kulta sunca, s ritualima i mitologijom posuđenima iz zoroastrizma, grčke mitologije i egipatske religije. Zanimljiva astronomsko-astrološka simbolika na pronađenim freskama i reljefnim prikazima očita je i na reljefu uklesanom u živoj stijeni u mitreju u Tominoj jami. U centru prikaza je Mitra u trenutku ubijanja pokleknutog bika, podno kojeg su škorpion, zmija i pas. U gornjem lijevom kutu je Sol, od kojega zrake preko Gavrana

dopiru do Mitre, a u desnom kutu je Luna. Lijevo i desno od Mitre prikazani su dadofori, Perzijci, lijevi (*Cautes*) s uzdignutom te desni (*Cautopates*) sa spuštenom bakljom. Teza da su prikazani likovi pandan zviježdima, a glavne odrednice etablirane položajem Sunca u četiri ključne godišnje točke (zimski i ljetni solsticij, proljetni i jesenski ekvinočij) smislena je te navodi na zaključak kako cjelokupan prikaz alegorijski tumači mitričku kozmogoniju, eshatologiju i soteriološka obećanja sljedbenicima Mitre.

Rast kršćanstva i pobjeda vojske tetrarha Konstantina Velikog (pod oznakama kristograma) u bitci kraj Milvijskog mosta protiv vojske tetrarha Maksencija 312. godine dodatno su oslabili već odumirući kult Mitre. Iako ga je car Teodozije I. zabranio 391., zajedno s ostalim poganskim kultovima, još neko vrijeme održao se u rubnim dijelovima Carstva.

MITHRAS IN THE VILLAGE OF MOČIĆI



Evidence of the cult of the Roman Empire in Konavle

“ The best evidence of the existence of Cult of Mithras in today’s Konavle is in a relief depicting Mithras’ tauroctony, which was transferred from the location of the Church of St. George (15th century) and was walled-in at the basement of the home where Baltazar Bogišić was born, and in the Mithreum in Toma’s Pit – a natural cave in the village of Močići in Konavle. It dates to the period 200–350 AD.

Konavle abound in finds from pre-historic and historical epochs. Although the area has still not been completely archaeologically explored, the finds in the area have contributed greatly to the knowledge of historical and cultural heritage. Thus, for example, we know that during the Roman Empire in the area of Konavle there were devotees of the cults of Jupiter, Minerva, Diana, Asclepius, the Emperor, and Mithras.

Of these, the Cult of Mithras was the most widespread, especially during the late Empire when Mithras was de-

clared a state deity. To date, about fifty shrines of Mithras have been found in the area that encompassed the Roman Empire. Since on average they could accommodate up to twenty initiates, sometimes fewer (e.g., a 2m² Mithraeum was found in the greater Paris area and also one in London), it is assumed that there must have been hundreds of them.

The best evidence of the existence of Cult of Mithras in today's Konavle, or rather, the area of the Roman colony of Epidaurus, is in a relief depicting Mithras' tauroctony, which was transferred from the location of the Church of St. George (15th century) and was walled-in at the basement of the home where Baltazar Bogišić was born, and in the Mithreum in Toma's Pit – a natural cave in the village of Močići in Konavle. It dates to the period 200–350 AD. The renowned British archaeologist and historian Arthur John Evans described and sketched both reliefs in his book *Explorations of Antiquities in Illyricum* published in 1883.

For now, it has not been precisely determined how and when the Cult of Mithras was formed in Konavle, but it is likely that military crews who oc-

asionally camped in Epidaurus were responsible. Specifically, from stone records we know that in the first century, crews of the 6th and 8th cohorts of volunteers were stationed here, each with 400-600 soldiers. The Roman Empire took care of its soldiers, so veterans would receive land and payment in money (*pensio*) after the service. Thus, a few veterans with families subsequently settled in Epidaurus and continued the cult.

Although mentioned by some ancient authors such as Plutarch and Statius due to the fact that it was mysterious, that is, that secret knowledge was transmitted exclusively to the initiated and only orally, there are no liturgical records of the Roman Cult of Mithras. An exception to this are a few verses inscribed on the wall of the Mithraeum found by the Augustinian friars in 1934 under the St. Prisca Basilica on the Roman hill Aventine, and then completely restored by Dutch archaeologists 20 years later. Despite the lack of liturgy, from the symbolism in archaeological evidence it is possible to conclude that Roman Mithraism taught eternal bliss into which the consecrated person is introduced by

the god Mithras, as reward for leading a simple and virtuous life.

Until about 1970, the interpretation of this cult largely, if not entirely, relied on the work of the Belgian explorer Franz Cummont, according to which the Roman Mithras was more or less a direct military "import" of the veneration of the Indo-Iranian deity of the same name from the eastern battlefields. More recent evidence strongly suggests that the Roman mystery cult of Mithras is actually the indigenous religious system of the Roman Empire. The difference between the Western god Mithras, identified in the sanctifying records with the supreme Invincible Sun (*Sol Invictus*), and the Eastern god Mithras, who represents a secondary, less important deity of good relations and agreements/contracts, is clearly seen in the depiction of tauroctony, i.e. in the depiction of a young man (Mithras) killing a bull – a copy of depictions from many already existing reliefs honoring the victories of the Roman legions, which does not exist in any version of the Cult of Mithras outside the Roman Empire. In support of the thesis of the cult's autochthony is the fact that the respective degree





Mitrički gem iz Epidaura, Konavle / Sketch of the mithracic gem from Epidaura, Konavle. Arthur John Evans, 1883.

levels of the initiated reflected a clear division of Roman society.

The generally accepted progression of the spiritual levels of the initiated included seven mystical degrees symbolically named: Raven (*Corax*), Betrothed (*Nymphus*) – sometimes Crypt-dweller (*Cryphius*), Soldier (*Miles*), Lion (Leo), Persian (*Perses*), Sun Runner/Messenger (*Heliodromus*), and Father (*Pater*).

Although it is also speculated to the contrary, from most of the data known so far, it seems that members of the cult were exclusively men – primarily soldiers and merchants, but also those from all other social ranks, from slaves to senators. Among them was even Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, nicknamed Caracalla.

Roman Mithraism embodies features of astrology and the cult of the

sun, with rituals and mythology borrowed from Zoroastrianism, Greek mythology, and Egyptian religion. Interesting astronomical and astrological symbolism found in relief and fresco representations is also evident on the relief carved into the living rock in the Mithreum in Toma's Pit. In the center of the depiction is Mithras at the moment of killing the prostrated bull, at the foot of which are a scorpion, a snake, and a dog. In the upper left corner is Sol, from which rays across Raven reach Mithras, and in the right corner is Luna. To the left and right of Mithras torchbearers, or Persian *dado-phors*, are shown, left (*Cautes*) with a raised torch, right (*Cautopates*) with a lowered torch. The interpretation is that the characters depicted are the counterpart to the constellations, and

the main determinants established by the position of the Sun at four key annual points (winter and summer solstices, spring and autumn equinoxes) is meaningful and inevitably leads to the conclusion that the entire depiction allegorically interprets the Mithracic cosmogony, eschatology, and soteriological promises to the followers of Mithras.

The rise of Christianity and the victory in 312 of the army of the tetrarch Constantine the Great (under Christogram insignia) in the battle near the Milvian Bridge against the army of the tetrarch Maxentius, further weakened the already dying Cult of Mithras. Although it was banned, along with other pagan cults, by Emperor Theodosius I in 391, it continued to exist for some time in the peripheral areas of the Empire.