

ETHNOASTRONOMICAL RESEARCHES IN SERBIA

The author briefly pointed out the development of ethnoastronomical research in Serbia. He presented a part of the research he conducted in this field since 1984 in cooperation with the organization "Young Researches of Serbia".

At the beginning, he described the ways to measure time using shadows, division of seasons and old names for some of the months of the year.

He also explained the beliefs about mythical beings that represent personifications of natural, meteorological phenomena: Winds, storm clouds, thunder, lightning, parahelia, as well as astronomical bolides (Zmaj-Dragon) and the eclipse of the Sun and the Moon.

He also described the ritual of "taking down" the Moon and its transformation into a cow.

He listed constellations that are well-known to the local people. Big and Little Dipper (Velika i Mala Kola, Ursa Maior, Ursa Minor), Triangle - unknown constellation, Hen with Chickens (Kvočka i pilići), Vlašići (Valachian little brothers), Scales (Terezije), Granny's Bludgeon (Babina Tojaga), Stick-parts of spinning wheel (Štapci), Followers (Pratioci), Line up stars (Porednice), Ralo, Ralce (Plough) - parts of constellation Orion, Peter's Cross (Petrov Krst, Delphinus), Wreath, Corral, Garden, (Venac, Trlo, Gradina) - Corona Borealis. Wolves, Needle (Kurjaci, Iгла) - unknown constellations. Godfather's Hay (Kumova Slama) is a national name for the Milky Way. Some of the stars he refers to are related to the different visibility of the planet Venus during the day or night: Danica (Morning star), Večernjača (Evening star), Ovčarica (Shepherdess), Prehodnica (Crossing Star), Ranka (Early Star), Nadnicarka (Charwoman Star). Unknown stars are Karavanka (Caravan Star), Karakol, Pozajmičarka (Loaned Star). Following expressions are used for the comets which are believed to announce wars: Barjaktaruša (Flag carrying woman), Krstata zvezda (Cross-shaped Star), Repatnjača (Tall Star), etc.

The author explained how the local people imagine geographical and cosmic space. The earliest is the idea of space as a living being, a man (Purusha, Anthropos). Some of the beliefs are based on the Cosmic Tree. It is believed that the Earth stands on the pillars, as well as the sky. The pillars on which the land rests are held by the evangelists Luke, Mark, John and Matthew. The sky is held by saints who represent the seasons - St. George, St. Elijah, St. Demetrius, St. Triphon.

The continuation of these activities in the field of ethnoastronomy takes place through the society "Vlašići" situated in Belgrade, Serbia.

Key words: Ethnoastronomy, History of astronomy, Astronomy in Serbia