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ORIENTAL-ISLAMIC CULTURAL IDENTITY IN MONTENEGRO – A MUSEUM ARTEFACT STORY

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ABSTRACT

Our interest in this research is to highlight ways of interpreting the symbols of Oriental-Islamic cultural identity in Montenegro. We are looking for the most representative sign of artefacts belonging to Oriental-Islamic material culture and this representative sign can be Arabic letter as well as inscriptions in Arabic script - as an obvious transmission of the distinctive cultural system. However, within the Oriental-Islamic cultural identity in Montenegro there is a mixture of original characteristics coming from the East and regional identity, so that the same cultural symbol in different usage tells us that our cultural identities are not reduced to a distinctive character of identity signs.

Keywords: material culture, heritage, Montenegro, archives and museums, artefacts, Islamic Orient

IDENTITÀ CULTURALE ORIENTALE-ISLAMICA IN MONTENEGRO – UNA STORIA DI MANUFATTO MUSEALE

SINTESI

La nostra intenzione in questa ricerca è quella di evidenziare diversi metodi dell'interpretazione dei simboli di identità culturale orientale-islamica in Montenegro. Stiamo cercando i segni più rappresentativi dei manufatti appartenenti alla cultura materiale orientale-islamica e il più rappresentativo dei segni può essere l'alfabeto arabo o le iscrizioni in caratteri arabi – come l'esempio di un'ovvia trasmissione del sistema culturale distintivo. Tuttavia però, all'interno dell'identità culturale orientale-islamica in Montenegro vi è una miscela di caratteristiche originali provenienti dall'identità Oriente e regionale, in modo che lo stesso simbolo culturale in uso differente ci dice che le nostre identità culturali non sono ridotte ad un carattere distintivo dell'identità segni.

Parole chiave: cultura materiale, patrimonio, Montenegro, archivi e musei, l'Oriente islamico

INTRODUCTION

In this essay we will try to study a museological segment bounded with a certain common symbolic element of the Islamic art and craft expression. As we know, the power of an image made by a group, lies not so much in what it shows, but in what it hides (Glusberg, 1983, 11). According to the theory of structuralism, items in a museum could be explained in relation *subject: symbol*, so each one is a symbol or a sign in the museological context, and has its own meaning. The symbol is in a continuous dynamic process of expansion, change or deformation of its meanings, depending on the complexity of its connotations, accepted by the one who thus expresses his decision to respect certain rules and characteristics of a cultural identity. As far as the cultural identity is concerned, it should be seen as a relationship with others. In historical process, the cultural identity develops depending on the criteria that a particular group is established in relations with other social groups. In analysing the cultural identity of a particular group, it would be desirable for three fundamental levels to be distinguished (observable artefacts, values, and basic underlying assumptions) (Schein, 1990, 111). Our focus will be on museum artefacts in which certain culture manifests itself. The data in regard to these visible artefacts are easily obtained however are difficult to interpret. We can describe all discernible elements among members belonging to a social group, “but we often cannot understand the underlying logic of cultural patterns and their symbols” (Schein, 1984, 3-4).

ARABIC *HARF* (A LETTER) AS A SYMBOLIC COMMON THREAD BETWEEN MUSEUM ARTEFACTS OF THE ORIENTAL-ISLAMIC ORIGIN

Polysemy of the cultural memory in Montenegro spreads between opposite poles. We notice a certain ignoring of all visible traces of the Ottoman culture on one hand, and on the other an effort toward emphasising the rule of the Turks in the Balkans. Aside of associating the Turkish or Oriental-Islamic cultural heritage as foreign to us, Turks and Muslims as ‘others’, we also recognize the constitutional role of the Turks in forming our individuality. Trying to answer the question of how it is possible that these two positions are there at the same time, when it is clear that the acceptance of one implies the rejection of another, we should analyse our cultural memory among a lot of loans and layers in our language, music, lifestyle and culture. If we talk about “external signs” of a culture, we primarily have in mind the letter or written elements, and it does not mean that the suggestion cannot be applied to the entire field of visual culture. What about the visible, “external” signs of the Oriental-Islamic heritage in Montenegro? Most of today’s generation has a very confusing image of the period of Ottoman rule in this country. If we are not suf-

ficiently informed, and hence we cannot even have a clear idea, the indifference occurs as a result of the mentioned. The message of indifference is that the traces and any sign of the presence of the invaders should quickly go away, no matter that their rule ended yesterday or many years ago. However, what is actually motivated by this indifference? Within consequences of the indifference is obviously the fact that the Turkish monuments in this region now are rare, so that today, every piece of paper written in Arabic script is very precious. Stereotypes of a “cultural threat of Islam and Turks” and “Islam as the enemy and rival of Christianity, using some Christian truths for its own purposes” (Hourani, 1989, 236) made us to continue chasing vigorously our former conqueror, and therefore the most valuable fragments of the Oriental-Islamic heritage can be found in museums and archives far from Montenegro. How to gather them? What is the common thread and sign that can isolate and create the whole identified by the name *Oriental-Islamic heritage of Montenegro*?

If we have in mind a thought that there is “...some awareness of the phenomenon, majestic and puzzling, of Islamic civilisation, stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, with Arabic as its lingua franca, the most universal language which had ever existed” (Hourani, 1989, 230), we got a starting point for our further analysis. Thus, we have found items marked with Arabic inscriptions in regional museums of Montenegro. The question is on what basis can we with certain make conclusions about these items? Without undertaking a research process, we cannot adequately compare these items with other ethnographic collections in museum funds, which have an established and documented history. These items cannot be given any dimension of credibility as testimonies of cultural history if they remain exposed as dumb contents of an antiquarian space. In a museological process an artefact can be selected as a document or as a witness to a particular period of time or a particular social group. Once selected, it is transferred into another space, functioning in a new way as a part of the new context which enables a different evaluation of the material culture in historical identity. In this open space of evaluation, the ideas are transferred from their natural context which exists in the real world, into a museum to define their museological value. However, being transferred into a museum context, the artefact becomes a subject of further interpretation of stored artefacts and their meaningful content in possible relations with the real world. We can say that the museum artefact is now open to new interpretations and meanings. Among artefacts belonging to the Oriental-Islamic heritage, and within the process of shaping a possible context of their public presentation, a collection should be described as a valuable memorial and a portrait of habits, standards and cultural priorities of a social group. For example, sometimes Islamic manuscripts were rewritten within regular school duties and other time copies of whole



Fig. 1 a, b, c: Parts of metal dishes with Arabic script (Rožaje, Pljevlja, 19th century)

Fig. 1 a, b, c: Le parti di metallo di stoviglie con la stampa araba (Rozaje, Pljevlja, XIX secolo)



Fig. 2: Levha (Homeland Museum – Pljevlja, 19th century)

Fig. 2: Levha (citazioni caligrafiche del Corano) (Museo locale – Pljevlja)



Fig. 3: Flag (Husein-pasha's Mosque – Pljevlja, 16th century)

Fig. 3: La bandiera con la stampa araba (Moschea di Hussein-Pasha, XVI secolo)



Fig. 4: Kur'an in Husein-pasha's Mosque in Pljevlja (16th century)

Fig. 4: Corano della Moschea di Hussein Pasha a Pljevlja (XVI secolo)

books were made. This activity was a source of living for scribes, who were partly or well educated. Generally speaking, the ability of people to write was considered as a "special gift" and a book was considered as a somewhat holy object (Hadžimejlić, 2009, 25). We know cultures are set up in order to be easily transmitted and to establish a cultural identity. A culture proposes and consequently imposes specific and established standards to regulate life. A network of accepted standards represents a cultural identity. In our case or in the case of the items with Arabic inscriptions a network of accepted standards would be one that concerns the general characteristics of the craft skills of Oriental-Islamic culture or specific aesthetic needs of consumers for a cultural pattern. If we talk about the Oriental-Islamic written heritage, a religious sign is obvious, because it follows the spiritual achievements and aesthetic standards of the Islamic East. This sign is somewhat neutral, because Oriental-Islamic or Islamic written material appears in Iraq, Egypt, Turkey, Iran, etc., and this material is stored in libraries throughout all Europe. All this, perhaps, be-

longs to the overall world heritage of Oriental-Islamic written treasures, which can be assessed by a still non-existent universal list of general standards, but one that is created somewhere in a European country determines the cultural identity of the area and thus it inseparably belongs to it, as well as another non-Oriental cultural legacy. We believe that its value could certainly be determined in relation to other achievements at the global level, but what could conditionally be called its "local" character, is defined primarily in the context of all of what we call the cultural uniqueness of the community or area that has inherited it.

If we isolate artefacts defined by Arabic script, we get a whole that is not created by the case, the name of the owner or the donor, because its elements have clearly established connection. Thus, despite their possible sporadic, insufficiently persuasive value and authenticity, they are transformed into a particular and not negligible cultural discourse. Of course, Arabic *harf* (a letter) cannot close a circle that it describes, but it certainly names it. Selected items from the museum collec-



Fig. 5: Gashevitch's translation of Mevlud into Bosnian language (Rozaje, 19th century)

Fig. 5: Traduzione di Mevlud in bosniaco a cura di Gašević (XIX secolo)

tions of Montenegro, following the trail of Arabic and Ottoman script, are certainly part of an "Album" of a cultural memory. Arabic *harf* represents a connective thread in the Oriental-Islamic decoration on objects or ex-libris pointing to their owner, author or craftsman. If we know that the uniform and expected style of a craft or an artistic production within the framework of Oriental-Islamic makes any quest for significance of the author's name and signature senseless, we consider that the carved, woven, or written Arabic inscriptions are sure mark of identifying such museum items as persuasive parts of the mentioned cultural pattern. In museum funds and private collections of Montenegro we can find many metal, ceramic and textile items with Arabic script, as well as prints on the glass, and stone walls, and in the end, manuscripts - the original environment of *harf*, illuminated or significant, due to their centuries of age and beauty of the script. All of them are the representative as a specific expression of Oriental-Islamic literacy, aesthetic patterns and spiritual values, and above all, the Arabic alphabet in this case can be

described as an obvious particular transmission of the distinctive cultural system.

ORIENTAL-ISLAMIC PATTERNS OF DECORATION AND RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS AS A PART OF THE ORIENTAL-ISLAMIC AND NON-ORIENTAL HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL IDENTITY – FIVE ARTEFACTS FROM MONTENEGRIN MUSEUM FUNDS

Beyond an artefact, there is a world and history of people who used the artefact, the events that surrounded it. Understanding the role that an object played in people's lives, the meanings it held to different individuals and communities, the way it reflected the common knowledge, values, and tastes of a particular era, allows the object to become a part of our history. With a single artefact, we can connect to a set of values and beliefs. In all religious traditions there are objects that are used in worship, or as reminders to followers of their beliefs, their traditions, and their identity. They represent a symbolic connection with the community and its history,

principles and beliefs, or a sign of belonging. Religious symbols serve to be a cohesive force within a society (Durkheim, 1995, 234), but symbols are also distinctive elements of our culture, making a difference and distance from others, and representation of the society in relation to the outer world. Here we try to talk about artefacts associated with specific religions which could also be linked to other belief groups and cultural traditions. Therefore, cultural interconnections are the key points in this part of our analysis. In many cases, such interconnections are described as impossible and rare, but life connects incompatible elements. Deep layers of our cultural history sometimes appear in signs and symbols, which belong to other religious tradition, with different and changed meanings. Members of a social group are connected by their symbols, or in other words, symbols make connections between very different parts of our reality. People are separated by their religion, language and tradition, but the same cultural symbol in different usage tells them that their connections and cultural identity are not reduced to a distinctive character of their identity signs. We want to say that certain religious or cultural signs are sometimes being transmitted, because a national or socio-cultural group has power to give them their own meaning. Religion is never merely metaphysics (Geertz, 1973, 126). For all people the forms or objects of worship are covered with a sense of deep moral and traditional meaning. A religious system consists of sacred symbols and settings so that the whole could be seen as creating a fund of general meanings stored in symbols: a cross, a crescent, or a feathered serpent. According to this symbolic whole, we interpret our individual experiences and organise our life. Religious symbols are in use in rituals or related to myths and deep layers of ethnic traditions. The subject often does not become valuable because of its precious material, but becomes valuable because of the special significance that carries in itself. Accordingly, the special significance that carries in itself is generated by our perception, and without these components, it's an ordinary, everyday element.

On a wall above the southern entrance of Piva Monastery (16th century, Northern Montenegro) is a fresco of a Turkish very high-ranked man and, according to some analysis, a man on the fresco is Sokollu Mehmet Pasha, an Ottoman statesman. The legend says that prominent Turks from Drobnjak prayed in front of the fresco of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha in Piva Monastery, leaving a gold coin to the monks after their prayer (Bojovic, 1992, 242–243; Kujovic, 2010, 105). Truth or lie, the legend shows a very unusual cultural mixture represented in three key points of the story: 1) a fresco of a high-ranked Muslim, 2) Islamic prayer in the Christian house of God, and 3) Islamic prayer in front of a fresco. All mentioned highlights very deep rooted different layers of cultural interconnections that found a way of their expression in a picture of a Muslim on a church wall and in a folk legend. Just as a word has its basic meaning and also

expands it, so a symbol, religious or not, can be used outside of an expected framework of its use and have multiple meanings. The phenomenon of multiple meanings is defined by the concept of *polysemy*. "As a symbol is used again and again, multiple meaning accrues, so the most meaningful symbols often are old rather than new" (Stewart, Hurwitz, 1996, 266). Symbols have their history, describing and functioning as axioms with initial stable meaning. By decoding of a related code, new complex components of the semantic field of the symbol are revealed to us. In four museums of Montenegro (Medun, Bar, Cetinje, Ulcinj) we chose five artefacts with atypical and unexpected use of what we mean religious or cultural symbols, and they are, as follows: a necklace with three different religious symbols (Fig. 6, Homeland Museum - Medun), Northern Albanian Christian folk costume decorated with crescents and stars (Fig. 7 a,b, Homeland Museum - Ulcinj), silver cross framed with Turkish coins (Fig. 8, Homeland Museum - Bar), an icon of the Mother of God with an inscription in Arabic (Treasury of the Cetinje Monastery) (Fig. 9), and the Turkish battle flag taken and used by the Montenegrin army with Islamic elements changed into Christian (Fig. 10, Homeland Museum - Bar). The three aforementioned artefacts (the necklace, folk costume and silver cross) are of the Albanian origin. The first one is stored in the Homeland Museum in Medun, but there is not any record about how it has come into the museum and to whom it had belonged. There's only a hypothesis that the artefact has Albanian origin, according to the region where it was found. It has three religious symbols, and among them is a crescent with star above. The other two artefacts have also Oriental-Islamic elements: crescents with stars and Turkish coins. But none of these three artefacts could be considered as Oriental-Islamic. The three religious symbols on the necklace are not distinctive elements to identify the necklace as a part of a religious tradition. Neither do the crescent moon featuring on the Albanian folk costume which is mostly worn by Catholic Albanians. It probably refers to old Albanian national tradition, closely related to Illyrian influences. As we all know, the crescent moons are not an original symbol of Islam and belongs to the ancient cult of the goddess Mother or goddess of the moon. Numerous Illyrian axes were known to have two blades which can visually represent a symbol of the moon, i.e. the phase of rising and the phase of falling moon, which again fully forms a circle which can symbolize a full moon. The adherence to ancient Albanian pagan beliefs also continued well till the 20th century, particularly in the northern mountain villages to which the costume refers. Alexander Hilferding, a Russian Empire linguist and folklorist from the 19th century, wrote that Albanians are indifferent toward religion, and Islam is only the form that they accepted to please the authorities. An Albanian Muslim is primarily Albanian, but Islam was for him a matter of secondary importance (Giljferding, 1972, 293). They remember very well that

their ancestors were Christians (Giljferding, 1972, 294). He noticed that according to Tosca Muslims customs, there is a strange fasting, the rest of Christian tradition, and this fasting is counted only on the basis of the visual sightings of the moon, so that sometimes does not coincide with the Christian fasting for a few days (ibid, 1972, 250). A British traveler from the beginning of the 20th century, Edith Durham admits that among Albanians “to get at real beliefs of either Muslim or Christian is most difficult” (Durham, 1910, 456). She also recorded that in Albania she had lived with Muslim tribesmen all night and all day, but she had never seen one prayed or performed the ceremonial ablutions, and his women were all unveiled (Durham, 1910, 456). The presence of a star above the crescent moon can be explained as a part of a popular form of the symbol. This crescent moon with a star is the symbol of Islam, but the crescent moon on the northern Albanian folk costume doesn't mean a religious symbol. It means the symbol featuring in ancient Albanian tradition. Edith Durham in her description of the Christian women folk costume in Scutari says: “... On the head is a flat black cap on the crown of which is sewn a crescent, or a double crescent, of silver-gilt filagree. Or a similar design is worked in gold thread. This crescent the Christian women say they have always worn, and that it is not Turkish. In this they are probably correct. The crescent and sun are very commonly tattooed together with the cross on all these Christian tribes-folk, men and women. This seems to be the remnant of some old pre-Christian belief not connected with Mahomedanism at all. The Moslems do not tattoo the crescent but a double triangle.” (Durham, 1909, 51) She also noticed that “yet many of the grave-slabs in Dushmani churchyard are rudely scored with mysterious patterns in which the sun and crescent moon almost invariably occur, and the cross seldom – the symbols of the pre-Christian beliefs that still influence the people” (Durham, 1909, 166). The aforementioned artefact from the Homeland Museum in Bar – a cross covered by Turkish silver coins, confirms what we said. It's a true evidence that silver coins don't represent a symbol of Oriental-Islamic tradition or cultural identity in the region. These coins covering the cross have no cultural meaning, but only aesthetic, and can be considered as a precious decoration. In this part of our discussion, we should remind of a slogan made by a northern Albanian intellectual and poet Pashko Vasa that *The religion of Albanians is Albanism*. That means that there is a strong unifying cultural identity among Albanians, where even Muslims and Christians see themselves as Albanian before anything else. Albanian culture takes precedence over religion and this has been probably solidified historically by the common experience of struggling to protect the national culture in the face of various outside conquerors. And here we are noticing, that symbols can have any meaning, depending on the wishes of the person who interprets them (Willocks, 2009, 33).

The fourth artefact we talk about in this essay is an icon of the Mother of God exposed and stored in the Treasury of the Cetinje Monastery, with an inscription in Arabic. The inscription is as follows:

لأن وسائل الأم تقدر كثيراً ان تستعطف السيد

(literally: Holy Mother of God is mighty to ask the Lord for mercy, or: Holy Mother of God prays for us). The icon was a gift to Montenegrin King Nikola I Petrovic from Patriarch of Antioch Melentije (beginning of the 20th century). Such icons from Palestine, Lebanon and Syria in the Ottoman period, often called Melkite icons, were painted with oriental details and sometimes bear their painter's signature, his native place and a date. From the 7th century, when the Arabs conquered the entire Middle East, the Melkites become in fact Arab Christians of the Byzantine rite. All Melkites are Arabs – (linguistic and cultural), they can be Lebanese, Syrians, Egyptians or Palestinians or they are Christians, Catholics, following the Byzantine (or Greek) rituals as Russians. Melkite artists learned the rules of painting and form of the icon from works brought to the Middle East and also from Greek artists who lived in Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. In the earliest period their works are characterized by decoration borrowed from Islamic art, but floral, vegetable and geometric designs covering the whole surface, and also Arabic inscriptions, are general traits that distinguish Melkite icons (Lewis, 2009). The aforementioned icon is something entirely created far away from the Montenegrin space and it can be considered as an imported and strange element. The presence of an Arabic inscription reveals with no doubt the Oriental origin, influenced by Islamic art, but the Christian nature of the artefact does not allow us to name it “Oriental” with an Islamic sign.

The fifth artefact we talk about is the flag from the Homeland Museum in Bar, remade to be used by Montenegrin army and its original Islamic elements are changed into Christian. This change could be described as an attempt of making a motivating symbol of triumph and victory and the flag got a new meaning in comparison to its original symbols. In an introduction of a book named “Imaginarni Turcin” (“Imagining ‘the Turk’”), written by Bozidar Jezernik (2010), we can also see a card from the author's private collection, showing a Turkish lion depicted as the German poodle (Jezernik, 2010, 23). Such images play a game with deep rooted motives, sending an emotional message and a common sign, very much like impressions left behind advertisements in our lives nowadays. These images are consumed as signs, like a brand name, the principal concept of advertising, whose function is to signal the product, as well as to mobilize of affect – they are “full of signification and empty of meaning”, so that they speak in “a language of signals” (Baudrillard, 1988, 17). In the remade Turkish battle flag from the Homeland Museum in Bar we cannot talk about a mixture of symbols, created as a result of deep cultural interconnections, but it can be shown as an interesting witness of our sharply divided past.



Fig. 6: Necklace with three different religious symbols (Homeland Museum – Medun)

Fig. 6: Collana con tre diversi simboli religiosi (Museo locale – Medun)

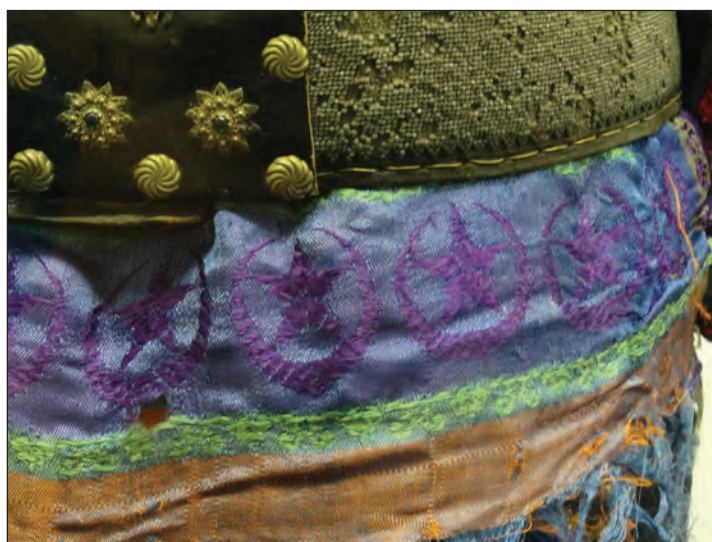


Fig. 7 a, b: Northern Albanian Christian folk costume decorated with crescents and stars (Homeland Museum – Ulcinj)

Fig. 7 a, b: Costume nazionale cristiano del nord di Albania, decorato di mezzalune con le stelle (Museo locale – Ulcinj)



Fig. 8: Silver cross framed with Turkish coins (Homeland Museum – Bar)

Fig. 8: Croce in argento incorniciata dalle monete ottomane (Museo locale – Bar)

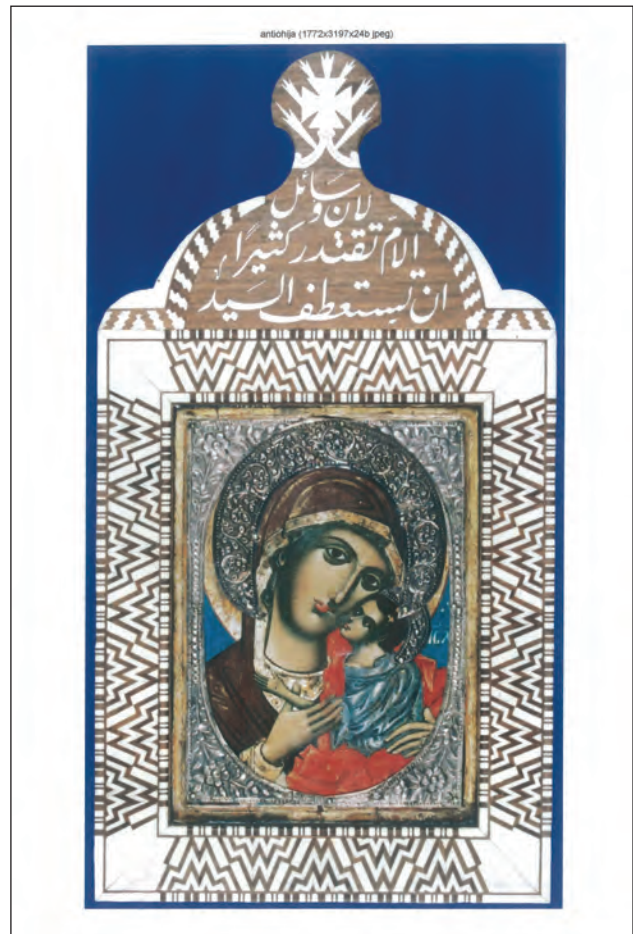


Fig. 9: Icon of the Mother of God with an inscription in Arabic (Treasury of the Cetinje Monastery)

Fig. 9: Icona della Madonna con la stampa araba (Tesoreria del Monastero di Cetinje)

CONCLUSION

Symbols are distinctive cultural features (implicit and explicit) and the structural part of the identity. These are more or less visible ethnic and cultural codes of a community for which it is believed that indicate a gathering of community members, as well as separate them from other communities. This definition was created as a summary of many studies confirming the ambivalent character of symbols at all. Every culture characterized by its own set of symbols associated with different experiences, traditions, history and perceptions. Symbols are a representative of reality and our research interest in this essay was to point out different possible ways of interpreting the meaning, distinctness of symbols of Oriental-Islamic cultural identity in Montenegro. Under the Ottoman rule in the Balkans, Oriental-Islamic influences meet very deep rooted local tradition, so a

regional expression of Oriental-Islamic cultural identity or the “Crypto-Christianity” and religious syncretism became very common. Among typical of the pre-Christian or pre-Islamic traditional beliefs are the dichotomy of light and dark, equivalents to male and female, sun and moon, good and evil, and this can be seen in symbols and images used in legends, myths, fairy tales, oaths, curses, tattoos, amulets, handicrafts, on gravestones, etc. The adherence to ancient pagan beliefs also continued through centuries and layered in shaping each new coming influence into a specific cultural expression. In the context of Oriental-Islamic cultural identity, we could talk on a mixture of original characteristics coming from the East and local regional identity. Besides, sometimes Oriental elements became a part of a pre-Islamic regional tradition taking changed meaning charge. In the process of recognising and selecting of artefacts of Oriental-Islamic origin, the first step can be isolating a common thread which is a reliable evidence



Fig. 10: Turkish battle flag taken and used by the Montenegrin army with Islamic elements changed into Christian (Homeland Museum – Bar)

Fig. 10: Bandiera militare turca catturata e utilizzata dall'esercito montenegrino con gli elementi islamici modificati in cristiani (Museo locale – Bar).

of their cultural belonging. Further procedure concerns to the history and all details of an artefact. In museological context different artefacts can be in interconnections on the basis of different criteria and a common charac-

teristic, but they must not be put in a certain collection forever, without continuing research and studying all possible ways, aiming to express and make a presentation of each part of our collective memory.

ISLAMSKA ORIENTALSKA KULTURNA IDENTITETA V ČRNI GORI – ZGODBA MUZEJSKIH ARTEFAKTOV

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POVZETEK

Večina današnje generacije v Črni Gori ima zelo konfuzno predstavo o času islamske oblasti na tem območju. Če nismo dovolj informirani, se kot rezultat navedenega pojavi ravnodušnost. Sporočilo te ravnodušnosti je, da morajo sledi in vsi znaki prisotnosti osvajalca čim prej izginiti, ne glede na to, ali se je njegova oblast končala včeraj ali že zdavnaj. Med posledicami te ravnodušnosti je vsekakor tudi dejstvo, da so turški spomeniki na tem območju redki, tako da se najbolj dragoceni fragmenti islamske orientalske dediščine najdejo v muzejih in arhivih daleč stran od Črne Gore. Kako jih zbrati? Katera je skupna nit ali znak za opredelitev celote, ki se identificira kot islamska orientalska dediščina v Črni Gori? Medsebojne kulturne povezave so ključni elementi naše analize. V mnogih primerih so takšne povezave razumljene kot nemogoče in redke, vendar življenje povezuje nezdružljivo. Globoki sloji naše kulturne zgodovine so včasih prisotni v znakih in simbolih, ki pripadajo drugim religijskim tradicijam, z različnim in spremenjenim pomenom. Ljudi delijo religija, jezik in tradicija, vendar isti kulturni simbol v različni rabi dokazuje, da se njihove medsebojne povezave in kulturna identiteta ne končujejo z razločevalnimi značilnostmi njihovih identitetnih simbolov. Ravno zaradi tega muzejski artefakti ne smejo biti za vselej umeščeni v neko muzejsko zbirko, brez nadaljnega preučevanja vseh možnih poti s ciljem izražanja in prezentiranja posameznih delov našega kolektivnega spomina.

Ključne besede: materialna kultura, dediščina, Črna Gora, arhivi, artefakti, islamski Orient

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