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THE INFLUENCE OF MEDIEVAL LEGACY ON THE CONTEMPORARY YUGOSLAV ART

The presence of medieval legacy in the literary, musical and pictorial creations of several contemporary Yugoslav artists points most of all to the continuity and acceptance of this seemingly remote cultural tradition. Although medieval themes have inspired a number of artistic works, there has not been an attempt to examine these aspirations as a simultaneous occurrence in different art fields. Yet there is an abundance of art works, created by writers, painters and composers, that share a similar introspection. The aim of this paper is to testify to the presence of medieval cultural legacy in a number of art work. The emphasis upon tradition points most of all to the continuity of spiritual culture, its presence resisting the seemingly destructive oblivion of time. Although this heritage pertains to the singularity of the national entity, it manifests itself in a plurality of visions. Accordingly, the cultural tradition preserving the historical consciousness is interpreted by the artists in a variety of forms and expressions. While reaching into the historical past, the artists seem to find a renewed creative incentive, producing in the process a synthesis of past and present.

The affinity for the heretical teaching of the Bogomils is apparent in the early literary works of Ivo Andrić.¹ Andrić was in particular influenced by the dualistic approach inherent to the ethical and moral codes of the Christian beliefs, as well as in distant and mistö tradition of the Bogomils. In two lyrically conceived prose segments under the title *Crveni listovi* (Red

¹ П. Палавестра, *Критика и авангарда у модерној српској књижевности*, Београд, Просвета, 1979, 321.

Leaves), Andrić points to the tragic dichotomy existing in social life after the end of World War I. Two opposing worlds existed next to each other: the world of suffering and misery, and the world of affluence and wantonness. Thus Andrić's lyrical contemplations, in its essence a soliloquy and subjective introspection, grew to encompass outside voices of despair caused by social injustice:

"And in my infirmity and discontent I believe only in the brotherhood of tears, in this bitter sea that is filling up and rising and that will finally connect the distant arid shores, and then overflow, enormous and mighty. And bathed for years by the sea of silent tears, the whole world will become ashamed and rise to be liberated. The sun will shed its rays on the oppressed and poor and then free numerous tied up hands to embrace, to work and fold in prayer. Then it will become easier for my soul since it will realize that in poverty and debasement it did not cry in vain."²

Bogomilism was a religious heresy that spread from Bulgaria, where it had previously taken root in the tenth century, to become entrenched in Serbia and especially in Bosnia. In its essence the Bogomilism presents a continuation of the long and complex heretic tradition of the East. During its century long evolution, Bogomilism incorporated diverse new influences. Consequently, Bogomilism became a syncretic heresy with an authentic and new profile, basing its teaching on the everlasting duality of goodness and evil, light and darkness.³

Andrić deliberated about the same division of good and evil in his novel *Gospodjica* (Miss). His preoccupation and concern about the existence of two separate worlds is depicted in the following profession mocking the social order:

"You divided the world justly: All that is fair and beautiful you took for yourself and all that is dark and difficult you left for us; thus we are all born with predestined clear and inexorable fates: you have the bright one and we have the dark."⁴

Poetess Desanka Maksimović felt frequently the need for the reaffirmation of the historical past in the course of her long and fruitful literary career. Thus Maksimović contended that she felt as if everyone experienced a greater freedom when reflecting and writing about the past.⁵ Consequently, in the late 1920's and

² I. Andrić, *Crveni listovi, Sta sanjam, Hrvatska njiva*, 1918, II, 41, p. 704, quoted after Palavestra: *Kritika i avangarda*, 321.

³ Д. Драгојловић, *Богомилство на Балкану у Малој Азији*, Београд 1974, САНУ, 1—13.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 322.

⁵ J. Milojković-Đurić, *Conversations with D. Maksimović*, May 1982 and June 1983, manuscript.

the beginning of the 1930's Maksimović wrote a cycle containing twelve poems under the title: *Molitva bogumilova*.⁶

It is significant that Maksimović wrote these poems, rediscovering her native heritage, at the time when a similar attitude was becoming apparent in a number of artistic endeavors in her own country and elsewhere. In the midst of the economic, social and political upheavals of the late 1920's and 1930's, many artists searched for a new artistic expression, abandoning the adherence to previous ways of writing or avantgarde experimentations. The solution for the wide spread feeling of the crisis in the arts was often found in the cultural tradition perpetuated from a different time on the native soil.⁷

In the poem *Bogumilska Pesma* from the afore mentioned cycle Maksimović saw in her own nature traits reminiscent of the Bogomil legacy. Talking about herself she contended that the spirit of goodness and the spirit of evil co-existed within her, alluding to the belief attributed to the Bogomil heresy about the simultaneous existence of these two opposing forces:

The Bogomil Song

Two spirits live in me —
The spirit of goodness and the spirit of evil
Oh, I am not guilty that I grew
On this tiny ground.

Oh, I am not guilty that I am a union
Of these two eternal spirits:
Within my hearing passed
At moments the sombre threat of thunder,
Or a contended flock of birds.

Oh, I am not guilty that along my trail
The butterfly flies, or the snake creeps
That next to trees in blossom, dark branches grow
And that everything is air darkness, and somebody says
on our bread black seeds are falling.

Oh, I am not guilty, I did not want
To be created from the soul and tissues
That are fleeting, that seek empty joy
That my heart is at a moment close to earth
Or to a heavenly sanctuary.

Oh, I am not guilty that I do not have the power
When I wake up at morning good,
In the evening to turn evil.
Oh, I grew on this tiny ground
Where days flow into nights.

⁶ D. Maksimović, *Zeleni vitez*, Beograd, Nolit, 1930. The translations of poems are my own.

⁷ J. Milojković-Đurić, *Tradition and Avant-Garde: The Arts in Serbian Culture between the two World Wars*, East European Monographs, No. CLX, Boulder, and Columbia Univ. Press, 1984, 4, 105—111, 119—134.

Bogumilska pesma

U meni žive duha dva:
duh dobra i duh zla.
O, nisam kriva ja što sam nikla
iz ovog majušnog tla.

O, nisam kriva ja što sam spoj
ova dva večna duha:
ukraj moga je proticala sluha
čas sumorna pretnja groma,
čas spokojni tica roj.

O, nisam kriva ja: duž mojih staza
sad leptir brodi, sada gmiže zmija:
kraj cvetnih kruna raste mrko trnje;
i sve je zrak i tama; i neko kaza
da u hleb naš padne crno zrnje.

O, nisam kriva ja: ja nisam htela
da budem stvorena iz duše i tkiva
prolaznog, što praznu radost ište,
da srce moje čas blisko zemlji biva,
čas da nebesno bude svetilište.

O, nisam kriva ja što nemam moći
da, kada jutrom probudim se dobra,
nikad večerom ne omrknem zla.
O, ja sam nikla iz majušnog tla
gde dani utiču u noći.

In the retrospective of some fifty years Maksimović explained that she was attracted to the Bogomil legacy primarily due to the purity of Bogomil beliefs. She perceived as truthful the acceptance of the equality of evil and goodness, in accordance with her own conviction that human nature presents an embodiment of these two opposing forces. Already at birth the evil is present in the new born perpetuated as an inheritance from the progenitors. These deliberations about human nature have persuaded her that the only true evil is the one executed in cold blood. These observations, carried for many years, brought about the inception of her most mature collection of poems: *Tražim Pomilovanje* (I Seek Mercy).⁸ In this remarkable poetic offering, Maksimović pleaded that forgiveness should be granted to human transgressions if committed without premeditation. She discusses human weaknesses and tribulations within the framework of the Law Code issued in 1349 during the reign of the Emperor Stefan Dušan. This most important legal monument of the medieval Serbian state was established at the time of great prosperity both economic and political. The preface to the Code declared that this legal document was instituted by the orthodox council, the archbishop Joanikie

⁸ Д. Максимовић, *Тражим помиловање*, Нови Сад, Матица српска, 1964.

in conjunction with all church dignitaries as well as by the Emperor Stefan Dušan himself and his noblemen: "small and great".⁹

Proglas (The Proclamation), as the first poem of the collection *Tražim Pomilovanje*, serves well as an introduction to the poems that follow:

The Proclamation

By the mercy of God
And with the blessings of the Saints from Ras
I, emperor of Serbs, Greeks and Albanians
Lands that I inherited from my father
And conquered with my sword,
That I tied with blood vessels
Of my soldiers,
I give this legal code
And there shall be no other codes
Than this one.

The child killer, adulterer, usurper
The one possessed by the evil and jealous devil
The heathen, bogomil and heretic,
The weakling, not talking justly in the court.
the man desecrating the holy icons
will be harshly punished according to my Code
but no more harshly
than it is stated in the Code.

I am separating the nobleman, after the customs of our fathers
From the peasants,
The higher priest and nobleman
Will be judged milder than the commoner
But not in fear
From my empire
And not milder
Than it is stated in the legal code

To the hemp spinning woman
My laws shall be instead of the shield
Nor the slave
Or the unknown one who hurries through my empire
From no one shall fear
Only the guilty one will be judged
But not more harshly
Than provided by the law.

Proglas

Po milosti božjoj
i blagoslovu svetitelja iz Rasa,
ja, car Srba, Grka i Arbanasa,
zemljama koje od očeva nasleđih
i mačem osvojih,

⁹ D. Jovanović, *Bogomilstvo, Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*, Zagreb 1958, 183—184.

koje povezah krvnim sudovima
svojih vojnika,
dajem zakonik
i neka nema drugih zakonika
osim mojih.

Čedoubica, preljubnik, najahalac,
onaj koga zlopakosni đavo uze,
babun, bogumil i jeretik,
slabić koji na sudu ne govori pravo,
čovjek koji skrnavi ikone svetih,
biće surovo kažnjeni po zakonima mojim,
ali ne surovije
nego što u zakonu stoji.

Ja vlastelu, prema običajima otaca,
od sebra izdvojih.
Prvosvešteniku i vlastelinu
sudiće se blaže nego meropahu,
ali ne u strahu
od carstva mi,
i ne blaže
nego što u zakonu stoji.

Kudeljnici sirotaj pred nasilnikom
zakoni moji
biće umesto štita.
Ni robu pravednom,
ni neznancu što kroz carstvo mi hita,
niti ikom
treba da ih se boji,
samo krivcu će se surovo suditi,
ali ne surovije
nego što u zakonu stoji.

A renewed interest in the Bogomil art in the late 1940's became even more prominent due to the efforts of the writer and literary critic Miroslav Krleža. While preparing the catalogue for the exhibit of Yugoslav medieval art in Paris in 1950, under the auspices of UNESCO, Krleža stressed the artistic value and the unique emotional qualities expressed on Bogomil tombstones, known as stećci. Krleža was impressed with the continuous tradition of the Bogomil cult of the dead, lasting from the eleventh century until Bosnia lost its independence and fell under the Ottoman rule. These unique markers were a proof of a religious, ethical and artistic nonconformism that endured centuries. Krleža pointed out that Bosnian stećci, defiantly pagan in spirit, eloquently express the pleasures, of life, depicting dancing and hunting scenes amid stylized animal figures and flowering plants. In conclusion, Krleža projected the Bogomil art as one of the most singular and impressive expressions of artistic imagination within the European framework.¹⁰

¹⁰ O. Bihalji-Merin, *Horizons, Limits and Boundaries, Art Treasures of Yugoslavia*, Belgrade, Jugoslavija, 1973, 42—43.

There are still around fifty thousand stecci preserved on originally designated grounds. The forms of these markers range from ordinary slabs to enormous crosses, caskets, obelisks and most often gabled sarcophagi. Decorative motifs and ornamentations are usually executed in low relief on one side of the monument. These carved images showed no attempt to copy natural forms since the desire was to convey the meaning of reality through symbolic features in individual and unique manner. Pictorial representations include the cross, the spiral, the sun disk, the crescent moon and feudal insignia, such as sword and shield. Frequently repeated is a male figure with disproportionately large hands in an upraised motion.¹¹

Krleža's support of the Bogomil art increased the interest of the public and artists alike towards these impressive monuments of cultural heritage. Lazar Vujaklija especially benefitted from this experience. His first exhibition of paintings in 1952 manifested the inner kinship with the stark and simplified pictorial language of the Bogomil stecci.

Vujaklija's iconography contains the stylized, symbolic presentations depicted often on Bogomil memorial markers: the sun disk, the crescent moon, stars, birds and doves, warriors on horseback, men with upraised hands. The intensity of Vujaklija's visual images is further enhanced by the colors used. The execution of motifs is juxtaposed with the symbolical as well as expressive use of blue and yellow. Similar to the Byzantine and Christian concept, the blue color in Vujaklija's paintings has a symbolic connotation pertaining to the heavenly nimbus of eternal splendor, while the yellow hues relate to the earth as the ancestry of human dwelling. Thus Vujaklija's pictorial art possesses most of all a symbolic quality, presenting metaphorical images of the fleeting yet eternal reality.¹²

The composer Ljubica Marić composed in 1956 the cantata *The Songs of Space*. Marić remembers that this composition developed as a response to a book on Bosnian tombstones by Alojz Benac that she received earlier as a gift. As a talented pictorial artist herself Marić was impressed by these austere images. Soon enough she started composing the cantata. For the textual base she chose seven epitaphs carved in stone on these funeral monuments.

In defining the title of the cantata, Marić explained that the concept of space, as contained in the title, denotes not only the physical space, but equally the concept of time and the very existence itself. Death is behind space and time, although in

¹¹ A. Benac, *Medieval Tombstones, Art Treasures...*, 285—287.

¹² L. Trifunović, *Lazar Vujaklija*, Introduction to the Catalog of Paintings, Beograd 1966. Reprinted in Lazar Vujaklija, Beograd, Škola industrijskog oblikovanja, 1972.

reality death is juxtaposed to life, and is therefore life-like even as an abstract negation of physical existence.¹³

According to her autobiographical sketches, Marić always felt an irresistible link with the native soil, her roots and origin. But the roots are spread out, and there is an immeasurable vastness of space: "And so we call through the ages, and by the very calling we recreate."¹⁴ However, the past and the present merge at one point and thus the very presence arises out of these two. Furthermore she believes that there is never a standstill due to the un-ending state of flux. In such manner new transversals of time that never existed before are created.¹⁵

The cantata *The Songs of Space* is composed for a mixed choir and symphonic orchestra. The formal structure of the cantata comprises an orchestral prelude and seven epitaphs performed by the choir and orchestra. One single intermission divides the cantata into two parts; the first part is made up of the prelude and three epitaphs, while the second contains the remaining four. The movements follow one another without a break. The chosen epitaphs relate to the profound human preoccupation with life and death.

The Prelude, introduced by a distinctive chord progression is enhanced by the piano and harp figurations in the high register. The First Epitaph that follows evokes the contemplative mood of the inscription:

I lay me down long, long ago
And long have I still to lie.

This inscription was originally found on the grave slab of Stipko Radosalić who was buried on the Premilovo Polje at Ljubinja. The monument was adorned by a half-moon in the shape of a ship that was believed to carry the deceased to the real life.¹⁶

A distinctive folk style is achieved in the Second Epitaph. The introspective passage of the female choir, lamenting the death of a well-beloved young hero who was struck down by death, is contrasted to robust and abrupt responses of the male choir. A similar melodic kinship with the folk idiom is projected in the Fourth Epitaph which is introduced by an orchestral interlude. The female choir evokes vocalizing the ancient custom of grieving in its foreboding solemnity.

The Sixth Epitaph also projects an inner resemblance with the folk melodies although there is no explicit quotation of

¹³ Lj. Marić, *Autobiographical Sketches*, manuscript in the Musicological Institute, Belgrade.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ M. Dizdār, *Kameni Spavač*, Second Edition, Mostar, Mala biblioteka Alfa, 1973, p. 45.

folk tunes. A decisive, march-like ostinato figure in the bass, supports the broadly woven recitative of the male choir, carrying the words of a warrior who bore intense suffering because of his loyalty to his lord.

The cantata *The Songs of Space* eloquently celebrates the acceptance of Bogomil contribution as an aspect of the multi-faceted ancestral heritage. The impressive musical rendition reinforces Bogomil messages with a renewed understanding, interpreting its content as an apotheosis of the continuity of human endeavors.

The Bogomil legacy provided an incentive for the creation of several poems by Dejan Medaković. Medaković, as an art historian, visited several necropolises in Bosnia and Hercegovina on scientific explorations early in the 1950's.¹⁷ On these occasions, Medaković grew to understand the Bogomil markers as an everlasting tie with the native soil. He voiced his acceptance of all the symbols and messages contained on these monuments. One of the representations of the male figure with upraised large hands in the region of Radimlja caught his imagination suggesting a feeling of closeness with this solitary witness of times long past:

Stećak

A stone in solitude
 Swollen wasteland
 An unknown hand upraised
 Threatening with its outstretched palm
 I am passing by one fugitive of a defeated army
 And in the forsaken presence everywhere
 I feel the long lance-like fingers reaching towards me
 And returning me to the place
 From where I can not run away
 Although indeed I am not guilty
 For the perhaps noble death
 Of its ancient owner
 I am reconciled to the hand and threat of the unknown one
 He stops the moments at the crossroads
 And I forsee
 And I know well
 When I follow a deer's trail
 He will tighten my bow and pass me the arrows
 thus from now on
 We will roam through time and unmarked ancestral lands
 And only secretly and softly I smile
 At our so different, uneven hands
 Always
 When we catch
 The same amount of
 Fruitlessness.

¹⁷ J. Milojković—Đurić, *Conversation with D. Medaković*, Manuscript, 1981 and 1982.

Stećak

Kamen u samoći
 Nabrekla pustoš
 Na njemu neznana ruka
 celom šakom preti
 Prolazim kao begunac pobeđene vojske
 I u napuštenosti svuda prisutnoj
 Osećam da me stižu veliki, kopljasti prsti
 I vraćaju na mesto
 Odakle više ne mogu pobeći
 Iako doista nisam kriv
 Za moguće, viteško umiranje
 Njegovog davnog vlasnika
 Mirim se sa rukom i pretnjom neznanca
 Koji na raskršću zaustavlja trenutke
 I slutim
 I dobro znam
 Kada budem na tragu jelena
 Zatezaće mi luk i dodavati strele
 I tako, odsada
 Lutaćemo vremenom i neomeđanim baštinama
 I samo krišom i tiho ja se nasmešim
 Našim tako različitim, nejednakim rukama
 Uvek
 Kada uhvatimo
 Istu količinu
 Uzaludnosti.

The poem *Stećak* was the first of the collection that afterwards grew and was published under the title *Kamenovi* (Stones).¹⁸ The poems were aimed at pointing to the continuity of the spiritual culture lending to the messages from the past an actuality that although inherent was not perceived by many.

In another poem from this collection, *Bobovac*, Medaković evokes the essence of the transmitted beliefs attributed to the teaching of the Bogomils. The title itself refers to the Bosnian city that was once also inhabited by a community of Bogomil believers. The recent research in the ruins of Bobovac reveals a highly developed artistic style in architecture and wall painting.¹⁹ Bobovac was at the time a major political center, where kings held their residences. In the opening verses, Medaković refers to the scarcity of written records and manuscripts relating to the Bogomils and their teachings.

Bobovac

It was not recorded
 For lengthy retelling,
 The message may declare,
 Our knowledge

¹⁸ D. Medaković, *Kamenovi*, Beograd, Prosveta, 1962. English translation of poems by J. Milojković-Đurić.

¹⁹ A. Benac, *Medieval Tombstones, Art Treasures...*, p. 279.

Shall be divided among the guards of ancestral roots
 Some to keep vigil
 Over the diminished wealth
 Others to defend
 The equality of evils
 To harken is the vow of the condemned women
 The protection of the live fire
 Was handed to the pursued
 If they cut down the inherited lime tree
 The rain will kill
 The pursued and the pursuer
 Through the desert of ancient codes
 Violent justice will roam.

Bobovac

Nije zapisano
 Za duga kazivanja.
 Poruka možda glasi:
 Saznanja naša
 Podeliće čuvaru zavičajnih žila
 Jedan da bdije
 Nad proređenim dobrom
 Drugi da brani
 Ravnopravnost zala
 Osluškiivanje je zavet sudenica
 Zaštita žive vatre
 Predata je gonjenima
 Ako poseku nasledenu lipu
 Dažd će pogubiti
 Gonjene i goniča
 Pustinjom drevnih zakonika
 Lutace nasilna prevednost.

Medaković's poems reveal his inner thoughts as he contemplates Bogomil memorial markers as symbols of continuous existence of a people, its endurance and stamina under diverse imposed hardships. Medaković believes that the understanding and acceptance of the native heritage has to be achieved repeatedly with compassion for the sacrifices in numerous battles in spite of human vulnerability. Thus the metaphorical significance of the Bogomil stecci, as strongholds of heritage seemingly remote and archaic emerges with the present, perpetuating a newly discovered reality.

Motivated by the wish to enrich the seemingly scarce data about the Bogomils, the poet Mak Dizdar distinguished himself as a voice of the medieval Bosnia and as a collector and commentator of a collection of medieval texts that shed considerable light on the history of Bosnia.²⁰ In his poems Dizdar often identifies himself among the inhabitants of the past. His poem

²⁰ M. Dizdar, *Stari bosanski teksovi*, Sarajevo, Svjetlost, 1971.

Gorčin attained recognition and was included in the Anthology of the Contemporary Yugoslav Poetry.²¹

Dizdar's collected poems published under the title *Kameni Spavač* (Stone Sleeper) were enhanced by the pictorial presentations of artist Dzevad Hozo, reminiscent of the Bogomil art. In the Introduction to this collection of poems, Dizdar wrote that he used to gaze for hours at Bogomil markers, situated at the edge of ancient woods: "From the stone masses various symbols were entering into me of the sun, entwined plants or outstretched human hands. During the night I am surrounded by the inscriptions at the margins of old books whose lines shout with questions about the apocalypse. At that time the sleeper under the stone visits me. His pale lips part from pleasure and his unintelligible language becomes clear. I recognize myself in him but I am not certain that I will solve this secret."²²

Dizdar's poems inspired the creations of several music compositions. In 1968, the composer Vlado Milošević composed his most accomplished work, based on Dizdar's verses. Milošević selected seven poems from the collection *Kameni Spavač*. These poems form the textual basis for the String Quartet *Kameni Spavač*, with participation of a narrator. The selected poems thus formed seven movements portraying contrasting moods and emotions.

Feeling the respect toward the poetic word and the nobility of style of Mak Dizdar's verses, Milošević lift the poems intact, to be recited by the narrator. The musical commentary is given to the string quartet and presents Milošević's response to Dizdar's poetry. The first poem *Kosara* presents a lyrical rendition about separated lovers, remaining true to each other into eternity. The expressive opening theme in a gradual ascension is played by the cello, setting a contemplative mood. The second poem *Gorčin* recounts the life of a soldier who lost his life in his homeland. The musical setting evokes a brisk and lively contrast to the first movement. The remaining movements lend to the laconic declamation of the narration, about diverse human conditions, a subtle emphasis. Milošević's musical language projects a kinship with the musical folk idiom of Bosnia. Throughout his compositional career Milošević believed that the native musical language, as preserved in folk tunes, presents a source of unlimited creative inspiration. Accordingly, the majority of his musical compositions testify to the influence of the folk idiom.²³

²¹ D. Adamović, Ed., Sarajevo, Narodna prosvjeta, 1958.

²² M. Dizdar, *Kameni Spavač*, Introduction.

²³ Motto by the composer on the jacket of the record: *Gudački kvartet, Kameni spavač*, Pro Arte, RTV Sarajevo, Diskoton, LPU 0305.

The composer Vojin D. Komadina wrote in 1972 the ballet music *Satana* (Satan) based on the medieval inscriptions contained in Dizdar's collection *Old Bosnian Texts*. The selection of these texts from the twelfth century formed the basis of the libretto for the ballet adapted by Miroslav Jančić.²⁴ The libretto describes the beginning and the end of the world, comprized in eight scenes. Komadina's musical language, although contemporary and avantgarde in approach, introduces the idiomatic elements reminiscent of the characteristic inflections of the secular and spiritual folk melodies. In addition Komadina strove for the unity of the musical content. Thus the music of the whole work is derived from the orchestral introduction, presenting the essential musical thoughts. The participation of a mixed choir lends to the choreography an added explicit quality, enhancing the instrumental musical component with the expresiveness of vocal music.

Stressing his ties with the native heritage, Komadina composed the choreographic suite *Ruka od Ruke* (Hand to Hand). The title is derived from Dizdar's poem *Kolo* (Round Dance) that constitutes, with several other poems, the textual foundation of the Suite. The Suite presents an apotheosis of dance where even the inanimate objects join in a dance-like movement. This composition bears likeness to the musical style that Komadina displayed in the ballet *Satana*, inspired by Dizdar's poetry.

The round dance is often depicted on Bogomil tombstones, presumably as a ritual that accompanied the funeral customs. There is some evidence that the round dance served to guide the souls to the other, everlasting world. It was also noted that the same function of guiding the soul may be performed by the deer. In some cases on the stecci, the deer rider leads the dance.²⁵ *Kolo* is still the one single most cultivated form of folk dancing among the South Slavs accompanying many customary celebrations the year around.

All these artistic creations corroborate the continuity of spiritual culture by rediscovering the past in the present experiences. In the manner of the round dance that was handed from one generation to another, the ancient native images permeate the contemporary artistic language. While trying to preserve the cultural identity of a people, these works point to parallel aspirations in various fields of artistic endeavors. Thus these works render a better understanding of the artistic vision of the medieval legacy as expressed in a number of creations by Yugoslav artists.

²⁴ J. Milojković—Đurić, *Conversations with V. Komadina*, Manuscript, 1982.

²⁵ M. Wenzel, *Ornamental Motifs on Tombstones from Medieval Bosnia and Surrounding Regions*, Sarajevo, 1965, 348.

**УТИЦАЈ СРЕДЊОВЕКОВНЕ БАШТИНЕ НА САВРЕМЕНУ
ЈУГОСЛОВЕНСКУ УМЕТНОСТ****Резиме**

Приказани су песнички, музички и сликарски радови већег броја југословенских уметника. Ти радови су обележени средњовековним, посебно византијским наслеђем. Нагласак на традицији указује, пре свега, на континуитет духовне културе. Посежући у многолику историјску прошлост, уметници као да добијају обновљен стваралачки подстицај, остварујући, у том процесу, синтезу прошлости и садашњости.