

LEPENSKI VIR – THE SACRAL CALENDAR OF THE SUN DEITY

LJUBINKA BABOVIĆ

*The National Museum in Belgrade, Trg republike 1A,
11000 Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro*

Abstract. According to the applied methodology, based in part on the mapping elements and the orientation in space, the objects found at Lepenski Vir, were by their contents a city of sanctuaries, devoted to the Sun Deity.

The complex of sanctuaries at the locality of Lepenski Vir, dating from the VII millennium B. C. (Djerdap /The Iron Gates/, Serbia), unique by its peculiarity of visual expression, the architecture of sanctuaries and sculptures – the objects of cult, the sacrificial altars and the ritual objects – is interpreted by the author as a spatial architectonical complex of temples, which realizes, in the chosen ambient, the projected apparent daily and annual path of the Sun, conceived as deity (Srejšović, Babović, 1983; Babović, 1997, 2006).

All the sanctuaries, built of stone, have the form of a truncated circular sector (celestial horizon) and they are anthropomorphous by their shape and the structure of interior; and they individualize the Sun deity in four modalities of motion, according to the active or passive being of the deity (Fig. 1a,b).

The conceived and represented world is realized in two semi-spheres, spatially arranged: the day semi-sphere on the E-S-SW part, with the zenith point (st. 37), and the night semi-sphere on the SW-W-N-NE part, with the nadir point and st. 54, which is point located between the semi-spheres. The axis of the spheres passes through the semi-spheres, at an angle of 331° relative to the axis of north, deviating by 29° from N towards NW, passing through st. 26, nadir, st. 54 and the centre of the day sphere (Fig. 1, 2).

All the sanctuaries in the day and the night semi-spheres are spatially located along the cardinal points, according to the function which they had in the realization of the Sun deity's motion (Fig. 2). They are all orientated with the arc side towards the east – the horizon of the sunrise (except st. 53, 10, 49 and 26 in the night sphere, which are orientated particularly for the sake of transferring functions, in the realization of the continuous motion of the deity through the spheres), and with the truncated side towards the west, the place of the sunset. The attributive properties of the Sun, both



Figure 1a: Lepenski Vir 1968.

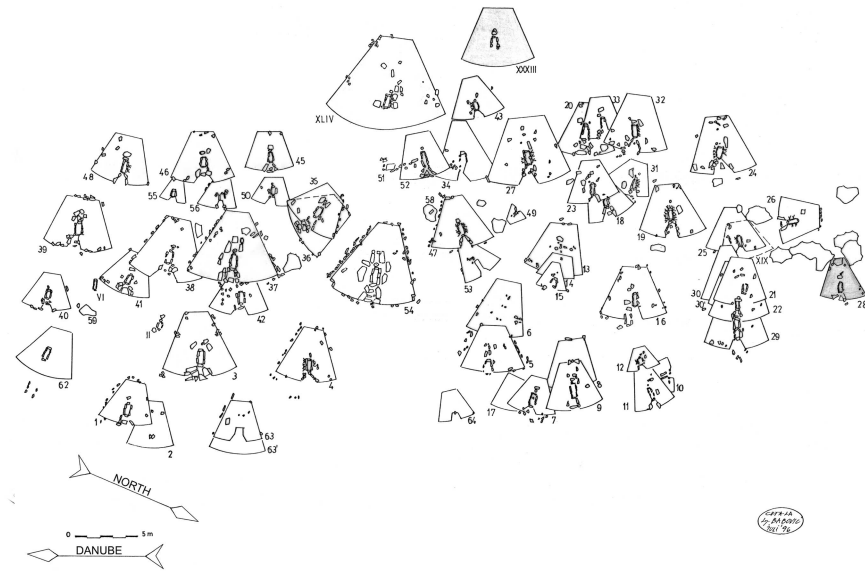


Figure 1b: The situation plan of the sanctuaries at Lepenski Vir.

as a deity and celestial body, light and warmth, are expressed by the fire in a rectangular hearth, and by light symbols the nocturnal epiphany of the deity. The lower limbs of the deity and the modalities of motion are stated by the shape of the ash-hole, and the upper ones by the sacrificial stone tables or altars, at the level of the floor (Fig. 1, 2).

The sanctuaries of the day and the night semi-sphere are organized into a circle, in two belts, the inner and the outer one (according to the midday height of the Sun and the length of the shadow), along which the Sun deity lawfully moves oppositely across the spheres, and continually – progradely or retrogradely. The direction of the Sun's movement is expressed by the succession of construction (Fig. 1, 2).

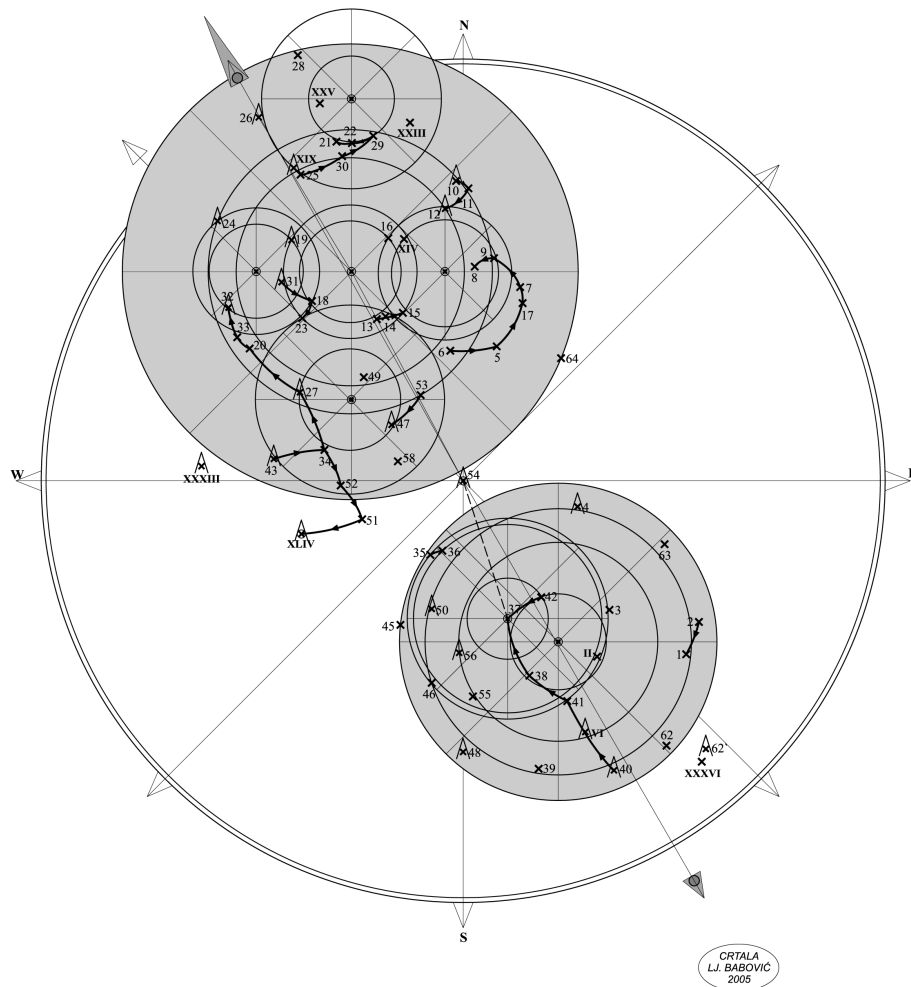


Figure 2: The place and position of sanctuaries in Lepenski Vir.

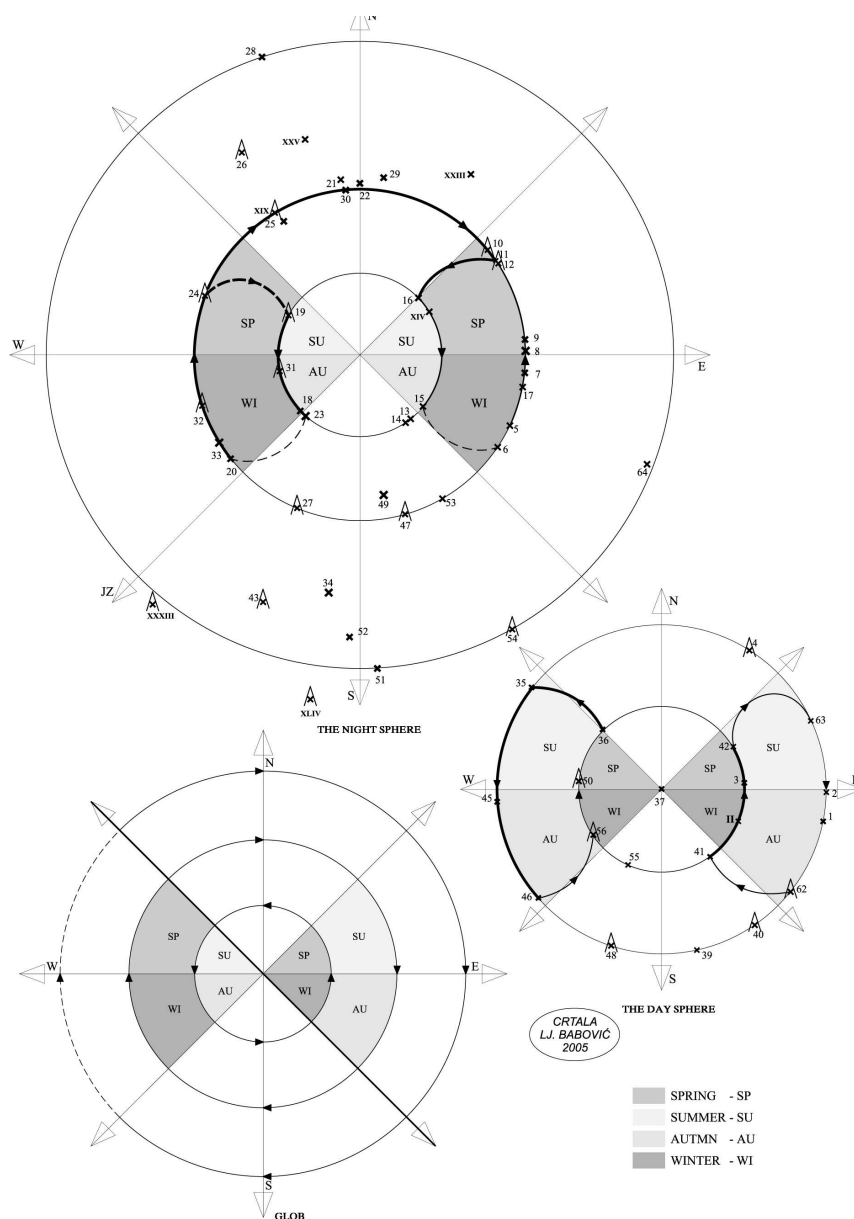


Figure 3: The calendar of the shifts of annual seasons in the day and night spheres.

The diurnal sphere, which comprises half of the sanctuaries in the nocturnal sphere, has the following configuration of the sanctuaries, in relation to the zenith (st. 37) – at the east of the inner belt: st. 41, 3, 42; at the south: st. 38, 55; at the west: st. 56, 50, 36; and there are no sanctuaries on the north. In the outer belt, there are

on the east: st. 63, 2, 1, 62; on the south: st. 40, VI, 39, 48; on the west: st. 46, 45, 35; and on the north st. 4, of the nocturnal epiphany. The succession of st. 40 > VI > 41 > 38 > 37 shows that the Sun moves along the inner belt from the south towards the north, symmetrically, on the east and on the west, with respect to the N–S axis, and along the outer belt from the north towards the south, according to the direction of the successions of ambivalent pairs, st. 42 > 37, 36 > 35 and 2 > 1. By such configuration, st. 41 at the east and st. 56 at the west of the inner belt occupy the positions of the winter solstice points; st. 3 and 50 of the spring equinox; and st. 42 and 36 of the summer solstice points, i. e. in the day sphere, along the inner belt, the Sun brings first winter, and then spring, to the northern hemisphere, going from the south to the north. "Turning" by the northern tropical point (st. 63, 35), it brings the summer to the northern hemisphere of the outer belt, and the autumn after the autumn equinox (st. 2, 45). There comes the walk towards the southern turning points (st. 62, 46), and thereafter the cycle repeats itself (Fig. 3).

The complex structure of the nocturnal hemisphere, encompassing the spaces of the realized world, is the initial space of residing of the Sun deity, in its multifarious functions (Babović, 2006). The structuring of the sanctuaries into two belts is consistently effected, with the same openness of the north space, without sanctuaries, on the inner belt. There are in the outer belt located st. 20, 33, 32, 24, which follow the deity's movement from the south to the north, that is expressed by the succession of st. 27 > 20 > 33 > 32. At the east of the same belt, the succession of st. 6 > 5 > 17 > 7 > 9 > 8 expresses the same, and the series of st. 10 > 11 > 12 – the reverse connection towards the regular motion, from the north to the south, which takes place on the inner belt (st. 16 > XIV) or to the contrary, from the inner to the outer one, in the series of st. 13 > 14 > 15.

On the inner belt of the west, there are st. 19, 31, 18, 23, which realize, by the succession of st. 31 > 18 > 23, the direction of the Sun deity's movement from the north towards the south, which has carried out the turn in the space of the north, around the axis of the north, by the series of st. 25 > 30 > 29 > 22 > 21. In the area of the winter solstice point, there are, on the outer belt, st. 20 and 6; the spring equinox points are occupied by st. 32 and 8, and those of the summer solstice by st. 24 and 10, so that, in the night sphere, along the outer belt the winter is first brought to the southern hemisphere, and then spring to the northern one. On the inner belt, at the northern tropic points, there are st. 19 and 16; at the autumn equinox st. 31, and at the southern tropic point – st. 23 and 15, by means of which this belt gets, first, the summer in the northern hemisphere, and, then, the autumn in the southern one, all that symmetrically along the axis N–S.

When we achieve the globe of the defined world by linking the day and the night semi-spheres, and trace the active modalities of the Sun deity's movement by mapping (the inner belt of the east and the outer belt of the west, in the day sphere; the outer and the inner belt of the west, of the night sphere), we identify the paths and transmissions of the continuous movement of the Sun deity; the prograde one along the inner belt, and the retrograde one along the outer belt, which alternately brings to the semi-spheres the cyclical shift of the annual seasons, always starting from the night sphere (Fig. 3).

So, this spatial calendar of the annual movement of the Sun deity, the most ancient at the Euro-Asian territory, is an ontological sacral calendar of the Sun deity (Babović, 2006).

References

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