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## GENESIS OF THE CITY ŠABAC AND ORIGIN OF ITS NAME

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**Abstract:** Origin and meaning of the name of the city of Šabac was object of interest for many Serbian and foreign historical geographers, linguist geographers, anthropogeographers and others. Nevertheless, the meaning of this name has not been clearly researched till today. Some scientist believed that „Zaslon, the city on the river Sava, is Šabac in Greek“, some others believe that the name Šabac is in Serbian language. In this research paper authors deals with two hypotheses about the name. First hypothesis connects city name with the river Sava, and the second with name of god Sabacius (Sabazije), who was identified as Dionysus and Thracian god horse rider. However, these names are much older than material evidences about city genesis.

**Key words:** Mačva, Zaslon, Šabac, Sabacius, sabacije, sabas, toponomastic

### Introduction

The origin of Šabac and meaning of his name attracted the attention of some eminent Serbian anthropologist, anthropogeographers and historians. The aim of this paper is to throw new light on these questions using the comparative method. The base is constructed by two hypotheses: The first is based on the archaeological evidence which confirms the continuity of the Neolithic settlement Mačva to date. So, it is logical to assume that the area of the Sava river crossing, there must be a village long before its name appeared in written sources. Second hypothesis is based on the fact that the name of the city resembles the same name Thracian-Greek god, it is logical to assume that the name is a trail of forgotten myths of peoples and cultures before Slavs, which is not read by the right way. The reader who is accustomed to the strict positivist science, the performance of geographic names from mythology may seem unscientific. But we should bear in mind that the people, at the time when these names appeared, were living in a world of myths and mythical names passed to the world around them, as a dream come true. In region of Mačva and Pocerina,

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and in the neighboring region of Srem, historically alternated peoples, cultures and religions from ancient times until today, but the names of some cities (Sirmium), mountains (Cer), rivers (Sava), remained as incomprehensible code of history, which can be deciphered only through myths and legends from which it were taken. So, toponyms are not created out anything - behind them is often mythological thinking, theonyms of already forgotten religions, relicts of historical memory. Their meaning is sometimes very associative and metaphoric, but not chaotic and uncontrolled. Sections in which are depicting the historical intersection of the population of Mačva and presented the evolution of the city of Šabac, are intended to substantiate the hypothesis of the origin and meaning of his name.

### **The place of Šabac in ancient times**

In the ancient period, the capital of the province of Pannonia was Sirmium, and its wealthier residents had in Mačva their property and homes - *villas*. The site of today's Šabac could be the port on the river Sava and the castle for the communication between Mačva and Pocerina with Sirmium. Felix Kanitz believes that Šabac fortress was built on the foundations of a Roman castle. The settlement Zaslon, where always lived only Christians, and the latter Šabac, is a field which altitude is 85 m, and from the established Muslim "Sebadža" was dedicated by the broad and marshy "Šabac field". When effusion of the river Sava and stream Jerez was cutting this field, deep trenches around the citadel were filled with water and it became inaccessible. Fortress lay at the center of the enclosure which retains not only the basis of the Roman castle, rebuilt by Sultan Mehmet 1471 to despite the attempt of the Hungarians to stop him, but a significant part of the roof of building materials which Roman origin is obvious. It was a quadrilateral, which was on the northeast side deviated from the geometric patterns, with the projecting round towers at the corners with a palisade rampart (begir delen) (Kanitz, 1904/1991). Such a view is not unfounded. In Roman times the position of the settlement did not affect only the fertile plains, particular importance had navigable rivers and roads.

During the Pre Slavonic period in the area of Mačva and Posavina lived Thracian tribes called Tribals. Papal chronicle noted the campaign of Alexander the Great against the Tribal and the Illyrians 335/4 years BC. He led the army to river Istar (Danube) and there "in a great battle triumphed against Sirm, the Tribal King" (Papazoglu, 2007). Arian said that the Celts first arrived in the region around the Danube and Sava during the war of Alexander the Great against Sirm, the Tribal King (Milošević, 2001). According to Bonfiny, historian at the court of Matthias Corvinus, Sirmium was named by the leader of Tribals,

Sir, whose name was Latinized in Sirmus. At the beginning of a new era because of the rebellion of conquered Illyrians and Pannonians, the Thracian vassal King, Remetalk, came to help Romans. After suppressing of the rebellion, Sirmium was beginning to take a true Roman character. In one inscription, discovered in the vicinity of Sirmium, the differences freed - libertarian – with the Thracian surname Masta. It is interesting to note, that the Sirmium was mentioned as the emperor's place of residence during the short reign of Maximinus Thracian (235-238 AD), who came from a Thracian peasant family. All this leads to the conclusion, around this area was living the Thracian population<sup>2</sup>.

Slavs crossed the Danube and entered Thrace in 557 AD, and seventy years later (650), became the majority in the Balkans. They were quickly assimilated with the present Thracians, "so in the early Middle Ages Thracians were not mentioned" (Bajić, 2006). Because of the topography of the terrain and layout of the fortress, we can say that the Slavs crossed the river Sava at Šabac and the Danube near Smederevo, and settled in the swampy regions Mačva and Morava, which were similar to their homeland. From there they spread through the river valleys in the hilly and mountainous hinterland.

### **The genesis of the medieval city of Šabac**

Byzantium and Hungary were built border-fortresses along the rivers Sava and Danube. Settlement Zaslon in the Middle Ages was the seat of Dubrovnik colony, and it is possible that there was old Byzantine frontier fortress. The Turks took it and modified in 1470 (Novaković, 1887), but the final works were finalized in the 1471 (Hammer, 1834, p.519).<sup>3</sup> Hungarian King Matthias Corvinus took this fortress in 1476, and turned it into an important defensive point of Hungary against the Turks. Struggles over Šabac have been and during 1492, and the city is mentioned often in connection with the battles at the end of

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<sup>2</sup> Name Singidunum (now Belgrade) is Thracian origin. The name of this settlement is consisted of two words: singi and dun. The first word was the name of the Thracian tribes Singaia or Sindaia which, according to Timonakt (who lived in the middle of IV century BC) and Apollonius of Rhodes, were living at the confluence of the Sava and Danube. Between the 284 and 278 BC, the Balkan Peninsula invaded the Celts. Celtic tribe Scrods gave the name of this settlement, probably by the ethnic group they had found, Singidun, or Singa (singa-city) (Marić, 1954). The names of Belgrade and Zemun can be derived from pagan mythology (from the Thracian god Bel and goddess Zemun).

<sup>3</sup> "Im Jahre vierzehnhundert ein und siebenzig theilte sich das Heer Rumili's gegn vierzigtausend Mann strak, in zwei Massen, deren eine von zwanzigtausend Mann, mit allen Zubehör des Festungsbaues versehn, sich in möglicher Stille gegen die Save wendete, um Syrmien druch den Bau einer neuen Festung, nämlich der von Sabacz, im Zaume zu halten..." (Hammer, 1834, p. 519).

the XV and in XVI century around Belgrade and Avala Mountain. The Turks under the command of Ahmed Pasha conquered the Šabac fortress and killed all the crew on 7<sup>th</sup> July 1521. On that occasion the Emperor Suleiman II said: "This is one of the cities I conquered. It must be improved". He ordered to build towers around the fortress and to build a moat around it filled with water from Sava and implement the bridge over the river Sava (Elezović & Škrivanić, 1956). The Sultan spent here 10 full days, on the Sava at Šabac, overseeing construction of the pontoon bridge. Šabac from that time shows etching by John Landrart from the second half of XVII century (Birken, 1664, p.96). Austrians have held a short time Šabac in 1695 and from 1717 to 1739 when they built the outer walls, which had to destroy in the 1739, and gave Turks the city. Austrian Army and Serbian troops won Šabac again in 1788. The city at that time had two parts: a city of stone inside and city of soil outside, surrounded by trenches and palisades. After three years (1791), Šabac was returned to the Turks. Rebellions led by Karađorđe conquered the city 25<sup>th</sup> January 1807. Turkish crew returned to the city in 1813, and didn't left until the 1867. The fortress was ruined by the explosion of powder plant in 1904.

### **The physiognomy of the city of Šabac in the old engravings**

The oldest drawing of the Šabac fortress is a woodcut, which image was appeared in the World Chronicle by Hartmann Schedels in 1493 (Schedels, 1493). The book of Carl Schuchhard says: "How much the building of the royal castle extended through the Middle Ages, showing the fortress Šabac on the river Sava, which provides Hartmann Schedels in the World Chronicle from the 1493. It makes an impression like a reconstruction plan of Dorestad: Inside is the elongated rectangle divided into larger and smaller yards. Outside is the empty space along the town walls, and everything is made of wood. Town wall fence is all woven wicker. Only many round towers at the corners, which are medieval addition, are probably from the stone" (Schuchhard Carl, 1931, p. 187)<sup>4</sup>.

Mentioned Dorestad stretched along the former river branch near the mouth of the river Rhine, as the Šabac on the branch of river Sava. It was in the eighth - ninth century a commercial and trade city of European significance. Buildings are comprised of a large wooden house up to 30 m and a width of 7.5 m. The

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<sup>4</sup> "Wie sehr auch die Form der Königshofbefestigungen ins Mittelalter sich fortgesetzt hat, zeigt die Burg Sabatz a. d. Sau die Hartmann Schedels Weltchronik von 1493 überbiefert. Sie wirkt wie eine Rekonstruktion der Anlage von Dorestad: im Innern das lange Rechteck, geteilt in Curtis und Curticula, aussen umher das weite Pomerium; und alles in Holz gebaut, statt der Mauer überall Flechtzaun. Nur die vielen runden Ecktürme, die eine mittelalterliche Zutat sind, scheinen steinern zu sein"1).

city was devastated by the Vikings in 834 and at the end by huge floods and moving of the river Rhine in 864 (Herman, 1986, p. 58). The question remains, how is it Šabac was similar to Dorestad, which was older almost five centuries? Maybe it was inherited topography of the city, which is much older than its first mention in written sources?



Figure 1. Image of Šabac, woodcuts, from the 1493 (Schedels, 1493)

On the woodcut from Schedels's Chronicle, the presented city deviates from the subsequent illustrations of the city. These differences are particularly because of that the fortress was built by palisades in combination with circular brick towers. These engravings give some information about the building with wood - wattle, horizontal logs, fences, gates, etc. A variety of oblique positioned pointy logs on the sides had a purpose to hinder access to the palisades. Historian Stojan Novaković says, "... these forts were built by the soil and palisades, there were towers, trenches and walls, weapons and defenders, as could only imagine".

Compared the etching by John Landrart with woodcut in Schedels's Chronicle, it is obviously that Šabac city had a general reconstruction. It had a five round

towers - one cannon at each corner and in the middle at the river Sava, Dizdar (commander center) tower. Wattle has been replaced by high walls with loopholes. Even around the casaba were no longer any wattle, there was a wall on which south-west side were located four smaller semi-circular bastions. In the central area between the casaba and the city was access to the fort where there was the main gateway (Handžić, 1960).

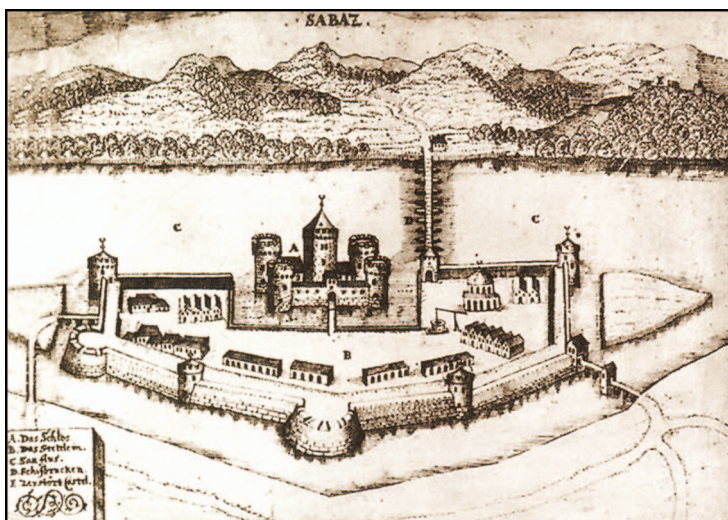


Figure 2. Šabac, etching by Peter Schenk from the 1717 (Stefanović, 1991).

The most complete view of the city gave the architect Pavlović (1956). In older illustrations from the Turkish period, till the 1717 the fortress was cut off from the mainland by a trench full of water. Besides the immediate fortress, there were presented and outside fortifications which on three sides include built city. The outdoor strip of land was cut off from the mainland by water. Unlike the large trench around the fort which is proper and gives the impression that the artificially excavated, lateral water channel is shown as a natural branch of the river Sava, which is surrounding the city as a kind of a natural island. The external ramparts of the walls and soil with low towers could occur between the 1521 and 1695, because they were showed in the engravings. The external wall was protecting *varoš* (city) which, according to the mosque, was a Turkish settlement (casaba). In the XVIII century the city was moved in front of the former ramparts of the fortress. Another group of plans and engravings are showing the perspective of Šabac from the time when the Austrians increased bastions (after the 1717). The appearance of the towers on the P. Schanks's (Figure 2) and J. Ettinger's drafts, corresponding to the architectural recording of today's remains of the city (Nešković, 1970).

### **Cartographic sources of the name of the city of Šabac**

The cartographic sources from the fifteenth-sixteenth century, shows the city Saslon (Zaslon). On the map of the Balkan Peninsula from 1482 (etching) by R. Francesco (1447-1527), kept at the National Library in Florence, among other cities was presented, at the site of the present Šabac, *Sasnnol Sascolus*. This Florentine cartographer resided at the court of Matthias Corvinus from 1480 to 1484, where he worked at the map of Hungary. Etching was one of six maps which were attached to a copy of the first edition of Francesco Berlingieri (*Geografia in terza Rima*) (first published in Florence in 1482). In the map of Marko Beneventan (etching), which was published in Rome in 1507, wrongly, on the banks of the Danube was enrolled Saso (n). In edition of Ptolemy's Geography from the 1513 in Strasbourg, among the new maps there was a modern *Tabula moderna Bossniae, Serviae, Graeciae et Sclavoniae*, which was in woodcut technique (40.7 x 54.4 cm) created by German cartographer Martin Valdzemiler. In this edition, which is kept in the Franciscan monastery in Hvar, is inscribed *Sason* on the river Sava (Tomović, 1991). Also, in the IX Ptolemy map from I. Moleti in Venice 1562 the west of Belgrade was also added *Saslon* near to the river Sava (Matković, 1879; Petančić, 1522). As the fortress came more importance, the old name was more disappeared (the last time Zaslon was mentioned in 1562), and the name Šabac became more dominant.

On the first topographic map of Hungary (color woodcut, 78 x 55 cm) made by Lazar, secretary of the archbishop Thomas, published in Ingolstadt 1528, two years after the Mohač battle, which includes part of Slavonia and part of the Danube area in Serbia, at the river Sava, Šabac was drawn under its present name (Sabass). During the wars between Austria and Turkey interest for Šabac was increased, because of its key strategic position to defend or to attack. The National Library of Serbia keeps the old plans of the city of Šabac: - Šabac, author Jakob Kop, etching 36 x 27 cm, XVII century (*Sabaz*. Jacob Kop); Šabac was presented by Peter Schenk etching 19 x 15.5 cm from the 1717 (*Sabat*. Peter Schenk) (Stefanović, 1991). Often reprinted and published maps from the atlas of successor of famous German cartographer J. B. Homann. Among them is the most attractive map entitled, "*Regnum Bosniae...Regni Serviae...ichnographia*" (map of Bosnia and Serbia, published in Nuremberg around 1730), which is surrounded by the plans of the fortress, including the Šabac (Sabatz).

Table 1. Šabac on the old maps

Author, profession	Name of the map	Year	Name
1. S. Münster, geographer, prof. in Haidelberg*	Polonia et Ungaria. XX Nova tabula.	1544.	Sabaŭ
2. W Lazius***	East Slavonia with Srem	1556.	Sabacz
3. W. Lazius***	Hyngariae descriptio	1570.	Sabacz
4. Kamočo, Đovani Frančesko**	Adriatic sea and east Mediterranean	1571	Sabaz
5. G. Mercator***	Sclavonia, Croatia, Bosnia cum Dalmatiae parte	1598.	Sabacz
6. G. Mercator, dutch cartographer**	Map of Slavonija, Croatia, Bosnia and part of Dalmacija	1631.	Sabacz
7. M. Stier's, austrian cartographer**	Map of Hungary, south part	1664.	Sabaz
8. N. Sanson***	Slavonia map	1664.	Sabacz
9. J. Blaeua***	Illyrian countries	1668.	Sabaz
10. G. Cantelli da Vignole***	Display of Slavonia on the map	1683.	Sabaz
11. G. Cantelli, italian cartographer**	Map of Dalmatia, Istra, Bosnia, Serbia, Croatia...; Rome	1684.	Sabatatz
12. G. Cantelli**	Map of Serbia; Rome	1689.	Sabaz
13. Johan Schribern, german cartographer*	Carte von Romanien mit dennes Dardanelen, Bulgarien und Servien	End of XVII	Sabacz
14. P. C. Monath, Nurnberg publisher**	Map of Dalmatia, Croatia, Bosnia, Slavonia, Serbia; Nurnberg	1700	Sabaz
15. Nikolaus Visscher, dutch cartographer*	Magni Turcarum Domini Imperium in Europa, Asia et Africa	1702.	Sabacz
16. M. Seutter, german cartographer**	Map of Yugoslavian countries	1709.	Sabatatz
17. M. Seutter***	Dalmatia, Croatia, Sclavonie, Bosnia, Servia	1709.	Sabatatz
18. M. Seutter**	Map of Austrian-Turkish border according to Pozarevacki peace.	1720.	Sabacz
19. Successors of german cartographer J. Homann**	Map of Bosnia and Serbia	1730.	Sabaz
20. J. van der Bruggen, Vienna publisher**	Map of Serbia; Vienna	1737.	Sabatatz
21. J. Homann***	Slavonia map	1737.	Sabatatz
22. E. Brifaut**	Map of Serbia; Vienna	1738.	Sabadsch
23. E. Briffaut***	East Slavonia with Srem	1740.	Sabacz
24. J. Gode***	Tabula Geographica / Regnum Sclavoniae ac cum Syrmii ducatu	1740.	Sabatsch
25. J. Mathias Hase, german mathematician and cartographer*	Hungariae ampliori significato et veteris vel Methodicae, compexae Regna	1744.	Sabaz, Bujurdelen
26. Homann's successors***	Slavonia and Srem	1745.	Sabatatzfch, Bujurdelen



27. T. C. Lotter **)	Map of Hungary and surrounding countries; Augsburg	1760.	Sabatatz
28. Antonio Yatta, venetian maps and atlases publisher *	Turchia d'Europa	1782.	Shabatsh
29. F. Müller**	Map of Serbia, Vienna	1788.	Sabatatz
30. Guillelmo del'Isle , france aacademician*	Nova et accurate regni Hungariae	поч. XVIII	Sabacz
31. Fr. Karac***	The area of Đakovo bishopric	1826.	Shabach
32. Langer****	Serbien unter der kaiserlichen Regierung 1717-1739	1899.	Sabatsch

Source: \*(Oračev, 2005); \*\*(Srejšović, editor, 1991); \*\*\* (Marković, 2002); \*\*\*\* (Pantelić, 1948).

### **Hypotheses about the origin of the three city names - Zaslon, Bugjurdelen, Šabac**

The origin of the city of Šabac, in our literature have dealt with Novak, Dinić, Savić, Popović and Elezović. Before the Turks built a Šabac fortress (1470-71), there was a settlement Zaslon. Some sources mentioned the city of Mačo in Mačva, but it was not noted in the old maps. Name Zaslon was known by the Dubrovnik archives and foreign cartographic sources from XV century. Zaslon was mentioned first time in a decision of Dubrovnik council from 16 April 1454. In a list of the Dubrovnik state archives of 1 March 1455, one of the Dubrovnik debtors was Prince Nikola from Zaslon - Nicola Conte de Xaslon. In the charter of the Bosnian King Stevan Tomaš from the 1458, was confirmed to Stevan Ratković and to "village Dimkovci toward the Zaslon in Mačva" (Dinić, 1953). Dimkovci no longer exist in Mačva, but there is a village of the same name in Bulgaria.

Zaslon was located at a suitable approach to the river Sava, where was a ferry to cross to the other side. As soon as the Ottoman Turks built a fortress, crossing at the Sava near Šabac has become the most important link with the northern areas. Felix Petančić from Dubrovnik in its report about the roads which may be the most easily to attack Turkey, which presented to a Hungarian King Vladislav, said: "Others place, from Pannonia crosses to Mysia, is near the Zaslon (Saslon), or Šabac (Sabasius) not far from, where the river Drina from Dalmatia mixed with the river Sava". The study which was Petančić probably wrote in 1502, was published in 1522 by his friend Johannes Caspinian (Petančić, 1522). At the time, and in our annals still mentions the name of Zaslon, "7029 year (1521) emperor Suleiman on the river Istar (Danube) receive Belgrade and Zaslon (Šabac) and enslave Srem" (Stojanović, 1927).

It can be assumed that the title screen (Sasnol, Sason, Saslon, Xaslon) derived from the name Sas, or shielded (fenced) place. Saxons came from Germany to Serbia in XIII-XIV century, as mining experts in small groups. The development of mining and trade spurred the arrival of people from Dubrovnik, which are owned not only capital but also knowledge and reputation, and were often tenants of mines. It is known that the traders from Dubrovnik had mines in Cer Mountain before the Turkish conquest. On the eve of the fall of Serbian Despotovina, in irregular time, three entire pits in Cer were purchased for 55 ducats, which mean that the value of each particular was about 20 ducats. The term Sas loses its original ethnic meaning and during the XV century became synonymous for the miners. According to Dubrovnik sources, two brothers Crijević had in 1457 three mine shafts on the Cer Mountain, on which slopes has been found the money of Despot Đurd Branković. They were owed by Radomio (blower), which clearly indicates that the ore here was not only dug, but also melted. In Zaslon was a consulate for resolving legal disputes of Dubrovnik residents. In a census of Zvornik province from the 1533 was entered the "mine on Cer mountain". Also, the Vlachos defter from the 1527, listed the various mezree, heritage and čifluci in Zvornik province, which different persons held in the lease. This alleges that mezree Crkvenica, Nedeljica, Skradane, Donji Dobrić, Ivanje, Crkvište, Nečajna, Bublerić, Hodotić and Sas belong to kadiluk "Bögürdelena" (Turkish name for Šabac). Some were later settled, and referred as a settlement. Sas was mentioned in 1548 as a village in the area Gornja Mačva (Handžić, 1960).

According to anthropogeographic researching of Šabac Posavina and Pocerina, Radovanović (1994) noted the large number of families Kuliza. Based on the popular opinion, Kulize are all families who celebrate St. Mrata. Prota Dimitrijević believes that they are "set aside the rest of the people looked to their distant ancestors Sas miners who brought with them part of a mythological cult of St. Martin, who, as foreigners, could be neutral during the Turkish occupation period, and acquired the name Kuliza, that the people mean sycophant, intruder, a spy" (Dimitrijević, 1926). Vuk Karadžić (1898) has noted: "There are now people called Kulize, and for the Turkish time in Šabac was one trader Jakov Kulizić".

When the Turks conquered Serbian Despotovina (1459), they conquered and Zaslon and on the basis of its 1470 (by Novaković), and according to Hammer 1471, built a new city that protects their attacks across the river Sava (Handžić, 1960). In the written Serbian sources belong "Zaslon", the city was called Šabac too. In Gabrovski Chronicle writes that the Turks gave to King Matiaš and Despot Vuk "Заслонъ", in Cetinje Chronicle, "Заслонъ on the river Sava", in

the Podgorica Chronicle, "Заслонъ the city on the river Sava which is called Šabac", in Sofia II and Magarašević Chronicle "иже зовет се Шабациъ". The Greek origin of the name Šabac indicates Ruvarčev II, Remetski, Vasić, and Jankovic chronicle which in the same event proved about that "Zaslon on the river Sava is by the Greek language Šabac. Characteristic of the Serbian name of the city indicates the Dečani chronicle for the same event "call of Šabac in Serbian" (Stojanović, 1927, p. 250). Old name Zaslon, was used until the XVI century (Ćirković, 1970). In Cetinje chronicle from the 1521 still was named "Zaslon" (Stojanović, 1927, p. 262). In the notes of the Peć Patriarchate from the 1650 the name Zaslon was not mentioned, but the name Šabac was (Novaković, 1887).

The earliest mention of the city of Šabac, noted Matija Katančić in the research paper of "Memorial of Belgrade", published in the Buletin of Serbian Slavs Society in 1851, in which he says that: "The Fatherland (Hungarian) chronicles presented that Belgradewas the third year of Mihail Duka in 1073 from the Hungarians conquered and with the Slankamen, Zemun and Smederevo was the most popular among the Danube cities, on the river Sava except Sirmium, Kupinovo (the old Kelpin) and the other hand Šabac with Mačva to the Morava; Hungarians are now found in Serbia, and Emeric is the first took the title of Serbian King" (Katančić, 1851). The Hungarians then really conquered Belgrade, but it was already in 1074 returned to Byzantium (Popović, 1964). It follows that the city of Šabac existed at the time of the Byzantine Empire, four centuries before its mention in famous historical sources, but still is not clear that on which Hungarian Chronicle Katančić based his researching.

Direct mention of the name and description of the settlement Šabac was given in the already mentioned Schedels's World Chronicle from the 1493 (Schedels, 1493, p. 253). Hungarian historian Antonius Bonfini, in his work entitled "Rerum hungaricarum decades IV cum dimidia seu libris XLV comprenensae" (which includes the time from 364 to 1495), finished in 1495 and printed in Basel in 1543, testified that the Turks with 20,000 people on the river Sava built temporary fortress "in order to attack the Srem, the final part of Lower Pannonia, and finally to the whole of Hungary and Germany". P. Matković was first pointed out the Bonfini's quote, which says: "the fortress Turks were calling Šabac, which in Turkish means something wonderful (excellent)" (as cited in Elezović, 1952., p. 44). Novaković translation of the same citations said "Turks start calling by the name Šabac the walls and levees as soon as they are established, and that's something strange in their language means (Sabacz, inita moles à Turco nominati coepta, quod Turcica lingua mirabile quid significat)". Bonfini believed that the name Šabac comes from the name of river Sava, which

was also Novaković's idea when he said "it's possible that Bonfini got the right when he connected the name of the city with the name of the river which is wetting the city walls" (*Sabaczii expugnatio successit - quamvis a Savo Savacium fortasse melius diceremus*), although he had heard that the name should mean, in Turkish, something strange (Novaković, 1887). With them, agrees historian N. Savić, who says that "the name of Šabac" comes from the meaning Savac, which means place along the river Sava, and according to foreigners Sava - Savacium - Sabaczium - Sabacz" (Savić, 1927, p. 13). Nešković believes that the city was "no doubt named by the name of the river (Savacium, Savac), which marks both, the city and town" (Nešković, 1970). This could be said for the first branch of the Sava at Šabac - such as a branch of the Danube was called Dunavac, so the branch of the river Sava could be called Savac, but this is only an assumption. On the map of Eastern Empire and surrounding areas, which according to Constantine Porphyrogenitus was created by Guillaume de Lille, a member of the French Royal Academy of Sciences, after the 1718, the river Sava was marked as "Sabas fl." (Oračev, 2005).

Turkish historian Ibrahim Pečevija in its history says that Šabac founded Isa Beg, who was called and Šaban Beg. Then he says that on 7 July in the 1521 "Rumeliya Beg called Ahmed Pasha included this city into the line of Islamic cities". Until now, non Muslims from Srem and Zvornik, called it by their own language Šabac. In the histories I noted that the name of the city was derived from the name of founder, called Sabana" (as cited in Elezović, 1952). However, if people "in their language" called it Šabac, then that name is not by Turkish origin.

In Western sources Šabac from the foundation time was mentioning under its present name (Šabacz), while the Turkish official lists from the XVI century and later still called "Bögürdelen", "Bügürdelen", "Bugjur-delen", "Bujurdelen" (Elezović & Škrivanić, 1956; Handžić, 1960; Milićević, 1876). The information provide Turkish census defter: List of Vlachs in Zvornik sandžak from 1527 (who also represents the earliest list of Šabac or "Bögürdelen" and the surrounding area after the final Ottoman occupation), the summary defter from 1533, as well as detailed defter of the same sandžak from the 1548 year. It contains information about the city "Bögürdelen", population and villages of Šabac province in XVI century (Handžić, 1960). Also, the translation of the text about the Suleiman campaign against Belgrade from the Feridunbeg proceedings (diary of the capture of Belgrade) Turkish name for the city of Šabac was Bögürdelan or Bügürdelen (Elezović & Škrivanić, 1956).

French travel-writer Michel Bodje, describes in the 1831 year how Turks conquered Belgrade in 1521, and that "Šabac, a town across the river Sava, significant for the Kingdom, called in Turkish annals Bejurdelen, which means "bed grass" (Samardžić, 1961), which indicates the "unhealthy" place. Milicević said that the city of Šabac Turks called Bugjur-delen, which in Serbian means "the one sticking in the side", or "bramble, a place where blackberries grow" (Milićević, 1876).

From the Kanitz description of Šabac fortress, it can be concluded, that its name Bujurdelen (indicated by a map of Hungary from 1744), derived from the name of the palisade wall ("begir delen") (Kanitz, 1904/1991). In other words, it means the same as the Serbian name Zaslon. According to Elezović, the Turkish city name comes from the word *bögür* (*bügür*, Constantinople's *büyür*), which means side, hip, and delen (delan) present from the verb *delemek*, which means drill. "Bügürdelen means exactly what it means to us that the battery cover fell, beating the side, or Zaslon, as this place was called before the Turks" (Elezović, 1952). However, if we consider that the fortress had defensive side wooden spikes, as the hedgehog, as seen in Schedels drawing (see Figure 1), we can assume that the Turkish name applied to the lateral spine.

### **The Hypothesis of the Mythical Meaning of the Name Šabac**

If we look through the mythological "window" to the problem of the name of Šabac, we come to resemblance to the name of deity - **Šabacija** (Latin **Sabazius**, Greek **Σάβαζιός and Σάβος**). That theonym means Thracian-Phrygian deity, which Greeks equated with Dionysus and celebrated the holidays with orgies, called "*Šabacije*" (Gislin & Palaci, 2005). This means that the name Šabac belongs to a Thracian substrate. According to Herodotus (V, 7), Thracians worshiped Ares, Dionysus and Artemis. In ancient Thracians, there is the myth of the hierogamy between the God of storm and mother - the Earth, and the product of this union was "Dionysus". The Greeks knew the names of Thracian Dionysus: the most used were *Sabos* and *Sabazios* (Đurić, 1976). In honor of the god Šabacius were held ritual ceremonies *šabacije*, Old Slavs *šabaši*, means gatherings, fairs (Potapov, 2007).

If the origin and meaning of the name "Šabac" comes from mentioned theonym, then it could be a sign that in this place was a pagan shrine, or meeting place, the venue for celebration called *šabaciji* ("sabazii") or "*šabaši*" in honor of Dionysus or Šabacijus, the forerunner of today's fairs. This is very close with a description of Sigmund von Birken from the second half of XVII century, which says: "...

that in an island of the river Sava is situated fortress Sabacia or Šabac (Pavlović, 1956).

Šabacije was mentioned in the Bible. "This ancient divinity of Thracian-Phrygian tribe is etymology, which goes back to the Hellenistic period, identified with the Jahve Sabbath, the Lord of the biblical heavenly armies. Kyrios Sabaoth Septuaginte (biblical Sabbath) has the same meaning as Kyrios Sabazios barbarian" (Cumont, 1959). Everything we know about the mythology, theology and rituals of the people who lived in this region, brought to us Greek and Latin authors.

One of the hypostasis of Dionysus is Zagrej. The name of a God "Zagrej" (Zagreus - pany agreuôn) means "Great Hunter", "beast-hunter" (Etymologicum magnum, 214, 13. - Fracassini, 80; cfr. Мережковский Д., 469). There is an obvious similarity with the name of the city of Zagreb and the settlement Zagraj in Karlovac County. It is also the God-Bull. The second Dionysus hypostasis was Šabacije or Sabazius. Dionis-Zagrej/Dionis-Šabacije ceremonies as an expression of faith in the Son-Sun - Son-Fire, were personified in the form of two hypostases of the Son, solar and htonic, and that personification has been named Sabazius (Šabacije). Greeks were very early (at V century BC) meet the originality and force of impact of Thracian ceremonies, which are later passed on to the Romans, and brought Byzantium to the Slavs, and preserved in the relics of folklore to the present. In Roman times in Thrace, Šabacije was equated with Zeus as the supreme God and presents himself as God - a Hero, God - Horseman. Thracian-Phrygian God – Horseman, Šabacije (Phrygian Šaobac) was an analog of the mythical Siyavuş (in Iranian mythology and Zarathustrianism and further "cousin" of "Slavic Hephaestus", the God of underground fire - Svarog).

The existence of Thracian cult of Šabacijus in Sirmium and its area proved archaeological finds dedicated to the god Dionysus and chips dedicated to the Danube (Thracian) Horse rider. The cult of Dionysus shows marble statue as well as examples of fresco painting with the Dionysus, discovered in Sirmium. In addition to finding figures of the Roman Gods (bronze figure of the supreme Roman deity, the God Jupiter in Tabanović village, bronze statuettes of Mercury in the village Grušić, statuette of the Roman Goddess Venus in village Mala Vranjska) there have been other unofficial cults. There are often findings of plates with the notion of gods, in particular: *Danubian horseman*, which is similar to the famous *Thracian horseman* from Madara in Bulgaria (I century BC - IV century AD) (Lečev, 2004; Vasiljević, 1996). The National Museum in Šabac kept 13 lead plates with distinctive iconography of the cult of Danube

horsemen (Ković, 2000)<sup>5</sup>. Dedications to Dionysus and to the Thracian rider complement what we detected in onomastics of Mačva, and acceptable is that in this border area was the Illyrians and Thracians. In the wider region of Sirmium came into contact Illyrians and Thracians and later Slavs and Hungarians.

At the time of the Greco-Roman syncretism, between I-III century Šabacije was associated or identified with other Gods - Zeus (Jupiter, Hermes), Mercury, Dionysus, Apollon, Mitra, Atis, Hercules, Mars. During this period, the main symbol and votive object becomes a "hand of Šabacije", left or right, on which the first three fingers stretched out like a familiar "benedictio latina" (Fol & Neykova, 2000, p. 102). Sacred Tree of Šabacije is the poplar. Dill (*Anetum graveolens*) is a plant symbol of Šabacije. The snake was a sacred animal for Phrygian Šabacije (Voynikov, 2009). Jews have been in the 139 BC expelled from Rome, because according to Valerius Maximus, "used the cult of Jupiter Sabazius Jews tried to corrupt morals" or morality (Perowne, 1990). After the 364 year, during the reign of Emperor Valentinian, in Sirmium became demolition of pagan temples.

Šabac is not only one toponym that the root has a name of a God. In Mačva, Šabačka Posavina and Pocerina with appellative "God" from Pre Christian religion are related toponyms: Bogatić, Bogosavac, top Trojan (the god of Trojan) and Trojan fortress in Cer, Vidojevica (by God Vid or Svetovid), Cer (Ceres - Latin Goddess of Trees, equated with Demeter), Belotić (Thracian god Bel). The old name for the Bela Reka (White River) is Crna Reka (Black River), which, as Crna Bara (Black Swamp) and Noćaj (Nightly), assumes connection to the Night deity or lunar cult. Mačva villages Glušci (Deaf), Slepčević (Blind), Tabanović (Soles), Štitar (Shield) and Desić (Happen) tied into a legend, which was noted by Vuk Karadžić and Milan Đ. Miličević, with adventures about the flight of the Night God Trojan from the Sun, or a new day. The shield which Trojan lost in Štitar symbolizing the War God, night riders, and his lameness was (he lost soles in Tabanović), by Čajkanović, a feature of the supreme God.

Attention deserves a fable of htonic deity Dabog, first noted in Mačva in the 1866, which has Thracian origin with visible traces of the Bogomil ideology

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<sup>5</sup> There are known the Bosphorus horsemen who can be compared with the "Danubian group" in which specialists include Madara and Thracian horsemen. Madara is 20 km from Sumen and protected by UNESCO since 1972. Madara Rider is an archaeological monument, which is a relief cut in the rock at 23 m height from the bottom. Length in 3.1 m and 2.6 m height (Lečev, 2004). It represents a life-size horseman walking on right, followed by the dog. Beneath his feet lay a lion in the opposite direction, according to A. Hofart, behind a lion are marks of a snake, the symbol of Šabacije (Hofart, 2001).

(Dragojlović, 1970, 1972). "Vertepi" as a Christmas manifestations under the mask has Thracian origin (Trubačev, 2006).

Also, memories of the mythical creatures of demonic character, until recently, were preserved in the Serbian tradition. In Šabac and around it was believed that in the river Sava is living a aquatic monster, devil water or water ghost. Famous ethnologist Sima Trojanović in his paper wrote: "During my childhood in Šabac sailors testified against the swimmers to the Sava lives a beast similar to man (with a tail as snake - somebody were added). It was called Kemza. He has always lurked to drown somebody, and in Čevrtija everyone had watch the lure and with the tail twists that no one could come off" (Trojanović, 1934).

In medieval beliefs, the night meeting place of Witches was called šabaš (Ožegov, 2010). The name šabaš ("Sabbath"), the middle ages associated with the Greek word šabacein ("sabadzein"), "play" (Bodžiev, 2000). In Russian, the word "шабаш ведъм" means "Witches meeting". "The reader may have heard something about the Sabas and know that they were in ancient times held around the day of Solstice, equinox, or time, which is consistent with the chase of wild animals. The rituals are carried out mostly at night, when the dark forces waking up" (Potapov, 2007). It could be a sign that in this area were manifestations or some kind of mystery dedicated to the god of Šabac. Festivals in his honor always mean the transition of winter into spring.

In medieval times, such "meeting places" are regarded as the "church heretical or pagan" (Bojanin, 2005). The Catholic Church forbade dissolute night games dedicated to Šabac, because it is considered that playing round (kolo) is nothing but a circle whose center is the devil (Potapov, 2007).

Although the Middle Ages were in the sign of the Byzantine Empire, though the people entered the church features from its earlier eras. Impact of Pre Slavonic pagan religion (Thracian), were primarily exposed to the Bulgarians. Thracian pagan cult of Šabacijus and Kibela in the Balkans was transformed into a nestinarian cult of St. Constantine and Helen (Fol & Neykova, 2000, p. 103). In the first half of the X century in the Bulgarian Kingdom appeared "the Bogomil heresy". Many Byzantine sources from the XI and XII century testify that the Bogomil strengthened "in every city, every area and every diocese". Also in our manuscript from the XIV century was noted "записъ отъ въштице", which presented that there were those who were committed to Bogomil apocryphal literature (Kazimirović, 1941). The monk Teodosije, author of "Live of the Saint Sava" carries the words of St. Sava: "Nemanja... the country of his people dedicated to Orthodoxy, banished the wolf of heresy and destroyed temples of



madness, and built Church of God". In the "Life of King Dragutin", Archbishop Danilo alleges that: "Dragutin, who was in the 1284, as a vassal of the Hungarian-Croatian king, administered Mačva and eastern Bosnia, addressed many of the heretics and baptized them". The Hungarian charters noted that the Hungarian King Charles Robert in 1319 crossed the river Sava and occupied the city (castrum) Mačva, in which were the Hungarian rebellions with an army of "schismatic King" Milutin (Petrović, 2008).

### Conclusion

From the above it is evident that intellectual culture can be a source of ideas and knowledge where has no physical evidence. However, analysis of Serbian folk traditions, myths and beliefs, like the European, "from the perspective of the general history of religion is still in its infancy" (Elijade, 2003, p. 140). This is especially true for the area Mačva, Šabacka Posavina and Pocerina, which is unexplored treasure trove of antiquities from Pre Slavic and Slavic times. Pre Slavonic origin hypothesis of the city of Šabac and mythological meaning of his name, discussed in the introduction, has a basis. Nevertheless, should be cautious in making final decision, until physical evidence has been appeared. The analogy leads us to the city's name etymologically related to the ancient name of river Sava (Sabas), or God Šabacije (Sabazius), which in these regions reached by the Thracians. The first hypothesis is performed by mapping facts. The second is derived from the mythology of the Balkans.

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