

The Cover and Logo of *Slovenian Veterinary Research* Contains the Rod of Asclepius

Naslovnica in logotip *Slovenskega veterinarskega zbornika* z Asklepijevim simbolom

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In the 60th year of continuous publishing, the cover page of *Slovenian Veterinary Research* now features the symbol of veterinary medicine. In other words, the Rod of Asclepius (Greek) or Aesculapius (Latin) is wrapped by a snake, both of which are surrounded by a capital letter V. This symbol originates from Antiquity and was attributed to our profession after this line of work was accepted scientifically based principles and became to be called “veterinary medicine”. There are several explanations regarding the origin and source of the symbol. A slightly deeper reflection brings us to the legends and myths of Antiquity.

Some interpretations state that Asclepius actually existed and worked as a very successful physician, who somehow, after the 5th century BC, began to be worshipped throughout ancient Greece as a deity. The greatest cult dedicated to him was cultivated on the island of Kos, and the largest temple in his honour was built in Epidaurus on the Peloponnese peninsula. It was here that also a medical school operated, which was first based on the methods of magic but later grew to develop more scientific and empirically based treatments. Several other temples dedicated to Asclepius are known in antique Greece. Among Asclepius’ successors, the most known physician is Hippocrates.

V šestdesetem letu neprekinjenega izhajanja prihaja na naslovnico *Slovenskega veterinarskega zbornika* znak veterinarske medicine, ki smo ga do sedaj pogrešali. To je Asklepijeva (gr.) ali Eskulapova (lat.) palica, ki jo ovija kača, obe pa obdaja velika črka V. Simbol ali atribut Asklepijeve palice s kačo izvira iz Antike in se je v naši stroki pričel uporabljati potem, ko je stroka prevzela znanstveno utemeljena načela dela in se pričela poimenovati veterinarska medicina. O izvoru in nastanku simbola je več razlag. Nekoliko poglobljeno premišljevanje nas popelje v svet simbolike in antičnih mitov.

Nekatere razlage navajajo, da je Asklepij dejansko obstajal in deloval kot zelo uspešen zdravnik, ki so ga nekako od 5. stoletja pr. n. št. dalje pričeli po vsej Grčiji častiti kot božanstvo. Njegov največji kult so gojili na otoku Kos, največje svetišče pa je bilo v Epidavru na Peloponezu. Tu je delovala tudi medicinska šola, ki je najprej temeljila na magičnih postopkih a kasneje prerasla v bolj znanstveno in temeljila svoja zdravljenja predvsem na izkustvih. Poznano pa je še nekaj drugih Asklepijevih svetišč v antični Grčiji. Med Asklepijevimi nasledniki je najbolj znan zdravnik Hipokrat.

Več legend pravi, da je bil Asklepij sin boga Apolona. Po najpogosteje navedeni pripovedi naj bi bila njegova mati tetsalska princesa Koronida, ki pa jo je zveza z bogom stala

Several legends claim that Asclepius was the son of the god Apollo. According to the most frequently quoted story, his mother was the Thessalian princess Coronis, who paid with her life for her union with god. A milder version of her death states that she was shot with an arrow by Apollo's sister Artemis, the goddess of hunting. According to a more dreadful version, Coronis was (spiritually) unfaithful to Apollo during her pregnancy, and therefore Apollo killed her, cut their son Asclepius out of her body, and gave him to the centaur Chiron to raise. Another legend states that the mother of Asclepius was the daughter of Peligas, a great thief. She became pregnant by Apollo and secretly gave birth to her son Asclepius in Epidaurus at the foothills of the mountain. The child was nourished by a goat and protected by a dog. The herdsman Arestanas, the owner of the two animals, found the child and was astonished by the light shining on the boy. He did not dare take the boy with him, and the child was left to his fate. Yet another legend states that Asclepius was the son of Arsinoe and brought up by Coronis. Also in this legend, Asclepius was entrusted by his father Apollo to the centaur Chiron.

Chiron stood out from the other half-man, half-horse creatures, who were mostly drunkards and tyrants. Chiron lived by himself in a cave and was clever, kind, and civilised. He also differed from other centaurs by his feet, which were like those of man and not horse. His tutors, Apollon and Artemis, taught him the skills of hunting, medicine, music, and prophecy. In addition to Asclepius, Chiron was also a teacher to some other well-known heroes, including Achilles and Jason. We can see him in the night sky as the Centaur constellation.

Chiron gave Asclepius the knowledge of healing, and thus Asclepius discovered how to awake the dead by the blood of Gorgon, which he received from the goddess Athena. In doing so, he angered Hades, the god of the underworld and the dead, who persuaded Zeus to kill Asclepius with a thunderbolt. After his death, Asclepius is said to have changed into a snake. The constellation Ophiuchus (Serpent Bearer) reminds us of him.

Asclepius had five immortal daughters and two or three mortal sons with his wife Epione. Panacea was the goddess of universal remedy, and the miraculous cure for all diseases is named after her. Iaso was the goddess of healing, Hygieia of health, Aceso of rehabilitation, and Aegle (or Erla) of natural beauty. Their son Podalirius, endowed with many talents, was a famous diagnostician, and his brother Machaon was the founder of surgery. They both took part in the Trojan War in which Machaon fell. In addition to these two sons, some legends also mention a third son, Telesphorus, who was Asclepius' assistant. The fourth son Aratus was illegitimate and born to Aristodema. He is considered the liberator of the decades-long-lasting combats for Sicyon in the 3rd century BC.

življenje. Bolj mila verzija njene smrti navaja, da jo je s puščico ustrelila Apolonova sestra Artemis, boginja lova. Po bolj grozni verziji naj bi bila Koronida med nosečnostjo nezvesta, morda samo duhovno, Apolonu in zato jo je ta ubil, iz njenega telesa izrezal sina Asklepija in ga dal v rejo kentavru Hironu. Druga legenda pripoveduje, da je bila Asklepijeva mati hči Peligasa, tatu velikega kova. Naj bi zanosila z Apolonom, skrivoma rodila sina v Epidavru ob vznožju gore in ga tam pustila. Otroka je hranila koza, varoval pa pes. Pastir Arestanas, lastnik obeh živali, je sicer našel otroka in bil osupel nad svetlobo, ki je sijala na dečka. Zato otroka ni upal vzeti s seboj in je ta bil še naprej prepuščen svoji usodi. Tretja legenda navaja, da je bil Asklepij sin Arsinoe in da ga je vzgojila princesa Koronida. Tudi po tej legendi je Asklepija njegov oče Apolon zaupal v rejo kentavru Hironu.

Hiron je bil posebej med kentavri, t.j. pol konji in pol ljudje, ki so bili v glavnem pijanci in nasilneži. Hiron pa je živel sam zase v neki votlini in je bil inteligenčen, prijazen in civiliziran. Od drugih kentavrov se je razlikoval tudi po tem, da je imel sprednje noge take kot človek in ne kot konj. Njegova vzgojiteljica, Apolon in Artemida, sta ga izučila veščin lova, zdravilstva, glasbe in prerokovanja. Poleg Asklepija je bil Hiron učitelj še nekaterim znanim grškim herojem, med njimi Ahilu in Jazonu. Danes ga na nebu lahko vidimo kot ozvezdje Kentavra.

Hiron je Asklepija izučil zdravljenja, ta pa je odkril kako lahko iz krvi Gorgon, ki jo je dobil od Atene, obudi mrtve. S tem pa je razžejil Hada, boga podzemlja in mrtvih, ki je pregovoril Zevsa, da je s strelo ubil Asklepija. Po smrti naj bi se Asklepij spremenil v kačo, nanj pa nas spominja ozvezdje Kačjenosca (lat. *Ophiuchus*).

Asklepij je imel z ženo Epiono pet nesmrtnih hčera in dva ali tri umrljive sinove. Panakeja je bila boginja zdravljenja, po njej se imenuje magično zdravilo panaceja, ki naj bi ozdravilo vse bolezni. Iaso je bila boginja ozdravitve, Higieja varovanja zdravja, Akesa rehabilitacije, Agleja (ali Erla) pa naravne lepote. Sin Podalirij, obdarjen s številnimi naravnimi talenti, je bil diagnostik, njegov brat Mahaon pa utemeljitelj kirurgije. Oba sta se udeležila Trojanske vojne v kateri je Mahaon padel. Poleg teh dveh nekatere legende omenjajo še tretjega sina Telesforja, ki je bil Asklepijev pomočnik. Četrty sin je bil nezakonski Arat, katerega mati naj bi bila Aristodema. Sodeloval naj bi v desetletja trajajočih bojih za Sikion v 3. stoletju pr. n. št. in bil tudi njegov osvoboditelj.

Tudi o izvoru Asklepijeve palice z ovito kačo obstaja več legend. Po eni naj bi si Asklepij naredil palico potem, ko mu je kača zaupala vse skrivnosti medicine. Poleg kače je bil Asklepijev znak še sova, simbol modrosti. Kača je bila tudi sveti simbol njegove hčerke Higieje. Kača, ovita okoli palice, naj bi ponazarjala sposobnost, palica pa moč zdravljenja. Ena od razlag simbola navaja, da naj bi palica predstavljala del drevesa, torej rastlinsko kraljestvo, iz katerega izvirajo zdravila za bolezni. Po drugi legendi naj bi boginja Atena Asklepiju dala kačo, ki jo je odvzela Meduzi. Po tretji, bolj

Furthermore, several legends exist regarding the origin of Asclepius' snake-wrapped rod. According to one, Asclepius made himself a rod after a snake had entrusted him with all the secrets of medicine. In addition to the snake, another sign of Asclepius was an owl, a symbol of wisdom. The snake was also the sacred symbol of his daughter Hygieia. The snake wrapped around the rod is said to represent ability, and the rod the power of healing. One of the interpretations of the symbol states that the rod represents a part of a tree, i.e., the plant kingdom, from which medicines for diseases originate. According to another legend, the snake was given to Asclepius by the goddess Athena, who took it from Medusa. According to a third, more cruel, legend, Asclepius is said to have left his walking stick at the door of a patient's home whilst visiting. The treatment was not successful, and when Asclepius stepped out of the house, he saw a snake wrapped around his rod. He killed it with another stick, but before the snake died, it opened its mouth in which was an unknown plant. Asclepius gave this plant to the patient, who was then cured. After this event, Asclepius placed the head of the snake on the top of his rod. A more practical explanation of the symbol's origin states that the snake wrapped around the rod actually represents the subcutaneous nematode *Dracunculus medinensis*, which is even today removed from subcutaneous tissue by winding it on a stick. In Antiquity, dracunculiasis was quite widespread, and it still exists in some parts of Africa today. However, it will most likely be the third permanently eradicated disease after smallpox and rinderpest.

Since ancient times, the snake had a special mystical or religious status in allegories and symbols and was worshipped as a mysterious creature. There are around 3,400 species of snakes on Earth, of which around 600 are poisonous. For most people, the sight or mere thought of snakes triggers uneasy feelings, even fear, which many believe is somehow implanted in human consciousness. For the ancient Egyptians, the snake was a symbol of life. The pharaohs were worshipped as descendants of snakes and wore the sacred serpent Uraeus on their heads in the form of a crown. The Sumerian god of medicine also originated from a snake. The Celts valued snakes as symbols of wisdom, healing, rebirth, transformation, and fertility because of their ability to shed their skin and live among the roots, deep in the Earth. For the Mayans, the feathered snake Quetzalcoatl was a symbol of fertility. In Norse mythology, the sea snake Jörmungandr represents the endless cycle of life. In India and China, snakes symbolize reincarnation or personify a special inner energy.

It is stated in the Old Testament that before Moses led the Israelites out of Egyptian slavery, he changed his staff into a snake to demonstrate God's help and power, which would convince the pharaoh to free the Israelites. Because the pharaoh refused to do so, ten plagues befell Egypt. After their departure, many troubles fell upon the Israelites, due to which they began to oppose Moses and God himself. God sent poisonous snakes over them, and thus recognizing

okrutni legendi, naj bi Asklepij ob obisku nekega bolnika pustil svojo popotno palico pred vrati bolnikovega doma. Zdravljenje ni bilo uspešno, ko pa je Asklepij stopil iz hiše je videl, da se okoli njegove palice ovija kača. Z drugo palico je kačo ubil, preden pa je ta poginila je odprla usta v kateri je bila neznana rastlina. Asklepij je to rastlino dal bolniku, ki je nato ozdravel. Po tem dogodku je Asklepij namestil glavo te kače na vrh svoje palice. Bolj praktična razlaga izvora simbola pa navaja, da naj bi na palici ovita kača dejansko predstavljala podkožnega nematoda *Dracunculus medinensis*, ki ga še danes odstranjujejo iz podkožja z navijanjem na paličko. V antiki je bila drakunkuloza precej razširjena, medtem ko je danes le še v nekaterih področjih v Afriki. Vse pa kaže, da bo to tretja stalno izkoreninjena bolezen, za kozami in govejo kugo.

Sicer pa je kača od pradednih kultur dalje imela posebno mistično ali religiozno mesto v prispodobah in simbolih in bila čaščena kot skrivnostno bitje. Na Zemlji živi okoli 3400 vrst kač, od katerih jih je okoli 600 strupenih. Pri večini ljudi pogled ali zgolj razmišljanje o kačah sproži nelagodne občutke ali celo strah za katerega mnogi menijo, da je nekako vsajen v človekovo zavest. Pri starih Egipčanih je bila kača simbol življenja. Faraone so častili kot potomce kač in ti so sveto kačo Uraeus nosili na glavi v obliki krone. Tudi Sumerski bog medicine je izviral iz kače. Kelti so kače, zaradi njihove sposobnosti levitve in življenja med koreninami globoko v zemlji, cenili kot simbole modrosti, ozdravitve, ponovnega rojstva, preobrazbe in plodnosti. Pri Majih je bila pernata kača Quetzalcoatl simbol plodnosti. V nordijski mitologiji nastopa morska kača Jörmungandr, ki predstavlja neskončni življenjski krog. Tudi v Indiji in na Kitajskem so kače simbolizirale reinkarnacijo ali posebljale posebno notranjo energijo.

V Stari zavezi je navedeno, da preden je Mojzes povedel Izraelce iz egipčanske sužnosti, je svojo palico spremenil v kačo, s čimer naj bi pokazal božjo pomoč in moč, zaradi katere naj bi faraon osvobodil Izraelce. Ker faraon tega ni naredil, je Egipt zadelo deset nesreč. Po odhodu iz sužnosti so se pričele različne težave, zaradi katerih so Izraelci pričeli nasprotovati Mojzesu in Bogu samemu. Ta je nad njih poslal strupene kače, zaradi česar so uvideli svojo zmoto, se pokesali in z molitvami prosili Boga za pomoč. Mojzes je po božjem ukazu naredil bronasto kačo in jo namestil na palico ali križ. Vsi, ki so jih kače pičile, so ob pogledu nanjo ozdraveli. Kače so omenjene tudi v Novi zavezi. Jezus svetuje, da naj bodo ljudje modri kot kače, kar pomeni, da je potrebno razvijati sposobnosti uma in razuma. Alkemisti so prevzeli egipčansko-grški simbol Ouroboros, t.j., kačo ki grize svoj rep in predstavlja naravo, življenjsko moč in božansko, neprestano, ciklično obnovljivo silo. O kačah sta razmišljala tudi slovita psihologa Sigmund Freud in Karl Gustav Jung. Za Freuda je bila kača simbol seksualnosti, ki je ob prikazovanju v sanjah pri ženskah vzbujala strah pred spolnostjo ali asociacijo na privlačnega moškega. Junga je levitev kače spominjala na človekovo preobrazbo.

their mistake, they repented and prayed to God for help. At God's command, Moses made a bronze serpent and placed it on top of a rod or cross. All who were bitten by snakes were healed at the sight of it. Snakes are also mentioned in the New Testament. Jesus advised that people should be as wise as serpents, which means that one must develop the ability of intellect and reason. Alchemists adopted the Egyptian-Greek symbol Ouroboros, a serpent biting its own tail, representing nature, the life force, the divine, and the never-ending, cyclical, renewing force. The famous psychologists Sigmund Freud and Karl Gustav Jung also considered the meaning of snakes. For Freud, the snake was a symbol of sexuality, which, when appearing in dreams, evoked in women a fear of sexuality or an association with an attractive man. For Jung, the shedding of snakes was reminiscent of human transformation.

In the Middle Ages, Asclepius and his sign were abandoned. Only in the Renaissance, with the rediscovery of the ancient heritage and its values, did the forgotten symbol start to gain ground again. In 1593, the author Cesare Ripa published the book *Iconologia*, in which he presented various ancient figures. The symbol of the snake and rod began to appear on the cover pages of medical discussions and pharmacopoeias. It became generally accepted in the 17th century.

In addition to the Rod of Asclepius, we can, not rarely, find another symbol in medicine, the so-called caduceus (lat. caduceus) or kerykeion (gr. kērukeion, κηρύκειον). Some even use the same expression for both symbols. However, there are considerable differences in the appearances, meanings, and origins of the two signs. The caduceus is represented by two snakes coiling around a rod topped by two wings. A similar symbol appears on the Mesopotamian seals dating from 4000 to 3000 BC and is most probably connected with their deity. According to one of the Greek myths about the origin of the kerykeion, the prophet Tiresias found two snakes mating and killed the female with his staff. He was immediately turned into a woman and remained in this form for 7 years until he killed a male snake in a similar event. The staff with its power of transformation was later passed into the possession of the god Hermes. Another story states that Hermes was appointed a divine herald by Apollo after he had played the lyre for him. On this occasion, he presented him with a kerykeion as a symbol of his service. The Greek name of the symbol means herald's staff and derives from the word keruks (κέρυξ), which means herald. Yet a third story says that Hermes saw two snakes entwined in mortal combat. He separated them with his staff and calmed them down. Such an origin of the rod with two entwined snakes supposedly represents a sign of peace.

Hermes was the god of roads, passages, borders, and herds; herald of the gods; intercessor between mortals and gods; and companion of souls to the afterlife who moved freely between the worlds of mortals and gods. He was

V srednjem veku sta bila Asklepij in njegov znak opuščena. Šele v renesansi, ob ponovnem odkrivanju antične zapuščine in njenih vrednot, se je pozabljeni simbol spet pričel uveljavljati. Leta 1593 je avtor Cesare Ripa izdal knjigo *Iconologia*, v kateri je predstavil različne antične figure. Simbol kače in palice se je začel pojavljati na naslovnih straneh medicinskih razprav in farmakopej ter se v 17. stoletju dokončno uveljavil.

Poleg Asklepijevega lahko v medicini neredko zasledimo še en znak, kaducej (lat. caduceus) ali kerikej (gr. kērukeion, κηρύκειον). Nekateri tako poimenujejo kar Asklepijev simbol. Vendar so med videzom, pomenom in izvorom obeh znakov precejšnje razlike. Kaducej predstavljata dve kači, ki se ovijata okoli palice, na vrhu katere sta dve krili. Podoben znak se pojavlja na mezopotamskih pečatnikih 4000 do 3000 let pr. n. št. in je najverjetneje povezan z njihovim božanstvom. Po enem od grških mitov, ki govori o izvoru kerikeja, je prerok Tirezij našel dve kači med parjenjem in s svojo palico ubil samico. Takoj se je spremenil v žensko in v tej podobi ostal sedem let, dokler ob podobnem dogodku ni ubil kačjega samca. Palica s svojo močjo pretvorbe je kasneje prešla v last boga Hermesa. Druga zgodba pripoveduje, da je Hermesa postavil za božjega glasnika Apolon, potem, ko mu je ta igral na liro. Ob tem mu je podaril kerikej kot simbol njegove službe. Grško poimenovanje znaka pomeni glasnikova palica in izvira iz besede keruks (κέρυξ), ki pomeni glasnik. Spet tretja zgodba pravi, da je Hermes zagledal dve kači prepleteni v smrtnem boju. S svojo palico ju je razdvojil in pomiril. Tako je nastala palica z dvema prepletenima kačama, ki naj bi predstavljala mir.

Hermes je bil bog cest, prehodov, mej in čred, glasnik bogov, priprošnjik med smrtniki in bogovi in spremljevalec duš v posmrtno življenje; brez ovir se je gibal med svetom smrtnikov in nesmrtnih bogov. Bil je tudi zaščitnik in pokrovitelj pastirjev, trgovcev, trgovine, tatov, popotnikov, govornišva, duhovitosti, izumov, literature, poezije, športnikov in športa. Z medicino in zdravljenjem ni imel nobenega opravka. Poleg kerikeja kot najpomembnejšega simbola, so bili njegovi prepoznavni znaki še petelin, želva, torbica oziroma denarnica, krilati sandali in krilati klobuk. V rimskem panteonu je dobil ime Merkur.

Prva znana uporaba kaduceja v medicini je bila vinjeta, ki jo je pri tisku medicinskih besedil uporabil švicarski tiskar Johann Frobenius (1460–1527). Znak je, kot vse kaže, uporabljal tudi William Butts (1486–1545), zdravnik kralja Henrika VIII. Armada Združenih držav Amerike je pričela uporabljati kaducej pri oznakah vojaških bolničarjev okoli leta 1856 in tudi pri sanitetnih oficirjih leta 1902, ker je tega leta znak sprejela medicinska služba vojske ZDA. Leta 1901 je pričel v Franciji izhajati vojni medicinski mesečnik *La Caducée*. V ZDA so znak uporabljali tudi po prvi svetovni vojni in ga lahko srečamo marsikje še danes. Kaducej uporabljajo tudi nekatera komercialna podjetja ali združenja, saj je bil Hermes bog trgovine. Nekaj časa je znak uporabljalo Ameriško zdravniško združenje, vendar ga je po burni

also the protector and patron of shepherds, merchants, commerce, thieves, travellers, oratory, wit, inventions, literature, poetry, athletes, and sports. He had nothing to do with medicine and treatment. In addition to the caduceus, his identification signs were a rooster, turtle, purse or wallet, winged sandals, and winged hat. He was named Mercury in the Roman pantheon.

The first known use of the caduceus in medicine was a vignette used by the Swiss printer Johann Frobenius (1460–1527) when printing medical texts. Apparently, the symbol was also used by William Butts (1486–1545), the physician of King Henry VIII. The United States Army began to use the caduceus in the insignia of military male nurses around 1856 and sanitary officers in 1902, which was also the year the sign was adopted by the US Army Medical Service. In 1901, the wartime medical monthly magazine *La Caducée* began to be published in France. In the USA, the symbol was also used after World War I and can still be found used today. The caduceus is also used by some commercial companies or associations, as Hermes was the god of trade. The American Veterinary Medical Association initially used the image of the centaur Chiron, which was replaced by the caduceus in 1920 and in 1971 replaced by the Rod of Asclepius with a snake, which is still used today. The use of the caduceus as a symbol of medical associations is in decline but is occasionally still used today. However, the caduceus is more appropriately associated with banks and other businesses of commerce because of the connection to Hermes. Veterinary medicine and human medicine, however, will use the rod of Asclepius, who was the Greek god of healing.

We greet with great pleasure the decision of the editors to introduce the Rod of Asclepius to the cover page of the only Slovenian scientific veterinary medicine journal. We wish the editors, editorial board members, and all co-workers much success and many high-quality scientific papers.

Prof. Vojteh Cestnik, professor emeritus of Veterinary Medicine, UL

razpravi opustilo že leta 1912. Ameriško združenje veterinarjev je v začetku uporabljalo podobo kentavra Hirona, ki jo je leta 1920 zamenjala podoba kaducej, od leta 1971 do sedaj pa uporabljajo Asklepijevo palico s kačo. Čeprav vse manj, nekatera medicinska združenja še vedno uporabljajo simbol kaduceja. Vendar lahko rečemo, da je uporaba tega znaka napačna, nepravilna in nestrokovna, saj je glede na mitološko povezanost kaduceja s Hermesom bolj primerna za poslovna in trgovska podjetja, medtem ko se v veterinarski in humani medicini uporablja simbol Asklepija, ki je bil bog zdravljenja.

Z veseljem lahko pozdravimo odločitev urednic za uvedbo Asklepijevega simbola na naslovnici znanstvenega časopisa, ki ga izdaja naša Veterinarska fakulteta. Uredniškemu odboru in vsem drugim sodelujočim pa želimo uspešno delo in čim več kvalitetnih znanstvenih člankov.

Prof. dr. Vojteh Cestnik, zaslužni profesor UL