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A Z. Exploring the Ancient Croatian Glagolitic Script

Foreword

Who am I

The Glagolitic alphabet begins with the symbol: “Az.”

“Az” is a symbol that stands for the letter “A,” the number one and the first person singular – “I.”

“Az” is a symbol, a number, a letter, as well as a question: Who am I?

“Az” is the beginning of an ambitious alphabet that requires not only writing, but also questioning. It is eternal, persistent and stubborn, and always equally vigorous.

Is it not natural, then, that precisely because of the way the first letter of the Glagolitic alphabet was conceived, an interest was sparked for its creator? Are you not intrigued by the creator of these new letters, of which the first poses the question:

Who am I?

There are many legends/theories about the origin of the Glagolitic alphabet.

However, it can be said for certain that this alphabet is derived from several sources – the Greek letter F, the Hebrew letter Š/SH and others testify to that. Furthermore Slavists with universities in Toronto and Brno during their research for the first Slavic illustrated etymological dictionary, “Universal Slavic Dictionary”, recently found an unmistakable parallel, both morphological and phonological, between Glagolitic (and Cyrillic) letter Ž/ZH and Ethiopian Amharic Ž/ZH as well as between Glagolitic (and Cyrillic) letter Č/CH and Iranian Avestan Č/CH.

According to the prevailing theory, the creator of the Glagolitic alphabet is Constantine of Thessalonica. This theory was considered valid by George of Slavonia (Georgius de Sclavonia), a Croatian theologian of the XV Century.

George’s knowledge of the Glagolitic alphabet is evident in the skill with which he interpreted its hidden meanings. Within the first nine letters of the Glagolitic alphabet George unraveled Constantine of Thessalonica’s hidden message and answered the question posed by the first letter: Who am I?

I, a Christian who knows the letters,
say that it is good to live honorably in this world.

Constantine’s alphabet contains other secret messages. Nevertheless, the first nine letters can serve as a clear guideline when we find ourselves at a loss of answers to the question who am I.

This manuscript follows in the footsteps of Constantine’s letters.

It is directed at those who are rested.

Also, it has been written for those who are persistent enough. “Az” addresses the readers who are asking themselves: Who am I?

Always.

Forever.

Part I: Ones of the Diary of Methodius

1, A – AZЪ – I, a Christian

2, B – BUKY – letter

- 3, V - VĚDĚ (věděti) - know
- 4, G - GLAGOLJŦ (glagolati) - speak
- 5, D - DOBRĚ - good
- 6, E - ESTŦ - is
- 7, Ž - ŽIVĚTI - live
- 8, Ž - ŽĚLO - very, honorably
- 9, Z - ZEMLI - Earth

Cyril and Methodius first translated from Greek into Slavic the words from the Gospel of John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" - fittingly enough, as the written word is a kind of incarnation of the spoken one.

I, a Christian who knows the letters, say that it is good to live honorably in the world.

According to George of Slavonia (XIV-XV century), the abovementioned is spelled out by the first nine letters of the Glagolitic alphabet.

Part II: Tens of Theodora, the Empress

Soon he received a message from God, the One who listens to the prayers of His servants, and the Philosopher conceived the script, and began to write the words of the Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Chronicle of St. Cyril, Book XIV

- 10, Ī - ĪŽE
- 20, I - I and
- 30, Ĵ/Ĝ - ĐERV
- 40, K - KAKO how
- 50, L - LJUDIE people
- 60, M - MYSLITE (mysliti) think
- 70, N - NAŠŦ our
- 80, O - ONŦ (онъ) he
- 90, P - POKOI - mir peace

Then follow iže (the letter "I", which is the first letter of the name of Jesus / Lat. Iesus / Gr. Iêsous) and đerv (a rare letter, found in the words of the Gospel). The acrostic continues: kako ljudie myslite našŦ onŦ pokoi rŦci slovo tvrdo...

How do you people mean, He is our peace?

Part III: HUNDREDS OF ANASTASIUS THE LIBRARIAN

- 100, R - RŦCI
- 200, S - SLOVO letter, word
- 300, T - TVRŦDO hard, firm
- 400, U - UKŦ

500, F – FRЪГЪ

600, H – HĚRЪ

700, ω – OTЪ

800, Ć – ŠTA

900, C – CI

Be firm in your faith.

J. Bratulić

Part IV: THOUSANDS OF A GEBALIM

... Thursday of year 895. One day of Gebalim

Mutimir (Muncimir) spent in Uzdolje,

a village at the bottom of Kosovo field near Knin...

1000, Ć – ČRЪVЪ

2000, Š – ŠA

Part V: Syllabary

In the year 1629, the Roman Congregation De Propaganda Fide, published under the title AZBUKIVIDNEK SLOVINSKIJ, a spelling book for learning the Glagolitic script, authored by Rafael Levaković.

The letters are written on the basis of the proto-Glagolitic, triangular script.

1, A – AZЪ

A is the first letter of the Latin script.

Its development is tied to an Egyptian hieroglyph

(), as well as a related pictogram ()

from a North – Semitic linear alphabet (around 1600 years B. C.). In both cases, the sign that is the predecessor of the letter A represents a stylized head of cattle, that is, of an ox.

ALEF is present as the first letter in the Phoenician and Hebrew alphabet, and is equivalent to the Arabic letter ALIF.

The Greeks took over the sign-letter ALEF used by the Phoenicians in the 8-9th century B. C., and gave it the sound value of the vowel A. They named it ALPHA and placed it at the beginning of the alphabet.

The letter A was taken over from the Greeks by the Etruscans and Romans. Its signifying of the beginning was described by Jesus himself: “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty” (Rev 1:8).

According to Frane Paro, Constantine Cyril had decided to begin the Glagolitic alphabet sequence with a cross – the central symbol of Christianity, the symbol of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ... He formed the letters as a whole between A and O, between the cross †, a sign of Christ, and the circle o, a sign of God’s completeness and perfection.

The letter A – AZ in Glagolitic represents the cross, the fundamental symbol of salvation and

redemption, and in a wider context, the pronoun of the first person singular, I, a Christian. The sign that has the numerical value of one and the sound characteristics of the vowel A.

Since the letter A has a leading position in the order of letters, the number one also has a special importance in the order of numbers. In the Ancient and Middle Ages, the number one was not only a number, but also the source of all numbers. According to Germ, the number one is the symbol of the primordial principle, of elemental cosmic energy, God and his infinite power of creation. The symbolical value of one in geometry is identified with the circle and sphere and in architecture with the transfer of the symbolic content of one on parts of buildings. Sacred architecture of most religions highlights a dome structure and central ground plan, making their symbolic reference to a concise message: circle – one – God.

In the Croatian language, A is one of the contrasting conjunctions.

2, B – BUKY

It is presumed that Buky originates from a Semitic sign that was first taken over by the Hebrews, and then the Greeks. Therefore, it is related to the Greek letter BETA and the Hebrew BET – house or labyrinth.

Greeks took over the letter B with its sound value, but changed its visual form, and in time, its sound value as well, so today they pronounce it as V. The Latin pronunciation was given to it by the Romans in the VII Century B. C.

In Glagolitic B is a sign that has the numerical value of two and the sound characteristics of the letter B. It symbolizes a letter as a sign, but also God.

In Glagolitic alphabet books the letters were learned by the spelling of rhymes (consonants followed by vowels). The teacher would write out rhymes on the blackboard, and the pupils would learn by heart (bubati): ba, be, bi, bo, bu..., by saying them out loud, they memorized them. The term bubati is present in the Croatian language today, and it means to cram, to blindly memorize. The meaning of the letter (BUKY – letter) exists today in the idiomatic expression to bawl someone out.

The symbolical value of the number two opposes the meaning of the number one. Two marks duality, deviation from one, splitting and bipolarity. Even though the number two symbolizes the material, negative, earthly, transient and dark, in the Christian iconography of numbers, negative meanings of number two are very rare. Two can symbolically represent the dual nature of Christ, man and God, but also the simultaneous love that a Christian shows to God and to his neighbor.

The letter B is the second letter of the Croatian alphabet.

3, V – VÊDÊ (vêdêti)

The letter V comes from the Semitic letter WÂW whose form was originally represented by a hook (). In Greek script, the letter Y was first transformed from the Semitic letter WÂW so it would represent the vowel U. During the late Middle Ages, this letter evolved in two forms – V and U.

In Glagolitic, the sign V – VÊDÊTI symbolizes knowledge (vedas is the name for ancient Indian books of knowledge), but also eternity. Its shape follows the circle in which alpha and omega are written. Since it takes up the lower half of the rosette, the letter V also symbolizes water that God separated from the heavens at the beginning of world's creation.

If the first three letters of Glagolitic are written into the rosette (A, B, V), one gains an entire rosette with the meaning: I believe in the eternal God.

The numerical value of the sign V – VÊDÊTI, corresponds to the number three, with a very wide range

of symbolic meanings. Three is often interpreted as a sacred number characterized by perfection, roundness, fertility, growth and progress. It was particularly denoted and glorified as a creator's number by Pythagoreans, because of their belief that the universe was created according to mathematical principles (three points determine a triangle – a starting point for all other geometric shapes). In Christianity, the number three is particularly tied to the motif of the resurrection of Christ on the third day, as well as the motif of the Holy Trinity, and the procreative capacity of the three sons of Noah who restored the entire human race after the flood.

The word *vêde*, *vidi*, *vjedje* (knowing) is of Indo-European origin and is widespread in many languages. Today it also exists in the Czech language, and it is tied to the word *vem* (know) in the Kajkavian dialect in the Croatian mountain region, as well as with the words *vidjeti*, *vješt*, *vještica*. It is closely related to the expression *vidjeti* (the difference between *vêdêti* – *vidêti* is in the apophony, that is, the change of vowels in the root of the word /ê : i/ that brings about the change of the grammatical category and/or lexical meaning). The well-known phrase “*Tko dobro vidi – dobro zna.*” also points out to the relationship between knowledge and the ability to see.

The letter V is the twenty-eighth letter of the Croatian alphabet, and it is a labiodental approximant vowel.

4, G – GLAGOLJQ (glagolati)

Like the letter C, the letter G also has its origin in the Hebrew letter GIMEL, and it is related to the Armenian letter GHAD, and the Samaritan GHIMEL. It appeared in the Latin alphabet in the third century B.C. It was used by Spurius Carvilius Ruga, the founder of the first public school of the city of Rome (around 230 B. C.) that charged tuition. Spurius Carvilius Ruga replaced the sixth letter of Greek alphabet Z with today's letter G. Basically, Spurius Carvilius Ruga made a modification of the letter C by the addition of a small vertical stroke to the tail end of the semicircle.

In Croatian, the letter G was used as a part of the digraph GJ. The digraph GJ was introduced into the Croatian language as the sign for the sound Đ and, for writing of the words of Greek origin (*anĝel*, *evanĝelie*).

The Glagolitic sign G – *glagolati* presumed speech. The letter G – *glagoljq* was a numerical sign for the number four, and was spelled *glagolju*. Its symbolical meaning was not exhausted by *govorenjem* (speaking). The letter G also marked the term according to which letter is (part) of the word(s). On the other hand, due to its two closed units that remind of a field with holes in it, it also symbolized the reptiles, creatures that hide in the holes.

The letter G has meaning in the Christian blessing for the family. In the blessing of the family, the gathered family receives the priest and his escorts: altar servers and one adult parishioner. On the door to the room, the priest's escort would write the following sign: 20 + G + M + B + 09, in which the numbers mark the year of the blessing, and three letters symbolize the beginning letters of the names of the Three Wise Men (Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar). According to another interpretation, the letters G, M, and B are an abbreviation of the Latin phrase *Christus mansionem, benedicat* – let Christ bless this house. According to this interpretation, one must be aware of the initial of the name Gaspar, which is the letter C in Latin. (Gaspar Lat. Caspar)

The numerical meaning of the number four is associated with the balance and harmony of the world, with its temporal and spatial organization, but also with firmness, law and order that rule the world. The number four is at the same time a symbol of man in whom the cosmic structure is reflected, and this structure is based on – four.

In the Croatian alphabet, the letter G is in the eleventh position, and is a voiced velar plosive consonant. The word glagol even today is related to the meaning glagoljō. Glagol (Eng. verb) is the most important word in a sentence, it carries the action of the sentence, and without it, sentences are not complete, even the ones that are verbless.

5, D – DOBRÊ

The letter D has been known ever since the Egyptian hieroglyphs, where the sign represented a door. It is related to the Semitic sign DALETH (or), which in Hebrew transliteration was signified by an expression for ruler or door, and was pronounced as D. The Greeks took over the Semitic pronunciation and the sign, but they also reshaped the name DALETH into DELTA. DELTA is related to the meaning of the Greek word spudé (heartiness, readiness for good deeds), which is in opposition to the word rathimia (weakness, carelessness, laziness, cause of the first fall and every sin). D signified the Roman numeral 500, and the Greek numeral 4.

In Glagolitic, D has the numerical value of five, and the symbolical value of good, but also of spirit. It comprises an arch and two rounded loops, and its triangular and round shapes take up the upper half of the rosette, the upper half of the circle. With its position and shape, the letter D symbolizes the Holy Spirit who hovered over the surface of the waters during the creation.

Number five was often considered an androgynous number in which the first even number (number two) and the first odd number (number three) are paired, that is, the female and the male principle. It was also considered the number of man (due to man's five senses, five ways of comprehending, and five fingers on a hand). Pythagoreans declared it a symbol of divine marriage and a holy sign that testifies to the relation between a man and the Divine. In Christianity, there are five Pentateuch, and according to Honorius Augustodunensis (mentioned in Germ's Symbolism of Numbers), On the fifth day the Lord created birds in heaven and fish in water, and in the fifth era of the world, after the Babylonian slavery, the Lord came to the world and saved the birds, that is the wise ones, and the fish, the foolish ones, from misfortune and delusion.

In Croatian the letter D appears as the basis for writing two more sounds: Đ (when a diacritic is added to it – a horizontal line), and Dž, when D and Ž create a digraph. It is in the sixth place in the alphabetical order and it signifies a voiced alveolar plosive consonant.

6, E – ESTЪ

The letter E comes from the Semitic sign HE () that probably represented a tree or a branch. HE was pronounced as a consonant H in Semitic alphabets, and when the Greeks took it over they reassigned it into a sign for the vowel E (Έψιλον, Epsilon) without changing its visual form. There was long-term experimentation on the direction of writing, so at one time, one of the lines was written from right to left, the next from left to right, and then again from right to left. It got its name for its similarity with the direction of plowing in the field. In the Greek alphabet, today's orientation became consistent by the end of the second and the beginning of first Century A.D. The Latin E was taken over from the Greek alphabet without any changes, even though the Romans had written it before the Greeks in the way in which it is written today.

For the Pythagoreans, the number six was the number of completeness, harmony, balance and accord, and at the same time a symbol of love, beauty, fertility and creativity. It is, at the same time, a sum of all its divisors ($1 + 2 + 3 = 6 = 1 \times 2 \times 3$).

The Glagolitic was true to the Bible in many things, and that is the case with the letter E. According to

the Bible, God created the world in six days: in the first days the sky and the earth, sea and land, then plants, and then animals. On the sixth day he created a man, and on the seventh day he rested. The letter E symbolizes the sixth day of creation, the day on which man was created.

In the Symbolism of Numbers, Germ states the importance of the sixth day from the Second Book of Moses: And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man... (Ex 16:5), as well as Origen's commentary on the mentioned quote by Moses: the sixth day is the time of our lives... And the more good deeds you collect, that will be your food for the future.

The group of symbols of the Glagolitic letters, by order and symbolical meaning tell the tale of the creation of the world in six days. When we add the first six letters, their shapes cover the whole rosette, from which they were created.

The letter E symbolizes the morning, sunrise, because the sunlight comes, warms and shines on a part of the Earth through a small opening in the sky. It was said in those days that morning is the change from night to day.

In the Croatian alphabet, E is in the ninth place and it is a medium-high front vowel.

7, Ž – ŽIVĚTI

In Glagolitic, the letter Ž represents beings inspired with life. In Glagolitic, there is great symbolism in the numerical value of the seventh letter. As Germ states, the number seven is, much like the number three, a favorite fairy tale number that is very rich in symbolic meanings. Even though the symbolism of seven is diverse, in most of the cultures it is interpreted as a motif of completeness, perfection, wholeness of the cosmos and rounded harmony of time and space. Seven was acclaimed since astral symbolism and the mythology of Babylon; it is present in the teaching of the seven planets, the seven main gods of heaven, and the seven divisions of Heaven. To Pythagoreans, the number seven was a symbol of the universe (with seven planetary spheres and seven planets) where motion, according to the analogy of the seven-tone musical scale, must create divine music of the harmony of the heavenly spheres. Alongside this, Pythagoreans believed that seven represents a wholeness of merging of the earth (number four) and the sky (number three).

The number seven also symbolizes the measure of the earthly, passing time that is always counted down anew by living through the seven days of the week. On the seventh day God blessed his work and rested. Germ instructs that seven is a number in which man's merging of the spiritual (three strengths of the soul mark the spirituality of a man) and physical (the physical nature of a man is stated by four, the sum of elements of which man's physical nature is made). Above all, the number seven expresses the wisdom of the sevenfold Holy Spirit.

The letter Ž is the thirtieth, and final letter of the Croatian alphabet. It signifies a voiced postalveolar fricative consonant. It was introduced from the Czech language into the Croatian language by Ljudevit Gaj. Slovenians and Bosnians have also adopted the letter.

8, 3 – 3ĚLO

The Glagolitic letter 3 – 3ĚLO is interpreted in the sense of virtue. The sound that signifies the letter 3 emerged as a result of the second palatalization, G before ê > 3: non-Indo-European: gailă > gělă > 3Ělo. It is often replaced by the sound Z.

Also, it represents the stars that seemed to be attached to heaven's arch, and in accordance, do not go out of the rosette circle.

From the numerical point of view, eight is a happy and harmonious number, a symbol of balance and

stability. After seven with which a man's life is measured in weeks, eight symbolizes the eternity which follows after the variability of earthly time. It is the number of a new beginning, a revival, heaven, resurrection and eternal life.

9, Z – ZEMLI

Today's letter Z has its origin in the Semitic ZAI. In Greek the sign was named ZETA and was used for writing the sound Z. The images of the sign ZAI, that is, ZETA, were in a way crossing with the images of the sign JOD, or JOTA. In a way, the letter JOD lent its picture to the Greek ZETA, and ZAIN to the Greek JOTA. Transitional forms of these letters became permanent with their acceptance in the Latin script, where the way they are written and pronounced was defined.

In Glagolitic, the letter Z signifies the earth, takes up half of the rosette (half of the world), and suggests a half of the world. The letter Z possesses an additional element which goes beyond the initial circle of the rosette. With the outer – extending appendage, the Earth is signified, as an astronomical body.

With its shape the letter Z takes part in telling the tale of the creation of the world: of the four elements - air (spirit), water, fire and earth, the first three elements were created on the first day of creation. On the third day, God created the fourth element, earth in the sense of dry land.

Nine is a number that symbolizes the strength of spirit, wisdom, knowledge and spiritual maturity. In Christianity, St. Paul had written about the number nine to the Corinthians (1 Cor 12:7-11) where he mentioned the nine gifts of the spirit, and also St. Gregory the Great, when he discussed the symbolic meaning of the lost drachma (Lk 15:8).

The letter Z is in the twenty-ninth position in the Croatian alphabet. It signifies a voiced alveolar fricative consonant. In mathematics, it signifies the third unknown factor (alongside X and Y).

10, Ī – ĪŽE

In the Glagolitic script the letter Ī – ĪŽE resembled a yoke for a pair of oxen. It symbolized farm animals. It was used as an initial and as an uppercase ligature.

In the more recent texts it exclusively represented a numerical value.

Its numerical value combines all of the above mentioned symbols. The number ten represents a self-enclosed multiplicity, roundedness, completeness and eternity. In the decimal system, ten is a measure of everything that is counted and measured, and, therefore, is also the symbol of the order of the physical world. Pythagoreans called it the sacred Tetraktys, because the sum of the first four numbers is equal to its geometrical value ($1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10$).

According to Germ, ten can also stand for a symbol of true faith, because the Roman numeral X corresponds to the number ten, and it is the symbol of the cross – the sign of Christ and his teachings. The life of a believer is determined by the Ten Commandments of God.

20, I – I

The letter I stems from the Semitic IODH, YOD, YUD, which means hand with a fist. The original pronunciation was probably similar to the letter J, but the Greeks applied it for the vowel I and gave it the name IOTA. From IOTA, the Latin I developed without any changes.

The Glagolitic letter I symbolizes motion, movement and it completes the rosette of the second day of the creation of the world. It can be interpreted as a letter that induces, as well as creates buoyancy, that is, a swing and a movement that follows inspiration.

Germ interprets the symbolic meaning of ten in Christian iconography as the perfection of God's creation. He finds the teachings of the Scriptures and faith to be based on two mathematical operations: on the doubled number ten ($2 \times 10 = 20$), and the product of the number five and the number four ($5 \times 4 = 20$).

By doubling the number ten ($2 \times 10 = 20$), the meaning of ten is given additional layers of meaning as the completion of creation and the perfection of true faith. The same product is the symbol of the law of the Old Testament; it keeps the Decalogue and the mercy of the New Testament, and pertains especially to the commandment on the duality of Christian love. Rupert of Deutz adds to this that the twenty stands for the double grace of God, for Jesus came to save the Jews and the pagans.

The motif of harmony of the Old and the New Testament comes from the product of the numbers five and four, where the number five is by analogy tied to the Pentateuch – the Old Testament, while the number four brings the four Gospels to mind, which is its connection to the New Testament.

The letter I is in the thirteenth position in the Croatian alphabet, it is a coordinating conjunction and a symbol for a front high vowel. In the Croatian language, I is found as a part of the triphthong IJE and the diphthong JE. Alongside other symbols, the letter I is one of the logical composites, the symbol of the Roman numeral one, and the Greek numeral ten.

30, Ĵ/Ĥ – ĐERV

The usual way of writing of the letter Ĵ/Ĥ – ĐERV is đ and it is in the shape of the rounded Glagolitic script. The letter ĵ was used when writing foreign words, such as angel (Greek: ἄγγελος, messenger, herald) – анѣлъ; then it appeared in the place of the Stokavian đ – meja, and later it begins to signify every J.

In the beginning J was just a variation of the symbol I, while its present look became common in the XVI Century. The first to describe the difference between these two symbols (and sounds) was Petrus Ramus.

In the Hebrew tradition it refers to the sign YOD linked to the virgo (virgin), the sign for work, left hand, health, madness, but also to turning ideas into reality.

Tine Germ states that thirty is a famous number that combines within itself the symbolism of three and ten, and as such, symbolizes completeness, maturity, wholeness, perfection, and happiness. The equation $5 \times 6 = 30$ points to the Pentateuch (as well as the five senses) multiplied by the number six, the number of the creation of the world, but also a number that invokes the six works of mercy. Moses and Jesus started public work in their thirties, David was thirty when he became the king of Israel, at the same age Joseph was appointed to rule Egypt. Noah's ark, with its height of thirty cubits, had foreshadowed Christ, the savior of men, who was baptized in his thirties. The negative meaning of thirty is associated with the thirty pieces of silver which Judas received when he betrayed Christ.

The letter J, alongside letters L and N, creates the diphthongs LJ and NJ. The letter J has more sound values, but the most interesting is the one in the Spanish language – H.

The letter J is the fourteenth letter of the Croatian alphabet, which marks a palatal approximant sonant consonant. The letter Đ is the eighth letter of the Croatian alphabet, which marks a palatal approximant sonant consonant.

40, K – KAKO

The letter K stems from the Semitic KAPH, which means hand, open fist, palm. The Greeks took it over

for the sound value of the sound K and call it KAPPA. The Romans used the letter C when writing the same sound value. The Roman use of the letter C for the K sound has been transferred to some other languages, i.e. the English language, although many languages have kept the letter K. The Hebrew tradition, most notably Kabbalah, associated it with life and death, Venus, the left eye, and the hand. In the Glagolitic script, the letter K has a shape that resembles a root, germ, seed, or a blade of grass. In the number forty, Tine Germ stresses the ancient symbolism of the world in its four in tens place, and in Christianity – earthly salvation, as well as a time of penance or punishment. Forty days is associated with Moses waiting on Mount Sinai, Jesus' stay in the desert, and the duration of rainfall during the flood. In this number we can see the positive meaning of the addition of the mercy of the Gospels (four gospels) to God's law (Ten Commandments). King David and Solomon the Wise both ruled for forty years each, and the Israelis also spent forty years wandering through the deserts before setting their eyes on the Promised Land, which means that the number forty may be read as the rich fulfillment of earthly life.

The letter K is the fifteenth letter of the Croatian alphabet and it signifies a voiceless velar plosive consonant. In the Greek language it is the tenth letter of the alphabet, and the symbol of the number 20.

50, L – LJUDIE (people)

The letter L comes from the Phoenician sign LAMED, for which it is assumed that it signified a hook or more probably a year. LAMED is a sign that does not have a pictogramic origin. The Greeks took it over from the Phoenicians, in both its symbolic and articulatory form. In the Greek alphabet its name is LAMBDA and it is a symbol for the number 30.

The Romans used it in its unaltered form, where it had the numerical value of the number 50. The Hebrew tradition associates it with Lybra (scales), connection, gall, action and sacrifice, necessary component of any action.

According to Marica Čunčić, the Glagolitic script used the letter L as the symbol of Luna (the Moon) and light. Its look reminds of moonbeams: the Moon is showed first as larger (the upper part), then as smaller (the lower part), and then it equalizes in size. As in Roman symbols, the letter L in Glagolitic had the numerical value of the number fifty.

Germ states that in contrast to the number forty, the number fifty is a symbol of release, mercy and reward for an exemplary life. In the Scriptures, the year fifty is the year of jubilee, celebration, time of conciliation, release and joy. It is also the motif of the spirits, of the great Christian holiday with which the Church celebrates the arrival of the Holy Spirit that descended upon the disciples fifty days after Jesus' resurrection.

If we break up the number fifty into the number forty with the number ten added to it ($40 + 10 = 50$), forty means earthly life and ten is the reward for the keeping of the laws of the Decalogue. If the number fifty is seen as the product ($5 \times 10 = 50$), five represents the five senses in the service of the Ten Commandments of God. In both cases, the number fifty is the symbol of paradise. When fifty is calculated as $7 \times 7 + 1 = 50$, it means an eternal reward for those who have spent their earthly life in the sign of the seven days of the week, filled with the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit, and faith in one God. In the Croatian alphabet, the letter L is in the sixteenth position and it signifies an alveolar lateral approximant. When used together with the letter J, it creates a new letter – the digraph LJ (the seventeenth letter of the Croatian alphabet and palatal lateral approximant).

60, M – MYSLITE (mysliti)

The symbol MEM in Hebrew carries the meaning of water, and its pronunciation did not change in any alphabet, from the Semitic scripts to the modern Latin scripts. It is assumed that Semites used to signify it with the symbol that they took over from the Egyptians. The Greeks first named it MU, and then MI, and attributed the numerical value 40 to it.

It was written with various modifications of a wavy and zigzag line, until the present form became common in the Latin and Greek alphabet in the 4th Century B.C. Hebrew teaching associates it with motherhood, water, stomach, liquid flow, coldness, winter and human fate. In the Roman script it signified the number 1000.

In the Glagolitic script, the letter M covers three-fourths of the rosette and marks three-fourths of the Earth's surface that is covered by sea. Its numerical value is equal to the number sixty, and it symbolizes the completeness of the cosmos.

According to Frane Paro, Constantine's systematic series of signs/symbols is opened by the sign of the cross – signum absolutus, and it is closed by signum totus – the four member character M (mir = world); which Constantine places in the middle of the azbuka sequence, in the position of the number sixty – a symbol of great cosmic completeness. (The letter X /Chi/ is located in the same place in the Greek alphabet – within the culture of Constantine's time the monogram of the name Christos.)

Germ decomposes the number sixty by using two equations. In the first, $6 \times 10 = 60$ means the perfection of true faith that is stated in supplementing the Ten Commandments of God with the six works of mercy. In the second, the number sixty is decomposed as the product $5 \times 12 = 60$, which represents the five senses contained in the efforts to fulfill the teaching of the twelve apostles. The number sixty can be interpreted as a harmony of the Old and New Testament (the Decalogue and the six works of mercy). It also hints to its great importance in the sexagesimal system of the ancient Sumerians, which has been preserved up to the present day in timekeeping.

In the Croatian alphabet, M is in the 18th position, and it signifies a bilabial nasal consonant.

70, N – NAŠЉ

The letter N originates from the Egyptian hieroglyph, a symbol of a snake. The Phoenician, Hebrew and Arabian name for this sign is NUN, and in most cases it denotes a fish. In many alphabets, the letter N is visually connected to the letter M. It is the Greek numeral for 50.

The Romans took it over from the Greeks in its original form. Hebrews associate it with the scorpion, the sense of smell, bowels, dying, fish, the ability to survive and renew.

In the Glagolitic script, the letter N represented sea beasts, and mammals like whales and dolphins. Its numerical value is 70. Germ finds symbolism in the number seventy, as in most bigger numbers, in absolution, heavenly reward for a good earthly life, and righteous faith in which the teachings of the New Testament supplements the commandments of the Old Testament. If we decompose the number 70 into 5×14 , the seventy is then presented as the symbol of absolution which worshippers are trying to achieve through their five senses, by fulfilling the Ten Commandments of God, and the teachings of the Four Gospels. Seventy is also the symbol of wisdom, and the exemplary number of the Council of Elders.

N is the nineteenth letter of the Croatian alphabet, and it signifies an alveolar nasal consonant. In the Croatian language, together with the letter J it creates the digraph NJ (the twentieth letter of the alphabet).

80, O – ONЪ (онъ)

The origin of the letter O is associated with the Egyptian hieroglyph (`ir) that was taken over by the Semites who made minor modifications and gave it the meaning AYIN – eye. The symbol of the Greek vowel O was created from it, a vowel which the Greeks differentiated as the long (OMEGA) or large O and short (OMICRON) or small o, with the numerical value of 70.

The Hebrew tradition ties it to the Capricorn (billy goat), anger, liver, rule, perception, and power of metaphysical vision that enables the foreseeing of events.

In the Glagolitic script, the symbol O signified the letter O, the number 80, as well as the sign for one of the third-person singulars – he. According to Čunčić, it symbolized fire or light and occupied the right half of the rosette. By overlapping (adding) the visual properties of the three letters (D – duh/spirit, V – voda/water, and O – oganj/fire) a rosette would ensue with the left side blank. According to the common beliefs present during the emergence of the Glagolitic script, darkness marked the absence (non-existence) of beings.

The blank part of the left side of the rosette was left precisely because the darkness signifies the lack of beings, emptiness, and desolateness. The rest of the rosette is filled completely and it bespeaks, according to the Bible, of the fullness of creation, but also of perfection and completion of the first day of Creation.

Germ points to how in the equation $8 \times 10 = 80$, Biblical exegetes saw the eternal reward (the Ten Commandments of God) which is gained by those who believe in the resurrection of Christ (present in the meaning of the number eight). In the spirit of the Old and the New Testament, they also understood the eighty years of Joseph's rule that were supported by the ten of the Decalogue and the eight of the Resurrection. The negative meaning of this number is attributed to its decomposition into $2 \times 4 \times 10 = 80$, where the motif of the earthly world is doubled.

In the Croatian alphabet, the O is the twenty-first letter and it marks the back, medium high vowel. Also, in the Croatian language it is a preposition that alongside the locative marks an object, a topic, and with the accusative and locative a place next to the outside surface of something or hanging on to something.

90, P – POKOI – mir (peace)

The letter P originates from the Semitic PÊ, a symbol for the mouth. Unlike the Roman alphabet that retained it in its original form, the Greeks had taken it over under the name PI (Π ili π), but have combined its original form to the letter RO. The first version of the letter RO was different from its later Latin version. The Latin R is probably only one variation of the letter PI. For the Romans, it signified the number 4000.

In the Glagolitic script, the letter P represents birds in flight, as its shape indicates.

Germ decomposes the number ninety into $9 \times 10 = 90$ and from this equation reads out the symbolism of absolution. He adds that in the number ninety, there is a triple number ten that appears three times ($3 \times 3 \times 10 = 90$) which encompasses the glory of the Holy Trinity, the wisdom of nine, and the prominence of ten.

The letter P is the twenty-second letter of the Croatian alphabet and it signifies a voiceless bilabial plosive consonant.

100, R – RbCI

It is assumed that the original Semitic symbol R was inspired by the Egyptian hieroglyph RÊŠ (pronounced: T – P) which signified the head. In Semitic, the head was called REŠ and its name has

remained associated with the taken over and modified symbol – the letter R. In the Greek language, this letter developed into P (RHÔ), and in Latin into R. It is highly probable that some Etruscan and west Greek forms of this letter were given a small stroke to the right of it to distinguish it from the letter P. In the Glagolitic script, the letter R had the numerical value of the number 100. Symbolically, it represented a fish. Čunčić speaks of the fish as the first symbol of Christianity, and recalls the biblical division of living creatures and distinguishes them into those that live in water, those that live on land, those that fly in the air, the water mammals and the fish in the end. She points out the symbolic importance of the four letters: the letter Ž (žive duše/living souls), the letter P (ptice/birds), the letter N (morske nemani/sea monsters), and the letter R (ribe/fish), which make up the content of the creation on the fifth day.

Germ calls the number hundred one of the perfect numbers: A special perfection, a roundedness of time and space, wholeness, firmness and steadfastness are meanings that Christian iconography sums up from ancient tradition, and adds numerous contents that are associated with the sublimity of God, completeness of his work of creating, purity of faith, hope of salvation and the beauty of life in heaven. Germ quotes St. Hieronymus, who concludes his pondering on the number one hundred with these words: Of the glory of this number let us only say that ten tens has the firmness of a square, and because of that, it is the symbol of steadfastness and eternity.

The letter R is the twenty-third letter of the Croatian alphabet and it signifies the alveolar vibrant sonant (a consonant and a vowel).

200, S – SLOVO

The letter S has a complex history, because its origin is based on multiple symbols, above all on the Semitic symbol (ŠĬN or teeth). ŠĬN was useful to the Greeks in creating their symbol SIGMA, which was reshaped and used to replace the sound S (sigma probably comes from the Arabic word samak – fish, spine). Before the Greek SIGMA, ŠĬN was used in the Phoenician alphabet as a symbol for Š, a letter that the Greeks did not need and they only took over its shape, but not its pronunciation.

For the needs of the Latin language, the letter S was used, but not in the shape of sigma, but as a sign with two curved lines. The Romans used that sign for writing the sound S, and its duality has remained in some later languages. It was used as the symbol for the number 90.

In the Glagolitic script, the letter S signified the word (iskoni bê slovo – in the beginning was the Word). At that time the word jezik/language had two simultaneous meanings – language and people. In addition to symbolizing words, the letter S also symbolized the sun. The letter S (like the letter Z) extends beyond the circle of the rosette precisely because it stands for an astronomical body.

In the Glagolitic script, the letter S has the numerical value of 200. In his work *De humilitate et gloria Christi*, Marko Marulić has interpreted it in the following way: Moreover, two hundred cubits marks the perfection of the saints who not only try to fulfill the commandments of the Decalogue, but also strive to fulfill the evangelical advice. For to the one who said that he abides by the commandments of the Law, and asked what he is lacking, the Savior replied: If you wish to be perfect, sell all you have and give to the poor, and then follow me! And, given that this kind of perfection strongly outweighs the merit of the imperfect ones, it is not valued by the number one hundred as it is for them, but by the number two hundred, as the double of those who are being saved.

S is the twenty-fourth letter in the Croatian alphabet. It marks a voiceless alveolar fricative consonant. In the Croatian language S and Š are clearly distinct, but in some other languages that distinction is not as apparent or so well explained.

300, T – TVRBDO

The letter T as we know it today comes from the Phoenician TAU, a letter very similar to a cross, which signified a sign. The Greeks took it over, and made minor modifications to it. By taking away the top of the cross, from the previous TAU, they made today's letter T.

This symbol was taken over by the Romans, and they have been using it in an almost unchanged form up to the present. The letter does not have any variants, and in its pure form is present in nearly all known languages.

The Glagolitic letter T visually appears to be a rotated copy of the letter V (letter VÊDÊ). It is found in the middle of the rosette and symbolizes the hardness of the heavenly arch, by which the waters of the sky are separated from waters on earth. It was believed that this space is hard because water turns into rain, hail, snow and ice to keep the land moist. The illusionary heavenly arch was imagined by the old Semites to be like a dome that restrained the waters from above, for these waters could break through to the earth and cause a flood. Saint Ambrose also states that waters are separated from waters by the arch as a boundary.

Along with the hardness of the boundary, the letter T signified the numerical value of the number 300. The number three hundred is associated with Gideon described in the Book of Judges, and his opposition to the ruling class at God's call. With God's help, with his 300 men Gideon managed to defeat the manifoldly more powerful Midian army and earn 40 years of peace.

In the Croatian language, the letter T is the twenty-sixth letter of the Croatian alphabet and it signifies a voiceless alveolar plosive consonant.

400, U – UKB

The letter U comes from the Semitic letter WÂW whose form was originally represented by a hook. From the same Semitic symbol, several other letters have developed – F, V, W, Y, and U.

From the middle to late Middle Ages, two forms of the letter V or U were developed, and both were later used as their modern shapes of V and U. V had its ending in the dot and was written at the beginning of the word, while its round shape – U, was used in the middle or at the end of a word. In the XVIII century, these two symbols finally split into the consonant V and the vowel U.

To the Croats, the letter U as a horseshoe is a symbol of good luck. In the Glagolitic script, it has the numerical value of the number 400, a number that can be expressed as the product of the number 8 and the number 50. The number eight is often interpreted as a new beginning (every following week begins with the eighth day), and the number fifty as the symbol of the reward for an exemplary life. In number four hundred, their properties are multiplied.

U is the twenty-seventh letter of the Croatian alphabet, it is a back high vowel, and as a preposition it denotes places (in locative) and the goal (accusative).

500, F – FRBTB

As well as the previous letter U, the letter F was also associated with the Semitic letter WÂW, whose form was originally represented by a hook, and from which the following letters developed – V, W, Y. The original Semitic symbol of the hook could have also been interpreted as the pitchfork or as the horned staff (the shepherd's staff). It was distinguished by the three vocal characteristics: the consonant V, but also the vowel O, i.e. U. Its original name would probably have been FAU. Today its original Greek pronunciation is not known, but its numerical value of 6 has remained. It was also used as a

mathematical symbol. Along with 20 other symbols from the Greek alphabet, in the 7th Century B. C. the Romans took over this Greek sign, which was used in southern Italy, and they gave it the sound value F.

In the Hebrew tradition, WAW is associated with Taurus, thought, the right kidney, ownership.

The Glagolitic letter F takes up the space between the two upper parts of the letter D. It is assumed that this is because the letter F represents animals that are not farm animals, but wild animals. Its numerical value is associated with the number 500 which can be decomposed in several ways ($5 \times 100 = 500$), ($20 \times 5 \times 5 = 500$) or ($5 \times 10 \times 10 = 500$). In every one of these equations, the five human senses are multiplied either by the perfection of time and space (the number 100), or by the perfection of God's creation (the number 20) or the Decalogue multiplied by ten (the number 10).

F is the tenth letter of the Croatian alphabet. It signifies the voiceless labiodental fricative consonant.

600, H - HĚRЪ

The letter H comes from the Semitic symbol HĚT, which stands for a fence or a field. After it was taken over by the Greeks, ETA was probably pronounced as the sound H, but later began to be used in the Greek language as the long vowel E and a symbol for the number 8.

According to Hebrew teachings, it is associated with Aries (a ram), speech, the right foot, life, a connection between the inner world and the outer world. In various languages which use the Latin script, it is often used in digraphs SH, SCH, TSCH, etc. Its multiple sound values are also known.

In the Glagolitic script the circular part or the triangle of the letter H is found in front of the horizontal line or the horizon. According to Čunčić, because of its shape, the letter H is a symbol of the evening, when the day is nearing its end and the sun is going down beyond the horizon. In those days it was believed that the evening was the general borderline between night and day.

H is the twelfth letter of the Croatian alphabet and it signifies the voiceless velar fricative consonant.

700, ω - OTЪ

In the Glagolitic script, this letter has the numerical value of the number 700. It is used as an initial.

800, Ć - ŠTA

In the Glagolitic script, the letter Ć - ŠTA has the shape of a fruitful tree with a wide treetop. It represents woody plants, trees, a rod that blossoms. It has the numerical value of the number 800.

The letter Ć is the fifth letter of the Croatian alphabet and it signifies the voiceless palatal affricate consonant. It is also used in the Polish alphabet, from which it was taken over. Bosnians also use it in their orthography.

900, C - CI

The letter C has the same origin as the letter G, which the Semites named GIMEL. The symbol is probably an adapted version of the Egyptian hieroglyph for a personal belt (a particular type of slingshot, a rope tied to a long tree). Another possibility indicates that the symbol portrayed a camel, for which the Semitic word was GAMAL.

During the third century B. C. the use of the letter C (as well as its variant G) as a substitute for the letters K and Q was becoming more and more frequent. In the classical period, as well as after it, G is treated as the phonetic representative of the letter GAMMA, and C as the equivalent of KAPPA. When transliterating the Greek words into Latin, for example, ΚΑΔΜΟΣ, ΚΥΠΙΟΣ, ΦΩΚΙΣ, their Latin written

form would be CADMVS, CYRVUS, PHOCIS.

The letter C was sometimes called a sigma of the crescent moon, due to its similarity with one of the forms of the Greek letter SIGMA, as well as the resemblance to the crescent moon. It signified the Roman number 100.

In the Glagolitic script it has the numerical value equal to the number 900, in whose meaning the squared value of the number three is found (a symbol of the Holy Trinity), multiplied by 100 (perfection of time and space).

C is the third letter of the Croatian alphabet. It signifies a voiceless alveolar affricate consonant.

1000, Ć – ĆRBVĚ

In the Glagolitic script, the letter Ć symbolizes man, who, unlike everything created during the first six days of the world's creation, is imbued with speech. Due to man's power to speak, the upper part of the letter Ć is open and it points to a man's open mouth. The Glagolitic letter Ć symbolically contains the man and the woman and represents the numerical value of the number 1000 whose symbolic meaning is associated with innumerable multitudes.

Ć is the fourth letter of the Croatian alphabet. It signifies the voiceless postalveolar affricate consonant. It was introduced into the alphabet by Ljudevit Gaj from the Czech language, and it is also used in alphabets of the Slovenian, Slovakian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Serbian and Bosnian languages.

2000, Š – ŠA

The Glagolitic letter Š symbolizes the width of space. It takes up the upper half of the rosette, and its middle stanchion reaches to heaven. Čunčić explains that the border parts of the letter (the two side stanchions) by following the half – circle of the rosette, mark the borders of everything that is visible. From the letter Š we can read that the universe is the space that seems endless, but even the Universe has its limits, compared to God. As such, with limitations, it finds its place in God who is larger even than the endless Universe He has created.

Š is the twenty-fifth letter of the Croatian alphabet. It marks the voiceless postalveolar fricative consonant. It was introduced into the Croatian alphabet from the Czech language by Ljudevit Gaj, and it is also used in the alphabets of the following languages: Slovenian, Slovakian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian, Serbian and Bosnian.