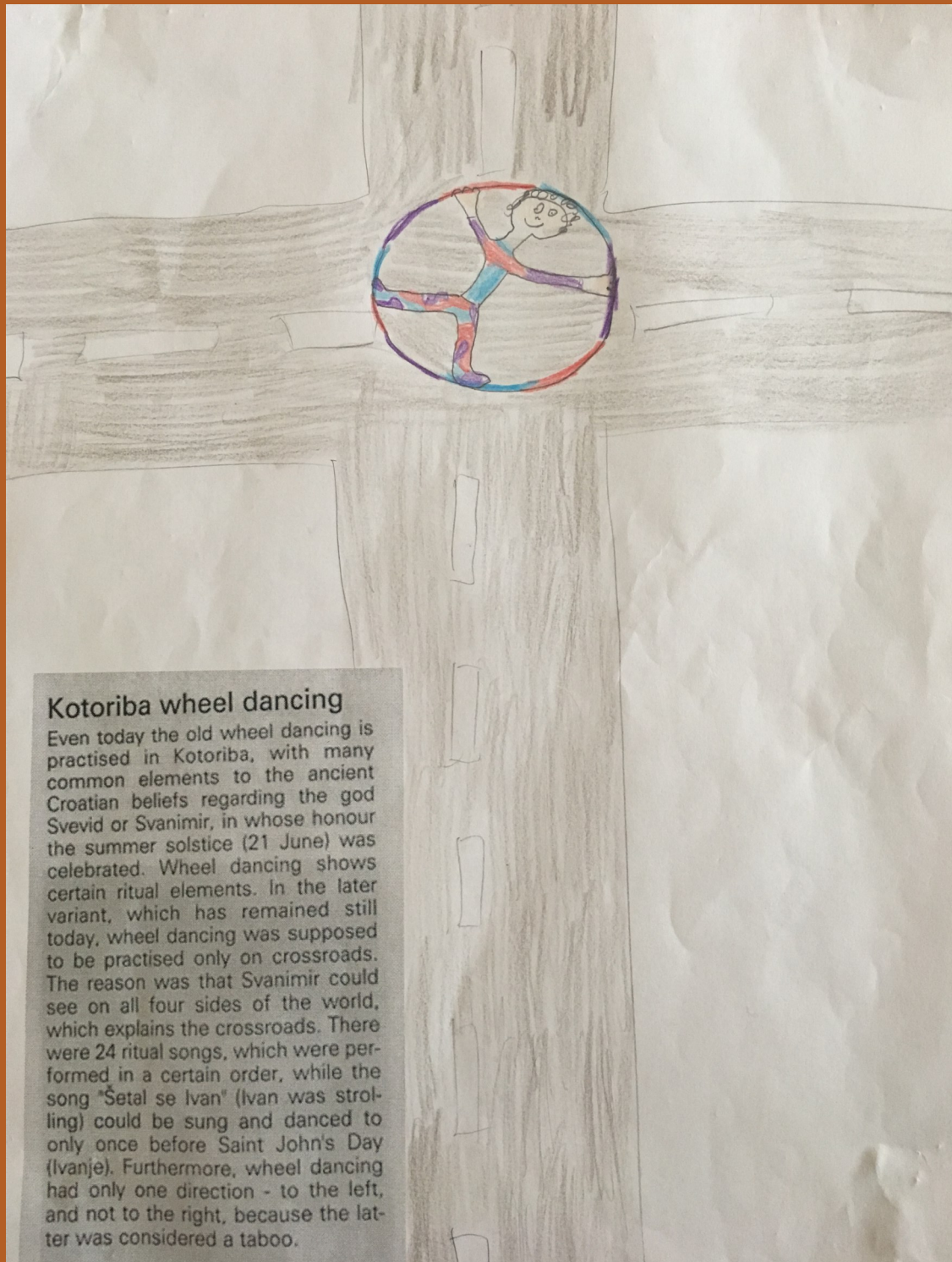


THE LEGENDS AND TALES OF MEDIMURJE

KOTORIBA WHEEL DANCING



Kotoriba wheel dancing

Even today the old wheel dancing is practised in Kotoriba, with many common elements to the ancient Croatian beliefs regarding the god Svevid or Svanimir, in whose honour the summer solstice (21 June) was celebrated. Wheel dancing shows certain ritual elements. In the later variant, which has remained still today, wheel dancing was supposed to be practised only on crossroads. The reason was that Svanimir could see on all four sides of the world, which explains the crossroads. There were 24 ritual songs, which were performed in a certain order, while the song "Šetal se Ivan" (Ivan was strolling) could be sung and danced to only once before Saint John's Day (Ivanje). Furthermore, wheel dancing had only one direction - to the left, and not to the right, because the latter was considered a taboo.

THE LEGEND OF THE ZRINSKI'S TREASURE



The legend of the Zrinskis' treasure

Somewhere in the Old Town in Čakovec the treasure of the Zrinskis is buried - a large amount of gold, pearls and precious stones, which Katarina Zrinska had hidden before the royal army attacked Čakovec, after Petar Zrinski had been locked in prison in Vienna. The treasure of the Zrinskis has not been found yet and it is said to be hidden behind the thick walls of the Old Town in Čakovec.

THE BLACK DRAGON FROM SV. JURAJ NA BREGU



The black dragon (črni pozoj) from Sv. Juraj na Bregu

Sveti Juraj na Bregu has the legend of the black pozoj, that was killed by Saint George on his white horse. The old name of Sveti Juraj (Saint George)

was Sveti Juraj on or between waters - med Vodami (rivers). This name undoubtedly refers to the privileged raised position of the village and the church, with a view on the entire Medimurje and the Drava and the Mura plain. Certainly this legends contains also a pre-Christian belief since Saint George's white horse can be associated with the white horse of the ancient Croatian god of light, Svanimir or Sveid.

Ivana Horv

THE LEGEND OF SURKA



The legend of Surka

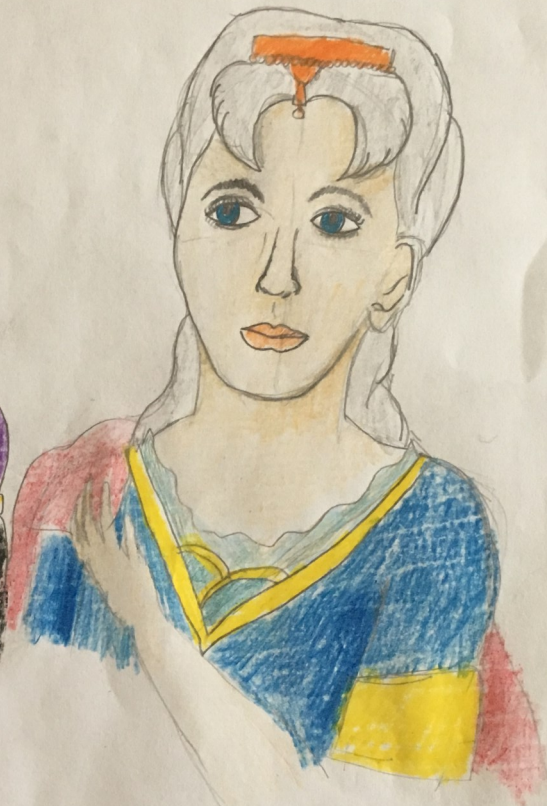
My father got up early that morning and, propped on the ladders, pushed hay from

the upper barn deck into the trough below in front of our two mares. Then he pulled the carriage out of the barn and loaded it with two heavy barrels. Namely, he had planned to go to Rotkovica, the place where our vineyard was and to rack off wine.

The times have changed since then and the rain and the snow have erased any trace Surka might have left on the way to Rotkovica. If our poor father could rise from his cold grave, he himself would not recognize our vineyard at Rotkovica. The graceful stakes our father used to chisel out of black locust every year and that were then carrying the burden of fertile grapes fell down rotten into dust a long time ago. Grass, shrubbery and berries have overtaken our vineyard amidst which our wooden cottage has fallen asleep as well, the cottage our father once was extremely proud of. Three oak pillars out of four have as well fallen to the ground; the fourth one—the last one—has also been bent towards the Mura river and Međimurje, waiting vainly for Surka's collar and father's old hat to be hung on it.

Kaja Horvatić

THE LEGEND OF ANNA AND KING CHARLES III.

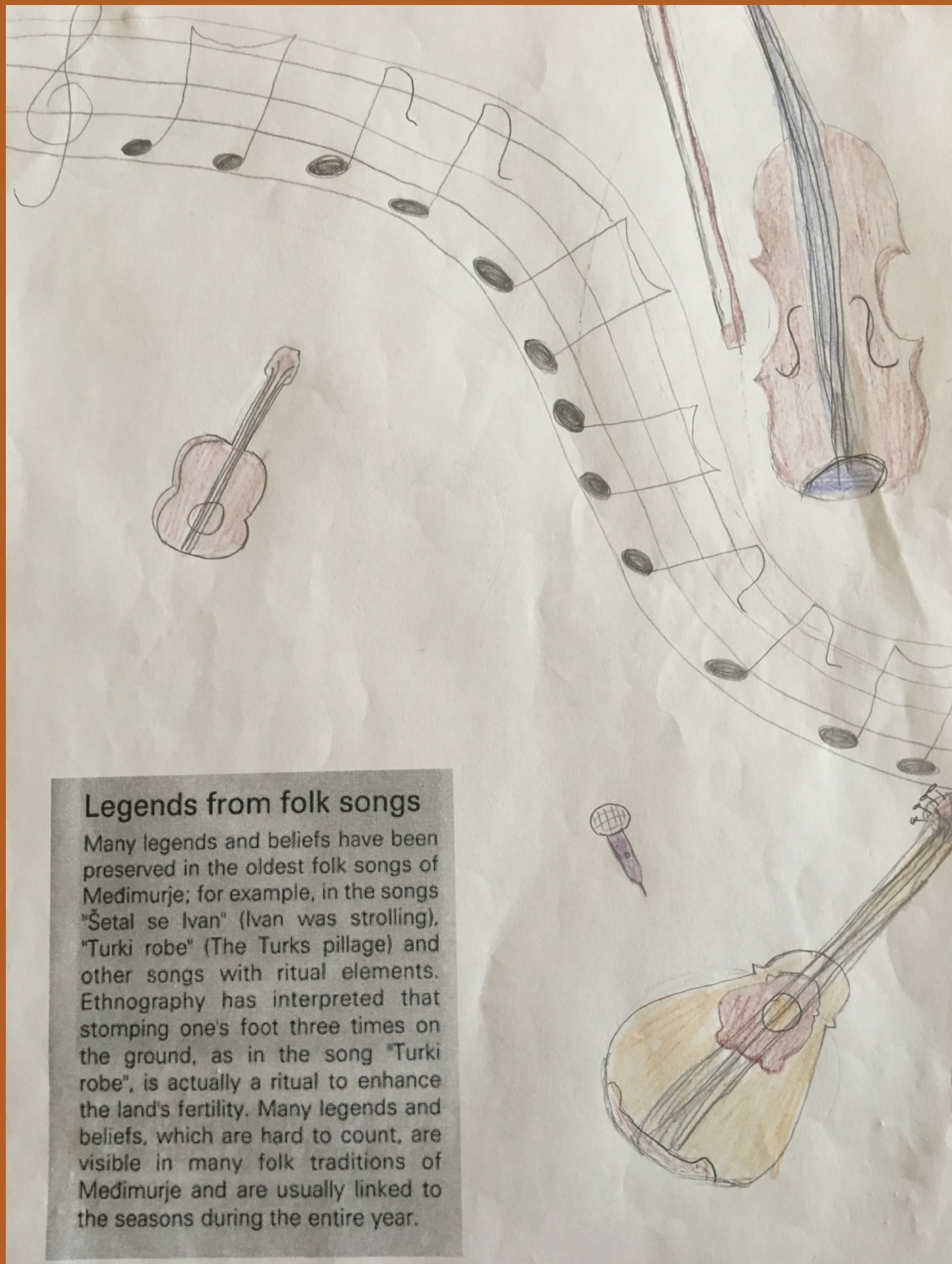


The love of marchioness Anna and king Charles III

During the wars for the Spanish crown, the young king Charles III, who was also the Spanish king, met the marchioness Anna Pignatelli, a beautiful woman known for her wittiness and love was born between them. But Anna got pregnant, which could have caused a great scandal. In order to save the king, the Czech count Ivan Mihalj Althan from the closer king's escort, married the marchioness. This was the reason why king Charles III in May 1719 signed a donation deed giving the entire Medimurje to count Ivan Althan, who had saved him twice already, the first time during the battles for the Spanish crown and the second time from a possible scandal.

In 1711 king Charles III moved to Vienna. In the meantime (namely, in 1708) he had married queen Elizabeth, with whom he had a son, Leopold. But Anna remained his mistress and it is said that king came to Čakovec very often. He had three sons with her, who lived in Čakovec as counts

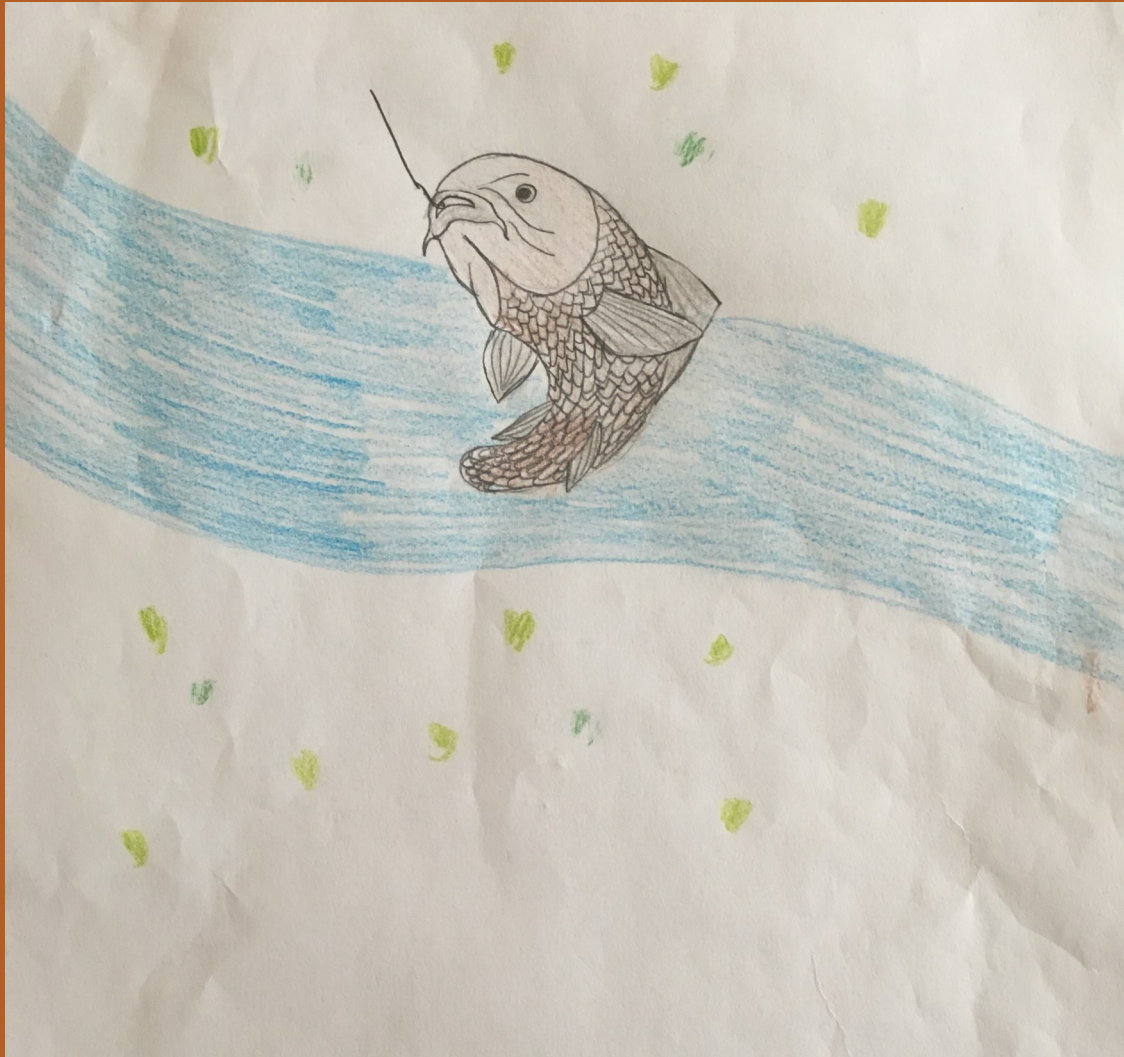
LEGENDS FROM FOLK SONGS



Legends from folk songs

Many legends and beliefs have been preserved in the oldest folk songs of Međimurje; for example, in the songs "Šetal se Ivan" (Ivan was strolling), "Turki robe" (The Turks pillage) and other songs with ritual elements. Ethnography has interpreted that stomping one's foot three times on the ground, as in the song "Turki robe", is actually a ritual to enhance the land's fertility. Many legends and beliefs, which are hard to count, are visible in many folk traditions of Međimurje and are usually linked to the seasons during the entire year.

THE LEGEND OF TAILLESS CARP

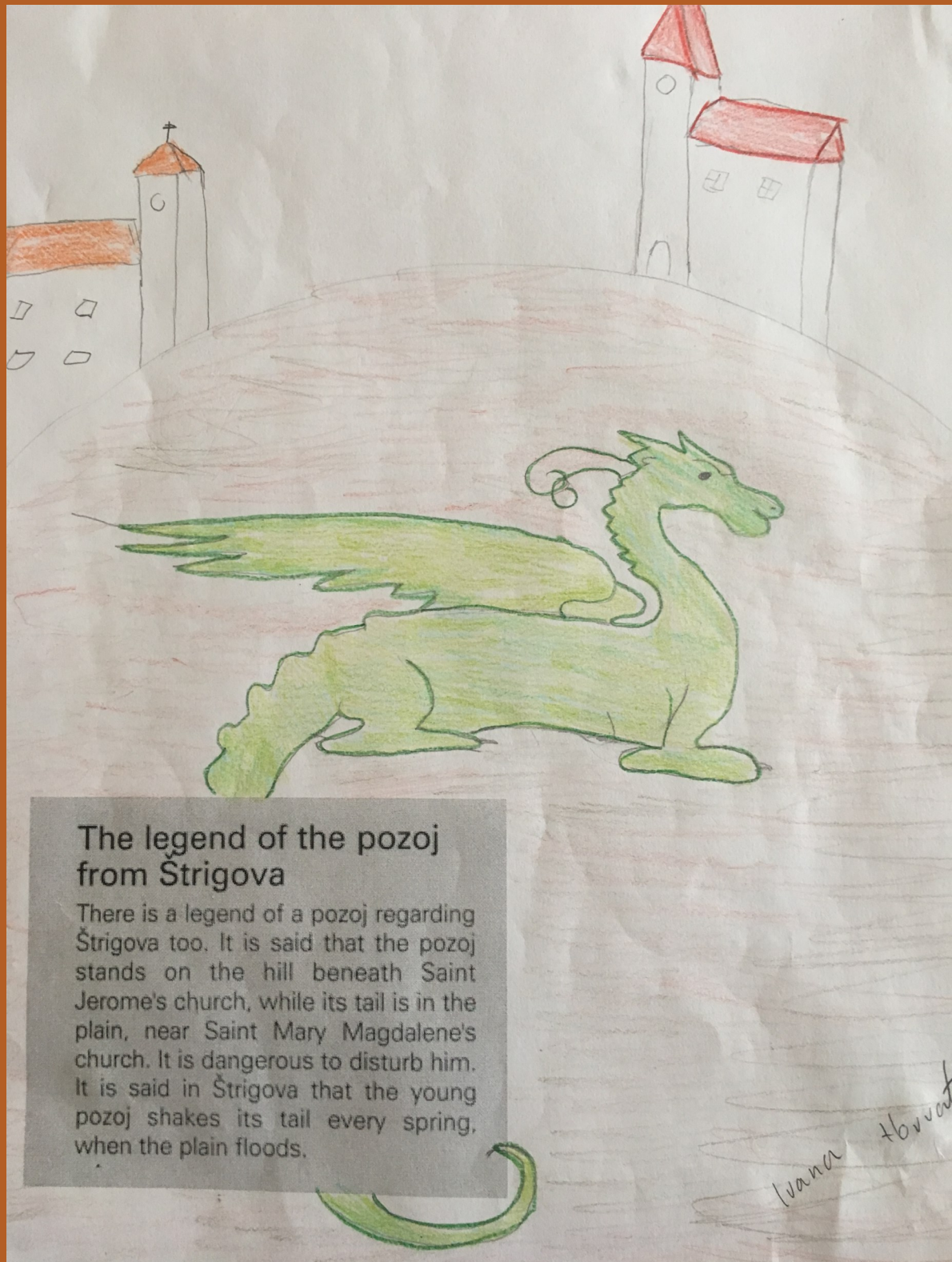


Legend of the tailless carp, the pozoj of the god Perun

The waters of the Mura, the Drava and the Trnava are associated with a series of legends regarding strange creatures and water sprites. These beliefs are still known in Oporovec and a part of Prelog, as well as in villages near the Mura. For example, it is said that fishermen must not go fishing at noon

because they could catch the tailless carp, that is a small dragon. In fact, it was believed that the ancient Croatian god Perun rode the šarkanj (deriving from the word "šaran" - carp), a dragon that came to be out of the tailless carp. Similar beliefs exist today on the Far East, which might indicate a common history.

THE LEGEND OF THE POZOJ FROM ŠTRIGOVA



The legend of the pozoj from Štrigova

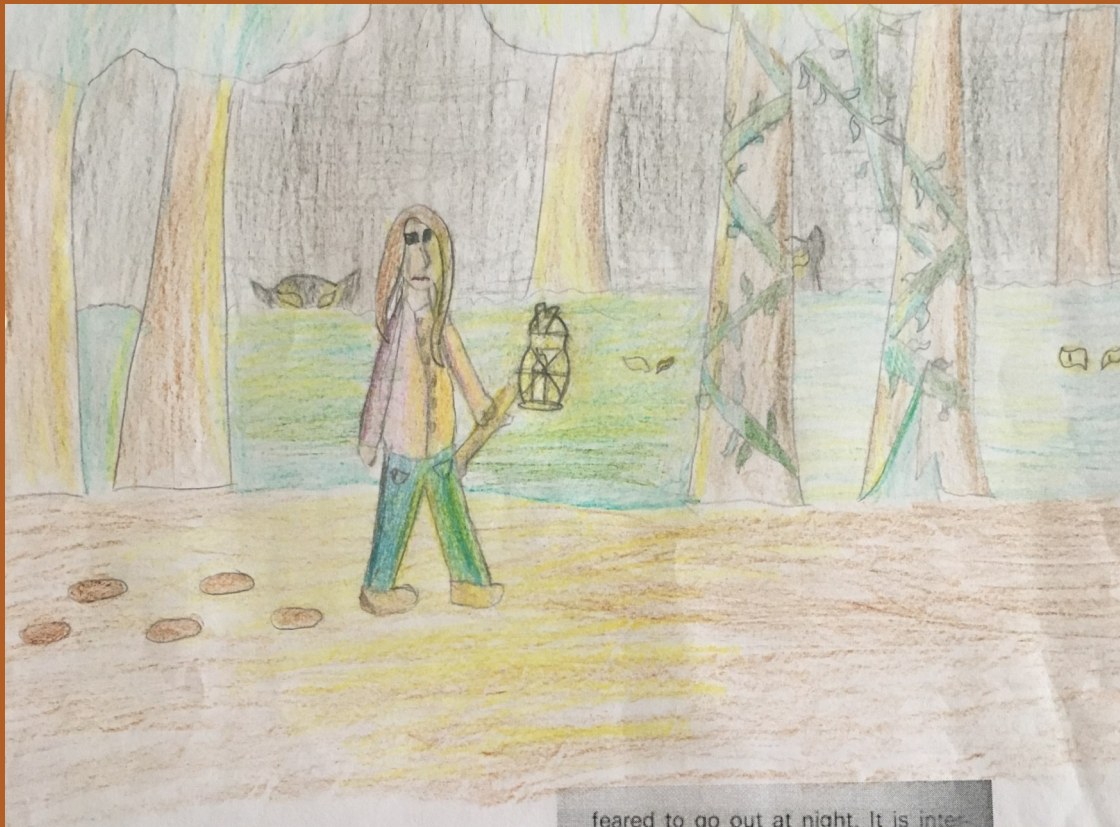
There is a legend of a pozoj regarding Štrigova too. It is said that the pozoj stands on the hill beneath Saint Jerome's church, while its tail is in the plain, near Saint Mary Magdalene's church. It is dangerous to disturb him. It is said in Štrigova that the young pozoj shakes its tail every spring, when the plain floods.

Ivana Horvat

THE LEGEND OF THE GREEN POZOJ FROM ČAKOVEC



LEGEND OF THE PESJANEKS



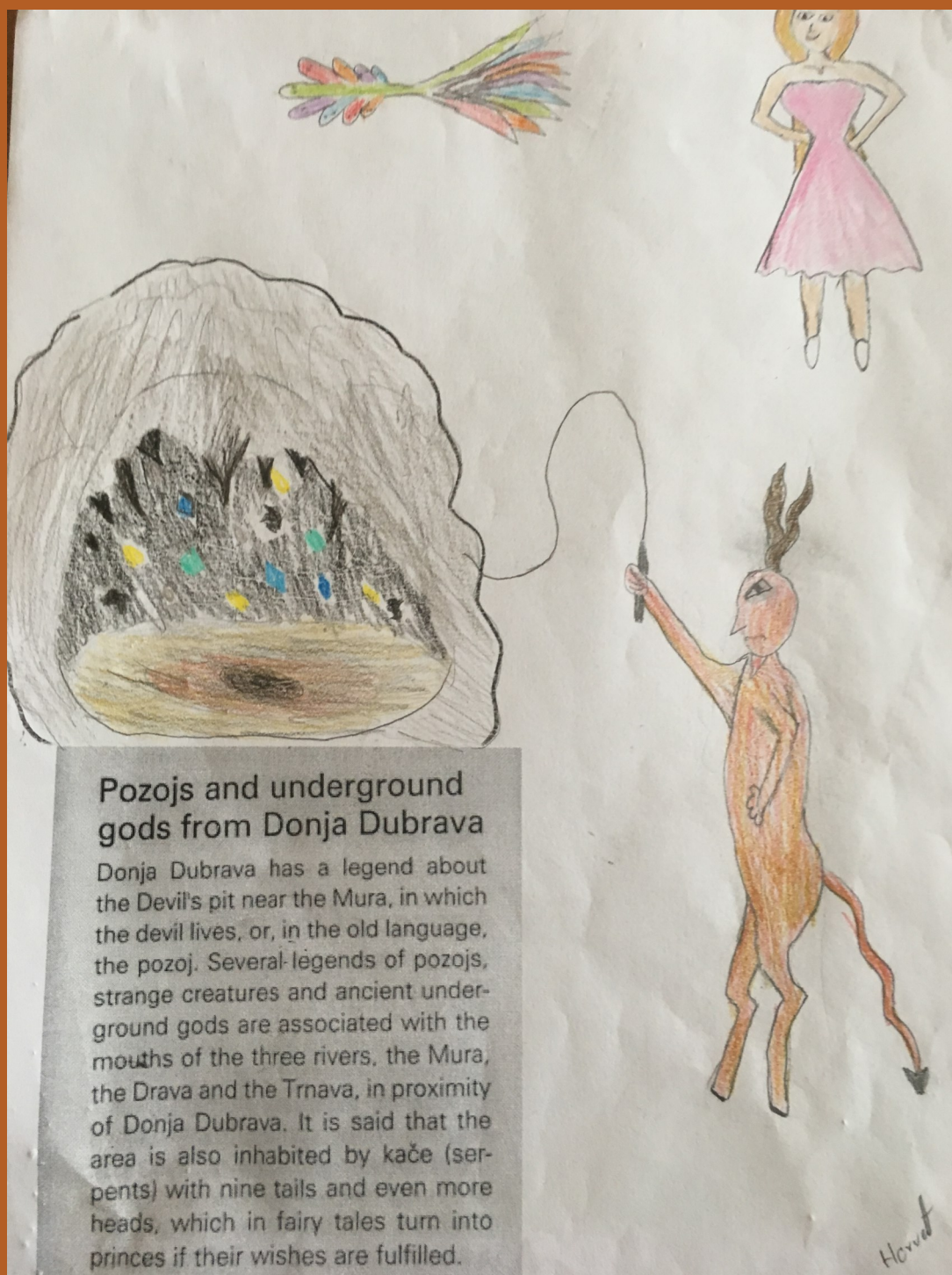
feared to go out at night. It is interesting that this fear, especially in Donji Mihaljevac, was based on real events, since sometimes during summer underground peat fires occurred which could burn for days and months. It was said that the pozoj was breathing fire because he was angry.

Legend of the pesjaneks

A similar legend regarding the pozoj is present also in Sveta Marija and Donji Mihaljevec. Those who walk at night on the paths through meadows and woods are followed by "spirits" (pesjaneks, deriving from the dialect word "pes" - dog), that is the small flames of dead souls who could hurt them. Therefore for centuries people

A similar legend of pesjaneks comes also from Donji Mihaljevec, according to which it was forbidden to drive a cart at night. Oxen and cows could not trail the cart because the pesjaneks, the evil dead spirits, would not let them. In another variant of the legend, the pesjaneks are what remains of a memory on the attack of the Mongols in 1241 on Medimurje over the frozen Mura and Drava, who destroyed everything that came on their way. People called them "dogheads" (psoglavci) and feared them mostly.

POZOJS AND UNDERGROUND GODS FROM DONJA DUBRAVA



Pozojs and underground gods from Donja Dubrava

Donja Dubrava has a legend about the Devil's pit near the Mura, in which the devil lives, or, in the old language, the pozoj. Several legends of pozojs, strange creatures and ancient underground gods are associated with the mouths of the three rivers, the Mura, the Drava and the Trnava, in proximity of Donja Dubrava. It is said that the area is also inhabited by kače (serpents) with nine tails and even more heads, which in fairy tales turn into princes if their wishes are fulfilled.