

## *The Magical Crowd*: field work as the inspiration for an exhibition

- The paper reviews the development of the exhibition about beliefs in supernatural beings in Podravina. The exhibition, entitled *The Magical Crowd*, was held between late 2015 and the first half of 2016. The museological and artistic concept are described in greater detail below. The subjects discussed include communication between the exhibition and attendant programmes and the museum public, and the preparations for the exhibition including field research.

Key words: beliefs, Podravina, fieldwork, museum exhibitions

### INTRODUCTION

The impulse for this paper came from the editorial board of the *Ethnological Research* journal, who have endeavoured, over the past few years, to promote in this way the recording of the exhibition and research activities of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb. Because of this the paper focuses on the presentation of the exhibition in terms of its museological concept, exhibition display, attendant programmes and field research.

The *Magical Crowd* exhibition was staged in the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb between 15 December 2015 and 31 May 2016. In order to provide for accuracy and clarity of the subject matter, the title of the Exhibition included a subtitle, *Beliefs in Supernatural Beings in Podravina*. The exhibition presented the topic from the ethnological and cultural-anthropological aspect. It was displayed in the hall for occasional exhibitions at the Museum ground floor. Just like research, it was realized with the support of the City Office for Education,

Culture and Sports. Although modest, the funding enabled the research and the actual display. A catalogue was also published, and the printing cost was covered by the AKD Ltd.

In terms of display typology, this was a thematic exhibition. Photographs, works of art and only a smaller number of objects from the Museum holdings were used in the presentation of the theme. Iva Lulić's forty photographs, Zdravko Tišljar four wickerwork *Virjan* sculptures, Zdenko Bašić's sculptural representations of gnawers (*glođani*) and the devil (*vrag/krampus*), his *Witch (Coprnica)* animation, and the installations *Witches' Tree (Coprničko drvo)* and *Interlace (Plet)* by the art tandem Petra Orbančić and Marija Plečko, and Maja Jurjević's *Fairy Hair (Vilin-kosa)* were accompanied by descriptive legends and served to represent supernatural beings which individually constituted the basic elements of the exhibition.

Designer Nikolina Jelavić-Mitrović blended all this into the exhibition display, visual identity and the design of the exhibition catalogue. The exhibition was focused on evoking the forest environment, highlighted by Ivo Vičić's design and tonal background. The author of the exhibition was ethnologist Danijela Križanec Beganović, and her assistant was ethnologist Mareta Kurtin.

The belief theme, including beliefs in supernatural beings, has been one of the themes covered in the Ethnographic Museum through work on the Collection of Objects Related to Customs and Beliefs. The issue of how to materialize this theme, i.e., intangible heritage, and present it by an exhibition within a set space and with a minimum of financial resources was dealt with at the very onset because of the clear idea to present the theme through photographs and works of other contemporary artists.

The Podravina region was selected in order to geographically locate and limit the theme-focused research.

## MUSEOLOGICAL CONCEPT

After the selection of the theme, and during the two-year preparations for the exhibition, major emphasis was placed on field work. Field visits were preceded by preparatory activities and the identification of references dealing with the theme, and other available data sources considering the geographical position of the researched region.

The work required to collect the references showed that the theme was poorly researched in the area under consideration. Nevertheless, some shorter records and published papers, and the material from the questionnaires of the *Ethnological*

*Atlas of Yugoslavia* enabled the positioning of the researched supernatural beings in the specific area, and the supplementing of available sources with newly-acquired information. The result is the text *Magical Crowd* which served as the basis for the development of the museological concept of the exhibition. It includes the introduction, the first unit covering four supernatural beings very present in the acquired material and in references, and the second unit presenting fourteen less known supernatural beings.

The first unit is devoted to four beings which are best recognized by modern interlocutors but also most represented in older references. These are *coprnice* (witches), *vile* (fairies), *more* (night hags) and *sudenice* (fates). Accordingly, the unit is divided into four parts, two longer ones covering the *coprnice* and *vile* theme, and two shorter ones the *more* and *sudenice*. The *coprnica* theme comprises several sub-units explaining who is a *coprnica*, how can she be recognized, how one becomes a *coprnica*, how she can harm, how to protect oneself from her, who is a *protuvještica* (counterwitch) and *vrač* (sorcerer), and who are the *demonske vještice* (demon witches). The *vile* (fairy) theme is also split into sub-units discussing the following aspects: who are they, how they look, where they originate, what they do, their ambivalent nature, *vile* (fairies) and *vještice* (witches) as antipodes, who is a *vilovnjak*.

The second unit of the exhibition consists of fourteen smaller parts presenting *vede* (demons), *posvečkari* (small flames floating above the open field), *divlje dekle* (wild girls), *mrak/i* (demon/s), *bela žena* (lady in white), *mali* (the little one), *dravski ftopenik* (the drowned man from the Drava), *pesoglavac* (the dog-headed man), and *zmaj* (the dragon). During field research fewer information were collected about these categories, and other sources were not too abundant either.

## EXHIBITION DISPLAY

The exhibition display was based on individual beings represented to the visitors through descriptive texts (legends), sketches from the stories of the interlocutors recorded during research, forty-odd original photographs and three-dimensional works of artists, and objects from the Museum holdings. Most of the Museum exhibits were included in the display primarily because of their artistic features.

In terms of structure, i.e., physical organization of the exhibited material, the individual beings were arranged on the basis of their relationship, and they were therefore displayed on the basis of common characteristic elements. In the entrance hallway an introductory text presented the theme of the exhibition illustrated through two works of art, *Interlace* and *Fairy Hair*; the first hall

presented, along with photographs, beings such as *coprnice* (witches) and fairies, *more* (night hags) and *suđenice* (fates); the large *Coprničko drvo* (Witches' Tree) and wicker maize cribs called *Virjani*<sup>1</sup> floating in the air dominated the scene.

The second part of the exhibition hall was devoted to less known supernatural beings presented in a sequence in terms of their common characteristics or elements. *Vede* (demons), *posvečkari* (small flames floating above the open field), *divlje dekle* (wild girls), *mraki* (demons), *bele žene* (ladies in white), *duhovi* (spirits), *mali lovci* (little hunters), *vukodlak* (werewolf), *vampir* (vampire), *dravski ftoplenik* (the drowned man from the Drava), *pesoglavec* (the dog-headed man), and *zmaj* (the dragon) were presented by photographs and some Museum exhibits, carnival masks and a dragon relief, while *glođan* (gnawer) and *vrag* (devil) were represented as three-dimensional figures.

The textual legends accompanying them exhibits described the beings and were additionally and picturesquely supplemented with narratives of interlocutors selected in the research process.

In terms of atmosphere, the exhibition was supposed to evoke the forest environment, the abode of quite a few of these beings, and the audio background contributed to the effect. The author of the audio record devised for the purpose compiled his own field records of natural sounds and the sounds of wild animals. The audio background was supplemented with the characteristic rhythmic sound dominating in Petar Krelja's film *Coprnice* produced in 1971, projected during the exhibition. This documentary film collected the accounts of people from Zagorje and Podravina regarding witches and their beliefs in the magic powers of these beings. It avoided sociological and anthropological analyses and drew attention, through a dynamic and witty whole, to the strength of beliefs in the power of magic in northern Croatia. This is why it focused on short peasants' accounts about witches and short presentations of picturesque rites against witchcraft. Women proclaimed *coprnice* by their fellow villagers also spoke in the film. Scenes are connected by shots showing finger-pointing at homes in which they allegedly live. The short scenes and shots enhanced the dramatic aspect of the stories and rites, but also suggested the author's ironic detachment.<sup>2</sup>

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1 *Virjan filipar, Virjan frljačić, Virjan basač, Virjan by the barn* from 1970.

2 [http://arhinet.arhiv.hr/details.aspx? ItemId=1\\_133635](http://arhinet.arhiv.hr/details.aspx? ItemId=1_133635) (29 September 2016)

## COMMUNICATION OF THE EXHIBITION WITH THE PUBLIC AND ATTENDANT PROGRAMMES

Even when devising the display of an exhibition and its attendant events one cannot avoid the omnipresent commercialization; thus, although we do not speak about exhibitions as products, we treat them that way. In the process major emphasis is placed on the kind of media promotion. Because of modern trends in communication with the public, institutions are faced with new challenges, especially if we take into account the growing number of cultural events, in which Zagreb leads the list. The observed trend regarding the adjustment of the way of promotion of cultural events to make them as attractive as possible to the broadest number of visitors occasionally leads to a mismatch between the actual substance of the cultural event and what has actually been promoted. The title of the exhibition was selected in line with such trends in attracting users which have also caused a shift in the naming of the offered events.

The way of presenting a theme from the sphere of spiritual culture by a museum exhibition is an interesting question if one takes into account the fact that the display of an exhibition is unavoidably *tangible*. Since tangible and intangible culture cannot be separated, the very presentation of many other themes from the sphere of ethnology and cultural anthropology can be a demanding task. Even if there exist various objects which can be used to represent beliefs and the associated practices such as, for instance, protection means, tools and other everyday objects used during magic actions and protective procedures, illustrations, etc., on this occasion the theme was presented through an original and artistic reinterpretation of traditional beliefs in supernatural beings. Such a stylistically uniform way in the presentation of a theme disclosed certain constraints in the display of specific subject matter, and deeper contexts and meanings.

Observing the way in which the exhibition communicated with the public one could note two parallel presentations of supernatural beings – one was the experience of the authors of the works of art mainly based on personal experience, and the other based on ethnographic research. Esthetics and the individual experience of specific beings reflected the attitude of the author-artist, and in cases involving specific beings there was a lack of correspondence with the research of the ethnologists. On the other hand, the expression and the work of artists who did not represent supernatural beings but covered with their works a broader context of a specific thematic whole within the exhibition proved to be much more neutral.

A number of varied attendant programmes intended for the museum public were organized during the exhibition. Along with many workshops, a number of professional lectures were related to the theme of supernatural beings. Among the attendant programmes, the presentation of Luka Šešo's book *Živjeti s natprirodnim bićima (Living with Supernatural Beings)* attracted quite a few visitors, and so did the guest performances of plays *Baba Yaga* and *Preko trna, preko grma (Over the Thorn, Over the Bush)*, the subject of which fit the exhibition theme. In the carnival period younger visitors could enjoy the *Fairy Ball* for children and parents, while older ones could attend the *Carnival of the Magical Crowd*.<sup>3</sup>

Due mention should also be made of the drama-visual happening *Vijale se ČaroVile (The Magic Fairyflight)*, conceived and performed after the visit of the exhibition by the pupils of the sixth and eighth classes of the Stenjevec Primary School under the leadership of Nikolina Stanišić, professor of Croatian. The characters were visually designed under the guidance of Vladimira Bošnjak, art class mentor. The works of the pupils produced in the attendant art workshop were used for the pupils' works exhibition staged within the *Magical Crowd* exhibition in May 2016.

## EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

The eighty-page Catalogue comprised texts in Croatian and it was published by the Ethnographic Museum in 500 copies. Unfortunately, because of insufficient funding it was not bilingual and did not include summaries in any of the world languages.

The author's text *The Magical Crowd – Beliefs in Supernatural Beings in Podravina*, published in the Catalogue, describes specific supernatural beings and the results of the research carried out in 2014 and 2015. The field part of the research was focused on acquiring material and insights into the form and the measure in which these beliefs are currently known in Podravina. The material collected on the occasion was supplemented with material from other available sources of information. An additional extensive source of information were the questionnaires of the *Ethnological Atlas of Yugoslavia* from the nineteen-sixties, kept at the Faculty of the Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb. The work of other ethnologists dealing with the topic was also important for this work, especially Zoran Čiča and his *Vilenica i Vilenjak (2002)*, and Luka

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3 More information on attendant programmes at the exhibition can be found in the text *Storytelling and other educational programmes during the exhibition The Magical Crowd – Beliefs in Supernatural Beings in Podravina* by Željka Jelavić and Anastazija Cvitković published in this issue of *Ethnological Research*.

Šešo, who completed his efforts focused on this theme with his book *Živjeti s nadnaravnim bićem (Living with a Supernatural Being, 2016)*. Mirjam Mencej also published quite a few books and monographs on the subject: one of them, *Coprnice so me nosile (Witches Led Me Astray, 2006)* was especially significant for our venture. Such an approach to the theme under consideration produced a data base for drawing descriptions and interpretations of the selected beliefs in supernatural beings.

Another text was also published along with this text, Luka Šešo's *U potrazi za mitskim svjetovima u suvremenom društvu*. In it Šešo considers the reasons underlying the great popularity of mythical/supernatural beings in modern society.

The catalogue was illustrated with Iva Lulić's photographs; it also included the list of exhibits, the list of references, and the biographies of the artists participating in the exhibition. The author of the exhibition was the author of the catalogue.

### **THE FIELD OF RESEARCH, INTERLOCUTORS AND THE RESEARCHER'S POSITION**

Proceeding from the general perception of our time and environment one can easily grasp the attractiveness of themes related to supernatural beings and their enhanced presence in modern society. Over recent decades this topic and the related motifs have gained particular momentum in the sphere of fantasy in literature and films through many specialized fairs and festivals, new e-games, design of children' toys.

The position of the research ethnologist proceeded from the fact that each region has its own beliefs and stories related to supernatural beings. When geographically and culturally related region are involved, they often correlate in a smaller or greater number of similar elements. Even the initial interview with theinterlocutors showed that traditions and stories about supernatural beings are still present in Podravina. It soon became obvious that almost all theinterlocutors were familiar with specific beings and that stories and beliefs related to them were more numerous. These were primarily stories about witches, *coprnice*, known to every interlocutor at least in general terms. There follow, as a singular antipode, fairies; night hags, *more*, are also more recognizable. At the other end, only a smaller number ofinterlocutors were familiar with many supernatural beings, such as *vede*, demons, and *palček* [thumb-boy].

The interviews were conducted with interlocutors from Virje, Novo Virje, Lozan, Podravske Sesvete, Molve, Stari Gradac, Koprivnica and Đurđevac. They were conducted as semi-structured open interviews based on the modified *Questionnaire IV* (Chapter 141: *mora, vampir, vukodlak and some other beings*; 142: *vještice, vile, suđenice*; 143: *some other supernatural beings and phenomena*). During the interview individual interlocutors were asked what they thought about supernatural beings and stories about them.

Research covered interviews with more than thirty interlocutors; some of them were interviewed several times. Each of them was given an explanation of what is being researched, for what purpose and how the acquired data will be used. They were also asked for permission regarding the audio-recording of their narratives, told how the recordings would be used, and advised that they could refuse the recording of certain parts of their interview. Interviews that were not recorded and were most frequently related to the personal experience of the interlocutor were not used as material.

The analysis of the age structure of the interviewed interlocutors showed that they were mainly older and middle-aged persons. Only one interlocutor was younger, and during this research children were not interviewed. Female and male interlocutors were represented equally with a slight prevalence of the former. In most cases they had lived in the same place in which they lived at the time of the interview; in terms of formal education, they were mainly persons with a primary or secondary school background. Because of technical reasons related to the protection of personal data, and in accordance with the *Ethical Code of the Croatian Ethnological Society*,<sup>4</sup> the interlocutors were not mentioned by name and surname, or initials; instead, the field recordings were marked with the name of the place in which they lived and the year in which the interview was conducted.<sup>5</sup> Persons mentioned by name in the interlocutor's narrative were put down with the name initial, although in most cases these were local, long-forgotten nicknames.

Notably, some interlocutors had already been interviewed by researchers, and some were even well-versed interlocutors. This was especially obvious during an interview with two interlocutors to whom every researcher in one or another stage of field work in Podravina has been referred. Not infrequently such interlocutors had ready stories and formed narratives for specific themes, narrated in an almost identical form on each occasion. The two above mentioned interlocutors were also highly motivated and cooperative, as confirmed by quite a few interviewers who talked to them over time. Unlike these two, most of

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4 <http://www.hrvatsketnolosksodrustvo.hr/o-nam/eticki-kodeks-hed-a> (4 Nov. 2016).

5 Details on field research and interlocutors are available in the private file of the author of this text.

the interviewees had no previous experience of talking to researchers; some of them showed lack of interest in the theme under consideration, or clearly stated that they did not want to speak about it. Obviously, in such cases the quantity of acquired data was low.

In the consideration of the attitude of the interlocutors toward the researched theme, the situation turned out to be quite complex and revealed a range of different responses to the theme and views about beliefs. The issue was studied by Luka Šešo, who described the causal links between the interlocutor and his/her socio-political environment; he developed a five-class classification of interlocutors and their statements about beliefs in supernatural creatures.<sup>6</sup> I do not wish to enter so deeply into the classification of interlocutors, and yet want to use the results of his efforts, and I shall therefore reduce my division of interlocutors as follows: persons who do not know the supernatural beings from traditional beliefs; interlocutors who have heard about supernatural beings but do not know stories about them, and interlocutors who know such stories; the last group can be divided into persons who know the stories but do not believe in them, and those who believe certain phenomena or think “that there must be something about it”.

Whether we take into account data related to supernatural beings and phenomena “having something about them” as believed by interlocutors, or narratives in which interlocutors speak about supernatural beings as about something that exists or is believed that it exists, or cases in which narrators mention events which they really experienced and witnessed, or stories of people personally known to the interlocutors – we can observe well-developed ‘credibility formulas’. They are very frequent in demonological traditions because of the great distance between what they talk about – the supernatural – and the situation from which they do it – the this-worldly – and that distinguishes them from the statements of interlocutors regarding traditions of other kinds and other themes (Rudan 2006: 89).

This theme was developed by Evelina Rudan in her paper published in 2006. She dealt with the way in which interlocutors of both sexes developed their credibility formulas taking over the function of persuading the listener.

The formulas are divided into “temporal ones (parts of texts referring to the exact time of the event in the story); physical/local ones (parts of texts referring to known localities); testimonial ones (parts of texts in which a/ tradition,

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6 Distribution of interlocutors; 1. did not know supernatural beings mentioned in traditional beliefs – inhabitants of urban and tourist centres; 2. potential interlocutors with restrained cinicism; 3. statements with strong self-censorship and rationalization derived from ethno-political problems; 4. ‘traditionalist’ group; 5. statements about own belief in supernatural beings as a reflection of the immobility and traditional occupation of the interlocutor (Šešo 2010).

b/ one or several persons and c/ written or electronic sources are referred as evidence); narrative/storytelling ones (parts of texts in which the narrators directly legitimize their stance to the story being told)” (Rudan 2006: 89).

Here is an example including the temporal, physical and testimonial formula from my own field files:

“[And *bela žena*?] – She appeared for the last time before the Homeland War in Ždala, in the Ždala graveyard. It was in 1989 or thereabouts, and she heralded the war. But everybody saw her in *Gornja Šuma* [Upper Forest]. I also remember that as child... You see... It’s not probable that there was nothing of the kind in Gola.”<sup>7</sup>

The very way in which the narrator related to the described event is observed in the following example showing that the main purpose of the story was to entertain the listeners and make them laugh:

“And the old man was quite good at telling those stories. But he would not unless he’d had a few drinks down his throat. So he told us: ‘We played, there on count’s estate, the count’s son was getting married. They had an ox on the spit, roast pork, cakes with nuts, poppyseed cake, soft cream cakes...’ – ‘Oh, how I wished I had some!’ – ‘So he told them stories instead of dinner.’ – ‘Then they took out a huge barrel, and we drank all that, and I took a nap in the empty cask. As I laid down, something tugged my ear. My pals liked practical jokes, so I thought... But no... It as a wolf that pulled my ear. He couldn’t get in so he pulled. And then I caught his tail... And he ran head over heels! Straight toward the woods and impaled himself on a post by my mulberry-tree... The cask broke up – and I was home!’ - That did not really happen, that’s fable.”<sup>8</sup>

Personal interviews with the interlocutors left the impression that beliefs in supernatural beings are now treated in a relaxed way, although the way in which the interlocutor related to the research topic was in itself ambivalent, and the narrators often stressed in their statements that those were only stories, and rarely guaranteed the truthfulness of the story. The three examples below illustrate how differently the interlocutors related to the subject:

“[And what did such a *coprnica* do?] – She said something, cast spells. My neighbour told me: ‘You’re a clever man, but that other neighbour milks my cows across the rope! The witches cast the spell!’ – ‘Your cows have no milk because you feed them poorly and not because of the witches!’”<sup>9</sup>

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7 Molve, 2015.

8 Gola, 2015.

9 Podravske Sesvete, 2015.

“[Have you heard about the *lady in white*?] – My man saw that once. He was going home... – ‘I saw the lady in white!’ – Well, whether that was the lady in white... At harvest time maize was stolen from the crib, hay carted away... There was a lot of stealing. Now, whether somebody dressed like that to scare people away, or there was something else, nobody knows.”<sup>10</sup>

“[Did witches really ever exist?] – I guess they really did. They must have... Because the parish priest said they could harm and never did anything good. So, I guess, they must have been!”<sup>11</sup>

The advantage of being personally present in the field is to be found in the possibility to judge the response of the interlocutor to the question(s), and that as a rule is not visible from the transcript of the interview. This enables a better understanding of the interlocutor’s attitude, occasionally visible in the expression of his/her face or laughter after hearing the question.

According to Maja Bošković-Stulli, in nonverbal communication, i.e., extralingual elements as integral parts of an account, the narrator uses mimic and gestures in addition to speech or in order to express himself/herself more briefly and more expressively. On one occasion, she reports, Vljako Palavestra recorded on tape a narrator telling a story about “idiots hunting grasshoppers”. When he later transcribed the recording, he was disappointed when he discovered that the central part of the story was not recorded at all. “And the remembered: the entire part of the narration between the moment when the grasshopper jumped on the peasant’s chest and the shot unfolded without words, as a dumb show, with gestures and mimic...” (Bošković-Stulli 1975: 153-154).

On the other hand, presence in the field also enables a personal appraisal when the theme has to be expanded with additional questions in order to gain information important for the understanding of the narrated story. An example are stories about the man who walked so fast that he miraculously covered great distances (actually they suspected that he flew), possessed special knowledge about forecasting the weather and treatment with folk medicine methods, and stories about events at his funeral. When such a person was discussed, the serious focus of the interlocutor was obvious right away. Such a relationship of the interlocutor encouraged me to put questions about this person to other interlocutors from the same and other places. As it turned out, that was an extraordinarily interesting case, known locally and remembered until the present day. In other words, I believe that personal contact in most cases

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10 Gornja Šuma, 2015.

11 Gornja Šuma, 2015.

helps in estimating whether true beliefs in supernatural beings are concerned or whether such cases only involve transmission of local stories and tradition which the interlocutor does not believe.

Finally, let us briefly consider the function of the story about supernatural beings, i.e., what the interlocutors think and say about them. The great range of replies illustrates the scope of understanding and interpreting of the issue, as shown by the following examples:

“[How do you explain all these stories?] – I think that this concerns individual people ... who can't interpret some things. Even I cannot say that it was like this or like that. I can say what I saw. And whether it was supernatural or something really... I have no idea”.<sup>12</sup>

“[What do you think about all that?] – I believe some things! I have been brought up in a strong Christian spirit and I abide by it ... but some things can happen and can be caused by people”.<sup>13</sup>

“We stood [with eyes wide open] when they told us those stories. And then everybody added something to scare us, of course. That was adrenalin, and you were scared to go outside. But there was also something positive about it. We never feared that completely.”<sup>14</sup>

These examples show that people tried, by telling stories about supernatural beings, to explain certain phenomena and events they could not understand and which scared them; that way they give significance their stories – narratives. Analogously, some responses of our interlocutors show that telling stories was actually geared to detecting the culprit for the damage in the community, and providing at the same time an excuse for it. The third example exemplifies the educational function, the children's amusement function and the function of scaring the gullible. Stories were used to deter children from potentially dangerous situations and in order to have an educational effect on bad or unacceptable behaviour. In other words, stories about supernatural beings played the role of a singular social corrective focused on educating young people and correcting the objectionable conduct of adults.

In collecting the material and researching the beliefs in supernatural beings in Podravina we noted that some people talked about the topic with no reserves, while others were reluctant – as if the very interview forced them to have or express their attitude, and they were not ready for that. The reasons underlying self-censorship can also be of a different nature such as, for instance, lack of

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12 Podravske Sesvete, 2014.

13 Novigrad Podravski, 2015.

14 Molve, 2015.

interest in the subject at hand or the attitude that such things could not and should not be discussed. Some interlocutors resorted to rationalization and saw in such stories and topics something that used to amuse people or something used to scare people, which really had no support in real life.

In spite of differing attitudes, most interlocutors saw in some of these beings – such as *divlje dekle* (wild girls) or *duplieri* (small flames floating above the ground in open fields) something that belonged to local tradition and something they identified with, and therefore considered the disappearance of stories and beliefs in supernatural beings a negative phenomenon.

The reason underlying the disappearance and forgetting of such traditions is to be found, according to some interlocutors, in the different way of life, in the separation of multigenerational families, in the influence of education, of the social system or of the church, etc.

In conclusion, it needs to be noted that field research proved to be of crucial importance for the museological concept of the exhibition. It showed that the quantity of acquired material related to specific beings enabled placing special emphasis on them through the presentation of their individual aspects. At the other end, other beings with few acquired data were presented in a more modest scope – only through the basic description of their appearance and action.

## CONCLUSION

The work on devising and production of a thematic exhibition is a long-term process. The specific stages of work on the *Magical Crowd* exhibition involved the efforts of quite a few participants.

The theme of the exhibition were beliefs in supernatural beings in Podravina. The transmission of messages, i.e., the communication of the exhibition with the public, was effected through works of art, i.e., original artistic reinterpretations of traditional beliefs in such beings, and through descriptive legends and collocator accounts based on research. The Catalogue of the exhibition included a text about the research results and a text discussing the reasons of the great popularity of mythical/supernatural beings in modern society, with photographic illustrations presented at the exhibition.

The basic idea underlying the display of the exhibition and its museological concept was the presentation of specific supernatural beings and, in the case of the *coprnice* and *vile*, the presentation of specific aspects of these beings.

Owing to modern trends in communication with the public institutions are faced with new challenges both in promotional activities and in the devising of attendant programmes following the exhibition throughout its duration.

The final part of the paper presented the implementation of the research, reviewed the structure of the interlocutors and their attitude regarding the topic, and personal experience gained during field work. The beliefs were recorded on the occasion as part of the community value system expressed in practice as part of the overall identity of the community (Grbić 2001: 459).

Let me conclude with a thought: although quite a few data were acquired during research, most probably not all of them were taken into consideration in the production of the text and of the exhibition – either deliberately in order to avoid expansion into a boundless ensemble, or by involuntary omission. Some data are easily overlooked with such a volume of material. On the other hand, I cannot resist the feeling that the space for my future studies has opened only now, after the end of research, after the text(s) have been written and the exhibition held. I have primarily in mind continued field research which would yield, through interviews with a greater number of interlocutors, more information on beings about which few or no data were acquired on this occasion, as well as work on expanding the body of references.

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