

THE THINGS WE INVESTIGATE: THE PREPARATION OF EXHIBITIONS ABOUT *KUMPANJA* SWORD DANCE ON THE ISLAND OF KORČULA AT KORČULA TOWN MUSEUM

"STOP RIGHT THERE, CAPTAIN!"

- This paper shall present recent research conducted for the purposes of a series of theme exhibitions at Korčula Town Museum on island dance *Kumpanija*, a protected intangible heritage of the Republic of Croatia, as well as tangible and intangible sources exhibitions are based on, and the changes observed in contemporary performance practices. The research was motivated by the 28th symposium of the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM) Study Group on Ethnochoreology held in July 2014 on the island of Korčula. This paper brings a short overview of native researchers, starting with the earliest published texts dating back to the end of the 19th century, "re-discovered" connections, first contacts and first visits by foreign researchers who came to Korčula in the first decades of the 20th century in order to see and experience these unique performances first hand. Despite the changes in performance practices, it seems that, by adapting to contemporary performance practices, *Kumpanija* from the island of Korčula found a new life, as testified by the growing number of performances each year.

Keywords: Korčula Town Museum
kumpanija, museum exhibition, Korčula

A series of exhibitions set up at Korčula Town Museum aimed at investigating, collecting, documenting and presenting *Kumpanija* dances of the island of Korčula, protected intangible cultural heritage of the Republic of Croatia, was motivated by the 28th symposium of the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM) Study Group

on Ethnochoreology held in July 2014 on the island of Korčula. The goal of the symposium was to present less known *Kumpanija* phenomenon to congress participants. Unlike *Moreška*,¹ a sword dance which is predominantly recognizable when it comes to sword dances on Korčula island, *Kumpanija* was never put on display at museums until now. The first exhibition of the series from 2014 was entitled *Kumpanija from Pupnat on the Island of Korčula*. Soon after the need arose to collect material in field, and to record and consolidate information about this unique manifestation on the island of Korčula in other museums and alike institutions, archives and institutes in Croatia, as well as abroad. Interviews with performers, those who are still active, and those who performed, *batili*, in *Kumpanija* in their youth, are indispensable. Namely, memories which are still alive in heritage bearers change as a result of adaptation of performance practices, which is in turn driven by adaptation to modern way of life in which tourism forcefully asserted itself as the dominant branch of economy.

Kumpanija, *kumpanija* (from Italian *compagnia*: company; party; group), and *Moštra* (from Italian *mostrare*: demonstrate, make visible) is a name used to describe a group with military features comprised of men from old rural communities on the island of Korčula, for example from Blato, Čara, Smokvica, Pupnat and Žrnovo, and since the second half of the 19th century from Vela Luka. This tradition was never present in Račišće and Lumbarda.

*In year one thousand nine
Hundred and twenty seven
A call is heard in a village
To restore the Kumpanija.*

*Old tradition ties the group
Kumpanija is its name
Twenty years have gone by
Without kumpanija alive.²*

Kumpanije gathered at carnival period, they played fictitious roles of local authorities (The King and the King's Army). The central event was *ples od boja*, a chain sword dance accompanied by a repetitive melody produced on dipele flute - *mišnjice*, and drums - *tamburl*. In the past the most expressive part of the dance was the ritual beheading of an ox with a single blow of a sword. Nowadays, as a consequence of abandoning the majority of performance practices, and the adjustment to contemporary way of life, *Kumpanija* and *Moštra* denote the chain sword dance only. The origins of the dance

1 In 2001 the 21st symposium of the International Council for Traditional Music Study Group on Ethnochoreology was held on the island of Korčula, and an exhibition about *Moreška* from Korčula was put on, which later served as a basis for a permanent display which can now be seen at Revelin Tower in Korčula.

2 The opening verses of a song by an unknown author in the article "Song for *Kumpanija* in Žrnovo in 1928" (Sardelić 2004: 187). This was the last time *kumpanija* gathered in the hamlet of Prvo Selo. *Kumpanija* is nowadays regularly performed in the hamlet of Postrana.

remain unknown, although it does bear resemblance to Central European sword or stick dances, and English Morris dances, which could be seen live at Sword Dance Festival in Korčula. The assumption is that the dance blended with the existing traditional structures in a *kumpanija*, such as choosing the king and a duke, a ritual procession around the village and decapitation of an ox. Performances outside of carnival period are also recorded, and these had connotations of a representation - they were performed when world and church leaders came for a visit, or to mark significant events, but this was very rare until mid 20th century. It is not until the second half of the 20th century that the performances are moved closer to summer, to make them more widely available to tourists, but they still remained tied to religious holidays and patron saints.³ Interestingly enough, Korčula performances retained a high number of dance figures in comparison with similar European chain sword dances. Contemporary associations and organizations - *kumpanije* - do not bear the significance they used to, or play the role they did in the past, but their extraordinary potential was recognized when it comes to cultural tourism, and they are therefore still cultivated, performances are held and adjusted to tourist and economic environment, but at the same time they still preserve the local identities of villages on the island of Korčula in a special way. Heritage, in all its shapes and forms, attracts attention from various groups of society, who are all aware of the inevitable loss of classes, and with it the context of phenomena connected to heritage, primarily as a result of globalisation. Croatia signed UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.⁴ In his article *An Ethnologist in the World of Heritage: Croatian Intangible Culture in the 21st Century* Tvrtko Zebec emphasises that cultural policies regarding intangible heritage influence everyday life more than cultural policies relating to tangible heritage and says that: "Putting emphasis on heritage often becomes a tool for validating or exercising political power on various levels" (Zebec 2013: 313). Global museum community, in the spirit of questioning the meaning of heritage in general, has been rethinking its own mission for the last two decades. In the report from the 20th general conference of ICOM (International Council of Museums) and the 21st general conference of ICOM in Seoul in 2004 entitled "Museums and Intangible Heritage," the author, Željka Kolveshi, writes that: "Instead of museums being depots for intangible heritage, the demands for more complex and problem oriented places which function as carriers of cultural values and new museum perspectives are brought forward" (Kolveshi 2004: 64). It is precisely the changes in the long duration of meaning, role, and performance practices in *Kumpanija* from Korčula that are the subject of interest at Korčula Town Museum.

3 In Postrana in Žrnovo performances are nowadays tied to the celebration of Saint Rocco on the 16th August, in Pupnat to the celebration of Our Lady of Snow on the 5th August, in Čara to the celebration of Saint Peter on the 29th June, and in Smokvica performances remained tied to the celebration of Our Lady of the Candles, Candlemas Day on the 2nd February, but are solemnly performed at the Assumption of Mary on the 14th August. In the first half of the 20th century performances in Blato were moved from carnival period to the 28th April when Saint Vincenca is celebrated. In Vela Luka performance takes place on the 19th March to celebrate Saint Joseph's Day.

4 The General Conference of UNESCO adopted in 2003, at its 32nd session. the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The Republic of Croatia ratified the Convention in 2005. <https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/00009-HR-WORD.doc> (visited on 21st April 2018)

THE FIRST PUBLISHED PAPERS ON *KUMPA NIJA* - THE END OF THE 19TH AND THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Korčula *Kumpanija* gained attention from the first ethnologists and musicologists at the end of the 19th century, and especially at the beginning of the 20th century. This is a time of dramatic, nowadays we would say structural, changes in society which had an impact on everything and everyone, including culture. Travel writers who visited Korčula during these early periods did not write about this phenomenon, at least as far as we are aware. For example in his extensive two-volume work *Dalmatia and Montenegro: with a Journey to Mostar in Herzegovina, and Remarks on the Slavonic nations; the History of Dalmatia and Ragusa; the Uscocs; [etc., etc.]*, published in London in 1848, Sir John Gardner Wilkinson (1797 - 1875) describes the town of Korčula and its sites and monuments in great detail, he briefly describes the island and rural areas, but he does not mention *Kumpanija*. The author noticed and described colourful traditional folk costumes, thus we can conclude that he showed an interest in ethnographic heritage or folklore. The possible explanation for not mentioning *kumpanija* by the early travel writers, might be in the fact that they were visiting Korčula during periods suitable for maritime travel, i.e. during warmer and less windy parts of the year. If they stayed long enough to visit rural areas, and not just the representative town centre, we can reasonably assume that they could not report about *kumpanije*, because there were no opportunities for them to see performances, since in the past *kumpanije* used to be performed at carnival period and were mostly connected to that period of the year.

Vid Vuletić Vukasović (1853 - 1933) is one of the first people to write about *Kumpanija*. In his paper entitled "Folk Traditions on the Island of Korčula: Moreška, II: The Obese King", published in *Vijenac* (a magazine for literature) issues no. 46, 47 and 49 in 1980, and unified and re-printed in 1891 in Zagreb, "Printed by Dionička Tiskara - with the support of Matrix Croatica", Vuletić Vukasović brings a detailed description of customs and traditions in Žrnovo, more precisely in a hamlet near Žrnovo - Prvo Selo, and mentions *Kumpanija* from Pupnat. He described ritual customs and sword dance, and also brings forth a transcript of the so called Statue of *kumpanija* from Žrnovo from 1620. This code of conduct, which all *kumpanije* on the island gladly refer to, points out the social role of this tradition, but Vuletić's transcript remains the only known source. The author writes that the original can be found in an archive in Zadar, but a recent search for the original did not yield results,⁵ so it appears that the original had been lost. Exhibits in *Kumpanije on the Island of Korčula: Moštra from Žrnovo* exhibition included a reprint of Vuletić's paper and of the Statute, so visitors could browse through them and read them. Both of these aroused quite some interest in visitors from Žrnovo. Vid Vuletić Vukasović was one of the speakers at the International Folklore Congress in Chicago in 1893. He did not talk about Moreška or *Kumpanija* from the island of Korčula, but the fact that he participated in this congress is still significant. In her paper with a somewhat symptomatic title *Vid Vuletić Vukasović and Salvation Ethnology* Sanja Potkonjak writes about the influence Vuletić Vukasović had on scientific approach and the

5 Correspondence between Korčula Town Museum and State Archives in Zadar in 2016, Registry Book of Korčula Town Museum 58/2016.

development of methodological guidelines in Croatian ethnology and folklore research and with his complex relationship with Antun Radić (Potkonjak 2014: 111-140). In the context of the European aspirations of the time and the growing awareness on the need to collect and document tangible and intangible heritage, Potkonjak emphasises that Vuletić's research and writing can be tied to "the beginnings of professionalization of Croatian ethnology" (Potkonjak 2004: 114).

In *On Foot for One Month: Travelogue from Korčula to Cetinje*, written in 1896, and published in 1897 by Brzotisač "Narodnog lista" in Zadar, Petar Kuničić (1862-1940) describes scenery and settlements and notes numerous customs as well. He writes about *Kumpanija* from Blato:

"The so called *Kumpanija* is the queen of all customs in Blato. It is a real war dance, performed in public squares at carnival, or at other solemn events. A group of strong men dressed in beautiful traditional costumes of Blato and carrying antique weapons dance around. The troop has a captain, a pikeman, a standard bearer, a footman, a drummer and a musician. The whole performance is made up of about thirty scenes." (Kuničić 1897: 10). Furthermore, he writes that "I wrote extensively about this rare native performance elsewhere, so I would like to draw Croatian choreographers' and custom lovers' attention to this description" (Kuničić 1897: 10).

Kumpanija or Company: Folk War Dance was until then the most detailed and most comprehensive piece of writing (Kuničić 1987), which is still a magnificent source of information, and a great starting point for a comparative analysis of contemporary performance practices in dance, an analysis of inter-village relationships between the communities which cultivated this tradition, and it is also a great stepping stone for an overall analysis of the tradition in general.

Franko Cetinić Tale (1903 - 1987) published his paper "*Kumpanija - Folk Sword Dance*" in the *Collection of Papers on Folk Life and Customs of the South Slavs* in 1930. Franko Cetinić Tale was a lawyer who had a doctoral degree and who dedicated his personal and professional lives to *Kumpanije*, or more specifically, to *Kumpanija* from Blato, which was established by him in 1927.⁶ This was the first formally established and organized *Kumpanija* on the island of Korčula. *Kumpanije* had previously been informally organized groups of men, although it may have seemed that the structure was very firm. During the first five years *Kumpanija* from Blato functioned under the auspices of Sokol Society (Sokolsko društvo), but because discipline and rules in the society hindered performance practices and the overall meaning of *Kumpanija*, *Kumpanije* managed to become formed and registered as independent associations⁷ in 1932. Franko Barčot explained the role of Sokol Movement in the folklore heritage of the island of Korčula (Barčot 2015: 258). The direct changes in national features within the Sokol Movement, from the first Croatian Sokol ever founded (Zagreb, 1874), whose subsidiaries

6 Franko Cetinić's family members came to see the exhibition at Korčula Town Museum - *Kumpanija* from Blato on the island of Korčula (2017). They recounted that Franko had two daughters who always felt like they had a third sister, older than them, who their father paid most attention to - *Kumpanijija*.

7 According to To Roy. *County Administration for the town of Korčula, for Roy. County Administration for the city of Split* from the 30th March 1932, file number: 19/32, Archives of *Kumpanija* Knight's Society from Blato.

were established in spaces of Croatian national identity, including Dalmatian islands (in the town of Korčula in 1905, and in Blato in 1910, to the prohibition of all Sokol Societies other than Yugoslavian Society on the basis of the 6th January dictatorship in 1929, had impact on the identities of societies established prior to this, societies which Sokol Society sought to assimilate or did assimilate, as well as on performance practices. Therefore, if we take into consideration *kumpanjija* role as a guardian and creator of the feeling of belonging to a defined collective⁸ it is obvious why it wanted to break away. According to Barčot the first five years were crucial for future independent activities carried out by *Kumpanjija* Knight's Society (cmp. Barčot: 2015: 259) which had direct impact on moving further away from carnival context, standardization of dance practices, military nature of society's organization and its preservation over the last several decades (cmp. Barčot 2015: 262). The exceptionally rich archive kept by *Kumpanjija* Blato Knight's Society which has been very well preserved was founded by Franko Cetinić Tale who ran it systematically from the first moment archive was set up - when the Society was founded in 1925, until 1964, and other people have maintained it since then and still maintain it nowadays. The archive is an extraordinary source of information for studying contemporary history of the island of Korčula and wider area, as well as European and global events by way of manifestations which touched local communities and changed them as a result. The preparation of the exhibition *Kumpanija* from Blato in 2017 at the Society's archive revealed long forgotten important details pertaining to this Society. The Society has the largest membership and it is formally the most complexly organized society. The preparation of exhibition revealed details pertaining to other *Kumpanija* on the island of Korčula, which Cetinić respected as stakeholders in the rich mutual heritage.

When it comes to foreign researchers, František Pospíšil (1885 - 1957) has to be mentioned. He is an ethnochoreologist who has been all but forgotten. He was born in Moravia, or Czech Republic as we know it today. He was one of the first researchers of sword dances in Europe. He visited Korčula for the first time before the First World War in 1912, but he returned in 1922 and 1924 and brought filming equipment with him in order to make silent movies about *Moreška*, *Kumpanija* from Blato, and a chained dance with swords called *pokladarsko kolo* from Lastovo. Elsie Ivancich Dunin gave a detailed account of Pospíšil, the impact of screening of these movies in world congresses at that time, of their discovery and rescue in 2003 when they were found at the Department of Ethnography at the Museum in Brno (Dunin 2005:299-313). František Pospíšil was the head of the Museum in Brno from 1920 to 1945. Clips from the movie about *Kumpanija* from Blato were displayed at the *Kumpanija* Exhibition in 2017 as a part of parallel representations of dance figures in movies which were filmed later.

Maud Carpeles (1885 - 1976), an English ethnochoreologist, spent some time on Korčula in 1936. She studied *Moreška* from Korčula and *Kumpanija* from Blato, and saw a performance in Blato to mark St. Vincenca's day. Correspondence which accompanied the photograph which Carpeles sent to the Society after she returned to England is kept at the Society's archive. Elsie Ivancich Dunin researched the archive at the Cecil Sharp

8 From personal correspondence with professor Aleksandar Jakir, Ph.D., June 2018.

Institute - English Folk Dance and Song Society in London in April 2017 and managed to complete materials on Blato *Kumpanija*. Photos taken during 1936 performance to mark St. Vincenca's feast day were displayed at the exhibition at Korčula Town Museum. Vincenca is the patron saint of Blato. Solemn performances by *Kumpanija* from Blato have been tied to this holiday ever since the Society was founded.

IVAN IVANČANIN'S INFLUENCE ON *KUMPANIJA* IN A NUTSHELL

After the Second World War Ivan Ivančanin (1927 - 2006) wrote a comprehensive research paper, his thesis: *The Origins and Connections between Kumpanija from Korčula* (Ivančan 1967: 7), which he defended in 1965. The research renamed to *The Folk Customs of Korčula Kumpanija* was published in 1967 by the Institute of Folk Arts in Zagreb (Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research). In addition to fundamental ethnochoreology research, Ivančanin focused on the restoration on the tradition of *Kumpanija* in Žrnovo where it practically died out. The first *Kumpanija* performed in Prvo Selo was in 1928, the first one in Postrana was in 1937. He investigated other *Kumpanije* on the island as well, especially *Kumpanija* from Blato, but the fact that *Kumpanija* from Blato was active for more than forty years at this point, and the fact that its structure and dance practice were consistent, helped Ivančanin understand and document this phenomenon. This did not help him prevent changes or any other kind of authorial intervention. However, there was no need for this with *Kumpanija* from Blato. Ivančanin's extensive written legacy and his movies were used to prepare the exhibition at Korčula Town Museum in agreement with the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research. In *Renewals and Local Meanings: Kumpanija on the Island of Korčula*, published in 2000 after the restoration of *Kumpanija* and the attempt to decapitate an ox in Pupnat in 1997, Zorica Vitez, a member of Ivančanin's research group during field research on the Island of Korčula, recalls 30 years later the circumstances of "Ivančanin's restoration" of *Kumpanija* in Žrnovo in 1966. She writes that "Ivančanin did not write about the renewal of complex traditions in their authentic environment, nor about the renewal of *Kumpanija* in Žrnovo and the role he played thereby, nor of performances outside of authentic environment, for example at the International Folklore Festival in Zagreb" (Vitez 2000: 37), and stresses the responsibilities regarding authorial intervention and the impact it might have on traditional performance practices. The particular value of her work is reflected in the fact that Vitez's personal and professional insight into the renewal of customs and traditions in two villages, with 30 years in between, has given her a unique chance to observe changes in social circumstances and meanings which are inherent to *Kumpanije*, as well as contemporary challenges which inevitably lead to change. "The idea of renewal connects idyllic memories of the past and modern day tendencies to incorporate some old values into the present" (Vitez 2000: 29).

PREPARING EXHIBITIONS

It cannot be said that the authors mentioned so far are the only ones who were inspired by *Kumpanije* from Korčula to do research and to investigate. However, their contribution to documenting and understanding this phenomenon is unmistakable, not just in a local context. Therefore, we can say that their works influenced the preparation of the exhibitions set up at Korčula Town Museum. Each exhibition individually pointed out particularities, but also the wholeness of this tradition. Exhibitions are organized chronologically by positioning island settlements and demonstrating mutual influences present in *Kumpanija* tradition. In addition to researchers I have previously mentioned, the exhibition also displays the first participations in national and international folklore festivals and events, as well as *Kumpanije* opening up to the world beyond local communities, beginnings of their "lives" as tourist attractions, the turbulent interwar period, and influences arising from fast changing political forces in the 20th century. The phenomenon of emigrant *Kumpanije* in South America and Australia is also displayed, with the special emphasis on the emigrant community from Blato. A comparative analysis of dance moves and figures was specially done for the purposes of this exhibition using the oldest available recordings as well as modern day digital recordings. In addition to works by previously mentioned researchers, investigation was also based on personal observations, note taking, and interviews with performers and other tradition bearers, for example blacksmiths who forge swords. Private collections of photographs and objects were also used for this exhibition: clothes, swords, music instruments, and written documents from island parishes. Researchers searched for manuscripts, video and photo materials at the Split Ethnographic Museum, the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb and the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb. Furthermore, they searched the Archival Remote Storage Korčula-Lastovo for materials directly related to *Kumpanija*, but they also searched the holdings of districts and local authorities with the assumption that a parallel can be drawn between the then political environment and *sword dance* performances. The largest amount of information and the most useful batch of information came from archives kept by societies which nourish the *Kumpanija* tradition, such as the archives maintained by *Kumpanija* Pupnat Knight's Society, *Kumpanija* Čara Knight's Society, Bratska sloga - *Moštra* Cultural and Educational Society from Postrana, and the richest archive of all - *Kumpanija* Blato Knight's Society.

My personal experiences gained while doing field research in the village of Pupnat in 2014 pointed out that the culture of memory, at least as far as *Kumpanija* goes, is very fragile and, I would dare to say, somewhat hazy, even though at first glance it might seem like it is enhanced by an intense dimension of local and national identity. For example, a photograph of *Kumpanija* performance in Pupnat in 1949 is on the attached catalogue cover for the abovementioned exhibition. Several written sources confirm that *Kumpanija* was performed in the wintertime, but the informant (Ivan Šain,⁹ b.

9 Ivan Šain was actively engaged in in *Kumpanija* performance in 1949, he helped his father make *žbare* - a wooden construction into which the head of sacrificial animal is inserted, and even nowadays he safekeeps the *schiaovona* sword he inherited from his great-grandfather. The sword was photographed and documented with the owner's approval (field research in the village of Pupnat, May 2014).

1938), who was present at a performance when he was eleven years old, was quite convinced that the performance took place in the summer. People in the photo are wearing coats, but he explained that fact as a state of overall poverty in the period after the war. His thinking can reasonably be explained if we take into consideration circumstances which led to moving performances from winter to summer, i.e. alignment with tourism. This explains the informant's fuzzy memories, especially since in Pupnat, of all places on the island of Korčula, *Kumpanija* was not performed for the longest period of time (1949 – 1997). At the other end of research spectrum, Stephen D. Corrsin never mentioned chain sword dances from Korčula in his book "Sword Dancing in Europe: A History" published in London in 1997. When he was on Korčula in April 2011, during preparation of ICTM Study Group on Music and Dance in Southeastern Europe, Corrsin gave several lectures on research he conducted so far on sword dances. Elsie Ivancich Dunin writes that Corrsin said: "Above all, I would like to apologise for my omission - I did not include chain sword dances from Korčula in my book *Sword Dancing in Europe: A History*, and I should have. I do not even remember why I did not. These performances undoubtedly perfectly fit in the wider context of European chain sword dances in every way, in terms of community, circumstances, history, performers and tools." (Dunin 2015: 510)

Research has been conducted, and still is, bearing in mind the idea of preserving heritage in its, still very much alive, context of live performances.

After the first exhibition on *Kumpanija* Pupnat several other exhibitions followed: *Kumpanija Čara* in 2015, *Moštra from Žrnovo* in 2016, and *Kumpanija Blato* in 2017. Exhibition on *Kumpanija* from Smokvica is in the process and will be opened in 2018. The last exhibition of the series will be the exhibition on *Kumpanija* from Vela Luka in 2019. The exhibitions are part of the Festival of Knightly Games program. Field research and exhibition planning was co-financed by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia, the Dubrovnik-Neretva County, Korčula Town and Korčula municipality. The exhibitions and solemn performances at the main square during exhibition openings attracted a lot of visitors, Croatian and foreign, inspired interest in overall tangible and intangible cultural and natural heritage in villages in Korčula, and gave rise to enhanced re-evaluation of identity factors in the most positive way in heritage bearers and heritage carriers. Memory, as a way of reviving past in our consciousness, is important for every community, whereby collective memory is especially emphasised when it comes to the reconstruction of communal identity. The exhibition opened space for better understanding of shared history and of the tensions between the inhabitants of the town of Korčula and inhabitants of villages on the island of Korčula that were present in the past, and are still present in traces. Fine, otherwise present but hidden anthropological layers could be observed through communication with visitors, heritage bearers and carriers. It is worth reminding that *Kumpanije* belong to the layer of oral culture, and this is still the main way we learn about them. All of this makes *Kumpanije* extremely interesting as a focus in recent ethnological, anthropological and historiographical approaches which research culture of memory and social constructions and re-constructions of identity. Furthermore, it is interesting to hear foreign visitors' comments and questions, especially when they notice connections with their

own cultural layers, for example the use of single-reed flutes (diple) - *mišnjica* as a rudimentary form of bagpipes, or similarities between sword dances or stick dances in their own communities. Elsie Ivancich Dunin, Professor Emerita at the University of California in Los Angeles (UCLA) and internationally renowned dance ethnologist, supported research and the program in general as the exhibition co-author. She used her professional influence to encourage the members of the International Council for Traditional Music to to organize conferences in Korčula in 2000 and 2014. (Fig. 1)

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE COVERS, KORČULA TOWN MUSEUM

EXHIBITION *KUMPANJA* PUPNAT FROM THE ISLAND OF KORČULA 2014 (FIG. 2)

Exhibition set up by: Elsie Ivancich Dunin, Marija Hajdić, Sani Sardelić

The front page black and white photograph depicts a performance in Pupnat in 1949. Fourteen dancers can be seen standing in battle formation with their swords raised, and the fifteenth man, the captain - *kapitan* is also there and he is getting ready to challenge the chosen *soldier* to cross blades - a challenge called *škerma*. The author of the photo is unknown, and the original photo is stored at VuK Pupnat archive. Considering that Pupnat is the smallest village on the island of Korčula and considering the fact that the photo was taken in the post-war period, the fact that there are so many performers in the picture and that their clothes and swords are elaborate draws our attention. The swords were successfully preserved despite house searches and weapons being confiscated during the Italian (1941 - 1943) and German (1943 - 1945) occupation. Field research revealed that some of the performers were people who returned from Australia and North and South America after the Second World War, and this was a great opportunity to take pictures of the performance. The dance was performed at the same place it is performed nowadays.

EXHIBITION *KUMPANJA ČARA* FROM THE ISLAND OF KORČULA 2015 (FIG. 3)

Exhibition set up by: Elsie Ivancich Dunin, Marija Hajdić, Sani Sardelić

The front page black and white photo depicts a *Kumpanija* performance in the village of Čara on the 1st May 1953, which was the first performance after the Second World War. There is a label on the backside of the original photo which says: photo studio Bosnić from Blato. Želimir Laus owns the photo nowadays. There are seventeen performers in the photo, including the captain - *kapitan*. The photographs also depicts *škerma* - sword fight, or more precisely, its beginning. At the very end of battle formation there is a large cylindrical shape which does not serve any purpose other than decorative. A group of men is sitting on it and a flag is attached to it as well as a photo which had to be enlarged in order to be able to see what is in it and only then were we able to assume this is a photo of Josip Broz, the president of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It

can thus be concluded that performances quickly incorporated a Yugoslav communist dimension, which was entirely in line with the spirit of the times. Informants were not sure where the performance took place. The traditional costumes worn today in Čara are different than the ones in the photo. Swords are also different, especially their hilts.

EXHIBITION *KUMPANJE* ON THE ISLAND OF KORČULA - *MOŠTRA* FROM Žrnovo 2016 (FIG. 4)

Exhibition authors: Elsie Ivancich Dunin, Marija Hajdić, Sani Sardelić

Exhibits authors: Darko Fritz, Sani Sardelić, Marija Hajdić

The front page black and white catalogue photo depicts a *Moštra* performance at the hamlet of Postrana in 1966. The picture was taken by Ante Stanković Kralj, and the original is stored at the Archive Collection Centre Korčula-Lastovo. *Moštra* was performed on the 4th September after long-lasting preparations and rehearsals under expert supervision of Ivan Ivančan. Unlike the photo from Čara in this photo there are no visible socio-political symbols. The photo depicts the army with raised swords entering the square in front of St. Rocco's church in Postrana. *Moštra* is still performed in the same place. The standard bearer is carrying a flag specially made for this event. The flag was displayed in the exhibition. A crown, crossed swords, ox head, and years 1620 - 1966 on the flag point to the meanings which the community attributed and recognized in *Kumpanija* by restoring the performance. Judging by clothes, cameras, sunglasses and hats we can conclude that there are tourists in this photo alongside the locals. These were the first tourists in this rural part of the island of Korčula. The exhibition marked 50 years since *Kumpanija* was restored.

EXHIBITION *KUMPANJA* FROM BLATO ON THE ISLAND OF KORČULA 2017. (FIG. 5)

Authors of the exhibition concept: Elsie Ivancich Dunin, Sani Sardelić

Exhibition authors: Tomislav Bačić, Tonko Barčot, Ivana Biško, Elsie Ivancich Dunin, Sani Sardelić, Fanita Šeman, Vedran Šeparović

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The front page black and white catalogue photo depicts a solemn *Kumpanija* performance in Blato to mark the holiday celebrating St. Vincenca on the 28th April 1936. The label on the backside says: Photo Studio Božić from Korčula. The photo is stored at *Kumpanija* Blato Knightly Society's archive. Although changes can be observed on buildings surrounding the place where performances take place, the place itself remains unchanged - the square (*plokat*) in front of the parish church St. Vincenca. The photo depicts the army entering the square led by the captain, *kapitan*, and standard bearer, *alfir*. They are accompanied by a drummer (*tamburl*) and a bagpiper, *mišnjicar*. In the photo we can see many spectators who are dressed in civilian clothes, they are wearing

hats and modern shoes, which is in line with the status of Blato which is becoming an urban centre of the western part of the island. There are no visible changes when it comes to clothes that dancers wear, which is in line with the Society's formal provisions, which even nowadays loath and resist changes. Markings on the flag in the picture cannot be clearly determined. The exhibition on *Kumpanjija* from Blato opened up an archival "treasure chest," brought to light information that has been long forgotten and revealed them again. At the same time, the exhibition marked ninety years since *Kumpanija* Blato Knightly Society was founded.

CONCLUSION

As previously mentioned, preparations for the exhibitions on *Kumpanija* from Smokvica and *Kumpanija* from Vela Luka are under way. Researches conducted so far have shown that, despite numerous uncertainties when it comes to origins of the dance, layered structure of this tradition, choice of the king, origins of ox beheading - questions that still remain unanswered, the *Kumpanija* phenomenon on the island of Korčula, as an important element of island identity, found a potential way of co-existence of heritage values and contemporary tendencies, despite or even because of the need to commercially mark almost all cultural factors. Due to commercialization choreographies are adapted and performances are cut short. On the other hand, tourism encouraged the revival of interest in this valuable heritage (Sardelić 2015: 271). Thus, at least partial economic self-sustainability arises as definite and only way for customs to survive. In our hyper-globalized world *Kumpanija* dance performances on the island of Korčula and *Kumpanija* societies as bearers and carriers of traditions remain important holders of local identities with layered meanings. Even though many deviations have been recorded, despite degenerations in performance practices, despite changes in season cycles - summer instead of winter time, night performances instead of day, despite abandoning other segments that used to be important such as ritual processions through villages, despite agreeing to cut short performances for the purposes of tourist filming and custom made screenings for tourist agencies, it seems that these customizations and adjustments to contemporary context *Kumpanije* from Korčula found a new life, a fact confirmed by burgeoning performances on yearly basis.

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