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Contribution of the *Ecomuseum Bistra* Association to the Recording and Popularisation of Oral Literature in the 21st Century – Projects *e-Scrapbook* and *e-Scrapbook 2*

In addition to a theoretical review of the role of museums and other institutions, as well as media in recording, preservation and promotion of oral traditional culture, the paper provides a detailed description of projects "e-Scrapbook: Popularisation and Preservation of Traditional Culture of Bistra" and "e-Scrapbook 2: Field Research, Preservation and Popularisation of Traditional Culture of Bistra" of the Ecomuseum Bistra Association and similarities and differences between them. In twenty-seven videos produced within the projects, narrations, various oral literary forms and speech of older narrators were recorded, which resulted in a permanent record of the local dialect of Bistra, providing the basis for further research. Testimonies of the narrators show the continuity of oral tradition. The educational information contained in the videos provides resources for researchers, teachers and educators, allowing them to use these videos in learning about oral literature and media literacy, among other things. Through these projects, the Association has made a lasting contribution to the recording, research and popularisation of oral literature of Bistra in the 21st century and to strengthening the visibility of the organisation.

Key words: e-Scrapbook, intangible cultural heritage, new media,
                Ecomuseum Bistra Association, oral literature

INTRODUCTION

Oral literature is an important part of traditional culture. Although it belongs to the past, it is a significant part of the present, according to Ljiljana Marks and Ivan Lozica (2001: 456), because we can perceive it all around us. It accompanies human life; it is present in annual customs and in the joyful and sad life circumstances.

In the municipality of Bistra, which administratively belongs to Zagreb County, oral culture is still alive thanks to the locals and local associations such as the Cultural-Artistic Society *Bistra*, the Male Choir *Bistrana*, the Association of *Vuglenari*, the Association of Winegrowers, Winemakers and Oenophiles *Sveti Nikola – Bistra* and the Association *Ecomuseum Bistra*.

However, Klementina Batina (2023: 50) points out that in the Croatian scientific literature only a small number of papers on the ethnological and folklore aspects of the traditional culture of Bistra is currently available. For example, Vladimir Tkalić (1925) and Josip Forjan (1996) addressed the issue of the folk costume from Bistra, while Anita Celinić (2011: 29-30) wrote about the speech of the Bistra region, which "belongs to the old, conservative group of speeches (that preserve the basic Kajkavian accent) and which, according to the newer divisions of the Kajkavian dialect, is classified as a dialect of the central part of the Croatian region of Zagorje". In addition, it is a speech that is "generationally marked, characterising the elderly" (Celinić 2011: 29-30).

Furthermore, Ludvik Kuba (1892) and researchers of the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research Jerko Bezić, Nikola Bonifačić Rožin, Olinko Delorko, Ivan Ivančan, Zorica Rajković, Divna Zečević explored in 1970s oral literature, traditional customs, songs and dances of Gubec's homeland[1] and thus included the Bistra region. More recently, Klementina Batina (2014) addressed the issue of Bistra's traditional culture, while Karolina Vrban Zrinski and Lina Malek (2022) explored the records on oral literature of Bistra.

In the 21st century, it is particularly important to emphasise the role of new media in the research of oral literary material, which Vanda Babić and Denis Vekić (2016: 162-170) wrote about. The authors pointed out that contemporary media, such as the Internet and film, are "useful in the transmission and popularisation of oral literature" (Babić and Vekić 2016: 168).

Hence, this paper strives to provide a theoretical review of the role of the museums, heritage institutions and media in recording, popularise and preserve oral traditional culture and present two authorial projects dedicated to digital recording and presentation of oral literary material of the Bistra region using the descriptive method.

ECOMUSEUM BISTRA ASSOCIATION

Klementina Batina (2023: 50) writes that the *Ecomuseum Bistra* Association has been actively operating since 2016 with the purpose of safeguarding, researching and presenting the cultural (tangible and intangible), natural and spiritual values of the Bistra region. A special goal is the

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1   The Stubica region, i.e. the homeland of Matija Gubec, refers to the wider surroundings of Stubica (cf. Uredništvo 1974: 3-4).

establishment of a Bistra ecomuseum[2] (Batina 2023: 50). Today, the association brings together more than 50 members, mostly local residents "middle-aged and of various profiles – from amateurs to experts" (Batina 2023: 50). As aspects of the intangible cultural heritage of Bistra, Batina (2023: 51) singles out "wedding, Easter, Christmas, viticulture and carnival customs", …, "the artistry of performing traditional songs and dances", … "the artistry of making a ceremonial women's headdress, the artistry of making traditional decorations from crepe paper", … "and the richness of the linguistic (Kajkavian) idiom". Some of the previous heritage projects include *Bistra Cottages* (2016), *Mapping the Bistran Tradition – Cottages, Paths and Roads* (2017), *The Secrets of the Oršić Castle* and workshops dedicated to the transfer of art of the traditional Bistran jewellery making (Batina 2023: 50-57). It needs to be added that in 2018, the Association submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Croatia "to initiate the procedure for the safeguarding of the artistry of making traditional Bistra jewellery using the technique of stringing multi-coloured glass beads on a horse hair yarn" (Batina 2023: 51), which was achieved in 2021, so the artistry entered the Register of Cultural Goods under the code Z-7453 (Ministarstvo kulture i medija Republike Hrvatske 2024a). It is especially important to point out that the Association has achieved its special goal (Batina 2023: 50) by being a partner in the project *Renovation of the Old School Building and Cultural and Tourism Revitalisation through the ITU mechanism – ECOMUSEUM BISTRA* (2021 – present), where the Municipality of Bistra is the applicant, and the Zagreb County Tourist Board the second partner (Batina 2023: 57).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

THE ROLE OF MUSEUMS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANISATIONS IN PRESERVING THE TRADITIONAL CULTURE OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Museums and other institutions and organisations play an important role in preserving the heritage of local communities. We are hence hereinafter providing selected examples of museums and institutions, as well as their activities linked with cultivation of local traditional culture.

Željka Petrović (2008) wrote about an example for the preservation of cultural and regional identity in Donja Kupčina. The author points out that Marija Gušić first established a local collection in 1968 in what at the time was the Cooperative Home, which was a precursor to the Heritage Museum founded in 1973. It is located in the centre of the village and was intended "as a way of preserving wooden buildings, as a permanent feature of the traditional past and cultural heritage of this region" (Petrović 2008: 270). The locals donated objects to the Museum against the backdrop of modernising their own homes, which is why the Museum contains a "rich traditional inventory" (Petrović 2008: 269-270). In addition to the exhibits, the Museum has contributed to the preservation of traditional heritage through educational and exhibition activities, as well as the local cultural-artistic society (Petrović 2008: 271), which shows how "the locals of Donja Kupčina have enriched their local community and social life by preserving and revitalising selected segments of lived culture with the influence of the existing Heritage Museum and the repeatedly shown interest by ethnological professionals, who through their

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2 According to the Museum Act, an ecomuseum is „a model of sustainable management of natural and cultural heritage, which uses the partnership mechanism, networking and/or heritage activism for the purpose of a comprehensive approach to the preservation, interpretation and presentation of heritage in a specific area" (Zakon o muzejima, Art. 3).

interventions and field research have possibly impacted on the awareness of locals of their own traditional heritage".

The unavoidable role of the local community in the preservation of the cultural and natural heritage of Podsused was presented by Sandra Berak (2023). In her work, the author pointed out that, for example, the seven-year programme *Cultural and Natural Heritage of Podsused* of the Podsused Library "is the result of the local community's interest in heritage topics and local peculiarities. The programme fosters co-operation with local institutions, associations and individuals, encourages residents to become involved in activities connected with recognising the value and need to safeguard heritage" (Berak 2023: 212). The carried-out activities include the collection of material for exhibitions in the form of photographs, documents or newspaper clippings, assistance in correction and recognition of content in them, as well as the creation of new content, followed by forums, lectures, discussions, workshops and printed catalogues (Berak 2023: 212-213). The realised content was also offered by the Library in a digital environment, "on the Library website and the *YouTube* channel of the Zagreb City Library" (Berak 2023: 212-213).

Digital museum activities have proven to be particularly important in situations such as the COVID pandemic, which was addressed by Lana Domšić, Barbara Franić and Mirna Perić (2021). The research found that many museums created online resources such as digital exhibitions, virtual tours, learning materials and online conferences in the analysed period, thus trying to connect with the audience in various ways. The authors concluded that "the digitisation of museum activities is necessary for the future sustainability of museum functions and encourages further reflection on the direction of digital access to culture and heritage" (Domšić, Franić and Perić 2021: 437).

Against the backdrop of the previously mentioned digital approach to traditional culture, the authors of this paper have designed the projects *e-Scrapbook* and *e-Scrapbook 2*, striving to record and preserve the Bistran oral traditional culture, which will be addressed in more detail in a separate chapter.

THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN RECORDING, PRESERVING AND PROMOTING TRADITIONAL CULTURE

Digital technologies need to be used for the purpose of recording, documenting and preserving cultural heritage, which was pointed out on the website of the Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Croatia (2020). Digital recording of cultural heritage enables the preservation and dissemination of heritage resources around the world, as stated on the Innovation Platform (2023). Innovations such as digital archives, virtual museums, and heritage-based language learning apps, make cultural heritage more attractive and accessible to younger generations (Inovacijska platforma 2023). While it has many advantages, "the digital transformation of cultural heritage faces challenges. One of the main challenges is the preservation of digital information. Rapid technological evolution can lead to the obsolescence of formats and platforms, which can jeopardise the long-term availability of digitised heritage. Moreover, data privacy and security issues are becoming increasingly important as sensitive cultural materials are stored" (ibid.). The main solution in securing the future is thus a balance between innovation and tradition, which would enable all generations to follow the rich Croatian cultural tradition (ibid.). Therefore, as a part of the project "e-Culture – Digitisation of Cultural Heritage", the Ministry of Culture and Media developed guidelines for the digitisation of cultural heritage, which strived to establish "a systematic and standardised approach to the digitisation of cultural heritage, with

the harmonisation of standards and specifications for the digitisation process" (ibid.), which were updated in July 2023 (Ministarstvo kulture i medija Republike Hrvatske 2024b). In addition to the abovementioned, examples of digitisation of cultural heritage in Croatia include 3D scanning and modelling (a project to digitise Diocletian's Palace in Split), augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) (a Hvar VR project that "revives the hidden history of ancient Hvar") and interactive heritage tours (the "Smart Guide" platform that offers an application with the help of which visitors become their own guides using a mobile phone while touring the city) (Innovation Platform 2023). As can be noticed, the activities are mostly related to the cultivation of tangible heritage. When it comes to intangible heritage, there is a lack of examples that would support the preservation of this type of heritage.

Furthermore, Daniela Angelina Jelinčić and Ana Žuvela Bušnja (2008: 51) believe that "the presentation and promotion of traditional culture and folklore, electronic media, the Internet and the development of cultural industries have created [...] new environments in which traditional cultures are successfully promoted". The authors add that the UNESCO's *Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore* from 1989 emphasised "the essential importance of disseminating the intangible cultural heritage in order to recognise the value of folklore and the need for its preservation" (Jelinčić and Žuvela Bušnja 2008: 51-52). Heikki Kirkien is of the opinion that mass media are often interpreted as promoters of the expression of traditional cultures (according to Jelinčić and Žuvela Bušnja 2008: 54). Therefore, it is quite clear that the media play an extremely important role "not only in the representation of traditional culture, but in almost every aspect of our everyday lives" (Jelinčić and Žuvela Bušnja 2008: 54-55). Bearing in mind that each medium has its own strength, television is "the most powerful medium because it provides an image in motion", while the Internet "creates a new type of consumption of contemporary folklore in which the user chooses a topic according to their own interest. It is often a two-way, interactive medium" (Jelinčić and Žuvela Bušnja 2008: 55). While writing about the way in which intangible cultural heritage is preserved and presented in the media, Lidija Nikočević (2008: 145, 150) states that a living tradition could be protected and "saved from disappearing" with the help of the media, because the media have the role of showing a particular cultural asset in its context, while, for example, showing it on stage puts it in a different space and time, thus decontextualising it. According to Sutapi Misra (2020: 92), new media refers to interactive digital media technologies, including social media[3], such as *Facebook* and *Twitter*, blogs, e-mail, video games, online communities, online forums, and various websites, and as such transcends the boundaries of space and time. Numerous websites, blogs, and *YouTube* channels nowadays are dedicated to documenting and sharing information about different cultures and communities in the digital space, allowing people from all over the world to witness different region- or community-specific oral traditions (Misra 2020: 90).

Vanda Babić and Denis Vekić (2013) explained the significance and meaning of new media in the context of recording of the Croatian oral literary heritage (cf. Kiiru 2021). The authors point out that "The written records are not sufficient when studying an oral literary text and its context. [...] Audio recordings [...] faithfully represent the diction, rhythm, tone and timbre of the

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3   This paper uses the term "social media", which includes "social networking websites ... that allow users to independently create user profiles, offer a variety of content, from making friends and communicating with each other, viewing videos and photos, to online trading. The most famous social media today are *Facebook, Instagram, X* Corp (formerly *Twitter*) and *LinkedIn*" (Hrvatska enciklopedija [s.a.]. s.v. "www").

narrator's voice. Videos represent the gestures, context and emotion of the narrator" (Babić and Vekić 2013: 162; cf. Kiiru 2021). The Internet and film, according to the authors, are particularly important for the popularisation of oral literature and the revitalisation of certain forms (Babić and Vekić 2013: 162, 165, 168). Audio recordings of oral literature show how important speech is because it expresses intellectual content and "the totality of human experience, i.e. emotions and motivational states. [...] From audio recordings, one can study the dialectal definition of some speech, as well as the historical determination of speech of a certain time and area" (Babić and Vekić 2013: 165). When it comes to video (or video recording), it could be described as the most desirable and the most impartial way of recording the narrator's speech because "it gives an insight into the reality of the moment in which the message of oral literature is conveyed, but it also provides an insight into the non-verbal signals that the narrator unconsciously gives" and thus preserves a part of art, the past and life (Babić and Vekić 2013: 166-167). In this type of media, the recorded "non-verbal message enriches the verbal message itself" and although it does not have an interactive aspect, the video is a necessary material for the next generations because it shows value and objectivity of the moment of recording of the narrator, and hence "the coexistence of oral literature and contemporary media is desirable because there is a possibility of the disappearance of oral literature in the sense of narration, when it will be reduced to simple forms such as proverbs and sentences" (Babić and Vekić 2013: 167-169). Although they are subject to manipulation, both audio and video recordings represent "ideal transmitters of the message [...]. By using these media, the form of information transfer is modernised, but the goal and purpose – storytelling – is not lost", conclude Babić and Vekić (2013: 166-167).

Mark Turin, Claire Wheeler, and Eleanor Wilkinson (2013: xiv) have also described the importance of new media in preserving the oral traditions and speech of indigenous communities. As an example, they cited the project "The World Oral Literature Project", which began in 2009 at the University of Cambridge (continued in 2011 at Yale University), which strived to collect, safeguard and connect endangered oral literary forms and speeches. Within the framework of the implemented project activities, more than 400 hours of audio and video recordings of oral tradition were collected, and the recordings are available on the project website.[4] The authors point out that indigenous communities have full copyright and intellectual property over the recordings of their traditions and that the materials are safeguarded for future generations by accessing a secure digital archive platform, with the obligation to move files to future digital formats upon the emergence of new standards (Turin et al. 2013: xiv).

In addition, Andrew Martindale, Sara Schneiderman, and Mark Turin (2018: 199-200) provide examples on the recording and sharing of oral traditions among indigenous communities in Nepal. Members of the indigenous Thangmi community[5] recorded shamanic recitations of oral texts and shared them via video on social media, where they were consumed by community members in India, the Gulf States and beyond. Migrant communities, operating in New York City, in turn, recorded wedding ceremonies and songs on smartphones and then uploaded them to *YouTube*, where they were watched via mobile networks by relatives in remote Himalayan villages (Martindale et al. 2018: 199-200). This way of recording and transmitting

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4   More at: University of Cambridge [s.a.]. "World Oral Literature Project Online Collections", http: // www.oralliterature.org/collections/collections.html (accessed 23/05/2024).

5   Thangmi is one of the 59 indigenous peoples and nationalities in Nepal of mongoloid origin. More in: United Nations [s.a.]. "Universal Declaration of Human Rights – Thangmi", https: //www.ohchr.org/en/ human-rights/universal-declaration/translations/thangmi (accessed 23/05/2024).

oral communication shows how new media are helping members of the Thangmi community to reinvent and redefine their culture, connecting images, audio, and video in ways that reflect traditional practices of memory creation through storytelling (Martindale et al. 2018: 199-200).

Misra (2020: 90) is of the opinion that new media and digital technologies have made different cultures around the world more visible and accessible, and that hence oral literature also needs to be collected, documented, preserved and disseminated using modern technology, with which Enongene Mirabeau Sone (2010) agrees in an article on the digitisation of Cameroonian oral literature. New media and digital technologies, especially mobile devices with HD camera functionality and built-in dictaphones (author's comment), make it easy to capture, store, and distribute ideas, beliefs, thoughts, knowledge, and experiences and make them easily accessible to a global audience (Misra 2020: 92). Oral tradition culture, if presented through new media, has the potential to make people culturally aware of their past traditions. Documenting and popularising the rich cultural heritage in virtual forms will ensure its sustainability and continuous transmission from one generation to the next, points out Misra (2020: 90). Additionally, community members can record oral literature and subsequently post and share information on social media, which can create awareness and ensure wider respect for local traditions among the masses (Misra 2020: 90), as shown by the mentioned example of recording and posting wedding ceremonies and songs on *YouTube*. New media and digital technologies can thus popularise oral traditions and have a direct impact on the audience (Misra 2020: 90). The results of a survey on the oral tradition of the Barak Valley in India, conducted by Misra (2020: 94) on 100 respondents, show that 76 % of the respondents think that new media can be used to document, popularise and maintain the oral tradition of their homeland. Such a positive response also indicates people's sentimental attachment to their own culture. Consequently, it is not surprising that most of the respondents support documenting oral traditions using digital technologies, as they understand that in doing so, they contribute to the preservation and promotion of their own oral traditional culture (Misra 2020: 91-94).

At the end of this theoretical review, we can say that the awareness of the need to record oral heritage and insufficient research of Bistran oral literature, the issue addressed by Batina (2023: 50), as well as the previously mentioned international examples of recording and presentation of oral heritage in the digital environment, encouraged the authors of this paper to design the project *e-Scrapbook: Popularisation and Preservation of Traditional Culture of Bistra* in 2022, and, in 2023, the follow-up project named *e-Scrapbook 2: Field Research, Preservation and Popularisation of Traditional Culture of Bistra*. The justification of the need for these projects is proven by the claims of the previously mentioned authors, who mostly believe that oral material needs to be recorded and preserved, and that new technologies play a crucial role in that.

PROJECTS *E-SCRAPBOOK* AND *E-SCRAPBOOK 2* – FROM IDEA TO REALISATION

Against the backdrop of the fact that there are not enough publicly available videos of the oral literature of Bistra[6], that there is a lack of works on the ethnological and folklore aspects of the

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6   As examples, we can point out videos in which the Cultural-Artistic Society of *Bistra* performs Bistra songs, which were published on YouTube before the *e-Scrapbook* and *e-Scrapbook 2* projects. Cf. YouTube [s.a.]. "KUD Bistra", https: //www.youtube.com/results?search_query=kud+bistra (accessed 23/05/2024).

traditional culture of Bistra (Batina 2023: 50), that the bearers of the Bistra speech are the elderly (Celinić 2011: 30) who are decreasing in numbers, and hence the original Bistra speech is slowly disappearing, and that there is a lack of publicly available recordings of Bistra speech, the authors of this paper strived to contribute to the research and recording of oral literature and Bistra speech within the project activities of the *Ecomuseum Bistra* Association.

Although the UNESCO's *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* mentions oral tradition and expression, a language only as a means of communication of the intangible cultural heritage and does not emphasise language and speech as forms of living cultural heritage, the authors of this paper are of the opinion, just like Gwerevende and Mthombeni (2023), that language and speech represent the living cultural heritage of people and are therefore worth recording and safeguarding. This has been confirmed by the UNESCO's text on oral traditions and expressions, including language as a transmitter of intangible cultural heritage (UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage [s.a.]), according to which languages live in songs and stories, riddles and rhymes, so the safeguarding of languages and the transmission of oral traditions and expressions are very closely linked. That is why mass media and communication technologies can be used to preserve and even strengthen oral traditions and expressions by broadcasting recorded performances both to their communities of origin and to a wider audience (UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage [s.a.]). It is important to emphasise that the Committee on Intangible Cultural Heritage has been operating at the Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Croatia since 2002. This Committee first "theoretically discussed the criteria for the inscription of a particular property in the National Register of Cultural Heritage, and a few years after that the inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Property began." In addition to folklore creativity, arts and crafts, also "Croatian local speeches / groups of speeches / dialects, have been inscribed and that was possible pursuant to Article 9 of the Act on the Protection and Preservation of Cultural Property from 1999" (Institut za jezik i jezikoslovlje [s.a.]).

Confirmation of the justification of the projects can also be found in Babić and Vekić (2016: 162-170), who report that contemporary media (audio and video, the Internet) are useful in the transmission and popularisation of oral literature, and that the audio recording of an oral literary creation is important in the study of the language and speech of a certain nation, while the video records gestures, the context and the emotion of the narrator.

By publishing the video on the *YouTube* digital platform and on social media such as *Facebook*, *Instagram* and *TikTok*, the projects *e-Scrapbook* and *e-Scrapbook 2* strived to present rich oral literary material, contribute to the popularisation of oral literature and bring oral culture closer to younger generations in an educational way. The focus was on social media which were intended as the mediators of videos because they are used by many users, the audience is heterogeneous and they are popular both among younger and older audiences (Levak and Belmić Šarić 2018: 37-38). By recording in audio and video form, the authors of the projects strived to create records of lasting value that would be available to the narrators, stored in the digital archive of the *Ecomuseum Bistra* Association and which could serve as part of the exhibition within the exhibition in the recently established public cultural institution in the premises of the old school in Poljanica Bistranska, as well as used by scientists and experts for further processing and research.[7]

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7   Objectives of the projects and activities need to be compared with *The World Oral Literature Project* (cf. Turin et al. 2013: xiv-xv).

The name of the projects came from the word "scrapbook" in the sense of an album in which memories are written into (Anić 2006 s.v. "spomenar": 1456). A scrapbook is, one could say, a type of book or notebook that is used to write down and keep memories, messages, drawings, and other personal or sentimental records. Mirjana Duran (2004: 532) adds that pictures are also a significant part of the scrapbook. According to Duran (2004: 532-533), the scrapbook "is most often owned by pupils", although by researching scrapbooks "from the late 19th and the early 20th century, when some of the owners were between 15 and 20 years old", the author learned "that not all of them were pupils", and she found "although rarely, scrapbooks that belonged to soldiers. [...] The owners are mostly (i.e. not always) young girls/girls, and friends, young boys/ young men, but also parents, relatives, teachers, etc., write something in the scrapbook." It could be added that scrapbooks are used as a means of collecting autographs, messages from friends, or memories of a specific period of life, such as school days, anniversaries, or special events. In addition, scrapbooks can also be used in other situations as a way to retain lasting memories of a specific period or event in life. Since this "scrapbook" is in digital form, it has been given the prefix e-, which indicates that it is an electronic version of the scrapbook in which videos were "entered".

The project manager was Lina Malek, who conducted semi-structured interviews with both the female and the male narrators during the field research in Bistra, as well as managed the social media of the Association within the projects, created shorter videos and conducted a digital campaign on social media. Dolores Domitrović Miličić was in charge and responsible for the post-production and editing of the videos. Both authors were involved in audio and video re-cording within the field research.

As far as the methodology of working on the projects is concerned, both included activities such as: preparatory work (research of relevant scientific and professional material), field research (which was based on audio and video recording of semi-structured interviews with female and male narrators), analyses and processing of the recorded material, editing of the selected rele-vant content and preparation and implementation of digital campaigns on social media (which were financed by project funding).

Field research led to a total of five female and three male narrators. Audio and video materials are stored in the digital archive of the Association, as well as a list of narrators with basic bio-graphical information about them, of which five narrators gave verbal consent to the publication of their stories.

The materials were recorded with technical equipment owned by the *Ecomuseum Bistra* Association (a digital camera, a dictaphone, a tripod, a lighting device, etc.), as well as with the authors' personal devices. The materials were edited in the *Adobe Premiere Pro 2021* video edi-ting software and the *Adobe Photoshop 2020* image editing software, in the *Canva* graphical web interface and the social media systems of *TikTok*, *Instagram*, *Facebook* and *YouTube*.

In the first project, the questions posed were presented in handwritten typography and voice over as a two-way communication. The second project featured videos with an introductory part where the project manager introduced the narrators and the topics that will be discussed, and then the narrators talked about their memories with a few questions from the project manager.

It needs to be pointed out that within the project *e-Scrapbook 2*, in addition to a digital questi-onnaire, the manager conducted an exhaustive preparation for field research, which included

four-month research of the relevant phonoteque material available in the Documentation of the Institute for Ethnology and Folklore Research. For the purposes of the research of the material in the IEF, the president of the Association and the project manager got in touch with the colleagues from the IEF, described the project and explained the purpose of the research, based on which the arrival in the Documentation of the IEF and the analysis of the material was approved. With this activity, the project manager contributed to the collation of audio content with manuscript transcripts and in this way relevant material was detected that could be used for further scientific and professional research work.

Both projects were implemented with the financial support of Zagreb County – the first project within the Public Call of the Expert Service of the Prefect of Zagreb County in 2022, and the second within the Public Call for Cultural Needs of Zagreb County in 2023.

Descriptions of both projects have been provided in the continuation of the paper. It is important to note that only visible project activities have been presented, behind which there are several activities that preceded the final videos and the digital campaign.

E-SCRAPBOOK PROJECT: POPULARISATION AND PRESERVATION OF THE TRADITIONAL CULTURE OF BISTRA

The purpose of the project *e-Scrapbook: popularisation and preservation of the traditional culture of Bistra* (hereinafter referred to as *e-Scrapbook*) was to popularise the oral part of the traditional culture of the Bistra region through research of existing records, fieldwork (interviews with local speakers) and production and digital distribution of new audiovisual recordings on the social media of the Association. The project is thematically divided, and the central theme of the six videos is the Bistran oral tradition of the Advent and Christmas periods, since the project was implemented in December 2022.

Project manager Lina Malek conducted semi-structured interviews with narrators in the field in Bistra. During the fieldwork, a total of 4 hours, 21 minutes and 52 seconds of audio and video material (the so-called "raw" material) were recorded. All the content is stored in the archive of the Association, while the published six videos are the result of professional post-production and production teamwork of the authors of the project. The total duration of the six horizontal videos is 43 minutes and 47 seconds.

In the introductory video titled "What is what here?" from the interview with Klementina Batina, PhD, president of the Association, the viewers could find out professional information about oral tradition, folklore and folklore studies, the intertwining of traditional culture and oral literature, and why it is important to nurture traditional culture and customs.

The second video "What to Search, Where to Look and Find Out Something?" contains a brief overview of selected relevant literature linked with the traditional culture of the Bistra region, especially Christmas customs and oral literature. Hence, this will simplify the work to potential future researchers and interested persons when researching the professional literature on the traditional culture of the Bistra region.

By answering the questions in the third video "What do books and people say about Christmas customs?", the narrators Klementina Batina, PhD, and Vera Grgac gave an insight into the Advent and Christmas customs that used to take place in Bistra, and about which you can also find out in the professional literature. Moreover, the viewers could learn about the Christmas
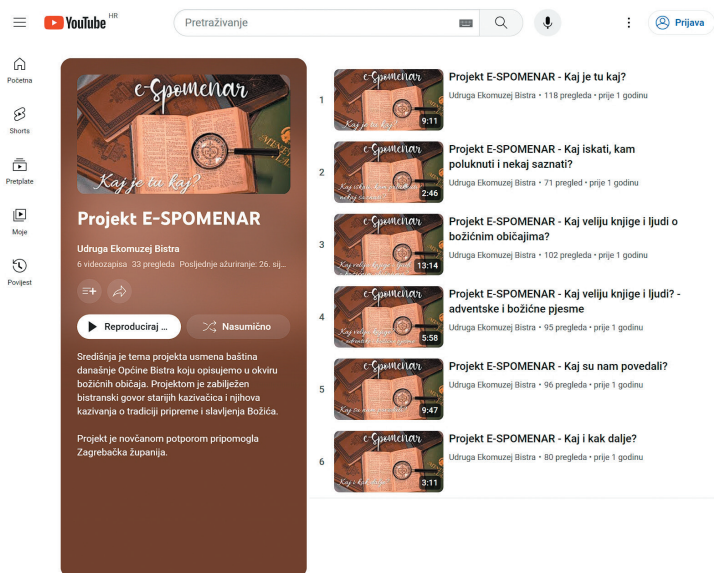
Figure 1. Visual identity of the project e-Scrapbook shown based on the playlist on the YouTube channel of the *Ecomuseum Bistra* Association

decorations made of natural materials and crepe paper that were used to decorate the home during the Christmas period, whose production is now safeguarded as an intangible cultural asset, which in Croatian are referred to as *kinč*. Furthermore, Vera Grgac spoke about the food that was prepared, how the festive table was decorated and about the Midnight Mass, and Klementina Batina about making the nativity scene.

The fourth video "What do books and people say? – Advent and Christmas Carols" was dedicated to Christmas carols that were sung in Advent, both at Midnight Mass and at Christmas Mass, and which are a part of the culture of oral traditional of Bistra. Nada Grgurić, a member of the Association, told how they went to dawn masses and what was sung along the way. A special contribution in this video is the recording[8] of the Cultural-Artistic Society *Bistra* that sang the song *Rejoice, All You People* at the traditional Christmas concert in 2019 in the Parish of St. Nicholas in Poljanica Bistranska.

The fifth video "What they told us" included selected memories, childhood memories and interesting facts of the narrators Nada Gregurić and Vera Grgac, and they were linked with the pre-Christmas period, Christmas, traditional beliefs at that time and the ways of decorating houses. Some topics were repeated, and some were discussed for the first time, but the key was to show and record the speech of the Bistra region in video format. The memories of the narrators are precious because they remind them of past times, of loved ones who are no longer with them and of a childhood that was filled with bonding, socialising and joy, and it all ends with a

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8   The author of the video is Lina Malek.

song. The narrators spoke in the language of the Bistra region (each speaking the dialect typical of their own village), while the project authors strived to adapt the text of the subtitles to the standard Croatian language.

In the last, sixth video "What to do next and how?" (Udruga Ekomuzej Bistra 2022b) a traditional Christmas card that was common in this region has been shown, and an example is the oral rhetorical type of toast that Stipe Botica (2013: 479) wrote about.

Klementina Batina co-operated on the project and was also the interlocutor, while Vera Grgac, Nada Grgurić and Domagoj Sironić were the narrators.

In *e-Scrapbook* in 2022, horizontal videos were published on the Association's *Facebook* page and on *YouTube*, and significantly shorter, vertical teaser videos (reels) have only been posted on *TikTok*. These shorter video recordings were intended to "invite" the viewers to watch a longer video on the Association's *YouTube* channel, adding to each of these vertical videos the then popular i.e. trending music on *TikTok*[9]. A photo was posted on *Instagram* as a notification that a new video was available on *YouTube*, after which that photo post was shared to the story, which was active 24 hours and later stored in the "e-Scrapbook" Highlights. We used the opportunity to add links to a video on the *YouTube* channel in a story using two stories.

PROJECT *E-SCRAPBOOK 2:* FIELD RESEARCH, PRESERVATION AND POPULARISATION OF THE TRADITIONAL CULTURE OF BISTRA

The project *e-Scrapbook 2: field research, preservation and popularisation of the traditional culture of Bistra* (hereinafter referred to as *e-Scrapbook 2*) (2023) was the continuation of the *e-Scrapbook* project (2022). The topics that were in the focus of the video were focused on the oral literature of Bistra, traditional beliefs of the locals, memories, recollections, knowledge and experiences of narrators about life and traditional customs in Bistra. Since most of the male and female interlocutors spoke in a local idiom of Bistra, the videos strived to record their speech and make it accessible to a wider audience. The transcribed text in the subtitles strived to be recorded as faithfully as possible in the spirit of the Bistra dialect. Since the transcription was made by the project manager, who is not a dialectologist, there is still room for improvement.

In addition to those that the audience has the opportunity to hear and see, the memories of some other locals from Bistra were recorded within the project, but they were not published, in accordance with the wishes of the narrators. Nevertheless, this provides a broader insight into the memories, as well as the speech of the participants.

The *e-Scrapbook 2 project* consisted of several related activities. As a part of the survey questionnaire shared on social media, the respondents were asked about their interests and preferences in terms of the type of content that the followers of the Association want to see on social media or what they want to know more about. The survey questionnaire greatly helped to direct the content of the project, and the added value of the survey questionnaire is the section in which the respondents could write their own memories, recollections and knowledge, and if they wanted to, they could leave their contact information and thus become a narrator on the project. The

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9   *TikTok* has not only revolutionised the world of digital marketing and social media, according to Ward (2024), but has gone further with its famous challenges and the music of its videos. Songs thus play a leading role in the content shared on this social platform, and many of these songs have gone viral. The adjective "viral" is used to describe a piece of information, a video, an image, etc., that is sent rapidly over the Internet and seen by large numbers of people within a short time (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries [s.a.]).
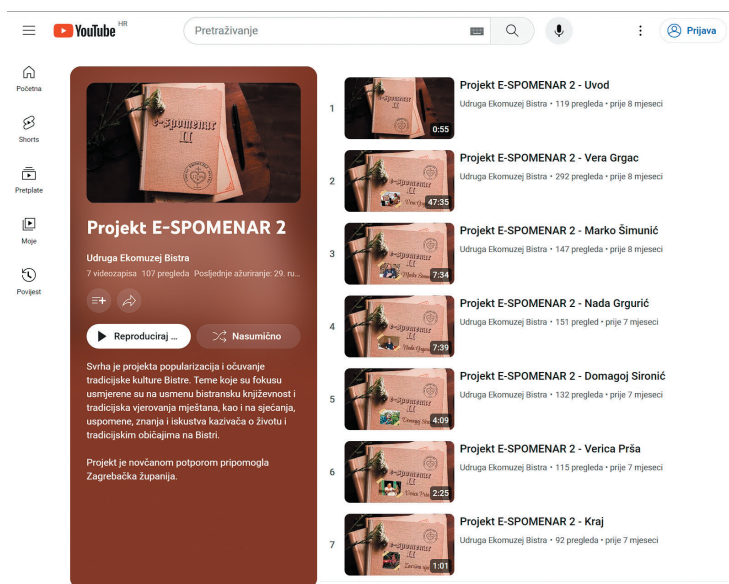
Figure 2. Visual identity of the project *e-Scrapbook 2* shown based on the playlist on the YouTube channel of the *Ecomuseum Bistra* Association

following activity was field research. During the two months of fieldwork, 6 hours, 32 minutes and 36 seconds of audio and video material ("raw" material) were recorded. A total of seven horizontal videos of a total duration of 1 hour 11 minutes and 18 seconds were produced within the project, and it needs to be emphasised that the project manager announced and concluded the project with two videos in which there is no narrator (the duration of these two videos is a total of 1 minute and 56 seconds).

In the introductory video of *e-Scrapbook 2,* the viewers were explained what the project is about and what they can expect in the content that follows.

The first narrator in the second video was Vera Grgac from Novaki Bistranski, who spoke about the traditional beliefs she heard from elderly people and about her book[10] *Majkina vraštva, vračejne i vračiteli (Grandmother's healing methods, remedies and healers)* (2019).

In the third video, viewers had the opportunity to meet Marko Šimunić, who told a story that his grandfather told him – it is a story about a man who borrowed money from the devil to buy materials for the construction of the roof, but after revealing to the neighbour from whom he received the money, the roof covering burned down completely at that moment. In addition, Marko Šimunić also referred to the story of the witches, which he remembers from his childhood.

In a peculiar way, the narrator of the fourth video, Nada Grgurić, spoke about the oral heritage of Bistra, with a special reference to the songs they sang in their childhood, and about the traditional beliefs and stories she remembers about the witches, but also about the fairies. At the end

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10   One chapter of the previously mentioned book refers to traditional beliefs.

of the fourth video, she shared two puzzles from her childhood.

In the fifth video, Domagoj Sironić, a history professor from Poljanica Bistranska, told the story of the country people in Donja Bistra and Mariadonna Carion, the French owner of the Oršić Castle in Gornja Bistra.

In the sixth video, Verica Prša from Oborovo Bistransko recalled the way they maintained folk costumes and other fabrics, as well as the witches from Bistra and in the end she shared some wisdom.

In addition to acknowledgments, the final video contained a short review of the relevant professional literature and previous videos, as well as an invitation to follow the work of the Association on social media.

Klementina Batina, Dolores Domitrović Miličić, Vera Grgac, Nada Grgurić, Lina Malek, Domagoj Sironić, Marko Šimunić, Verica Prša and other narrators participated in the projects.

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PROJECTS

The *e-Scrapbook* and *e-Scrapbook 2* projects have been designed in the style of an old book that represents a scrapbook, which was the main visual identity of both projects. As previously mentioned, the project was named in such a way to be in line with the project goal – recording the forms of oral literature and the memories of narrators in the local dialect of Bistra in an electronic environment. Although they build on each other, there are several differences in the concept and the implementation of the project.

The most obvious difference is that *the e-Scrapbook* addresses specific topics, while *the e-Scrapbook 2* is organised according to the narrators and their memories of different customs, oral literature, and beliefs. In *the e-Scrapbook*, the narrators talked about traditional customs, memories and oral literature (especially oral songs - carols) in the Advent and Christmas season, and *the e-Scrapbook 2* was divided according to the male or female narrators and was more focused on traditional beliefs and supernatural beings of oral traditions.

Bearing in mind that there is a younger audience on *TikTok* and an older one on *Facebook* (Levak, Belmić Šarić 2018: 37-38), project authors decided to post shorter vertical videos on *TikTok*, which at the end have a clear call to action (CTA) – watch the full story in *YouTube* videos. In the first project, horizontal videos of longer duration were published on the *Facebook* page of the Association as they were intended to evoke the memories of the audience and connect the existing (older) audience with oral traditional culture.

In order to reach new viewers, horizontal, longer videos were published only on *YouTube*, while on *Facebook*, *TikTok* and *Instagram*, (the same) vertical shorter videos were shared, accompanied by appropriate popular music on each social media. In *e-Scrapbook 2* vertical videos posted on *Instagram* and *Facebook* were also shared in stories, so that the followers and the users could get information about the availability of a new video. In the stories, you could also find direct links to each video on *YouTube* in order to provide the audience with as easy access as possible to the final horizontal video on *YouTube*, and also so that the authors of the project could track how many followers actually clicked on the link. The *Instagram* highlights store the stories of both projects, so viewers can access them at any time. Project authors believe that the special content recorded for social media as a part of the *e-Scrapbook 2* project, i.e. vertical videos, contributed to a better promotion of the project, but also to bringing the content closer to new, especially

younger viewers, which gave the Association new followers and promoted itself as one of the important factors and caregivers of the intangible traditional cultural heritage of the Bistra region in the digital environment.

In the digital campaign context in *e-Scrapbook*, each horizontal video is advertised on *Facebook*, with the aim of achieving as many video views as possible and, consequently, increasing the number of followers on *Facebook*. In *e-Scrapbook 2*, the approach to advertising was different. Separate ads were created in three series (not videos, but special visuals), and they contained a clear call to action and a highlighted link to *YouTube* channel of the Association, where all the produced videos were available. The first ad contained a visual with the project logo, the second ad was in the form of a carousel on which visuals alternated with photos of the narrators and a link to the video of each narrator, while the third ad was a "reminder" of the project – the visual contained the logo of the project and photos of the narrators with a link to the project playlist on the Association's *YouTube* channel. The ads aimed to directly increase the number of video views and the number of followers of the *YouTube* channel of the *Ecomuseum Bistra* Association, and indirectly to increase the number of followers on other social media and increase the audience's awareness of the Association on social media.

RESULTS OF *THE E-SCRAPBOOK* AND *E-SCRAPBOOK 2* PROJECTS

Within the framework of *e-Scrapbook*, the digital campaign popularised the existing audiovisual material on traditional culture of Bistra, especially on the Christmas period and oral Christmas carols. Based on the professional processing of the existing relevant selected material and a short field research, several videos were created.

The *e-Scrapbook* project thus includes six of the same horizontal videos published on the *Facebook* page of the *Ecomuseum Bistra* Association and on the *YouTube* channel. Seven more vertical videos of shorter duration have been posted on the *TikTok* social media. Seven posts with visuals were posted on the Association's *Instagram* profile, as well as seven stories, which were also shared on the Association's *Facebook* page. All seven *Instagram* stories are set up in the form of a highlight on the association's *Instagram* profile, named *e-Scrapbook*.

The *e-Scrapbook 2* project resulted in seven longer horizontal videos that were published on the Association's *YouTube* page. On the social media *Instagram*, *Facebook* and *TikTok*, seven more of the same videos of shorter duration were published. Seven stories were posted on the *Instagram* profile of the Association, which were also shared on the *Facebook* page of the Association. All seven *Instagram* stories are set up in the form of a highlight on the *Instagram* profile, named *e-Scrapbook 2*. Hence, the total number of produced videos, which includes both horizontal and vertical, is twenty-seven.

A *Linktree* was added on the Association's *TikTok* profile, where all *YouTube* videos were available.

By creating digital oral literary content, the number of publicly available records of traditional oral beliefs has increased, which has brought a new audience, i.e. followers on all social media of the Association. As for the results of the digital (marketing)[11] campaign, from the publication of the video until the 3rd October 2024, the total number of views within the *e-Scrapbook* project on *Facebook*, *Instagram* and *TikTok* social media, as well as on *YouTube* platform was 13 540.

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11 At the time of project implementation, the advertising option was not available on *TikTok*, which is why the views are the result of the so-called organic videos reached via non-ad links in that social media.

Videos created through *e-Scrapbook 2* project from the date of the publication to the 3rd October 2024, had 26 786 views on *Facebook*, *Instagram*, *TikTok* social media and on *YouTube* platform. The constant increase in the number of views shows that there is an interest of the digital public for this type of content – oral traditional culture, which is also an indicator for future projects. Hence, *the Ecomuseum Bistra* Association has also distinguished itself as one of the key guardians of the local dialect of Bistra.

Volunteers Vera Grgac, Nada Grgurić, Domagoj Sironić, Marko Šimunić and Verica Prša passed on oral traditional beliefs to everyone, and there were one more female narrator and one male narrator, whose information are stored in the archive of the Association, since they did not want their identity and the contents of the conversations that we had with them to be publicly revealed. Nevertheless, it is valuable content to explore and preserve.

The best results are shown in feedback, such as comments on the Association's *Facebook* page (for example, "It is really nice that the folk tradition has been preserved in the oral and written tradition of our fellow villagers [...] this e-scrapbook really deserves credit and it is a blessing for new generations") and private message on the *TikTok* profile, especially those that came from a foreign country ("I am contacting you to tell you that you are doing a fantastic job. Keep doing what you're doing!"). Communication with followers is extremely important, and it proves that the project has been a success, and that the digital audience is eager for cultural content, which motivates the members of the Association to continue implementing similar projects. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that the project and the installation of the video reached a younger audience, which is reflected in the number of views and comments, for example, *TikTok* videos in which the narrator is a Bistra local, as well as a history teacher in a local elementary school (that video has 9 comments and over 5000 views, while the other *e-Scrapbook 2* videos have on average around 1500 views)[12].

CONCLUSION

With the described audiovisual recordings of the narrators' narrations, which were created within the *e-Scrapbook* and *e-Scrapbook 2* projects, types and forms of oral literature were recorded, as well as the speech of elderly narrators, in order to, among other things, provide scientists and experts and younger generations with a permanent record of the typical speech in Bistra and create material for further research.

In terms of the conducted preparatory work, research of scientific and professional material and field research within the project, over ten hours have been recorded and a total of 27 videos have been produced (both horizontal, and vertical – Reels), adapted to *YouTube* and *Facebook, TikTok* and *Instagram* social media.

In addition, with the projects and the work itself, the contribution has been made to the solution of the problem detected by the *Ecomuseum Bistra* Association, which Batina wrote about (2023: 50), which refers to the insufficient research of ethnological and folklore aspects of traditional culture of Bistra in the Croatian scientific and professional literature.

A digital campaign was carried out to increase the number of publicly available records of traditional Christmas customs and oral literature of the Bistra region. Videos of shorter duration and

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12   Data collected on the 3rd October 2024.

vertical format, which were published on *TikTok*, showed that they are interesting to younger audiences, especially the video within *the e-Scrapbook 2*, in which the main narrator is a history teacher at a primary school in Bistra. The number of views on this record, likes, and comments shows that younger audiences respond positively if they recognise someone from their real-life in the videos.

The repetition of male and female narrators could be considered as a limitation but given the circumstances of the project implementation (budget, capacity, recording period, etc.), the authors strived to record the speech and different topics, even if they were of the same narrators. It certainly needs to be mentioned that both the female and the male narrators gave similar answers to the questions asked, as well as on some topics, so the thematic similarities and variants of oral literary forms thus showed continuity and presence in the Bistra area. Another limitation of the projects that could be mentioned is technical equipment used during the recordings, which had previously been in possession of the Association. Although no high-end equipment has been used, the project objectives have been met.

The projects, even with a relatively small number of narrators, have shown that oral literature is still nurtured in Bistra, that elderly speakers still preserve the characteristics of the local dialect of Bistra, and that further field research is very much needed to record as many narrators as possible and thus record the oral tradition, customs and speech of this region.

Since the videos of both projects contain educational information and are publicly available, the videos could also serve for educational purposes at different levels, both for learning about oral literature and the application of new media (especially social media) in the context of learning about media literacy. Hence, teachers and educators could show children/students videos in which they could detect certain oral literary types and forms, as well as oral literary themes and motifs. Videos could also serve as an example of positive practice in the application of new media as a tool in recording and presenting oral literature. Based on this paper, a conclusion can be reached that new, modern media, especially social media, as transmitters of information, contribute to the popularisation and preservation (performability) of oral culture.

In the end, we can conclude that through the presented projects, *Ecomuseum Bistra* Association has created a cultural content of long-lasting value, provided by no other association from Bistra. Moreover, it has contributed to the preservation and popularisation of traditional culture of the Bistra region, as well as to the recording of the Bistran speech, while increasing its visibility on social media through promotional activities.

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