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FOLK CUSTOMS IN THE SURROUNDINGS OF STUBICA

Summary

The present study of folk customs in seventeen places in the surroundings of Stubica in the northern Croatian region of Hrvatsko Zagorje was not intended to reconstruct an imaginary picture of traditional life by reaching as far back into the past as possible but rather to explore the state of traditional culture in the region at the present moment, to examine people's attitudes towards it, to trace its development and describe some of the recent forms. The rural population in the district of Stubica gives a very positive evaluation to traditional culture, as seen in the conscious and deliberate cultivation of certain folk customs and in the lively memories of those customs that are no longer practised. Interest in traditions is in most cases a family phenomenon nowadays, mostly linked with an elderly member of the family. Family differences in relation towards traditions are so great one might almost say that traditional culture has now become family tradition, and that it has withdrawn from the wider circle of the entire rural community into the more narrow confines of individual families. Another important development in that part of the country is folklorismus e. g. various folkloric shows specially designed and staged for tourist purposes — the Zagorje wedding ceremony, the young wine festival, some carnival parties, etc.

The author takes the examples of the bridal headgear and the titles of three »officers« in the wedding party to show the sequence of change between the beginning of this century and the present day. In particular, she wishes to demonstrate that several different customs and practices relating to one and the same event in the life of the people can be found at a given time. The complexity of folk culture today, coupled with family and individual differences in relation towards the tradition, requires corresponding changes in the scientific approach and methodological procedure. A particularly strong need is felt for a carefully planned selection of informants (in order to obtain representative data) and for the exhaustive documentation of the collected material (information on the source of data, time when a particular traditional custom was alive, the present state of that custom, etc.). We can now no longer be

content with generalized, temporally unspecified descriptions of cultural phenomena, with valued models of the kind that is often found in ethnological literature. We must take into account also what happens along the path leading from the model to the variant, from *l'ordre conçu* to *l'ordre veçu*.

Descriptions of different customs are given in this study according to our informants' accounts of recent or more distant past (depending on whether they were reporting their own experiences or what they had heard from other people), but always with a statement of the presentday situation. The customs described here include those surrounding childbirth, marriage, death, Carnival, Palm Sunday, Eeaster, St. George's Day, Midsummer Day, All Saints' Day, All Souls' Day, St. Martin's Day, St. Barbara's Day, Epiphany, and Candlemass.

(Translated by *Vlado Ivir*)