

From Research on Žumberak (preperuše, spindles, tara)

Summary

On the basis of the author's research, conducted from 1961 to 1984, three traditional phenomena are described from the life of the people of Žumberak in the first half of the 20th century. The first is a custom for invoking rain in times of drought, called *preperuše* here. According to collected material from twenty villages the distribution and name of the custom are analysed; participants in the custom in terms of sex, age and equipment; the execution of the procession; texts of poems that are sung by those in the procession; the frequency and performance of this custom in recent times. It has been established that the custom for invoking rain was spread through almost all of the Žumberak region in the period from the mid-19th to the 1970s, and it is assumed that it was used with greater intensity earlier on. The custom is not known in neighboring regions, so it is actually specific to Žumberak.

From the inventory of so-called material culture, the author has focused on spindles, in use among the women of Žumberak until the end of the Second World War. Four types, some of which have sub-types, have been designated in this relatively small and distinct area. This indicates that there are different cultural traditions within this territorial group. With spindles there were some signs of interconnection with cultural elements of neighboring regions, while other aspects indicated certain Žumberak specific qualities.

The loom, one of the tools used for making homespun cloth, referred to in this area as the *tara*, appears in its more primitive form with an upright fixed base. As part of the entire clothing and textile cultural complex it belongs to only that part of the population whose ancestors came to Žumberak in the 16th and 17th centuries. And the *tara* is confirmed within the entire ethnographic picture of Croatia as a relict phenomenon.

These three researched phenomena express succinctly the complexity of cultural traditions in Žumberak, that small and quite sparsely inhabited region of central Croatia. This complexity is due, in part, to the specific historical fate of this region. Due to the spatial continuity and discontinuity as illustrated in this paper, these three phenomena could be relevant to the study of the ethnogenesis of the Žumberak population.