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## PREFACE

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The Slovene Ethnographic Museum celebrates its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. Etnolog joins the celebrations with this festive volume. For this occasion, its cover is festive and colourful too, adorned with designs from objects from the SEM's treasures.

It is additionally festive because its theme section is dedicated to **holidays and celebrations**, a topical and interesting theme. We invited articles on holidays and celebrations as modern phenomena (at the personal, family, local, national, and international levels, and as recreated forms of celebrations), as well as discussions and experiences from the past from various areas of the way of living in Slovenia and abroad.

In his book *The interpretation of Cultures* (1973) Clifford Geertz writes that “people celebrate birthdays, but mankind doesn't”, because celebrations are as old as mankind itself and are a constituent part of culture. We do not celebrate only anniversaries of special meaning in the life of individuals or communities, but also those of institutions - museums. The Slovene Ethnological Lexicon (2007) states that we do so to emphasise *identity*.

The theme section of scientific articles starts with *The social construction of holidays: between heritage, identity and sustainable development* by **Saša Poljak Istenič**. The article is dedicated to the process of the social construction of holidays and the performance of traditional ritual practices at the local level by means of an analysis of local holidays in Janče near Ljubljana. In the countryside holidays are usually connected with past agricultural tasks, crops, or the changing seasons. Ritual practices used to unite a community or had a magical meaning, but in their present form of performance they turn into cultural heritage, influencing people's feelings of affiliation and bonding the inhabitants, but also have considerable economic effects. At the same time, holidays may stimulate cultural creativity, develop ecological consciousness, and support the development of the countryside in line with the of sustainable development.

**Marjeta Pisk's** article '*Seeing Abraham*' and other jubilees addresses the etiology of the proliferation of celebrating personal anniversaries – especially fiftieth birthdays and other jubilees – in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Special attention is dedicated to the role of a personified “Abraham” and its connections with the entertainment programs of folk-pop music. The article further describes different aspects and views of setting up jubilee maypoles and their traditional roles.

In *An ethnographic museum as a space for celebrating vulnerable groups* **Ralf Čeplak Mencin** addresses (ethnographic) museums, which in the past thirty years

have reorganised themselves and turned into institutions opening their premises to a variety of publics and social and political problems. These changes have been influenced by critical analyses of society, activists for human rights, the worsening financial crisis, democratisation, and numerous competing media and institutions. Festivals are an alternative form of museum activities. They are an attractive way of communicating with the public at different levels, while enabling disadvantaged creative people to play an active part in planning and realising various museum events, which can take place simultaneously at different locations.

With her article *The continuity of symbols – The fertility ritual of the Three Virgins of Copoya in Mexico* **Marija Mojca Terčelj** takes us across the Atlantic Ocean to a quite different cultural area. The article draws attention to the fact of historical dynamics and the universality of symbols. The feast of the Three Virgins of Copoya is historically connected with the colonial institution of indigenous brotherhoods (*cofradías indias*) of New Spain, the system of its religious posts (*el sistema de los cargos religiosos*), and the Marian cult. It also reflects elements of the previous institution of the *cowiná* (extended family) and fertility rites. The celebration nowadays continues in the modern institution of *mayordomía* (stewardship) of Tuxtla Gutiérrez and witnesses to symbolic continuity and the social and religious adaptability of the local Zoque indigenous population and the many economic, political and social changes.

Together with **Miha Poredoš** and his article *Fiesta de Mamacha Cocharcas: Sacrifice and reciprocity during the Marian celebration of the Virgin of Cocharcas, Sapallanga, Peru*, we remain at the other side of the ocean. The feast of the Virgin of Cocharcas, patron saint of Sapallanga, is one of the most important days of the calendar year, which spread from Bolivia to Peru by way of trade routes. It replaced the pre-Hispanic spring festival of the fertility goddess *Coya Raymi*. The inhabitants of the village perform a variety of tasks during the feast to preserve and reaffirm the reciprocity between the Virgin and the community. Successful collaboration in the feast strengthens the ties between the individuals and the community, establishes and confirms their social status and ethnic identity. This requires riches and affluence to be distributed as is manifested through the folklore dances. This way of sacrificing to and worshipping Our Lady enables a new cycle of accumulating material wealth, creates a feeling of reciprocity and preserves and reaffirms the community's collective memory..

*Celebrating diversity and unity on Reunion – The presence of two discourses* by **Petra Žišt** takes us to the social space of Reunion, an island in the Indian Ocean that is today a French department and region, formed in the course of many migration waves from Africa, Asia, and Europe; in the social and historical context of French colonialism they brought together people from very different cultural and social environments. All these phenomena of interaction between different groups, acculturation, borrowing, adaptation, and rejection gave birth to a Creole society within the colonial society. Today we witness two different identity discourses: the first draws on the history and different origins of the population and is based on cultural plurality or multiculturalism, while the second is the discourse on the Creole identity, which serves to unite people in relation to all non-Reunionians, and is considered a synonym for Reunionian. This discourse indeed tries to generalise the identity issue on the island across the entire population. It shows in the definitions of the “Creole” language, music, food, etc., but also in the introduction of new holidays,

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the foundation of museums, and cultural policy programmes. Alongside these two discourses or identity positions, the old colonial discourse also survives and through assimilation models pushes the French identity to the foreground.

**Maja Dolinar's** article *The importance of sacrificing animals: celebrating Eid-Al-Adha in the town of Meknes in north Morocco* deals with the Arab cultural area. Eid-Al-Adha, or to use the in Slovenia more familiar name Kurban Bayram, is a Muslim holiday celebrated at the end of the annual *Hajj* - the pilgrimage to Mecca. The feast is a reminder of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his first-born son Ismail as an act of submission to god. Muslims honour this day with prayers and religious sacrifices of animals, and it is therefore also called the "feast of the sacrifice". The article is based on an ethnographic description of celebrating the holiday with a Moroccan family and reveals the meaning of religious sacrifice of animals to Muslims in contemporary Morocco.

The second section of scientific articles consists of a variety of papers that are indicative of the vast range of themes studied by ethnology and cultural anthropology

In her article *The topicality of researching and studying female migrant workers in the context of the "Alexandrian women"* (a discussion on the book *Dediščina aleksandrink in spomini njihovih potomcev* by Daša Koprivec) **Mirjam Milharčič Hladnik** describes the context of research into women's migrations and care work as a contemporary phenomenon of the developed world, where it was supposed to have disappeared long ago. It places the book about the "Alexandrian women" by Daša Koprivec in a wider European and global research trend, presenting historical and contemporary forms of women's paid care work. Work and the migration of women connected to it have always been embedded in normative, socially prescribed gender roles, and as a result in the national imagination. As the text shows, the (past) migration of women to Alexandria is therefore once more an important social topic in Slovenia. Equally important are the subjective experiences of the women migrants and their descendants, which are now finally heard thanks to researches and books like the present one by Daša Koprivec.

In *On the meanings of verbal salutations* **Gorazd Makarovič** addresses the concept, functionality, types, and meanings of verbal salutations in different societies and Slovenia. Salutations or greetings are very old, among the most ordinary and most frequently used cultural elements, which have different meanings in different societies and periods, but they nearly always have positively meant meanings. Their basic social function is to consolidate good interpersonal relations; the opposite of salutations are curses and insults. There are nearly uncountable salutations, many more than there are languages and their changes.

Verbal salutations are often sent or conveyed in written messages. The ways and types of salutations and responses to them reflect the social relationship between the saluting person and the saluted one, while some greetings emphasise affiliation to a political, ideological, religious, occupational, societal, or other formal or informal community, class, environment or movement. The salutations in Slovenia are cultural versions and varieties of European culture.

*The Muslim population of Sandžak: a comparative study of national identification in Serbia and Montenegro* by **Jakob Fišer** addresses the issue of national identification among the Muslim population of Sandžak. It focuses on a comparative analysis of such identification among the inhabitants of the Serbian and Montenegrin parts of the region. The core of this analysis derives from the results of a field research

in Sandžak carried out between March and May 2012. In this analysis we clearly observed differences between the two countries, and the second part of the article therefore attempts to theoretically explain them. In doing so the issue of national identity in Sandžak is treated as part of the wider issues of the development of national identities in general.

**Marko Frelj** and **Vesna Podržaj** present six to date unpublished staffs from the African Collection of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum in their article *The importance of African staffs, drawing on specimens from the collection of the Slovene ethnographic museum*. Its main focus is on the ritual staffs of the Dogon from Mali. The article describes the phenomenon and development of staffs from ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Etruria, and Greece to Early Christian Ireland, and the intercultural connections with the staffs from the African Collection of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum. The research was carried out on the basis of records, iconography, and archaeological finds. The study of such staffs is important because they had a social and religious role in ancient cultures, in some places in Africa even to the present day, while they have become forgotten in Europe, with the exception of their use in Christian rituals and the coronation of monarchs.

The article *Slovene priests-homeopaths in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries* by **Nena Židov** presents Slovene priests who engaged in homeopathy in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Their activities were very important, especially in the countryside, where there was a lack of physicians and they were often too remote or expensive for the peasant population, while the priests treated them for free. Some Slovene missionaries also turned to homeopathy to relieve their own health problems, as well as to treat indigenous peoples

This festive year is additionally marked with a special section entitled ***The SEM celebrates its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary***. It is introduced by the museum's director **Bojana Rogelj Škafar**, who first describes the history of the museum's operation and its future orientations, but especially outlines the challenges facing the museum as a modern institution in the present times. This introduction is followed by a selection of the most important events celebrating the anniversary in the course of the year. Two in particular marked the jubilee year 2013: this year's central exhibition *Doors: spatial and symbolic passageways of life* by the museum's curator **Polona Sketelj**, which the French ethnologist Pascal Dibie (Ethnologie de la porte) qualified as unique in the world, and the art film *The time of aliquot particles* by **Miha Vipotnik**. The festive supplement concludes with a somewhat different view of the workings of the museum in the past and present – including short notes, flashes, memories, and critical reflections from fellow ethnologists and other experts, who were or continue to be connected with the SEM in one way or another. The following people responded to our invitation; **Ingrid Slavec Gradišnik, Boris Kuhar, Inja Smerdel, Vito Hazler, Marjetka Golež Kaučič, Andreja Brancelj Bednaršek, Anja Serec Hodžar, Vladimir Bocev, Klaus Beidl, Margot Schindl, Verena Perko** and **Marjeta Mikuš**.

In some way, this year's ***Museum News*** is festive as well as it once more reflects the great variety of events in our museum and some other Slovene museums. **Nadja Valentinčič Furlan** has written an exhaustive review of the two-way communication in the permanent exhibition of the SEM I, *we and the others: images of my world*, enabled and triggered by the audiovisual material. **Andrej Dular** and

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**Marko Frelj** present two exhibitions based on the photographic legacy of Peter Naglič, staged at two different locations and almost simultaneously. **Janja Žagar** describes two of the many student exhibitions staged in collaboration with the SEM. **Tita Porenta** writes about the photographic exhibition on the Sinti in the Radovljica Municipal Museum, which was also hosted by the SEM. **Jana Mlakar Adamič** from the Zasavje Museum in Trbovlje writes about the exhibition *The December Three*, whose contents are well in line with this festive volume of *Etnolog*. **Miha Špiček**, co-curator of the exhibition on Peter Naglič, writes on the digitisation of Naglič's photographic material, while **Andrej Dular** reviews the exhibition. Another article by **Andrej Dular**, related to a new acquisition, addresses the donation of the family of butcher Josip Rozman from Ljubljana. In the sub-section *Reports* **Jana Rožker** sheds light on the importance of Ralf Čeplak Mencin's monograph *In the Celestial Dragon's Land: 350 Years of Slovenian Chinese Encounters* to Slovenia and globally. **Anja Jerin** reports on the activities of the Coordinator of the protection of the living cultural heritage in 2013, **Nadja Valentinčič Furlan** on the project *The theme path "On our own land"*, **Nina Zdravič Polič** on the ICOM Slovenia 2013 award for internationally outstanding projects given to the *Orinoco* exhibition, and **Bojana Rogelj Škafar** on this year's meeting of directors of European ethnographic museums, hosted by the SEM. *Museum News* concludes with three contributions that round up the varied events in the SEM in the past year with a survey of the exhibitions and other events, and an extensive bibliography of the SEM's staff members.

We sincerely hope that this volume of *Etnolog* reflects at least part of the festive mood that accompanied our work at Metelkova street in Ljubljana throughout the year. The SEM's doors will remain wide open to all visitors, and to all good, creative, and noble ideas, in the future. And the same is true of the next volume of our bulletin.