

Inja Smerdel: *Orala = Ploughing Implements*. Ljubljana : Slovenski etnografski muzej, 2008, 234 str. : ilustr. (Knjižnica Slovenskega etnografskega muzeja; 10)

Dvojezična knjiga v slovenščini in angleščini, lepo opremljena z več kot 150 barvnimi in okrog 60 črno-belimi ilustracijami. Avtoričino besedilo je ustrezno podprto z angleškim prevodom Franca Smrketa, lepimi posnetki Marka Habiča in oblikovanjem Jurija Kocbeka.

Na prvi pogled bi naslovnica z naslovom *Orala – Ploughing implements* in s slikami sedmih starih predmetov lahko odvrnila potencialne bralce, ki jih zanima kultura, a skrbno oblikovanje in prefinjeno, valovito, čokoladno rjavo ozadje nas vendar vabita, da knjigo odpremo; in potem ugotovimo, da vsem nam, ki ne razumemo slovenščine, ni treba da se zadovoljujemo zgolj z angleškim prevodom pri ilustracijah sredi slovenskega besedila in da o ostalem le ugibamo, ker je poglavje za poglavjem v celoti prevedeno v angleščino; enako velja tudi za opombe in vire. Tako hitro zvemo, da oralo preprosto pomeni “*ploughing implement*”, ralo pa “*ard*”.

Knjiga je imenitno zgrajeno delo o predmetu in temi, na katero bi danes marsikdo gledal kot na nekaj, kar spada v preteklost, a s pregledom evropske kulturne/poljedelske zgodovine in z umestitvijo koristne znanstvene razprave v čezmejno perspektivo avtorica temi dodaja težo in povezuje vse tisto, kar je neotipljivo, toda bistvenega pomena pri ustvarjeni zbirki oral.

Prvi izziv Inje Smerdel, etnologinje in bivše direktorice Slovenskega etnografskega muzeja v Ljubljani, pri pisanju te knjige je po mojem moral biti, kako danes, leta 2008, najti način za predstavitev komentiranega kataloga muzejske zbirke z okrog 50 orali, ki bo relevanten domači in širši, mednarodni javnosti.

Način, ki ga je izbrala, je bil pogled na orala v širšem kontekstu – v povezovanju slovenskih oral in slovenskih raziskav tega orodja s sočasnimi raziskovalnimi razpravami priznanih strokovnjakov na tem področju v Evropi ter v komentarju teh razprav z današnjega vidika.

Taka zbirka orodij v muzeju je plod raziskovalnega zbiranja podatkov o prejšnji lokalni ali regionalni raznolikosti za kmeta in za poljedelske postopke zelo pomembnega obdelovalnega orodja. Predstavitev je podana v lepih barvnih slikah s podatki o pridobitvi, nastanku, izvoru, tipu, imenu, dimenzijah, lastnikih itd.

Ilustracije z ustreznimi imeni za posamezne dele oral, plugov ali ral v slovenščini in angleščini bodo gotovo zelo cenjene pri bralcih.

Velika raznolikost tipov tako rala kot pluga, ki so jih zbrali na slovenskem podeželju v petdesetih letih prejšnjega stoletja, se zrcali v somernih ralih, ralih z ali brez plaza, četverkotnih ralih s kolci z ali brez lemežnic, četverkotnih ralih na oje, nesomernih enojnih plugih na oje ali brez ojesa, rezalnicah, osipalnikih in nesomernih dvojnih plugih. Prikazano je tudi, kako in s kakšnimi vzorci so orali v različnih okoljih z dvema do osmimi voli; na risbi (št. 57) sta prikazana osnovna načina oranja; tako oranje na ravno (c), ki je bilo v rabi na strmih njivah z ralom ali dvojnim plugom, in drugi, običajni način, pri katerem se začne orati na robu polja in konča na sredini tako, da je njiva "razvržena" (a) in na popravljeni risbi (b) se naslednje leto oranje začne po sredinski črti z enojnim plugom in nastane "zložena njiva".

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Knjiga se začne s predstavitvijo etnoloških raziskav in terenskega dela pri zbiranju ustnih podatkov in predmetov, ki pričajo o preteklih načinih oranja v Sloveniji; pri tem se Inja Smerdel še posebno osredotoči na prispevek in raziskave slovenskega etnologa Borisa Orla (1903–1962), rojenega v Brnici (Fürnitz) na avstrijskem Koroškem. Prvo orno orodje, ki ga je pridobil leta 1950, je bilo četverkotno ralo s kolci. Dve poglavji sta v celoti posvečeni Orlovim motivom, začetkom njegovega raziskovanja oral, teoretskemu kredu, metodam dela, ugotovitvam in prispevkom o nesnovni dediščini poljedelskih tehnik.

Avtorica korak za korakom bralcu odkriva, kako je Orel v petdesetih in šestdesetih letih prejšnjega stoletja opravljal svoje delo in ga povezoval s sodobnimi raziskovalnimi prizadevanji in razpravami evropskih strokovnjakov, in opisuje, kako so slovensko gradivo in raziskave vpete v mednarodno zgodovino pluga. S tem, ko na kratko nakazuje poti zgodovinskega razvoja, slovensko gradivo umešča v ta razvoj in opozarja na vidike in faze v zgodovinskem razvoju rala in pluga po svetu in v evropskem prostoru. Zelo pomembna je tudi omemba vprašanja, kako daleč na zahod v Evropi so segle slovanske tehnike oranja in ali je neka tehnika izumrla in za njo ni ostalo vidnih sledi – ali vsaj ne nedvoumno interpretiranih najdb –, preden so v Sebenjskem zakladu odkrili dva ozka tulasta lemeža za soho.

Ko Inja Smerdel umešča slovensko predmetno gradivo in delo etnoloških raziskovalcev v širši evropski kontekst, suvereno citira in navaja vrsto mednarodno znanih evropskih raziskovalcev zgodovine oral zadnjih petdesetih let iz Francije, Avstrije, Italije, Hrvaške, Danske itd. Mnogi izmed njih so bili korespondenti ali člani mreže Mednarodnega sekretariata za raziskovanje zgodovine poljedelskih orodij, ki je bila ustanovljena v Kopenhagnu 1954. leta in deluje še danes; številna dela, ki jih Inja Smerdel citira, so bila objavljena bodisi v publikaciji *Tools& Tillage* ali se izvodi teh knjig hranijo na sekretariatu. Sama sem bila tajnica organizacije od leta 1968 in urednica publikacije *Tools&Tillage* do prenehanja njenega izhajanja leta 1996.

S pristopom, ki je osredotočen bolj na človeka, je Inja Smerdel o tej zbirki uporabnega orodja spletla zanimivo podobo, ki ji pestrost daje ustvarjalnost in posamezne rešitve ljudi; ko prikazuje dolgotrajne vidike, lahko zasledimo tako starodavne posebnosti kot nedavne. Plug obravnava tudi kot umetniško metaforo in med drugim navaja pregovor natisnjen na papirnati vrečki za kruh: “Brez orača in pridnega kopača ni ne kruha, ne kolača.”

A knjiga je hkrati tudi zelo koristen vir za raziskovalce, ki se bodo lotili primerjalnih študij in sestavljali mozaik evropske raznolikosti na osnovi dejanskega gradiva namesto na osnovi razmišljanj in teorij in ki bodo iz prikazanih orodij hoteli ugotoviti, kako jih je bilo mogoče uravnjavati in kako so se izogibali obrabi.

Inja Smerdel je hotela več, slovensko zbirko je hotela videti v širšem okviru, in dvojezični seznam vsebine jasno pove, kaj obravnavajo posamezna poglavja:

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1. O oralih, oranju in Orlu
2. Orlovi vzgibi in začetki preučevanja oral
3. Orlov teoretski krédo, metode dela in dognanja; doneski k nesovni dediščini poljedelskih tehnik
4. Z orali skozi čas in prostor, na Slovenskem in drugod
5. Pripoved muzejske zbirke
6. Uporabljeni viri in slovstvo
7. Uvodna beseda h katalogu zbirke in risb oral
8. Katalog predmetov
9. Kazala kraja uporabe, tipov in materialov

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Ploughing Implements, The Collection of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, a bilingual book in Slovene and English, 234 pages, well illustrated with over 150 colour and up to 60 black-and-white illustrations. The author's own text and its content are well backed up by the English text by Franc Smrke, fine photographs by Marko Habič, and design and lay out by Jurij Kocbek.

At first glance, the cover with its title “Orala - Ploughing implements” and pictures of 7 old implements may frighten away some culturally interested readers, but its careful design and the very delicate, wavy chocolate brown background surely tempt us to open the book, and we then find out that those of us, who are not capable of reading a Slovene text, do not have to make do with English texts added to the illustrations in the Slovene text and guess the rest, but can read chapter after chapter fully in English, and this applies also to the informative notes and sources. We thus quickly learn that *oralo* simply means ploughing implement in Slovene, and *ralo* means ard.

It is an amazingly finely orchestrated book on a subject and theme which today many would look upon as a thing of the past, but by surveying Europe's cultural/agricultural history and drawing the useful scholarly discussion in perspective across the borders, she adds meat to the bones, and connects it to the immaterial but essential aspects that are behind the created collection of ploughing implements.

The first challenge to Inja Smerdel, an ethnologist and former director of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum in Ljubljana, in writing this book must have been to find a way to present today, in 2008, a commented catalogue of the museum's collection of about 50 ploughing implements in a way relevant to the national, as well to a wider international audience.

The approach she chose was to look at the collection in a wider research context and associate the Slovene ploughing implements and related research in Slovenia with contemporary research discussions among esteemed scholars in the field around Europe and comment on them from the present standpoint.

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The illustrations with the relevant terms for the different parts of the ploughing implements, ards and ploughs, added in both Slovene and English, will certainly be appreciated by the readers.

The great diversity in types of both *ralo* and *oralo*, collected in the Slovene countryside in the 1950s consists of symmetric ards, ards with or without a sole, rectangular wheel ards with or without mould stokers, rectangular ards with yoke beams, asymmetric single ploughs with and without wheels, ristles, ridging ploughs, and asymmetric double ploughs. The book shows how tillage was performed and which patterns were created with two to eight oxen; a drawing (fig. 57) shows the principle of basic ploughing patterns: reversible ploughing (c), common on steep fields and done with an ard or double plough and the conventional pattern, where one starts at the edge of the field and ends in the centre, called "casting" (a), and in the corrected drawing (b) in my copy, the next year ploughing begins along the middle line with a single plough, and is called "gathering".

First, however, she presents how the ethnological research and fieldwork were carried out in gathering oral and material evidence of former ploughing practices in Slovenia, and Smerdel has a special focus on the contribution and research of the Slovene ethnologist Boris Orel (1903-1962), a Slovene born in Fürnitz, Carinthia, Austria, whose first acquired ard was a rectangular wheel ard in 1950. Two chapters specifically deal with Orel's motives and the beginnings of his research into ploughing implements and his theoretical credo, working methods and findings, and contribution to the intangible heritage of tillage techniques.

Step by step, she reveals to the readers how this work was carried out in the 1950s and 60s and how it was connected with the contemporary research discussions and works of European scholars, and she associates the Slovene material and research with the international history of the plough. Through brief references to paths in the historical development, she places the Slovene material in this development, and she points out aspects and steps in the historical development of the ards and ploughs in the world and around Europe through archaeological finds. She quite relevantly also mentions the

question how far westwards the Slavic tilling technique extended in Europe, whether it had disappeared, leaving no or only tentatively interpreted finds before the time of the two narrow socketed shares for a sokha discovered in the Sebenje hoard.

When Smerdel puts the Slovene material and works of ethnological researchers into the wider European context she cites and refers with great ease to many of Europe's internationally well-known researchers into the history of ploughing implements from the last 50 years, be it from France, Austria, Italy, Croatia, or Denmark. Many of them corresponded with or were members of the network International Secretariat for Research on the History of Agricultural Implements, which started in Copenhagen in 1954 and has continued to operate to the present day. Many of the works Smerdel cites were published by the secretariat in the journal *Tools&Tillage* or copies of their works are kept there. I happen to have been its secretary from 1968 and editor of *T&T* until publication was stopped in 1996.

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With her more human centred approach Inja Smerdel has knitted an interesting picture of this collection of practical tools, to which the creativity and individual solutions of humans gave diversity; as she outlines the longer perspective, ancient traits as well as recent ones can be traced. She also devotes attention to the plough as an art metaphor, citing a proverb printed on a paper bread bag: There is no bread or cake without a ploughman and a hard-working digger!

The book is, however, also a useful handbook to researchers who will make comparative studies and put together bits and pieces of the European diversity, based on factual evidence more than on thoughts and theories, and who like to decode from the depicted tools how they could be regulated and how wear was avoided .

Inja Smerdel wanted more, she wanted to see the Slovene collection in a broader frame, and the bilingual list of the book's contents clearly shows what the individual chapters deal with:

1. On ploughing implements, ploughing and Boris Orel
2. Orel's motives and the beginnings of his research into ploughing implements
3. Orel's theoretical credo, his working methods and findings; contributions to the intangible heritage of tillage techniques
4. Ploughs through history, in Slovenia and elsewhere
5. The story of the museum collection
6. Sources and literature
7. Introduction to the collection, catalogue and drawings of ploughing implements
8. Catalogue of objects
9. Indexes of places of use, types and materials