

# ETHNOGRAPHIC OBJECTS – PREVENTIVE DESINSECTION BY IRRADIATION

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*Carnival King of Europe* is a project of the Museum of Folkways of Trentino, San Michele all' Adige (Italy). Partners in the project were the Zagreb Ethnographic Museum (Croatia), the Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilisations of Marseille (France), the National Ethnographic Museum of Skopje (Macedonia) and the National Ethnographic Museum of Sofia (Bulgaria). The aim of the project was to identify and research common roots of the European carnival as a part of winter fertility rites still practiced in many rural communities in Europe.

- Inv.br. 47 299 Mask of wolf, Viškovo
- Inv.br. 22 162 Maska Lampa, Turčišće, Međimurje
- Inv.br. 47 301a Mask cattle, Viškovo



Inv.br. 24 074 Mask Larfa, Duboševica



Inv.br. 24 461 Mask Kapa, Mohač, Mađarska



Inv.br. 25 434 Mask Larfa gypsy, Turčišće

The exhibition, staged at project partner museums, also showcased several items related to carnival customs from the depot of the Zagreb Ethnographic Museum. After several years of display in inadequate conditions (unfavourable micro-climate, lightning, relative humidity, parasites...) and due to the diversity of materials used in the creation of carnival masks (wood, fur, leather, paper, animal horns, snouts, ears...), the objects were treated with gamma irradiation. Irradiation disinsection was carried out in the irradiation device at the Ruđer Bošković Institute, with a dosage of up to 2 kGy. After the treatment, the objects were subject to mechanical cleaning and returned to the depot. Gamma irradiation was selected in this case as the most adequate parasite elimination method.



*Carnival, in Croatian poklade, fašnik (kajkavian regions), fašange (Baranja), pust (Istria), karneval (Adriatic regions), is very important in the annual cycle of folk customs. In terms of timing, it occurs at the winter solstice, i.e. the time preceding spring, when the sun increases and the day grows longer. It is the beginning of new life on earth, when magical spells must be used to ensure fertility in the current year. At this time, young people in rural and urban areas disguise as various characters and cover their faces with various masks to avoid being recognisable in their community. (Benc Bošković, 1990:3)*

- Inv.br. 26 196 Mask, Marčelji Kastav
- Inv.br. 47 300 Mask pokladna, Viškovo
- Inv.br. 9397 Mask Zvončara, Marčelji Kastav

*Masks were used in ancient history epochs (the Neolithic) as magical objects to fight off various demons. Hunters used masks to identify with animals in order to catch or control them more easily, while farmers used them to protect from supernatural forces and adverse weather conditions. Zoomorphic and anthropomorphic masks originated from these ancient times and continue to exist in various forms and diverse customs, including carnival customs, to the present day. (Benc Bošković, 1990:3)*

*The basic aim of carnival customs is to turn away evil forces and demons that could harm people and their environment. Thus these customs have a magical apotropaic meaning, although such purpose of carnival customs and rituals is completely forgotten today and they are practiced only for entertainment purposes. (Benc Bošković, 1990:3)*

LITERATURA  
Benc Bošković, K. (1990) *Carnival Masks and Customs of the Past*. Carnival – Magic – Critics

Masks and Carnival Rites; Ethnographic Museum Zagreb, Institute for Folklore Research, Zagreb, p. 3-9. (originally in Croatian).



RADIJACIJSKE METODE U ZAŠTITI KULTURNE BAŠTINE  
Zagreb, Muzej Mimara 4. X 2011. Hrvatski restauratorski zavod, Institut Ruđer Bošković 5. X 2011.

IRRADIATION METHODS IN THE PROTECTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE  
Zagreb, Mimara Museum Oct 4th 2011, Croatian Conservation Institute and Ruđer Bošković Institute Oct 5th 2011