

Mlekuž, Jernej (ed.), Damir Josipovič, Mojca Kovačič and Dimitrij Mlekuž. 2015. *Venček domačih. Predmeti, Slovencem sveti [A Medley of National Favourites. Things That Make Slovenes Shine]*. Ljubljana: Založba ZRC. 192 pp. Pb.: 16.00 €. ISBN: 9789612547714.

The book *The Wreath of the National* is the final result of the basic research project *Imagined Material Culture. Reflection on the Spread of the Nationalism in the Company of Material Culture*. It connects studies of nations and nationalism and studies of material culture as it treats symbolically, conceptually and discursively highly charged objects – the Carniolan sausage, the accordion, the Vače situla and the gibanica cake – which occupy a special place in the imaginaries of Slovenian nationalism.

The most striking is the editorial written by Jernej Mlekuž and entitled *The Nose and Two Ears of the Nation* following Ernest Gellner saying ‘a man must have a nationality as he must have a nose and two ears’ (1983: 3). It brings a (sometimes even too) brief overview of the most frequently covered studies of nations and nationalism and the role of material culture in the (re)production of nationalism. The author states that in the process of nationalisation (and formation of its culture and traditions) some material objects were selectively used for its representation. Those objects were imagined top-down, by elites, but were appropriated by the wider public. Objects which glitter to the nation are therefore material objectifications of those ideas and requests that are aimed at defining the nation by objective criteria. These objects are not important merely due to their symbolic, representation value, but also due their materiality, by which author refers to Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood (1979) and to David Miller’s process of objectification (1987). Therefore, nationality is not just imagined but also objectified.

The first paper, *Imagined Carniolian Sausage – in Time, Space, Language and Mouth* by Jernej Mlekuž, presents the role of the Carniolan sausage in the formation and development of Slovene national consciousness from the Spring of Nations until the labelling of it with protected designation of origin in 2008. It has thus not become an outdated identification element, but is living and continuous identification and communication element, which belongs to several generations, participates in a variety of (not necessary harmonious) traditions and has inherited several legacies.

Mojca Kovačič, the author of the article *In the Land of accordion – nationalization of the accordion in the Slovenian context*, presents the history of the introduction of that instrument to folk bands in the 19th century, in pop-folk bands in the 20th century, and its current striking role among the nationally-representative objects.

Dimitrij Mlekuž shows – by employing Latour’s (1993) actor-network theory and Gell’s technology of enchantment (1992) – in the paper *The Lord of the Vessels – the Situla and the Slovenes* the outstanding part that belongs among the variety of different objects to the Vače situla. Such a role is (among others) a legacy of its age as nations and nationalisms need the past and therefore archaeology (as well as and other historical sciences) in order to reveal, document, and construct national heritage.

The last paper with a title that is polemical at first sight but explained in the text – *The Layer (Gibanica) Cake – Ritual Dish of the Upper Class of the Old Slovenes*

(*Staroslovenci*) by Damir Josipovič shows that *gibanica* was not merely (as all the above objects) employed in the process of ethnonational emancipation, but it also objectifies several problems of nativness. The *gibanica* cake entails regional indicator to Prekmurje (hereby Old Slovenes, referring to the old Slovene language (*staroslovenščina*)) which is complementary to the mainstream Carniolity (or Young Slovenes (*mladoslovenci*)). At the same time, *gibanica* refers to the stratification of the society, to the culinary influence of the Jewish inhabitants of Prekmurje, and as a traditional speciality guaranteed (and not as protected geographical indication, as stated by the author) the *gibanica* cake constructs the non-negotiable boundary of the Sloveneness in Prekmurje towards the Croatness of Medžimurje despite the common geographical and cultural origins.

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