

Heritage Animals – Why Not? Anthropocentrism Notwithstanding

————— Ivona Orlić, Suzana Marjanić —————

This article discusses the relationship of men towards Istrian cattle (*boškarin*) through the years. The authors question the problem of treating the animals as objects of natural-cultural heritage. The concepts of Nature and Culture remain anthropocentrically segregated, and this is also reflected in promoting the *boškarin* as a gastro-phenomenon, which was the dominant feature of the project *Boškarin with Potatoes* (2012–2014) by the City of Pula, developed as the collaboration with the French town of Villefranche-de-Rouergue, which became the partner city of Pula in 2008. The authors claim that one can only talk about *heritage species* (especially traditional or autochthonous livestock breeds), but not about *heritage animals* (the animals in the concept of heritage), and that the anthropology of animals, as defined for instance by socio-cultural anthropologist Barbara Noske, can be – or ought to be – a segment of ethnographic studies of the 21st century.

KEYWORDS: Boškarin or Istrian ox, heritage animals, agro-tourism, gastro-tourism, anthropocentrism

INTRODUCTION

This study aims at problematizing Istrian cattle and the Boškarin through heritage. Is it possible that *branches* dealing with heritage, both tangible (such as museums where objects are kept) and intangible (which wishes to be called living heritage), deal with animals? Anthropologists and ethnologists dealing with intangible culture want it to stay alive, despite its disappearance in its original form. In order to preserve musical and dance heritages, they are popularized, but also self-funded through, for instance, performances for tourists.

Can an animal that had a significant role in the everyday life of people in Istria be inherited in the same or similar way?

My personal interest in the *boškarin*¹ emerged from an encounter with this animal more than 20 years ago. Funnily adorned and walking clumsily, it wriggled through the throng

¹ The noun *boškarin* is written in italics (*boškarin*) when used as a synonym for Istrian cattle; the noun has recently come into everyday use to denote a castrated bull; the capital letter (Boškarin) emphasizes the personal name of an ox of Istrian breed, as used 50 and more years ago and has been preserved with the older generation; the noun *boškarin* is written in capital letters (BOŠKARIN) when contextualized through a coexistence with man; the form *boškarin* is used in quotes.

of summer guests of the overcrowded tourist town of Poreč. Everyone was marvelling at it, both tourists and locals, even its owner who was walking proudly next to it. The tourist attraction was walking... This lyric introduction was inspired by the following thought of the contemporary German philosopher Andrea L. Hofbauer:

The experience of research consists precisely in a man encountering something, in something appearing, adverting attention and disturbing, and not in searching for something, something defined even before the search has commenced (2007: 18).

The reasons that I am still dealing with the problem of Istrian cattle and/or *boškarin* are manifold. The appearance of autochthonous Istrian cattle, especially of an ox, also called *boškarin*, cannot but attract attention. Furthermore, you will soon feel something disturbing if you encounter it on asphalt or within an urban area; you then start searching for something specific – the meaning of its existence today – before you know it.

The wish to preserve the autochthonous breed of Istrian cattle, due to a sharp drop of its numbers and the danger of its extinction, has brought about a string of deliberations and activities in order to modernize and conceive the further life course of the *boškarin*. Whilst the process of extinction has been stopped, the link with human culture, which brought it to the edge of existence and then raised it up again, remains vague. Furthermore, the considerations regarding Istrian cattle in the everyday Istrian life brought about the problems regarding terminology. The present and future interactions of man and *boškarin*, inevitably relying on traditional moments, are the topic of this article.



Boškarin in Bužleti, 2007 (photo by Ivona Orlić).

TERMINOLOGY

The *Great Dictionary of the Croatian Language (Veliki rječnik hrvatskoga jezika)* by Vladimir Anić reads: *boškarin m (G boškarin) reg. Istrian cattle, have pronouncedly large horns, ital.* (Anić, 2004:106). Consequently, *boškarin* is written with a lowercase letter; this is Istrian cattle with exceptionally large horns, and its etymology is of Italian origin. According to Dorigo, *boškarin* is the name which today denotes Istrian cattle of the steppe breed reduced to a genetic relic (1995: 72). A friend of mine, Darko Pekica, a cattle breeder from Svetvinčenat, explains: “Boškarin is the personal name given to a castrated bull, now an ox. Just like Galjardo, Srnea or Bakin, they are castrated bulls.” Scientific texts speak exclusively of the Istrian cattle comprising bulls, oxen, cows and calves. “Boškarin” is often the name of an ox, *boškarin* is the popular name for an ox belonging to the Istrian cattle breed, while the term “Istrian cattle” includes bulls, oxen, cows and calves (Orlić, 2007: 311-312). However, in my recent research conducted in Istria by talking to local people in 2006–2007, as well as the latest interviews conducted in 2015, I came to a field-based conclusion that is somewhat different from my previous considerations regarding the etymology of the name of this animal. Whilst it is clear that Boškarin is the name given to oxen, and we do know what is meant by Istrian cattle, the term *boškarin* defined by Anić in his *Dictionary* as a synonym for Istrian cattle has not been accepted in everyday language. More precisely, this depends on the age of the respondent. When older Istrians are questioned about a *boškarin*, they will be puzzled, and their answer will be something similar to: “I did not have a Boškarin, only a Galjardo”. To them, Boškarin is only a name given to an ox. They had their “blago” (Istrian for cattle), rarely cattle or livestock, which comprised, for instance, *two pairs of oxen, two cows and a calf*. To the younger generation the term *boškarin* means an Istrian ox, a castrate or Istrian cattle. This is how I.V., a student from Novigrad, clarifies in her essay:

“In my opinion the Istrian boškarin can be presented as a typical Istrian symbol of the past times. As far as I know, it was used to work in the fields and our granddads considered it as something ‘sacred’ (not literally). They were aware of its service and of its indispensability in field working, since war was going on and one had to struggle for food and survival. When I see it today, I remember the stories told by my granny and it takes me to inner Istria.”

This item can be substantiated with newspaper articles from the most widely read daily in Istria, *Glas Istre*.

“Despite the fact that quite a few years ago an association to save Istrian cattle was established under the name of the Association of Istrian Cattle Breeders (and not the Association of Boškarin Breeders); despite scientific papers on this topic having the term ‘Istrian cattle’ in their titles to refer to the breed, and not the term ‘boškarin’; despite the recently launched

megaproject for final preservation of Istrian cattle (and not: boškarin) through a cost-effective breeding for meat; despite all these, often and even in complex occasions, the wrong term ‘boškarin’ is used as the name of the breed” (Šišović, 2007: 18).

However, one must not forget Anić’s and other definitions and explanations listed above. Due to such ambiguities, the Agency for Rural Development of Istria (AZRRI) – whose aim is to preserve and safeguard Istrian cattle from extinction, also through promoting gastronomy – experienced rejection from a part of the Istrian people. In my opinion, the reason is the ambiguity of terminology. The exploitation of the Istrian ox in the immediate present as a symbol of Istrian identity – chosen, among other things, also because of a sentimental relation between the Istrian farmer and this noble, strong and gentle animal – led to the consequence that people collectively and emotively relate to the symbol of their origin. In this context, it is impossible that this symbol, i.e., an animal – is eaten. Moreover, it is difficult to kill and eat someone you spent five, ten, even more years together and you call it by its name. *Glas Istre* published in the column on reactions, an article entitled “Boškarin is a sacred animal for the Istrians” reading:

“The promotion of the ‘grand’ project initiated by the Istrian County regarding the raising of Istrian boškarin [it is interesting that ‘Istrian’ was emphasized, as if there were other boškarins, author’s comment] for meat. I could not but react to this absolutely hypocritical project which is completely contrary to Istrian tradition and culture, and is a reflection of total primitivism. [...] In Istria, boškarin is a holy animal for the Istrians and a greater symbol than a piece of meat. It is therefore unforgivable to brutally belittle such a beautiful animal that had never been considered an animal by the Istrians. [...] Investing the money of taxpayers into the most expensive meat production in order to feed the gluttonous, arrogant gentry is a total absurdity, all under the excuse of preserving Istrian cattle.” (Kufnić, 2007: 20).

The author of the text goes on to explain that boškarin will not be saved by greedy gentry or incentives, but only by love; he concludes that it is disgraceful to present and fabricate an autochthonous breed as a gourmet delicacy, explaining that the boškarin is like a pet and, like cats, it is not proper to eat it. In the article, Kufnić recollects his *did* (grandpa) with tears in his eyes while thinking about his oxen. This narrative is not an isolated case; most of my interviewees, now *didi* (grandpas) recollect their *blago* with tears in their eyes.

However, this generation has a completely different experience of animals. The sudden sickness or death of their cattle would directly endanger their lives. The emotional reaction of the reader of *Glas Istre*, who could not eat a Galjardo, a Boškarin, a Gardelin or any nameless *boškarin – castrated labourer* is therefore understandable. It is important to clarify that the permanent safeguarding of Istrian cattle, i.e. their survival, can

only be successful by means of a commercial source of a first-rate gastronomic offer. A transformation of the traditional relationship towards the animal, whose context also now involves a modern tourist gastronomic offer, must be considered through global implications: the need to preserve the autochthonous and the original through interests and possibilities of the present time.

WHAT SHOULD BE INHERITED AND WHAT SHOULD BE PRESERVED?

It is our intention in this paper to clarify how traditional inheritance may harm the preservation of Istrian cattle, while, conversely, by relying on tradition, attempts are made to preserve the autochthonous breed within the context of the inevitable economic profitability. We will try to grasp whether Istrian cattle were consumed as food, on what occasions and how often, and whether they can be considered as a gastronomic tradition of Istria. And finally, and perhaps most importantly, do we have any right today to castrate animals, under the contention of modern principles of economy and market capital, only to later eat them?

If the genetic material of Istrian cattle is to be preserved, cultural anthropology and anthropozoology have not much say in it; however, if the totality of the coexistence of man and Istrian cattle (Boškarin in particular), but also of cattle as an authentic and equal member of the zoological system of Istria is to be preserved, multidisciplinary collaboration is required. To observe Istrian cattle purely through the gastronomic aspect is definitively not in correlation with tradition. If we speak of a comprehensive concept of the cultural heritage of Istrian cattle, indivisible from man and from natural habitat (with an emphasis on pasture), then they must be seen as a heritage animal.

AUTOCHTHONOUS ISTRIAN CATTLE

Istrian cattle were first and foremost working cattle. When the cattle became old and feeble and died, they were used for various other purposes. Ox horns were used as ornaments or to make combs, snuffboxes, whetstone holders. Horns were also used to make flutes and parts of pipes. They were also used to make lantern walls, powder horns for hunters, as handles, holders for razors or billhooks. The scrotum was used to make snuffboxes and wallets. The outsole of shoes was made of cow leather (Radauš Ribarić, 1997: 27), just as powder bags and various belting, even the collar of the cowbell around a cow's neck. An interviewee from Žminj, G.Z., explains that the penis was used to make the *trta* (the link between the yoke and the ole). A traditional game *hitaj u rog* (hit the horn) is still known in Motovun (also played in Barban and Buzet; a horn is first hit down the hillside, and the aim is to hit a stick as close to the horn as possible).

Cattle would be borrowed. The owners of the borrowed ox would ask in return for help with vintage or some other job. The interviewee A.K. confirms: *We transported timber or manure or hay for others. Then the others helped us digging or harvesting*

crops or cutting grass. In the 16th century, in the area of Roč, cattle were hired, mostly for a measure of wheat, but also rye and millet. Almost always one ox was hired, only rarely a young ox or two oxen (Vlahov, 2006: 588-589).

In his description of the Poreč area before World War I, Radetić mentions that in autumn, when the harvesting season was over, thousands of sacks full of grain would be brought from the surrounding villages to the Poreč mills "...which milled and milled without stopping, day and night, and hundreds and hundreds of carts were waiting their turn, hundreds and hundreds of pairs of powerful oxen were drawing carts laden with barrels of finest wines..." (Radetić, 1969: 188).

It must be mentioned that cow milk was used for food and that a calf would be sold to cover household expenses, such as tax payment. Istrian cattle were a lasting asset to their owner. Beef was eaten on very rare occasions, normally after the sudden death of an animal.

Lovljanov, when describing the life circumstances of Boljun in 1905, in the chapter on food and kitchenware, mentions that oxen would very rarely be killed, and when this was necessary, they would be killed by hitting them with the blunt side of an axe on the head between the horns (Lovljanov, 1949: 127).

GROOMING AND CARE OF THE AUTOCHTHONOUS ISTRIAN CATTLE

The specific relationship between Istrian cattle and their owners is confirmed in the need to adorn the animals. One of the most eye-catching adornments on the Istrian cattle is the balls placed on the horns. These are first of all used as protection from stabbing, but also as decoration. M.G.: "Just like a young lady wearing earrings on her ears or a bracelet on her arms. Our elders would put brass bolts. And there it was, boasting its beautiful horns, excellent build, and if it had bolts, it was like a model."

Brass balls were placed on filed horns. In his philosophical deliberations, Hofbauer sees the brass decoration on the horns as a substitute for the "balls" which were taken from it before (Hofbauer, 2007: 25).

The removal of these balls, i.e. the cumbersome moment of castration, was made with the intention to keep the scrotum eye-appealing. As described by the interviewee M.G., in order to obtain: "... small but finely shaped balls. Nice balls, even when dried out on the inside. Now the method of removing them is used while leaving them empty and flabby, only the skin remains. It is not nice to see this. An ox must still have nicely shaped balls, even if it is not sexually capable."

Cowherds would brush and groom their oxen to clean their fur, especially when seasons were changing and the fur changed. In the area of Roverija, the Municipality of Juršiči, when going to the mill, farmers would rub bacon on the horns and hoofs of their cattle to make them shinier. Rubbing bacon on the area around the eyes and the navel (where the skin is thinner and softer) had a practical purpose as protection from insect bites.

SURVIVAL OF ISTRIAN CATTLE

The revitalization of Istrian cattle started with the establishment of the Association of Istrian Cattle Breeders registered in 1990 with headquarters in Višnjan. A plan was produced to save Istrian cattle, named *Istarski boškarin*, with the sole aim of preserving them from extinction. The main task was to find purebred Istrian cattle, which was a laborious task due to frequent cross-breeding. Fortunately, the majority of the living examples of Istrian cattle today have their blood type confirmed, based on which progeny and purity of Istrian cattle can be defined. The Croatian centre for animal reproduction is included in the safeguarding of Istrian cattle using the technique of *embryo transfer* and embryo freezing. “During the stock-taking carried out in Istrian barns in 1994, only 125 heads of Istrian cattle were found; according to Antolović,² when there is less than 500 heads left of a breed, the breed is, under the EU standards, considered endangered. In the last ten years, the number of Istrian cattle increased to 270 heads” (Maul, 2004: 16). Nowadays extinction is no longer threatening Istrian cattle, the number of heads ranging between 1,600 and 1,700, 800 of which have been set apart for breeding (cows, bulls and calves)³. This is hardly comparable with the figure of 50,000 registered before World War II, but it gives a reason for optimism and comfort compared to the figure of six genetically purebred samples in 1991.

The first genetic park of Istrian cattle, “Stancija boškarin”, opened in 1997 in Višnjan. At that point, the park housed 28 purebreds. The Višnjan venture was preceded by the Exhibition of Istrian Oxen – boškarins in Kanfanar during the local festival “Jakovljeva” held on the last Saturday of July. This exhibition was started in 1991.

The exhibition usually includes a varied cultural and artistic programme, but is also accompanied by political speeches. The guests of the exhibition of 2004 were thus addressed by the Mayor of Kanfanar, the President of the Association of Istrian Cattle Breeders and by the then prefect of the Istrian County, Ivan Jakovčić.

Among other things, the Prefect also announced an economic programme related to Istrian cattle that should be implemented in cooperation with the Slow Food Foundation and receive the support of various European funds, all this in the hope that boškarin will be safeguarded as a living monument of Istria. (Terzić, 2004:15)

The oxen parade through the village of Kanfanar along a path lined with numerous spectators until they reach the weighing scales. Cattle breeders demonstrate the skills of their animals in ploughing with a plough in pairs and individually. In the past, one ox or cow was used to close-plough vines and corn. A yoke of oxen would plough the land for planting potatoes and sowing grains. Ploughing an entire field would require two, three or more yokes of strong oxen, with two or more families forming a *sprega* (a team).

² Milan Antolović – Head of the County Administrative Department for Agriculture and Forestry.

³ Gordan Šubara, Dr. Med. Vet.; Economic Development Programmes Manager, AZRRI.

Deep ploughing would see three yokes of oxen, which was called a *šestarica* (a six-pack) (Šepić, 1997: 151.) Oxen are appraised in six categories: weight, obedience and beauty.

Owners of awarded oxen receive cash rewards. The experience of the festival is magnificent: mighty, good-natured and obedient animals seem as if arriving from a past moment to evoke feelings of nostalgia for past times, but also to evoke the feeling of regional belonging, without forgetting that they are here also as a tourist attraction. The justification of their arrival on asphalt – which is not their natural surface – to the stage (weighing scales) and their newly-acquired function as an exhibit, reflect our understanding and our choice about which animal species must survive; and – let us not be confused – also to our benefit.

Older citizens of Istria still cannot be reconciled with the consequences of the arrival of tractors. They recognize the strength of a tractor, but it is their common opinion that an ox can plough where a tractor cannot. The bond between a master and an ox can still be felt today. Former owners of a *Boškarin*, today owners of a tavern, have hung photos of the household and their relatives with their *Boškarin* all around the tavern. A retired farmer and innkeeper from Žbandaj, Mičo, taught us that *boškarins* used to be the measure of wealth, that they were extremely intelligent and easy-learning creatures, and that they would transfer knowledge to each other. When a new *boškarin* was yoked, it would soon learn how to plough with the assistance of the older *boškarin*.



Boškarin – from a peasant worker to a showpiece Jakovlja, Kanfanar, 2005 (photo by: Ivona Orlić).

EMOTIONAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MAN AND AUTOCHTHONOUS ISTRIAN CATTLE

“It is said that Jerolim has a better relationship with oxen than with people. When the lady sells an ox, he will not let her, he fights and cries and does not eat for two days.” (Valić, 2004:80).

An indicative and touching story was told by Š. B. from Višnjan who was liberated from a concentration camp in Berlin as a sixteen-year-old boy. Whilst the other prisoners took gold and other valuables they found, he took a chain for his Boškarin: “And I brought home a chain for Boškarin. I found a nice chain to hang the cowbell. I came back in 1945; the chain was very beautiful.”

The book of fiction *Štorije od žalosti* (Stories of Sorrow) by Drago Orlić contains 35 stories set in the first half of the 20th century, seven of which mention Istrian cattle. Let us mention some of them. In the story *Kumovi* (*Fellows*) the author describes the stealing of cattle: “In the blunt night delirium, I discerned brigands removing cowbells off the cattle and by the steps of the cattle I knew that his ox Galjardo, cow Srnela and the calf were being taken away” (Orlić 2007: 29). The story *Dvoboj* (Duel) describes the return of the main character from the hospital. He was brought home by his neighbours on an ox cart. Maybe the most scenic and emotional relationship between cattle and man is shown in the story *Pizdohran* (Live-in Son-in-law):

The young bull Brun, still uncastrated and without brass “bolts” on its horns, charged out of the blue and with all its might against Srnela. The first two times it impaled it on its horns, the third time the cow was hit into the air as if of straw... The cow was skinned immediately, it was summertime, there was no time to spare. Messengers were sent around asking if anyone wanted to buy a kilo or two of meat. This was the only way to mitigate the damage. People responded, and Srnela was sold out before night, the last big pieces went to the butcher from the town. ...the young man’s mother, who was sitting next to the entrance door, simply collapsed. She died of grief for her cow. (D. Orlić, 2007: 101)⁴

Each interviewee/cowman developed close and deeply emotional relationships with their oxen. Let us emphasize one example.

Š.B.: “When we bought our first ox I thought we were a step forward, poor me, as if it were a bulldozer, even more. I thought I was the best in the world and nothing else mattered. Here in Višnjan, we had bought a milk cow, but they are not as robust as our Istrians. Istrian cattle are much stronger. They were lively, formidable, always happy.

⁴ Naturally, it must be taken into consideration that the author has right to poetic licence, and that he is writing about times of his youth or before his birth; in most of the cases, he retells stories he had not lived himself, but passed down to him by oral tradition.

That one was the last one; I had to abandon it [crying]. I had to leave. There was no more unity and no family, and I had to go away. The last one was called Boškarin, the one I had to leave. That was its name. I had to abandon that one without turning back. It was sad, very sad.”

The problems of the autochthonous Istrian cattle preoccupy the above-mentioned cattle breeder and poet from Svetvinčenat, Darko Pekica. He wrote a song named *Istrijanke ili Evropljanke* (Istrians or Europeans) for Franci Blašković’s album *Merack za FAK*. The song expresses his dilemma in the choice of the breed:

<i>Na Istrijanke imaš šoldo od države aš zumiru,</i>	You get money for the Istrians from the state as they are becoming extinct
<i>Evropljanke muzu trideset, kvarnar do pedeset litri.</i>	Europeans give thirty, forty even fifty litres of milk
<i>Šolde je ud jenih i drugih.</i>	Both yield money.
<i>Z Istrijankami je manje dela,</i>	Istrians give you less work
<i>Evropljanke triba napro tendit.</i>	Europeans must be tended well.

GASTRONOMY AND ISTRIAN CATTLE

An Istrian ox, old and worn out, would end its life in a slaughterhouse. Today, when extinction is threatening, the real gourmets were left without a classic culinary standard – beef soup. This *pijat* (dish), typically Middle-European, has lost the quality and taste and is slowly disappearing from our tables; what is left is just the surrogate beef soup (in stock cubes or packets). Boiled beef, seasoned with coarse sea salt, with side dishes of horse-radish and boiled Swiss chard, is an almost forgotten dish. Oxtail soup was especially appreciated. Butchers would often leave the tail for themselves or for their friends and privileged customers. Today’s beef does not get close to the old one. A greater power or a greater production power is not always in symbiosis with quality. A growing number of scientists, not only those nostalgists, who believe that breeds selected to achieve record production “yield low-grade products from the organoleptic, health and nutritional aspect” (Dorigo, 1995: 73). Although tastes should not be discussed, it is worth mentioning the opinion that “there is no comparison between the meat obtained from traditionally raised cattle and that of cattle subjected to finishing, fed on corn flour and integrators and raised in battery cages” (Dorigo, 1995: 73).

The entire text is permeated with an emotional relationship between *boškarin* and man, once in an actual way, today in thoughts, recollections and emotions... Both new and old uses of Istrian cattle are of equal importance when it comes to human benefit. The *boškarin* will survive and be integrated only if it is cost-effective. (Unless it is kept as a pet, as a species in extinction in a zoo or as an accessory on a farm). *Glas Istre* published

an article under the indicative title *Boškarin – from the field to the plate*, mentioning that the Agency for the Rural Development and the Slow Food Foundation work together on a project aimed at a permanent safeguarding of Istrian cattle, explaining that in the European Union there are no subsidies exclusively for keeping animals. The article points out that Istrian cattle are not a holy cow and that over the last decade cattle have been turned into a fetish that must be broken; self-financing production must be developed. The idea to make Istrian cattle the first recognizable autochthonous breed of Istria is being developed to prove that its meat is of better quality than that of other breeds (Flegar, 2004: 16).

The leading partner in the safeguarding of the Istrian autochthonous cattle is AZRRI (Agency for Rural Development of Istria). The aim of the project led by the agency is to *brand* Istrian cattle as a trademark of Istrian tourism and gastronomy, founded on tradition, and to promote the meat of this autochthonous breed, which should, in the long term, ensure the survival of the species that was recently threatened by extinction and that remains endangered (Medić, 2007: 17).

The term “tradition” is conditional on the passing of experience, knowledge, and customs from generation to generation. Clearly, a romantic recollection of this giant but gentle animal helping the poor farmer is still deeply rooted in the man-*boškarin* relationship, as part of the cultural heritage. This relationship, pervaded with attention, mutual respect and a symbiosis of survival, has remained recorded in the memory and is passed to the generations along a very emotional story. Nevertheless, was the meat of Istrian cattle ever eaten in Istria? This is a question gaining more and more attention. Arguments are also found in tradition in order to justify the saving of Istrian cattle by means of gastronomy.

In his book *Glagoljski rukopisi iz Roča* (Glagolithic Manuscripts of Roč), which covers the period from 1523 to 1611, Vlahov presents information on the prices of livestock, meat and skin. In 1528, an ox was worth 24 libras, while in 1600 it was worth between 72 and 90 libras. The author assumes that the difference in price depended on the weight of the oxen. However, and more interesting for our purposes, are the records, although rare, of the prices of meat of ox, young ox and calf. Prices of skins of single animals are listed. The best-selling was the skin of an ox, with the price ranging between 6 and 14 libras. Only one instance of sale of a cow skin was recorded (Vlahov, 2006: 29-30). It can thus be inferred that in the 16th century Roč, ox meat, young ox meat and calf meat was sold and eaten.

An interviewee from Žbandaj, B. M., said that soup made from Istrian cattle did not require additives as the meat was caloric and sweet, while the soup made with the meat of non-Istrian cattle required a lot of salt and beef concentrate.

At the beginning of the last century, veal was prepared in the following way: “Meat: veal, ... fried on fat or lard. Stew is prepared in a saucepan. Meat is cut into pieces, fried on lard, flour is stirred until golden, water is added and let to boil” (Lovljanov, 1949: 131). Lovljanov stated that meat was eaten only for holidays.

An interviewee from Višnjan, Š.B., recalls that during the Italian regime, there was a terrible famine, but with the arrival of Yugoslavia in 1945 tasty home-raised meat began to be consumed.

The opinion of B.O., a butcher, Istrian-cattle breeder and owner of an agro-tourism facility from Juršiči, is interesting. He believes that soon he will be able to present the lifelong cycle of the cattle: from the moment they are born to the moment they are offered as a gastronomic product. He sees the gourmet success in the quality of meat that has not been crossbred or genetically modified, and in the natural diet of cattle.

S.P., a chef from Katun near Poreč, explains that Istrian cattle meet is best used to cook soup or *žgvacet* stew (savoury sauce). He adds that the circumstances in Istria did not allow for frequent consumption of meat. For this reason, the traditional gastronomy presents scarce examples of meat dishes, mostly in the form of *šugo*, a type of sauce which served more as a side dish to give flavour to polenta or home-made pasta. Beef soup was cooked only on very special occasions, for holidays, or when this was necessary due to the death of the animal. In the opinion of another chef from Poreč, the meat of Istrian cattle cannot be given proper value in hotels through holiday packages, due to the difference in price. It is also considered that a boarding guest would not be able to appreciate the value of the dish, unless this was explained to him. Today Istrian beef can be prepared as soup. Flank or spare ribs can be cooked in the soup, and thus cooked meat can be offered with tomato sauce and a side dish. Beef can also be braised. It is not recommended to prepare fast-cooking meals because the meat is rather tough, it is better if boiled in some way. A steak could be prepared, but only if obtained from a very young calf. It is suggested and presumed that Istrian cattle can be enjoyed in some specialized restaurants of farm holiday facilities, meaning that one will go to a restaurant with a plan to eat home-raised beef, as is the case with, for instance, truffles. It is important that good quality meat of Istrian cattle meat is offered and not replaced by farmed meat. The success of the Istrian cattle project as a gastronomic delicacy depends on all stakeholders in the chain, from breeders to caterers.

This potential tourist and gastronomic attraction must not be confused for the former attraction when an entire ox was roasted on a spit during local *tourist festivals*. That ox would always be farmed, never a home-raised animal. Even if one would like to offer an Istrian ox prepared in this way, it would have to be a very young ox.

Istrian cattle were consumed only occasionally, in extreme circumstances, and were eaten by those who had not had a symbiosis-like relationship with it. B.M.:

“...Once there used to be hundreds of them in the village. In 1944, the Germans besieged Radmani during a battle at Ladroviči, and they confiscated all of them; some families had twelve, thirteen heads of cattle. If I am not wrong, one family had eighteen heads. And the Germans did not leave one. And they fed on them, they killed them, ate all the meat, and that was it.”

Even today, in 2016, the life of Istrian cattle remains contradictory and dichotomous. The article *Runaway cows usurped hunting ground at Gračišće* quotes that a pensioner from the village of Mrletī near Gračišće, bought a dozen heads of Istrian cattle from AZRRI. Three cows ran away, one even calved in the wilderness, so that the calf was following them. Feral cows cannot be domesticated again and will have to be slaughtered (Dagostin, 2016: 12).

The other extreme (of successful domestication) of life/death of this animal can be learned from AZRRI's winter/spring cycle of culinary workshops at the Educational-Gastronomy Centre of Istria. A workshop led by the chef Zdravko Tomšić was dedicated to Istrian cattle meat in general. He decided to show to the attendees, mainly professional chefs from Istrian restaurants, how less used and less attractive meat cuts can be prepared. The demonstration focused on spare ribs, flank steak, tongue, boned shank and brisket.

I have been dedicated to *boškarin* meat for more than ten years. When we were just starting, only the tenderloin and sirloin steaks were asked for. Other meat cuts were hardly associated with any culinary value... namely they would end in soups and stews. Since not all meat cuts are available in desired quantities, especially not those most popular and in demand, the aim of this workshop is to teach that almost the entire carcass can be employed to prepare attractive *à la carte* dishes in restaurants, said Tomšić on this topic. (Zdravko Tomšić, according to Šišović, 2016: 17)

These two articles, published in the interval of less than a month, underline the dominance of man over animal, where the animal is reduced to objectified meat.

AUTOCHTONOUS ISTRIAN CATTLE TODAY

Istrian cattle have lost the sense of domesticated animals. They lost their precedence in working processes to more powerful and economical machines, dairy cows and farmed calves. The breeding of Istrian cattle today has become a status symbol or a sentimental object of affection (Hofbauer, 2007: 20), a competitor in beauty pageants and a gastronomic feature of Istria. Oxen owners compete even in the category of ox weight (up to 1.4 t). Why weight? What is there to be drawn? Prestige, owner's vanity? Over a particular time, status symbols change. Thus, at the beginning of the last century owning cattle meant prosperity and power; half a century later it meant frailty, old age and poverty. The symbol of power in a village was represented by the tractor. The symbolic position of power today, at the beginning of another century, has been regained by the ox.

Modern breeders confirmed that they undertook tending the animals for the money received through subsidies, but also for love, to make their dreams come true or, as one interviewee confessed, "I breed them as they serve my ego", continuing that he was aware that one day they would become food on tables, but they would also serve as spiritual food for the breeders.

Man and cattle lived in symbiosis, and their lives depended on each other. The importance of cattle can be noted in the then religious moment when both houses and barns were blessed. Modern-day values and positions towards the *boškarin* are part of traditional heritage that, in contact with the present, are assuming political connotations. Today economic profit from a *boškarin* is only casual; this is not the primary and only source of income of a family. This is also one of the reasons that the previous layered

relationship cannot be relived. In the opinion of the breeders and tourist workers, Istrian cattle can survive only if their breeding becomes commercially justified. A conversion of purpose is called for - from the anthropocentric aspect, of course, since, as it could be inferred from the newspaper article, Istrian cattle can live and reproduce in the wild.

The problem with emotions that are inherited, but not personally lived, is that they remain deposited in ethnographic notes or in the memories as intangible heritage. The question of reconstruction of the relationship between Istrian cattle and man remains an open issue for the future research studies. It is to be assumed that the search for profit which depends on good quality meat – and quality relies on traditional values such as pasture in a natural environment – will bring man and *boškarin* closer and reinstate a high-quality relationship.

IN LIEU OF A CONCLUSION

Were Istrian cattle once consumed in Istria? According to the available literature, the answer is affirmative. Were Istrian cattle part of a traditional diet in Istria? No, several generations within a family never tasted the meat of Istrian cattle. Was *Boškarin* ever eaten in Istria? Extremely rarely, mostly when it died of old age or injuries.

Finally, our present time features the category of autochthonous Istrian cattle, which are becoming a gastronomic delicacy of Istria; there is also the category of the memory of Istrian cattle whose member was sometimes called *Boškarin*. The global trend of creating something new but with the seal of autochthonous is also done in Istria through the *boškarin*. We decided to save this noble breed from extinction, we decided to preserve autochthonous genetic material for future generations, we decided to breed it and sell it, we decided to be determined, persistent, noble and powerful. But we did not preserve *Boškarin*. The entire set of problems surrounding *Boškarin* is based on the microcontext of man and cattle, as part of the cultural heritage of Istria; this microcontext, compared to global ambitions of breeders of autochthonous Istrian cattle, has little in common today. In order to have the recontextualization of this animal accepted in Istria, it must be clearly distinguished that *Boškarin* is not the same as autochthonous Istrian cattle, apart from their sharing the same genetic material. It is precisely in this complexity of problems ranging from cost-effectiveness to safeguarding of cattle to preservation of *Boškarin*'s heritage that I see a need for multidisciplinary collaboration and common endeavour towards a rural park.

Should *Boškarin* be preserved?

Š.B.: "Its time has passed. People are not for it any more. But when there is an exhibition of oxen, I watch them all day long. They are still as they used to be, but there are very few of them. They need to work to live. Work keeps them alive."

The animal has always been present in Istrian culture. The bonds between Istrian cattle and Istrian man have been interwoven for centuries. A mutual relationship between two cultures, the animal one with its obvious ability to pass experience and knowledge onto

the younger generation, and the culture of man able to be sudden and fast-changing, results in an impressive autochthonous wealth. The increasingly dominant position of man has left the cattle overshadowed. I believe that man will save Istrian cattle because there are a number of interested individuals and a growing number of reasons for their preservation. However, cultural zoology, with its knowledge on the mutual influence of man and animal, must also be heard to side with the animal. A great number of scientists and experts are dealing with the problem of the domestication of animals. One of the possible divisions is to “utilitarian” animals kept outside human dwellings, with no emotional relations, and “pets” which live with man, are communicated



The photo displayed in the butcher shop “Graciano” in Žminj (the owner of the photograph: Graciano Zohil).

with and played with (Visković, 1996:277). Normally, Istrian cattle lived separated from the household (animals on the ground floor and people on the first floor, separated by wooden planks), however under the same roof. But they were always talked to, tended, cared for; this is especially true today when they are taken to exhibitions. Istrian cattle have been changing their status as social changes would occur in Istria. Domestication means possession of an animal, but also the human power to change the animal. This reflects the diachronic sequence of the boškarin’s life. Boškarin was once the synonym of life; today, it is first of all emotion. Istrian cattle have learned to live with the needs of the Istrians. Istrians learned through history how to co-exist with various occupiers and liberators. Boškarin and man, slightly similar in the extinction of the original and local, always more similar in the revival of folklore in this modern and – above all – consumer society. By changing the boškarin, we change ourselves. Its smell is not pleasant any more, but also our smell is not pleasant: our hair or many other things about us are not natural. From the wild to the domesticated to the gastronomic delicacy. The destiny of the boškarin, and ours, perhaps?

Ivona Orlić

CYNICISM: AZZRI AND *BOŠKARIN WITH POTATOES*

“The question is not, Can they *reason*? nor, Can they *talk*? but, Can they *suffer*?” Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, 1823.

The concept of promoting the B/boškarin as a gastro-phenomenon was the dominant feature of the school project *Boškarin with Potatoes* (2012 to 2014), by the City of Pula, developed as the confirmation of collaboration with the French town of Villefranche-de-Rouergue, which became a partner city of Pula in 2008. As part of the project, local products were presented; the Istrian Boškarin (that is the Boškarin was presented as a product rather than an animal) and the Ségala potato variety from the French region of Midi-Pyrénées. Hence the Boškarin (Istrian ox), a native Croatian livestock breed, has been “revitalized” in the 21st century as an economic and gastronomic sacrifice of the EU project.⁵

The wish to protect the native breed of Istrian cattle,⁶ because of the rapid decrease in cattle threatening the extinction of the breed, resulted in a series of activities with the aim of protecting the future lives of the Boškarin. The process of extinction, fortunately, has been stopped. However, in a profit-orientated society, the Boškarin is reduced solely to food, and it is sold under the false trademark: “The meat of the Istrian ox – the original Istrian product!”⁷

The extinction of the Istrian cattle was caused by the rapid mechanization of villages. However, the rapid development of tourism initiated the increasing demand for meat and milk.⁸ In the 1990s, the population of the Istrian cattle fell to little over 100 (Prekalj, 2008: 60). In 2004, there were about 270 pure-bred Istrian cattle, in comparison with a figure of 50,000 before World War II.⁹ As written on the web-page of the Agency for Rural Development of Istria (AZZRI):

The industrialisation of agriculture, the appearance of mechanisation, social trends in rural areas and the economic orientation towards tourism in the early 1950s resulted in the replacement of the Istrian cattle with more productive breeds. Crops and vineyards became the prevalent cultures, whereas cattle farming took on a secondary role.¹⁰

⁵ *A remark*: According to animal rights theoreticians, in avoiding speciesism (cf. Dunayer 2004/2009) in the English language, we shall be using the personal pronouns *he/she* for the Istrian cattle, instead of the pronoun *it* in this paper.

⁶ The term of the Istrian *cattle* includes the *bulls, oxen, cows and calves*.

⁷ Cf. <http://konoba-nono.com/en/istria/> (Accessed 1 November 2015).

⁸ An additional factor of the extinction of the Istrian cattle was the departure of the younger rural population to coastal areas, in tourist centres in search for new, “easier” jobs.

⁹ Throughout Istria in 1994 there were only 16 head, 4 cows and 8 bulls, of whom at least six were related, which threatened the degeneration of the species. In 2009 there was about 600 head (Božić 2009, [http](http://)).

¹⁰ Cf. <http://www.azzri.hr/index.php?id=55&L=1> (Accessed 1 November 2015).

The project of the *edible* Boškarin started in 2004, which documents the article entitled “Boškarin from the campaign on a plate”, published in the daily newspaper *Glas Istre*. The article noted that the AZZRI’s *Slow Food* project was working for the permanent protection of the Istrian cattle, justifying their position that in the European Union there is no other incentive only to keep the animals. The article emphasizes that the Istrian cattle is not a sacred cow and that in the last ten years, the Boškarin had become a fetish that should be dismantled. Additionally, AZZRI is trying to spread the idea that the Istrian cattle will become the first recognizable indigenous species from Istria, however with the aim of proving that his meat is better than other varieties at (cf. Flegar, 2004: 16).¹¹

In addition, today, among other tasks, AZZRI organizes workshops on the processing of meat of Istrian Boškarin cattle for all interested citizens – lovers of gastronomy. The price for a one-day workshop is 500 kunas (VAT included, in 2015). In that way, AZRRI is proud that today Boškarin is hailed as a gourmet delicacy in Istria, and that his meat is part of the gourmet cuisine of the region. However, in that revitalization, AZRRI forgets that Boškarin was a working animal and was never bred for gourmet purposes as it is today.

Turning the Boškarin on a spit has nothing to do with traditions. In ethno-traditional culture, the Istrian ox was never eaten. It was only eaten as old meat, as Ivona Orlić pointed out in the first part of this article. Thus, his meat today is only propaganda driven by touristic-economic factors. Hence, the once Istrian ox, as an old animal, only then found himself as a delicacy. In that way, it was expensive, with meat and soup being made from the tail of the oxen. Often, butchers left the tail for themselves, friends and preferred customers.

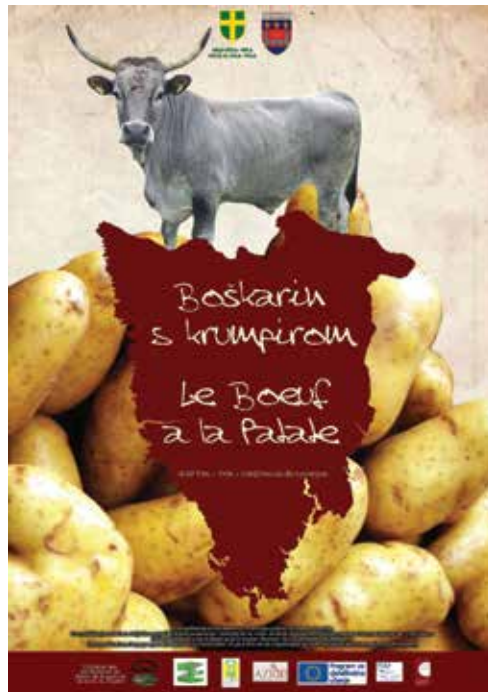
As history goes in a cynical way, the AZRRI is considered to be the principal carrier-going protection of the indigenous Istrian cattle. In short, journalists follow their lead and write articles asserting that that only gastronomy can save the Istrian cattle from the extinction (cf. Medić, 2007: 17). Unfortunately, besides the meat of the Istrian cattle, in the same way in the near future the meat of other Istrian autochthonous animals (donkeys, sheep, goat) would be invested in and, as it is believed on that way, that these animals would be saved from extinction (cf. Šišović 2014). However, this is just a mask to justify of slaughtering of animals, nothing else, nothing more; the slaughtering must be justified by profit.

Thus, after the 1990s, the Boškarin received the status of a sacred cow as an exhibition piece in the marking of the Istrian identity; in the following decade the Boškarin was modified into a delicacy. That is, since 1991, after a ban of forty years, the *Jakovlja* (a folk festival on the occasion of St. James) began to be organized in Kanfanar (Istria) and one of the most attractive events for the celebration of *Jakovlja* is the exhibition of

¹¹ It is real cynicism that on the main web-page of this Agency the following story about the history of the Istrian ox is written:

“The story began with the farming of these strong animals in order of economic exploitation. The man on the land of Istria survived in the coexistence with the Istrian ox. The landscape was barren, but in the ecological sense – the landscape was really varied and valuable. So, the story about boškarin will not end. It continues! But nowadays Istrian ox will not survive in order to haul wagons and will not plow. The Istrian ox will strengthen the Istrian tourism and gastronomy. And in that way the Istrian ox will survive modern disease and misfortune.” Cf. <http://www.azrri.hr/index.php?id=99>

Istrian oxen and cattle. Unfortunately, after this role of Boškarin as a fetish of the 1990s, in the next decade, he was dismantled, and the Boškarin has been revitalized only for the purpose of profitable agro-tourism and gastro-tourism. So, as Ivona Orlić aphoristically emphasized in the first part of the article, the Istrian ox was used throughout history as a peasant worker, though later, during the 1990s, as a showpiece – during the predominance of the national identity that people found in the Boškarin. Nowadays, the Istrian ox exists only as a gastronomic delicacy, living to be killed and to be eaten. Apparently, in anthropocentric society, this is the only way in which this animal can survive and not become extinct.



The school project *Boškarin with Potatoes* (Pula, Villedfranche-de-Rouergue, 2012 to 2014).

REWILDING EUROPE / BOŠKARIN

However, there is also another option, to settle the Boškarin in his natural habitat. At the end of March 2015, twelve Boškarin cattle (five cows, five heifers and two calves) were transported to the *Tauros programme*, to the breeding site in the Velebit mountains. According to the latest information (in 2015), the animals are doing well in their new home. It is a part of the rewilding efforts by *Rewilding Europe* and the *Tauros programme*'s plans to de-domesticate or rewild primaeval cattle breeds to return them to their original form – the aurochs, an ancient Eurasian bovine species that became extinct in 1627, in Poland.

A little bit more must be said on the context of this programme, which I consider to be most reasonable, of course in a way how it is possible to be reasonable in a profitable society, in revitalising Boškarin. In November 2012, *Rewilding Europe and the Taurus Foundation*, as I learned thanks to the cultural anthropologist Lidija Bernardić, signed a long-term agreement to help preserve biodiversity in Europe through a breeding programme in the hope of bringing back a functional, wild version of the aurochs, which were the ancestors of every head of domestic cattle in the world.¹²

Henri Kerkdijk-Otten, a former member of the non-profit organization *Rewilding Europe*, has a lifetime of experience in understanding the mega-fauna of our prehistoric world. His interest and research focuses on the reconstruction and rebirth of Europe's original mega-fauna, such as the aurochs, wild horse and water buffalo. Among other facts, *Rewilding Europe* makes a distinction between restoration and rewilding.¹³

Rewilding is really not about going back in time. It is instead about giving more room to wild, spontaneous nature to develop, in a modern society. Going back (to when?) is not a real alternative, it is just nostalgia. Rewilding is about moving forward, but letting nature itself decide much more and man decide much less. (*Rewilding Europe*, 2011)

THE ZOO-SYMBOLS OF ISTRIA

While the Istrian goat is the symbol of Istrian identity (cf. “Zakrivljeno palico v roki..., 2007-2013),¹⁴ Boškarin today occupies, also as the zoo-symbol of Istrian identity, an important place, but on the menus of fine restaurants. The goat is on the coat of arms and the flag of the County of Istria, as well as on the Croatian flag. The Tourist Board promotes, through its marketing materials, also a goldfinch (*češljugar*) – a small bird that was once much more commonly present in the lives of Istrian peasants, who spent most of their time in nature. The Tourist Board also promotes donkeys as a symbol of Istrian identity. All of these animals appear as zoo-symbols and zoo-trademarks of the region. Unlike the aforementioned animals, the Boškarin is the identification symbol of a regional affiliation

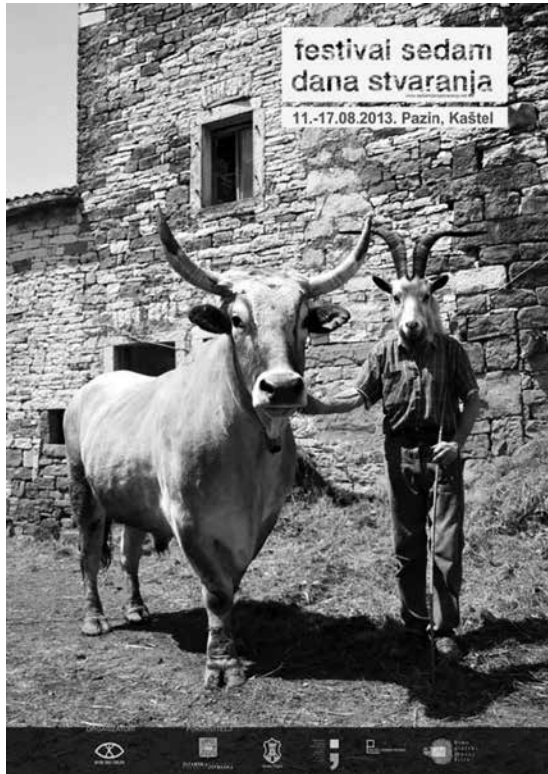
¹² Cf. <http://www.rewildingeurope.com/news/lika-plains-officially-opened-as-natural-grazing-pilot-in-velebit/> (Accessed 1 November 2015)

Here I can add that, in my opinion, it is not necessary to take cross breeding to invent aurochs, it is enough to put Boškarin in a natural habitat of course under the control because this re-wilding programme is not completely natural; environmental recovery is a designed, human-made nature to fulfil our postmodern standards for wilderness.

¹³ The cattle now brought to Velebit, come from the Štifanić farm in the village of Višnjani in Istria. To conclude, 12 Boškarins in Velebit became part of the Tauros Breeding Programme in 2014. With these herds, reintroduction of natural grazing as a key natural process has started both in Western Iberia and Velebit, and is prepared for the Danube Delta. Cf. <http://rewildingeurope.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Rewilding-Europe-Annual-Review-2013.pdf>

¹⁴ In the monograph *Zakrivljeno palico v roki... (2007-2013)* one can see the photograph of the goat with the bag on her udder in order to prevent the baby goat from sucking on it mother's milk; the best goat could produce litres of milk per day (cf. “Zakrivljeno palico v roki...”, 2007-2013:118).

because of autochthony or exclusive affiliation to the Istrian peninsula; however, despite this fact, he is extremely exploited in meat consumption – he is served in many Istrian restaurants of the highest culinary standards (as well as the highest price), and under the false trademark “The meat of the Istrian cattle – the original Istrian product!” (cf. photo 5), of course cynically, thanks to AZZRI.¹⁵



The poster of the multimedia festival *Sedam dana stvaranja* / *Seven Days of Creation* (Pazin, 2013): the zoo-conjunction of the Istrian goat and Boškari (photo: Davor Sanvinčenti).

FINALLY, THE CORE QUESTION OF HOW TO KEEP THE BOŠKARIN

Here, I would like to mention the performance *Requiem for Boškari* (2005), Svetvinčenat, Istria by multimedia artist Darwin Butković, dedicated to the Boškari that was slaughtered the next day. Along the lines of the activity of St. Francis, who preached to the birds, the artist thus decided to play *Requiem for Boškari* (cf. Marjanić, 2014: 1662).

Or as Ivona Orlić pointed reported, one informant said: “Their time is in the past. They need to work in order to be alive. Work is what keeps them alive.” In these statements,

¹⁵ Cf. http://www.azzri.hr/fileadmin/Novinski_clanci/Dodjela_oznaka_Buscina.pdf (Accessed 1 January 2010).

we can see the truth and foundations for the existence of the Boškarin. As the Boškarin was primarily a working animal (Svrtan, Labrović, 1995: 24), his existence cannot be reduced only to a delicacy, an object for consumption.

Paradoxically, to AZZRI's tasks of modifying Boškarin to the haute cuisine this Agency writes the following on its web-page: "For centuries, Istrian farmers have bred Istrian cattle as intelligent and obedient animals, with moderate feed requirements, to work the Istrian soil and produce food for both. Breeding should continue along these lines."

So, the question is: why does AZRRI not want to promote breeding along these lines?

FINAL REMARK

Here I do not want to offend anybody, but from the position of the anthropology of animals and critical animal studies, I merely want to emphasize that the Boškarin cannot survive only as a delicacy, as he is also a working animal. As the Boškarin is no longer necessary as a working animal, of course, there is the problem of how he can survive. This huge animal with a mild character, who for centuries was the main power in the fertile red soil in Istria, can only survive in geno-parks such as the one in Višnjan which is run by the president of the Association of Breeders, Aldo Štifanić, as well as in the programme *Rewilding Europe*.

The second remark: in comparison with Ivona Orlić, here I use the term Boškarin as the synonym for the *Istrian cattle*, because it is common in everyday usage to use the name Boškarin as a general noun. Furthermore as the authors of the *Encyclopedia of Croatian Domestic Animals*, have used these synonyms (Istrian cattle or Boškarin) (*Enciklopedija hrvatskih domaćih životinja* 2003: 47).¹⁶ Or, as it written in the *Istrian Encyclopedia*: "boškarin (Friuli *boscarin*: raw wooden cane and cattle name), the most widespread Istrian folk name for bovine Istrian Podolac" (*Istarska enciklopedija*).

However, Goran Šubara from AZRRI found some mistakes in this short encyclopaedic explanation:

Boškarin is the name of a bull or an ox that is most commonly used (Boškarina is the name of the cow or heifer). The official name of the breed is the Istrian ox. The breed of Istrian cattle belongs to a wider group of breeds – Podolian breed. Therefore, there are two mistakes in *Istrian Encyclopedia*: Firstly, Boškarin was the most widespread name that was given to the ox, a bull or cow of Istrian cattle (other common names were: Bakin, Mandula, Srnela, Galjarda, Sivo...), so this is not the name of cattle Istrian Podolian breed. Secondly, the breed is Istrian cattle / *Bovino Istriano* which belongs to the group Podolian breeds (Italian breeds: Maremana, Chianina, Marchigiana, Podolica, Romagnola, the Istrian breed and Croatian breed – Slavonia and

¹⁶ A special feature of the Istrian cattle is the pigmentation of the palate and lead-grey tongue. There is a saying: "The real Istrian bull has *black sky*" (In the ancient Croatian language, dialect there is no word of the palate but sky (*nebo*); they marked the palate as the sky) (the upper part of the mouth) (*Enciklopedija hrvatskih domaćih životinja* 2003: 47, video *Istrian Oxen – Bakin and Boškarin*, 2011).

Srijem Podolac; Hungarian breed: Hungarian gray cattle, Serbian breed: Podolian Cattle). (from e-mail conversation with Ivona Orlić).

Furthermore, there is an understatement in the definition of the name Boškarin. It is supposed that Boškarin got the name because of *his* work in forests (the word *forest* in the Istrian dialect is *bošku*). However, the *Istrian Encyclopedia* the Friuli noun *boscarin* – in the meaning of raw cane, is mentioned and, of course, the cattle name.

As far as the final boškarin in/on his way from the farmers through the exhibit and today as “delicacies”, here we can add the conclusion of Ivona Orlić, who denies the allegation referred to AZZRI that the Istrian cattle used primarily for meat production. Ivona Orlić pointed out that the Istrian ox only as old and worn out ended his life in a slaughterhouse (Orlić, 2007: 322), which means that he was never used primarily for meat production, slaughter, as he is used nowadays in commercial purposes of AZZRI. While commercialization of the boškarin goes in the direction of gastronomy, for the Istrian people; boškarin, as the ethnotradition evidenced, was a sacred animal, by the words of Nenad Kuftić, who was cited in the text of Ivona Orlić.

THE CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF ANIMALS

In her 1989 book *Humans and Other Animals: Beyond the Boundaries of Anthropology*, the cultural and social anthropologist Barbara Noske made her demand for the shaping of the anthropology of animals, due to the fact that anthropocentric anthropology dominated in relation to animals. Or, in her words: “Alas, there exists no anthropology of animals, only an (anthropocentric) anthropology of humans in relation to animals” (Noske, 1989: 169).¹⁷ Noske suggests that such scholarly discipline – the anthropology of animals – could bear the name anthropozoology or zooanthropology (Noske, 1989: 170). Noske takes these terms from John Cunningham Lilly (*Lilly on Dolphins, Humans of the Sea*, 1975), “where he uses these terms with reference to a possible study of human-dolphin communication” (Noske, 1989: 212).¹⁸

In that process, starting out from her own profession – which is cultural or social anthropology – Barbara Noske states that some animal scientists have established that there are certain shortcomings of their own “subject-object-minded science” and have realized the anthropological potential for the study of animals, which other anthropologists have not yet comprehended (Noske, 1989: 169).

We can check her detection on the example of *anthropology* offered by William A. Haviland. Namely, according to the tautological definition he proposes in his book, the

¹⁷ I have emphasized in the title of this paper the scholarly discipline that could be called, according to Barbara Noske, the anthropology of animals, which could also definitely be a terminological umbrella for research into animalistic themes in folklore.

¹⁸ This final part of the article I have used from my article *The Anthropology of Animals – Paradox and/or Necessity*, which I wrote for the International Interdisciplinary Symposium “What to Do with Folklore” (Ljubljana, 2009).

university textbook on anthropology, *Cultural Anthropology* (1st edition 1975), anthropology *studies human beings*, in the framework of which biological (physical) anthropology deals with biological organisms, while cultural anthropology does so with “people as cultural animals” (cf. Haviland, 2004: 8). It could thus be concluded that animals are “uncultural animals”, despite the undeniable fact that they, too, possess cultural patterns. Therefore, it is obvious that such anthropology excludes animals; in other words, it includes them solely if the animals *are used* for cognition on the supernatural *anthropos* as “cultural animals”.¹⁹ Briefly, as Molly Mullin says in connection with anthropological research, the anthropological anthropocentric approaches of the past depicted animals as passive objects of human agency towards better understanding humans (Mullin, 2002: 390).

Furthermore, physical anthropology – by Haviland’s definition – also deals with the study of primates *other* than human beings in order to establish the origins of the human race and to determine how, when and why we became the type of animals that we are today (cf. Haviland 2004:9). From merely a few lines of the university textbook, the detection is confirmed that the study of the *anthropos*, or, in other words, humankind, is intrinsically anthropocentric, due to the belief that animals as subjects can be dealt with only by biology, or rather by zoology and ethology (the zoological study of animal behavior).²⁰

In that contextualization of the anthropology of animals, as defined by socio-cultural anthropologist Barbara Noske, this text about the possible future of Boškarin was written. **Or, why do we have a list of national animals (e.g. pine marten is the national animal of Croatia) but fail to include said animals (only individual species) in the concept of heritage – why are the concepts of Nature and Culture still anthropocentrically segregated? The fact is that one can only talk about heritage species (especially traditional or autochthonous livestock breeds), but not about heritage animals (the animals in the concept of heritage).**²¹ **Or, why are we struck by the destruction of the Buddhas of Bamiyan, but we do not tackle the extinction of Boškarin or any other animals, at all... Why are we not tackling the fact that the Istrian cattle is still in danger of becoming extinct (*Enciklopedija hrvatskih domaćih životinja* 2003: 47).**

All these facts connected with the Boškarin, suggest that the Istrian ox was a permanent capital to his owner. It is obvious that the relationship between man and Boškarin, as

¹⁹ This definition of physical and cultural anthropology is quoted from the Croatian translation of the 6th edition of Haviland’s book. In the 2nd edition (1978) of his *Cultural Anthropology*, Haviland states that physical anthropology is primarily concerned with humans as biological organisms, and that this work “lays the foundation for the study of humans as cultural animals. The study is referred to as cultural anthropology” (Haviland, 1978: 8-9). I have taken Haviland’s well-known *Cultural Anthropology* as an example solely because it is used as a textbook on cultural anthropology at Croatian universities.

²⁰ Regarding the status with studying animals, the situation is similar in other social sciences and the humanistic sciences, and is even more gloomy in some of them, so that Clinton R. Sanders points out that animals were largely ignored by early 20th-century sociologists (Sanders 2006, http).

²¹ Rodney Harrison distinguishes between *cultural heritage* (those things manufactured by humans) and *natural heritage* (those which have not been manufactured by humans) (2009: 11). Furthermore, under the concept of natural heritage, he also includes animals, or by his words: “Natural heritage is most often thought about in terms of landscape and ecological systems, but it is compressed of features such as plants, animals, natural landscapes and landforms, oceans and water bodies” (2009: 13). As it is noticeable that in this definition of *natural heritage* the animals are included only in the context of landscapes, natural habitat.

part of cultural heritage, is deeply rooted in romantic memory, as a great warm-hearted animal, with the lyre-shaped horns, that helped the poor farmer. The relationship which is laced with care, respect and mutual symbiosis of survival, was recorded in the memory of ethno-tradition (as Ivona Orlić documented in her part of the text) and is passed onto future generations through a very emotional story.

In the context of anthropocentric society, the Boškarin will survive only if he is useful in an anthropocentrically profitable society. In this sector, the new possibility is open to them so, that the Boškarin can become a *pet* in the “petishist” culture, or as Joan Dunayer would say – a *companion*, in eco-farm tourism. In the case that the Boškarin would become a *companion*, it would not be a surprise. As in Tokyo, during the Edo period up until 1886, there were cases that some citizens of that city of two million people in coexistence with nature, had elephants and orangutans as pets or as *companions*.

Of course, I am completely aware that all stages of the usage of Boškarin – from his role as a peasant, then as an object of exhibition to promote Istrian national identity, before he ended as a delicacy, was run under an economic function, or as Marvin Harris stated for the Hindu holy cow – they are holy only because of that they are economically viable (Harris, [http](http://), 3). Or by his words: “The ox is the Indian peasant’s tractor, thresher and family car combined; the cow is the factory that produces the ox.”

Suzana Marjanić
Translated by *Adriana Lukić*

LITERATURE

- Anić, Vladimir. 2004. *Veliki rječnik hrvatskog jezika*. ed. Ljiljana Jojić, Novi liber Zagreb.
- Božić, Tanja. 2009. “Istarsko govedo ipak spašeno od izumiranja”. (<http://www.vecernji.hr/sjeverni-jadran/istarsko-govedo-ipak-spaseno-od-izumiranja-869453>). (Accessed 1 October 2010).
- Dagostin, Anđelo. 2016. “Odbjegli krave uzurpirale lovište u Gračišću. Tri pitome krave pobjegle u šumu preko žice i ne daju se više uloviti”. *Glas Istre*. 27 January, 2007. No 25, p. 12.
- Dorigio, Livio. 1995. “Boškarin. Genetska relikvija.” *Jurina i Franina, časopis za istarsko domaćinstvo* 59:71-73.
- Dunayer, Joan. 2009 (2004). *Specizam. Diskriminacija na osnovi vrste*. Institut za etnologiju i folkloristiku, Dvostruka duga, Zagreb, Čakovec.
- Enciklopedija hrvatskih domaćih životinja*. 2004. Marijan Posavi... et al. Katarina Zrinski, Varaždin.
- Flegar, Kristina. 2004. “Boškarin iz kampanje na tanjur”. *Glas Istre* 19 October 2004. No 282, p. 16.
- Harris, Marvin. “India’s Sacred Cow”. (sociology101.net/readings/Indias-sacred-cow.pdf). (Accessed 1 October 2013).
- Harrison, Rodney. ed. 2009. *Understanding the Politics of Heritage*. Manchester University Press, Manchester.
- Haviland, William A. 2004. *Kulturna antropologija*. (6th Edition). Naklada Slap, Jastrebarsko.
- Hofbauer, Andreas L. 2007. *Moč/Kraf, Veröffentlicht im Drava*. Verlag/ Založba Drava, Klagenfurt/Celovec.

- Istarska enciklopedija*. (<http://istra.lzmk.hr/>). (Accessed 12 November 2015).
- Jørgensen, Dolly. 2015. "Rethinking Rewilding". (<https://ds.lclark.edu/bon1/2015/10/25/rethinking-rewilding-by-dolly-jorgenson/>). (Accessed 4 January 2016).
- Kuftić, Nenad. 2007. "Boškarin je za Istrijane sveta životinja". *Glas Istre*. 4 April, 2007. No 92, p. 20.
- Lovljanov, Frane. 1949. "Boljun (Istra)". *Zbornik za narodni život i običaje Južnih Slavena*, 33:125-139.
- Marjanić, Suzana. 2014. *Kronotop hrvatskoga performansa: od Travelera do danas*. Udruga Bijeli val, Institut za etnologiju i folkloristiku, Školska knjiga, Zagreb.
- Maul, Davor. 2004. "Boškarin s markom u šnicle". *Večernji list* 18 October 2004. No 14716, p. 20.
- Medić, Mihaela. 2007. "Gastronomija spašava istarsko govedo". *Glas Istre* 1 August, 2007. No 205, p. 17.
- Mullin, Molly. 2002. "Animals and Anthropology". *Society & Animals: Journal of Human-Animal Studies* 10/4 2002 (http://www.animalsandsociety.org/assets/library/477_s1049.pdf) (Accessed 5 September 2008)
- Noske, Barbara. 1989. *Humans and Other Animals. Beyond the Boundaries of Anthropology*. Pluto Press, London.
- Orlić, Drago. 2007. *Štorije od žalosti*. Nova Istra, Istarski ogranak Društvo hrvatskih književnika.
- Orlić, Ivona. 2007. "Boškarin: Od težaka do izložbenog eksponata". U: *Kulturni bestijarij*, eds. Suzana Marjanić and Antonija Zaradija Kiš. Institut za etnologiju i folkloristiku, Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, Zagreb.
- Pekica, Darko. 2002. *Merack za FAK*. Orfej, Zagreb.
- Prekalj, G. P. Caput, A. Jedrejčić, A. Ivanković, M. Konjačić. 2008. "Permanent protection of Istrian cattle through commercial exploitation". *Stočarstvo* 62(1):59-67.
- Radauš Ribarić, Jelka. 1997. *Ženska narodna nošnja u Istri*. Institut za etnologiju i folkloristiku, Zagreb: Istarsko književno društvo "Juraj Dobrila" Pazin; "Josip Turčinović" d.o.o., Pazin.
- Radetić, Ernest. 1969. *Istarski zapisi*. Grafički zavod Hrvatske, Zagreb.
- "Rewilding Europe". (<https://www.rewildingeurope.com/frequently-asked-questions/>). (Accessed 4 January 2016).
- Sanders, Clinton R. 2006. "The Sociology of Human-Animal Interaction and Relationships". *Ruminations* 2, 2006 (http://www.h-net.org/~animal/ruminations_sanders.html) (Accessed 2 September 2008).
- Svrtan, Štefica and Ankica Labrović. 1995. *Neke autohtone hrvatske pasmine domaćih životinja*. Hrvatski centar Znanje za okoliš, Zagreb.
- Šepić, Lino. 1997. "Zanimljivosti iz Kaštela". U: *Kaštel danas, jučer, sutra*. eds. Lino Šepić et al. KUŠD "LIPA" Kaštel, Matica hrvatska, Ogranak Buje, Kaštel pp. 147-152.
- Šišović, Davor. 2007. "Jelovnik istarskog Boškarina". *Glas Istre* 23 May 2007. No 138, p. 18.
- Šišović, Davor. 2014. "Boškarin testira granice kuharske mašte". (<http://www.glasistre.hr/multimedija/foto/boskarin-testira-granice-kuharske-maste-457273>). (Accessed 4 March 2016).
- Šišović, Davor. 2016. "Kako iskoristiti meso cijelog boškarina". *Glas Istre* 24 February 2016. No 53, p. 17.
- Terzić, Domagoj. 2004. "Najteži Boškarin od 11 i pol kvintali". *Glas Istre* 2 August 2004. No 207, p. 15.
- Valić, Tone and Ante Ciliga. 2004. *Štorice iz Proštine*. Gordo d.o. Pula.
- Visković, Nikola. 1996. *Životinja i čovjek. Prilog kulturnoj zoologiji*. Književni krug Split, Split.

Vlahov, Dražen. 2006. *Glagoljski rukopisi iz Roča. Iz Knjige crkve i bratovštine sv. Bartolomeja (1523 – 1611)*. Državni arhiv u Pazinu, Pazin.

“Zakrivljeno palico v roki... S gobaston palicon va rukah Zgodovinski pomen paše in pašništva za okolje Povijesno značenje ispaše za okoliš”. Projekt APRO. 2007-2013. (http://www.azrri.hr/uploads/media/Povijesno_zna%C4%8Denje_ispa%C5%A1e_za_okoli%C5%A1.pdf). (Accessed 1 November 2015).

Istrian Oxen – Bakin and Boškarin. Producer Tourist Association Municipality of Višnjan, Screenplay by Marijana Gašparini. Production by Rose-art video produkcija d.o.o. Kaštelir, Croatia, 2011. (Video)

BAŠTINSKE ŽIVOTINJE – ZAŠTO NE? USPRKOS
ANTROPOCENTRIZMU

IVONA ORLIĆ, SUZANA MARJANIĆ



(Ivona Orlić) Želja za očuvanjem autohtone pasmine istarskog goveda, zbog naglog smanjenja broja goveda te prijetnje izumiranju pasmine, uzrokovala je niz promišljanja i aktivnosti s ciljem kako osuvremeniti, odnosno osmisлити daljnji životni tijek *boškarina*. Proces izumiranja je zaustavljen, međutim poveznica s ljudskom kulturom koja ga je dovela i do ruba postojanja te ga ponovno uzdigla, ostaje nedorečena. Također, u promišljanju o istarskom govedu u istarskoj svakodnevicu pojavili su se problemi vezani za terminologiju, odnosno nazivlje. Sadašnje i buduće interakcije čovjek-*boškarin*, koje se neminovno oslanjaju na tradicijske momente, interpretirane su i analizirane kroz teme i problematiku prvenstveno nekadašnjih emocionalnih odnosa nasuprot današnjem tržišnom odnosu između čovjeka i životinje. Nekadašnji je odnos bio uzajaman, današnji je antropocentričan.

(Suzana Marjanić) Antropologija životinja, kao što ju je definirala sociokulturna antropologinja Barbara Noske, mora biti – ili bi trebala biti – segment etnografskih, antropoloških istraživanja 21. stoljeća. Zbog čega postoji popis nacionalnih životinja (npr. kuna je nacionalni zoo-simbol RH), ali se navedena životinja, a i neke *druge* životinje, ne uključuju u koncept baštine. Zašto su pojmovi prirode i kulture, prirodne i kulturne baštine još uvijek antropocentrički i dihotomijski razdvojeni? U kontekstu navedene dihotomije pratimo sudbinu boškarina ili istarskoga goveda kao simbol života u prošlosti – vol je bio važniji od vlastite djece – međutim, danas je istarsko govedo revitalizirano samo u svrhu profitabilnog agroturizma i gastroturizma. Navedeni je koncept promidžbe boškarina kao gastro-fenomena/specijaliteta bio dominantna oznaka projekta *Boškarin s krumpirom* Grada Pule (2012-2014) koji je nastao kao potvrda suradnje s francuskim gradićem Villefranche-de-Rouergue s kojim se Grad Pula 2008. i pobratimio. U okviru projekta bili su istaknuti lokalni proizvodi – istarski boškarin (dakle, boškarin je predstavljen kao proizvod a ne kao životinja) i krumpira Segal iz francuske pokrajine Midy-Pyrenees. Tako se boškarin ili istarsko govedo, hrvatska autohtona pasmina goveda, u 21. stoljeću “revitalizirao” kao ekonomska i gastronomska žrtva EU projekta.

Dr. Ivona Orlić, Ethnographic museum of Istria, Trg Istarskog razvoda 1275, br. 1, HR-52000 Pazin, Hrvatska/Croatia, Ivona@emi.hr

Doc. Dr. Suzana Marjanić, Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Šubićeva 42, HR-10000 Zagreb, Hrvatska/Croatia, Suzana@ief.hr