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ANNOTATION

Kateřina Klápřťová – Otokar Homola.

Dakotská kultura na rozcestí:

Vojta Náprstek a jeho dakotská sbírka z roku 1856 / Dakota Culture at the Crossroads: Vojta Náprstek and His Dakota Collection from 1856.

Praha, 2016.

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Thanks to Josef Wolf's *Abeceda národů* [*Alphabet of Nations*] (Wolf 1984) we have an excellent definition of the Dakota that comprises of all the vital facts. We know that they are/were one of the most numerous Indian tribes of the North America and that they belong to the language group that was first considered Sioux, later Dakota, sometimes also called Lakota.

As their name suggests, their territory was mostly defined by today's states of the North and South Dakota, Minnesota, Montana, Wyoming and Nebraska. The Dakota tribes are known for winning the Battle of the Little Bighorn in 1876 under the chief Sitting Bull; where after the battle, four thousand of his warriors settled in the temporarily liberated area and in the nearby reservations. It was at this time when the Dakota population almost doubled the original count of 30,000 and their way of subsistence shifted from hunting and gathering to agriculture.

The new comprehensive Czech-English publication *Dakotská kultura na rozcestí / Dakota Culture at the Crossroads* by Kateřina Klápřťová of the Náprstek Museum describes the facts, history and changes in traditions. The English version increases the chances of Czech specialists being noticed abroad. The author captures the traditional lifestyle of the 18th and first half of the 19th century. Similarly to other ethnic groups, the Dakota were under the pressure of cultural change and acculturation from the Anglo-Saxon colonists. These changes can be observed not only in the commercial and friendly approach to trade and gift-giving, but also in the Dakotan given names.

The Dakota belongs to the better-known Sioux people. The publication captures their culture in the period of decline of the classical Dakota culture in the 19th century. It analyses the culture around social and family organisation; dedicating a section to courting and marriage, which particularly stands out. The author uses the collections and texts gathered by Vojtěch Náprstek that are today kept at the museum bearing his name. Complicated family relations, the general course of life, work and hunting of the

Dakota are all described scientifically. However, the author manages to keep the language accessible, so that even the general reader can easily understand what is important, confidently follow the argumentation of the process of acculturation, and comprehend the gradual decline of local know-how and technologies, etc. I appreciate that the author included a treatise on the sacred character of hunting; as similar approaches can be noted in the European tradition since the Classical Period.

The author describes the Dakota based on reports, illustrations and scientific studies of the past centuries, and discusses the boundaries between the Sioux and the Dakota including intertribal contacts. Much the same as any other scholar in our country, Klápšřová took advantage of the Americanistic legacy of the Museum's founder Vojtěch Náprstek. This has been, however, not yet fully documented; therefore it is very inspiring that this publication includes materials from Náprstek's personal archive. The author has put together a catalogue of objects analysing the materials used, history, utilization and work methods of the Dakota.

Texts of the author are supplemented by a selection of archival texts (personal fund) of Vojtěch Náprstek. These were in particular his diary entries on his trip to the Indian territory in Minnesota (1856) that were written in German; the language of the Náprstek American community. Passages from the German-written work *Vorlesung über die "Dakota Indianer"* was translated from German by Tomáš Mařík. The study is concluded with a comprehensive list of literature relevant to the topic.

The text of Klápšřová is followed by another part: Bows and arrows of the Dakota culture in the collection of Vojtěch Náprstek by Otokar Homola. Metaphysical attitudes are discussed here, mostly regarding the sacred nature of hunting and (as the title suggests) the use of bows and arrows as their primary tools (historical resources are used within the text to explain further).

The text is fluent and easy-to-read, yet does not succumb in the regard of scientific nomenclature or definitions that are always presented in a professional way.

The catalogue is well-arranged, minimalistic and yet cogent, taking advantage of aesthetically pleasing pictures of high technical quality, both coloured and black and white.