

*OBITUARY*  
**ZUZANA PROFANTOVÁ**  
**(1953 – 2018)**

At the beginning of the summer came the unexpected news that on Sunday July 1<sup>st</sup> 2018, our colleague, a former researcher at the Institute of Ethnology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAV), Mgr. Zuzana Profantová, Csc. had passed away.



She joined this institute – at the time it bore the name of Ethnographic Institute SAV – in 1977 after working for one year at the Department of Ethnography and Folklore Studies of the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University in Bratislava, where she graduated in ethnography in 1976. At the institute, she started to work on verbal folklore, and we may say that the topic of proverbs, sayings and weather sayings accompanied her throughout her professional life. In 1988, she defended her thesis on this topic and obtained the title of Candi-

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date of Sciences; two years previously, her first book had been published, entitled “The rainbow drinks water. Slovak folk weather sayings” (1986).

After joining the Department of Ethnography SAV under the supervision of Dr. Mária Kosová, she contributed to the creation of a wide-ranging paremiological archive, and later became involved in work on the two largest collective works of Slovak ethnology: the “Ethnographical Atlas of Slovakia” (1991) and the two-volume “Encyclopaedia of the Folk Culture of Slovakia” (1995). At the beginning of the 1990s, she expanded her professional interest in issues of contemporary folklore studies, Slav studies, and also began to take an interest in current social reality. But she did not abandon the issue with which she had entered the academic world. She was a co-editor of the publication “Slovak sayings and proverbs. I, II. Selected works of A. P. Zátarecký” (1996), and in 1997 two works by her were published: “Little Fish are Sweet. Selected Writing on Proverbs” and the publication “Slovak weather sayings. On the calendar months, seasons, days of the week, celestial bodies, animals and plants”. In relation to the study of sayings, proverbs and weather sayings, the then director of the Institute of Ethnography SAV, professor Milan Leščák, stated that it was Zuzana Profantová who had opened the way for their modern-day study in Slovakia.

In this changed social situation, she was aware of the importance of examining the era of socialism via the memories of living contemporaries. Whilst in other post-socialist countries, teams of experts were formed for such research, in Slovakia, Zuzana was at first a lonely pioneer. She included her findings concerning the ideological aspects of socialist everyday life, based on research from narratives of memory, in two publications with the joint title “We lived under socialism”; she was a co-author and editor of the first volume, subtitled “Chapters from the Ethnology of the Everyday” (2012), and the second one, subtitled “Helena: (a biographical approach to the ethnology of the everyday)” (2015), was her own work.

During her professional career, Zuzana Profantová was exceptionally active in several spheres. As well as the above-mentioned publications, between 1977 and 2017 she wrote almost 130 scientific and specialist texts. With great enthusiasm, she also worked as an editor, for example on the “Grammar of the National Myth and Folklore” (1998), “On the threshold of the Millennium. Folklore and Folklore Studies in Slovakia” (2000), “Slav Folklore Studies at the Crossroads” (2003; as part of the XIII International Congress of Slavists”, Folklore and Folklore Studies in the Postmodern World (2013; as part of the XVI International Congress of Slavists). She also often found her place as a successful publisher and several projects, publications and events were created thanks to her talent for finding sponsors. She was also active in the international field. She organised and co-organised international conferences. From

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1988 to 2001, she attended study trips in England, the Czech Republic, China, Finland, Poland, Russia and Serbia.

From 1991, she was a co-researcher on several foreign VEGA projects and the leading researcher on Slovak projects in the field of folklore research and the ethnological study of socialism. She taught at the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University in Bratislava, of the University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra and of the University of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, and at the Faculty of Education of Comenius University and of the Slovak Technical University in Bratislava.

She was a member of Slovak and foreign scientific societies and a winner of awards from the Ethnographic Society of Slovakia (repeatedly for her scientific and organisational work), as well as of the SAV Award, Premium of the Literary Fund and of the Guiseppe Pitré – Salvatore Salomóne Marino International Award for Ethnological and Anthropological Studies as a co-author of joint works.

In 2015, Zuzana Profantová retired. However, she remained in contact with the workplace she had called home for many years. She regularly visited our archives and library, and was a regular guest at Christmas parties. She was an unmistakable, non-conformist, energetic and charming woman, and an exceptional and well-meaning person.

*May she rest in peace.*

*Juraj Zajonc*