

LITTLE FISH ARE SWEET

PROFANTOVÁ ZUZANA: *Little fish are sweet*. Selected Writings on Proverbs.
Bratislava 1977, 109 pages

This publication was incited (as the author writes in the introduction) by two round anniversaries in 1977 interlinked with publication of so far largest collection of Slovak paremia. One hundred years ago, in 1897, was in Prague published a large collection of 13 000 paremia with the title "Slovak proverbs, sayings and idioms" and 160 years ago (in 1837) its author - Adolf Peter Záturecký was born.

The publication comprises seven selected and partly adapted studies of Mgr. Z. Profantová, CSc., a scientific researcher of the Institute of Ethnology at the Slovak Academy of Science. Some of them have already been published in almanacs and professional journals in Slovak, Polish and English languages. The first three studies are oriented more theoretically, though they are based on the analysis of the concrete material on Slovak paremias. In the contribution To the Beginnings of Paremiology in Slovakia the author draws attention to the historical and cultural conditions which formed the proverbs abundance in our country not only from own sources and experiences but as well under the influence of Roman and Greek stimuli, Christianity and Church institutions in our country, etc. In addition the paper investigates the initial interest in proverbs and their publication in Slovakia, which is distinctly shown since the 17th century and culminates in the end of 19th century in collecting and research work of A. P. Záturecký.

A logical continuation of the first part is the next study On Classification of the Slovak Paremiological Treasury (History and Presence). It evaluates the very classification used by A. P. Záturecký in his collection as well as his discussions on these issue with his contemporaries, specially with Pavol Dobšinský. Z. Profantová can only partially keep to Záturecký's classification because the concept of 'Archive proverbs' which was originally initiated and built in the Institute of Ethnology by its founder PhD Mária Kosová, has gradually been enlarged to Paremiological archive. Z. Profantová clarifies principles and methods of this archive creation, various classification views in computer processing of material and possibilities of their utilization in various scientific disciplines and practice.

As indicated by the title of other study Concerning One Possibility of Logical-Semiotic Invariants of Weatherproverbs, the author muses over the possibilities of logical-semiotic invariant use at semilogic analysis of forecasts. The author mentions several authors using this method in their works (V. Voigt, Z. Kanyó, G. I. Permjakov and others). She also applies this method in the analysis of several weather proverbs groups and considers the apparatus of mathematical logic as one of the attributing method in paremiological research.

In the second part of publication Z. Profantová publishes four papers which analyse proverbs on thematic principle and utilise various approach methods. The contribution "Christian Standards in the Proverbial Tradition in Slovakia" is investigating which biblical moral and value principal are comprised in Slovak proverbs and in what form they are presented within them. When investigating the linguistic forms of normative and evaluating statements the author found out various tendencies, e.g. evaluating acts and manifestations are mainly expressed in declarative way, standards in imperative, etc.

The paper called "Antithesis - a Functional Means of Expression of the Patriarchal-Family Relations in Slovak proverbs" starts from the premise that folklore is oriented mainly on such phenomena and elements of human life which concentrate in them certain semiotic content and which generalise collective ideas and views. This determines also folklore poetry which expresses the aesthetic relation to reality as well as the social functions of folklore. Family belongs among stable objects of folklore depiction in various genres, i.e. also in proverbs, in which antithesis has a significant place among artistic means. Through antithesis the proverbs about family provide not only concentrated information but as well express effort to form views of man and his acting.

The study "Ethnoidentification in conversational Genres of Folklore Alias Locus Standi" brings very interesting incentives. It investigates statements arising from comparison of "oneself" and "others" on ethnological, regional or local basis, especially abusive and ridiculing statements (slurs, blason populaires, Ortsnackereien, nicknames). These statements contain also many stereotype attitudes and evaluations. They can be positive, but they are mostly negative even pejorative and very often they utilise humour and sarcasm.

The concluding contribution "Semantic Gesture of Death" brings semantic analysis of forms, symbols and death signs in various genres of Slovak folklore. Death phenomenon is depicted from three conceptions of universe: 1. the oldest conception contains relicts of pre-Christian understanding of world and life 2. expresses symbols and attitudes connected with Christianity and 3. understands death as a natural biological end of a living organism.

In the title of her publication Z. Profantová utilised one of the internationally valid proverbs in Slovakia spread in version "Aj malé ryby sú ryby" (Small fish are sweet). A.P. Záturecký described proverbs as "slippery fish" which are difficult to catch. In addition the proverbs belong to so called "small genres" in folklore professional literature of course only by its extent and not importance. Z. Profantová offers her publication to the professional public attention as such "sweet fish". Z. Profantová's work brings an interesting and challenging view of the study of Slovak paremia representing several approaches and possibilities of their analysis also in wider contexts.

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