

I am writing now in the plural form because apart from me she was befriended also with Dr. Małgorzata Maj and with all members of our institute who were interested in the Carpathian culture. On such occasions it is often the case that we focus rather on publications, field research, conferences while the personal aspect of mutual contacts with our Slovak friends tends to disappear. But those elusive matters remain part of our individual memory. It happened very often that with many of the people that we met in Slovakia, right from the very first meeting we felt like old friends. I had that feeling when I met Milan Leščák in Bratislava (If I may speak personally here). Maybe it is one of characteristics features of the Slovak – their straightforwardness.

It is good that times changed. Our friendship was at the beginning supervised by a USSR professor who, as a scholar, quickly fell into oblivion. Our cooperation has lasted, and it seems that we did not need Prof. Bromley to achieve this. However, he might have been useful in one thing: he inspired us to speak with one voice, and in his self-righteousness he did not even realize it. Let us stop this “veterans’ ponderings”, the real understanding and friendship exists between people who are free. When I talk about it now, I would like to remind you that our cooperation began in troubled times. The fact that we could somehow set those troubles aside constitutes the greatest value of our cooperation.

Czesław Robotycki

The Seminarium Ethnologicum and the Seminarium Ethnologicum Szegediense

I was a third-year university student when on 10 – 22 September 1971 my professor, Béla Gunda (1911 – 1994), announced that students who spoke English or German could apply for the summer student seminar, the Seminarium Ethnologicum, to be held by the Department of Ethnology of the Komensky University in Bratislava. He told us that the seminar was being organised by Professor Ján Podolák, and would be attended not only by students from Slovakia but also from Poland, Romania, Ukraine, Hungary and possibly other countries, each accompanied by a teacher. During the seminar students would do fieldwork somewhere in Slovakia, forming thematic groups each under the guidance of a teacher or researcher. These group leaders would be leading researchers from Slovakia and abroad. I liked the idea and applied with the recommendation of Béla Gunda. That year Iván Balassa (1917 – 2002), deputy director of the Museum of Agriculture in Budapest was present from Hungary as a researcher and I represented the Debrecen Department of Ethnology.

It was a long trip by bus from Bratislava to the place where we were to stay that year, Vyšné Ružbachy. This is a well known spa in the Spiš region. We were

lodged here three to a room and I found myself together with Janez Bogataj (Ljubljana, Slovenia) and a Swedish boy. Unfortunately, I have forgotten his name. (Janez Bogataj is now one of the leading representatives of Slovenian ethnology. And although I have visited Ljubljana several times since then, I have not met him.) But I listened with amazement and envy as the Swedish boy told us how he was investigating sheep-herding in Sardinia. In those days we, Hungarian students, did not even dare to dream of doing fieldwork abroad, and not only because of the lack of funds!

The daily activities and programmes followed a precise timetable. At that time I was working on the pastoral culture of the Hortobágy region, so I joined the group examining pastoral culture. Meals provided the rhythm of our days, but there was also time to explore the area around the village. We studied not only the village itself but were taken by bus to several locations and the smaller groups were dropped off at the places they had chosen. I still have the collecting book I kept then, so I know that on the first day we visited Jakubany, the second day Plavnica, the third day Legnava and Starina. On the fourth day we visited the settlement of Šarišské Jastrabie in Šariš county where we were able to visit the shepherds' huts. On September 17 our group visited the village of Kolačkov.

However, the centre was Vyšné Ružbachy where the evenings were spent in conversation, singing and short talks introducing ourselves. In the afternoons the teachers and researchers leading the different groups held seminars. Iván Balassa's seminar, held on September 17, was on the rural economy. I clearly remember that Iván Balassa and I sang Hungarian folksongs. I was able to hear for myself that the new style Hungarian and Slovak folksongs were basically the same, not only in their melodies but often also in their texts.

As someone who came from the Great Hungarian Plain, it was very instructive for me to see a different kind of ecological environment and within it to get to know the high mountain (Carpathian) shepherding, its buildings, the milk processing procedures and implements. The group leaders gave very effective assistance. I learnt a great deal from Ioan Vladuțiu (1920 – 1991), who came from Bucharest, but if I remember correctly his family was from Maros County (Marosludas/Ludas, Transylvania), and he spoke Hungarian fluently. (Since then one of the schools in that settlement has been named after him.) On September 21 he gave a talk about the cultural elements associated with high mountain shepherding that are found in all mountain cultures. I particularly remember his discussion of the vatra (fireplace). The members of our small group discussed what they had learned. I still have the text of the paper I wrote at the time about my experiences and research on shepherding. I spoke in Hungarian and it was translated into Slovak. I liked the fact that the teachers and researchers participating found a common language. But not all the Slovak students spoke German or English. A few of them also spoke Hungarian. And perhaps there was also a Hungarian girl among the students from Bratislava. Among the leading researchers was Michal Markuš (1912 – 2004), with whom I later formed a close and good relationship from the

1980s right up until his death. He held a talk on September 18 on the nutrition culture.

The shepherds and the Slovak villagers received us very kindly. When they learnt that I am Hungarian they tried out the few words of Hungarian they knew. These small gestures reinforced my conviction that the peoples of the Carpathian Basin, and especially the Slovaks and Hungarians, are bound together by strong cultural and emotional ties. We ate a lot of fresh ewe cheese at the shepherds' huts (*salaš*), which of course had a beneficial effect on our digestion. We were also very impressed by the distinctive architecture of the mountain villages. Not to mention the magnificent landscape. I took many photographs that are now in the photographic archive of the Debrecen Department of Ethnography.

On September 18 we transferred to Levoča, travelling via Vyšné Ružbachy – Ždiar – Tatranská Lomnica – Poprad. From here we visited the Greek Catholic villages of Nižné Repáše and Olšavica. It was here that I first saw how far west the Greek Catholic Ruthenians had migrated. For me, of course, one of the highlights was the visit to Levoča (*Lőcse* in Hungarian), the setting of many works of Hungarian literature. I still remember my delight at seeing Saint Jacob's church and admiring the altars and statues I had previously known only from photographs. And the whole environment of the town, the old houses steeped in the atmosphere of past centuries.

Naturally, there was also an excursion to the Spiš/Szepesség region. I particularly remember Podolíneč/Podolin and Stará Ľubovňa/Ólubló. In Podolin I remember the first school set up in Hungary by the Piarists where many famous people studied, and in Ólubló the memories of Krúdy. The extensive castle ruins that, of course, we climbed up to see, were an unforgettable experience, and the many beautiful Szepesség settlements we saw from the bus with their mediaeval churches and old houses. The Turks never reached this area.

As I remember it, the Seminarium Ethnologicum was unparalleled at that time. It was a unique opportunity for ethnology students from the socialist bloc to maintain contacts, get to know each other, learn how to move in the international field and exchange professional views in foreign languages. It was interesting to look at my notes and collecting books 39 years after the event. In the following years Ján Podolák tried to have the Seminarium held at other places in the neighbouring countries. I seem to recall that it was to have been organised in Debrecen too, but for reasons unknown to me this did not happen. And with this the long series of events was interrupted.

This is why, when I was appointed to the Department of Ethnology at the University of Szeged in 1993, one of the first things I did, building on my personal experiences in Slovakia, was to relaunch the Seminarium Ethnologicum, now based in Szeged and held every second year under the new name of Seminarium Ethnologicum Szegediense. Its structure partly follows the Slovak pattern, especially as regards the international nature of the event. The language of communication is English. It also reflects the Slovak pattern in focussing on collective field research. However it introduced new features in the way it is organised. Each seminar has a central problem that we approach from different points of view.

Participants coming from abroad, students and teachers must all prepare on the chosen problem. We spend two days preparing for the collective field research with lectures on the theoretical background and forming the work groups. After 2-3 days of research we again have 1 – 2 days to present our preliminary results to our fellows and the community concerned in the form of short talks. Then on the basis of these talks within a semester we prepare the studies intended for publication in a bilingual (Hungarian-English) volume. It is a great pleasure for us that we are often able to welcome both students and teachers from Bratislava at the Szeged seminars. In this way the Slovak initiative lives on in Hungary. But the common goal remains the same: to get to know each other's culture and the research methods taught and to cultivate connections between departments through professional friendships. Ján Podolák and his team provided a good foundation for this.

Gábor Barna

**The Brno students
at the 7th Seminarium Ethnologicum
(Opatová, September 2nd – 13th 1974)**

When our colleagues from Bratislava asked us to contribute to the jubilee publication with our memories of what the participation in the Seminarium Ethnologicum in Opatová (Trenčín district), joint field research with our the Slovak and foreign students of ethnography and folklore meant to us, at first we found ourselves in the territory of "oral history" due to the time that had passed since then and to the fact that all research material was given to the organizers of the Seminarium a long time ago. However, when we started recollecting our memories and slowly reconstructing our almost two-week stay in the Trenčín district we agreed on one thing: the participation in the 7th Seminarium Ethnologicum left a deep and unforgettable memory due to its unusual friendly atmosphere and because it exceeded the routine of university study like e.g. the study trips abroad organized by professor Richard Jeřábek. At the same time it was our first encounter with a foreign world in the area of research.

First the memories of our journey to Slovakia emerged. We travelled to Trenčín by bus at the beginning of September accompanied by professor Jeřábek having feelings whether we are not "the chosen ones" that we (Lia Černíková, Jana Tomancová, Miroslav Válka) were selected from among many other students. The perfectly organized event started by the departure from Trenčín bus station accompanied by Milan Chlebana, one of the Seminarium secretaries. And how spontaneously and warmly professor Richard Jeřábek greeted Viera Ábelová, another worker of the Trenčín Museum! We could see that our professors are also people of flesh and blood and spontaneity and warmth affects also them.