

JOURNAL SLOVENSKÝ NÁRODOPIS IN THE CONTEXT OF TIME (1953 – 2012)

*Dedicated to Božena Filová with great respect for her many years' work
as editor-in-chief of Slovenský národopis.*

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Abstract: Štúdia je prehľadom vývinu vedeckého záujmu o problematiku spôsobu života a kultúry obyvateľov Slovenska na stránkach časopisu Slovenský národopis – jej materiálnych, sociálnych i duchovných kontextov. Nie je však len súpisom prác vedeckých osobností a kolektívov, ale i výziev a limitov, ktoré im spoločenská situácia na Slovensku v sledovanom historickom období vytvorila. Sprístupňuje informácie o ústrednom národopisnom časopise Slovenskej akadémie vied v období rokov 1953 – 2012 a o jeho význame v procese vedeckého záujmu o túto časť kultúrnej histórie Slovenska. Aj keď záujem o spôsob života a kultúru predovšetkým vidieckeho obyvateľstva možno v slovenskej vede objaviť už vo vedeckých prácach z druhej polovice 18. storočia, vznik Slovenského národopisu súvisel s inštitucionálnym zázemím pre špeciálny vedný odbor – národopis (etnografia a folkloristika), ako základného predpokladu pochopenia kultúrnych osobitostí ich civilizačného vývinu. To vznikalo v porovnaní s inými národmi Európy veľmi neskoro. Prvé odborné zázemie vytvorila Muzeálna slovenská spoločnosť (1895) a Matica slovenská (1863), na pôde ktorej vznikol i jej Národopisný odbor MS (1895). Kvalitatívnym prínosom v profesionálnom rozvoji národopisu na Slovensku v období po druhej svetovej vojne bolo založenie Národopisného ústavu SAVU (1946) na pôde Slovenskej akadémie vied a umení. Zároveň sa v roku 1947 obnovila i výučba národopisu na Filozofickej fakulte UK a začala sa rozširovať sieť slovenských múzeí, v ktorých pracovali jeho prví absoventi. Vtedy vznikol aj nový ústredný odborný časopis Slovenský národopis. Ten bezprostredne nadviazal na obsahovú náplň Národopisného sborníka (1939 – 1952), ktorý vydával Národopisný odbor MS. Vnímavému a kritickému čitateľovi príspevkov v Slovenskom národopise počas celej jeho šesťdesiatročnej histórie, ak ich dokáže chápať v dobových historických a sociálnych súvislostiach, dajú možnosť dozvedieť sa niečo o realite, ktorá bola iná, ako je tá jeho. Môžu sa tak pre neho stať novou kultúrnou a historickou skúsenosťou.

Key words: dejiny vedy, národopis, etnológia, folkloristika, časopis Slovenský národopis

Introduction

The institutional framework for a special branch of science – ethnology focusing on the way of life and culture of the generations of Slovakia's population was formed much later than in other European nations. The ethnology in Slovakia could

not arise earlier than the problems that it was dealing with. Members of the Slovak intelligentsia started to pay attention to ethnology earlier, but the first institutional background was established only by *Matica slovenská* [Slovak Mother] (1863) and the *Muzeálna slovenská spoločnosť* [Slovak Museal Association] (1893). Ethnological section of *Matica slovenská* was created there too (1895). Both institutions studied, first of all, rural communities. Their research focused on natural, historic, regional and ethnic, economico-social, and technological links of the development of way of life and culture of Slovakia's inhabitants. They were considered a basic condition for the understanding of cultural characteristics of their civilization development.

The establishment of *Matica slovenská* made it possible to research and gather documents concerning the way of life of the broad population strata in Slovakia. *Matica slovenská* was supposed to organize cultural-educational, scientific, museum, collecting, and publishing activities of its members as well as of the broad public. It appeared that *Matica slovenská*'s possibilities in developing "the Slovak national science" were rather limited as there were no workplaces yet, nor internal research workers. *Matica slovenská* could only support scientific ambitions of individuals, mostly laymen, working across Slovakia. Still, the issues of national science – its ideological, gnoseological, and methodical orientation including its national goals- were being raised. At this philosophical and theoretical levels, the current researchers did not come with a new concept, they just developed and improved the one presented by Ludovít Štúr's (1815 – 1856) followers.

Abolition of *Matica slovenská* affected the development of science in Slovakia after 1875.

The organizational platform for a nationally oriented science was lost. The official Hungarian science, particularly its social sciences, were fully engaging in promoting the idea of a nationally unified state. Under such conditions, the Slovak science had to rely on self-sacrifice of enthusiasts. They began creating modern national concepts in their branches of science, while using positivist methods in their research. However, shortage both of personnel and publication options, was a limiting factor.

Broader interest in the traditional culture phenomena was, at that time, linked with the idea of constructing a museum. Andrej Kmet' (1841 – 1908) became its ardent supporter; by the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, he was one of the leading personalities of the national history research in Slovakia. He failed, however, to implement his plan "to put together active scholars in an academic or national and scientific association." His scientific and organizational activities remained focused on systematic collection of articles on the traditional folk culture for museums as well as various exhibits. Publications like *Sborník Muzeálnej slovenskej spoločnosti* [Almanach of the Slovak Museal Association] (1896) and *Časopis Muzeálnej slovenskej spoločnosti* [Journal of the Slovak Museal Association] (1898) represented already a higher quality level.

The founding of the Comenius University in Bratislava in 1919 significantly affected the science development in Slovakia. New departments and sections were created with the help of Czech teachers. The establishment of the Ethnological

Seminar at the University in 1921, which was organized by a professor of the Slavic and general ethnology Karel Chotek (1881 – 1967), greatly impacted Slovak ethnology.

Under the Czechoslovak republic, most of abolished cultural institutions were gradually recreated. Matica slovenská in Turčiansky Svätý Martin played a significant role again in organizing both the cultural and scientific life in the inter-war period. Apart from its cultural and educational activities, it focused exclusively on national history disciplines. Already in 1919, there was a revival of scientific branches studying solely national history disciplines. In the inter-war period, Matica slovenská turned, after Bratislava, the second center of the newly formed professional Slovak science. It had major impact on national history research, because together with the Slovak national museum in Turčiansky Svätý Martin, they continued to do historical and ethnological research. Gradually, the first generation of local specialists, who, together with graduates of the Prague universities, prepared the fundamentals of the professional science in Slovakia.

From the first half of the 18th up to the beginning of the 21st centuries, changes of the historical and social and economic conditions of the way of life and culture went hand in hand with the changes in reasons, views, and methods of expert approaches to their study. The faster civilization progress, the stronger political causality and influence of the socio-political decisions on the way of life, thinking and behavior of people. This tendency culminated in the second half of the 20th century. It significantly impacted the shaping of life strategies in individuals, social groups, and often of the whole generations living in Slovakia.

The presented study reviews progress made in the scientific interest in regard to the way of life and culture of Slovakia's population in *Slovenský národopis* [Slovak Ethnology] journal including its material, social and spiritual contexts. Its ambition goes beyond the summary of works made by individuals and research teams as we attempt to capture both challenges and limits under the contemporary situation in Slovakia. It provides information on the central ethnological journal of the Slovak Academy of Sciences within the years of 1953 – 2012 and its position in the process of scientific interests in this part of the cultural history of Slovakia. Though, Slovak science showed interest in this issue already in the second half of 18th century. These works provided a significant base for a historical comparison of the subject followed by the formation of the future independent scientific discipline (Urbancová, 1970, 1987; Michálek, 1975, 1990; Podolák, 2003; Slavkovský, 2011).

Ethnology in Slovakia in the second half of the 20th century

The establishment of the Institute of Ethnology under the umbrella of the Slovak Academy of Sciences and Arts (1946) represented an important quality contribution to the professional development of the Slovak ethnology after the WWII. Simultaneously, in 1947 ethnology started to be taught at the Philosophical Faculty of the Comenius University. The network of Slovak museums, employing first ethnology graduates, was growing too. A new journal entitled *Slovenský národopis* (1953) was launched. It was connected with the former *Národopisný sbor-*

ník [Almanach of Ethnology] (1939 – 1952) that was published by the Ethnological section of Matica slovenská. This was due to the fact that the *Slovenský národopis* journal included the same editorial board, in both cases headed by Ján Mjartan. A similar scientific journal, Československá etnografie [Czechoslovak Ethnography], was started in the Czech republic reflecting the establishment of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. After 10 years, the journal stopped to exist (Šrámková, 2003: p. 215). Český lid [Czech people] became the central journal for ethnography and folkloristics in the Czech country (1946).

In the fifties of the past century, *Slovenský národopis* was assisting the first generation of professionals – ethnologists and folklorists to create conditions for more intense and more systematic study of the way of life and culture of the Slovaks, minorities living in Slovakia, and Slovak enclaves in the Central and southern Europe. During this important period due to professionalization of Slovak ethnology, a new generation of young ethnologists and folklorists was offered a great chance to demonstrate its attitude to the research and its branch of science. The new professional journal has since reflected activities of several generations of researchers in ethnology and related scientific branches. Careful readers will certainly observe both the gnoseological and social conditions that were decisive at the time.

a) Socialist way of life – ethnological reflection

Every period has had its challenges and limits. The first nation-wide conference of the Czechoslovak ethnologists in Prague in 1949 adopted a commitment that ethnological research will be fully based on the Marx-Leninist methodology. It was a period following the IXth congress of the Communist party of Czechoslovakia that concluded the necessity of cultural revolution in Slovakia. There were many illusions, impatience, and revolutionary romanticism in this process as well as in social life as a whole. It was expected that the road to socialism will be smooth both in cultural and scientific life. This was the price that social sciences paid to the contemporary socio-political system (Slavkovský, 2009).

Social and political changes following 1948, collectivization and industrialization of Slovakia connected with them, represented a significant social change in the Slovak way of life. This fact was obviously reflected in social sciences, including ethnology. Ethnology turned to the changed situation with interest, though it was not due to the immanent substance of social sciences, which is searching for new knowledge on society and culture, but rather to the then ideological motivation of the contemporary political elites. That is true, most of all, of the first stage of agriculture collectivization.

Slovakia was an agrarian country. The misunderstanding of the idea of cooperative farms, ideologization of economic questions of the countryside negatively impacted several generations to follow, regarding their life strategies formation. A sharp internal political struggle in Slovakia after the 1946 elections was reflected not only in ideology, but also in science and culture. It concerned particularly the way of implementing concrete tasks in culture and science. However, intellectuals were the most important target in this respect, because they were a decisive force

in implementing the goals of the cultural state policy. This task could not be reached without increasing the level of Marxism-Leninism knowledge (Melicherčík, 1950; Mjartan, 1952, 2006; Podolák, 1995; Krišteck, 1986).

From 1947 on, there was adopted an expert program vision of Vilém Pražák (Pražák, 1947) for the Slovak ethnology in the second half of the 20th century. Cultural reconstruction of the countryside, i.e. the ethnological study of the village in the process of its transfer to socialism, became an academic topic under the pressure of contemporary events already in 1951. As it was stated then, a new socio-economic situation of the Slovak countryside could not be studied by traditional methodical tools of ethnology. A study by Ján Mjartan (Mjartan, 1952) was the first contribution to resolving this issue. It followed the conclusions of the Soviet colleagues at the Moscow conference in 1951 that was devoted to kolchoz type of farming. It is much easier, as a rule, to postulate criteria and principles than to implement them. The same applied to the study of Marxist methodology and its application in scientific thinking with respect to the cooperative village research in the fifties.

The first period of both the organizational and methodological developments of the Institute of Ethnology of SASc culminated in the years of 1950 – 1951. The Institute focused on discussions concerning signs of bourgeois ideology in the Slovak ethnology and on the results of ethnological research in the Soviet Union and in other states of people's democracy. Apart from the above discussions, the Institute set two principal themes in research: study of extended family and research on servitude and capitalist oppression and their reflection in folk tradition.

Both ethnology and museology in Slovakia reflected then a socio-political situation that affected scientific thinking in the beginning of the fifties of the 20th century. The IInd nation-wide conference of the Czechoslovak ethnologists in Prague was considered a turning point; it was held on the 6 – 7th April 1952 and initiated by the governmental commission for building the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, by departments of ethnology from Prague, Bratislava, Brno and by research workers of the SASc. It was there that a strict implementation of Marxist-Leninist principles in science was adopted.

The contemporary ethnology and museology in Slovakia and Czech country adopted paradigms of the Soviet ethnology, its methodological and ideological fundamentals. These were based on the Marxist-Leninist ideology as well as on the corresponding methodology of science. The professional literature of Soviet ethnologists was supposed to be the inspiration for research. Czech colleagues also ardently adopted the Soviet experience. The publications of Soviet researchers in *Český lid* (Czech People) journal were promoted in *Slovenský národopis* journal as the methodological starting points for the study of cooperative village, and the process of collectivization and industrialization (Podolák, 1955).

Setting of both methodological and methodical postulates of the research on the cooperative villages was rather demanding. As we learn from issued articles of J. Mjartan (Mjartan, 1951) and J. Podolák (Podolák, 1955), the study and research of folk culture in its transition to Socialism was mandatory. The Czechoslovak ethnology was tasked to assist, uncover and evaluate those elements of the folk

culture that could help to build Socialism, a new socialist culture along with new socialist people. At the same time, it was expected to outline their historical prospects. Both the theoretical and methodical principles as formulated by J. Mjartan, were applied in the first research on the way of life and culture of the cooperative village in Horehronie¹ village of Závadka nad Hronom in September 1952. Apart from this village, there were other places that were selected so as to represent various geographical, economic, social, and cultural conditions characterizing the Slovak countryside in the fifties of the 20th century.

After all those years, it is possible to reevaluate results of the project. In 1969, the ethnological monograph *Horehronie* was published. It represents a significant addition to the research on traditional culture in that part of Slovakia. It is hard though to speak about analysis of culture and way of life of the peasants living in Horehronie region in the process of turning private farms into collective ones; similarly, we do not learn too much about impacts of the collectivization and industrialization processes on Slovak peasants and their work. It is rather interesting that this task as if disappeared both from scientific and research plans of the Institute of Ethnology of SASc and from its journal. We cannot learn anything about its implementation when reading the evaluation studies of Ján Podolák (Podolák, 1955) entitled *Ten Years of Slovenský národopis* (1945 – 1955), or Emília Horváthová's work (Horváthová, 1973) entitled *The Principal Direction and Activities of the Institute of Ethnology of SASc since the Founding of Slovak Academy of Sciences* published in *Slovenský národopis* journal. Obviously, its results could not be found in the later evaluation of its twenty five volumes by V. Frolec (Frolec, 1978). It seems that Soňa Burlasová (Burlasová, 1964) may have obtained the most valuable results in this area when studying songs concerning the cooperative farms.

In the fifties of the 20th century, another topic related to Slovakia's industrialization, research on the culture and way of life of the working class, appeared rather inevitably in ethnological research. It was *Slovenský národopis* journal that published the first theoretical starting points of its implementation (Filová, 1960). There were also presented reports on working meetings that attempted to search for methodological and methodical approaches to resolve these issues at the Czecho-Slovak level. Outcomes were similar to those as in case of collectivization. The ethnological research on workers' centers and worker's culture was not an easy gnoseological task, which on one hand, resulted from imperfect techniques of information gathering, on the other hand, from a wide variety and diversity of life and culture that ethnologists were supposed to capture in their research (Fojtík, 1965). B. Filová made a valuable comment at that time: "The contemporary history of ethnological science proved that it could justify its social position only when it corresponded to the concrete needs of the society that produced it" (Filová, 1960: p. 15) This statement in many ways explains the content of contemporary volumes of *Slovenský národopis* journal under Socialism.

¹Horehronie is one of the traditional ethnographic region of Slovakia.

Although both ethnologists and folklorists proclaimed uniformly their respect for the Marxist methodology, in the beginning of the sixties, they demonstrated a more critical position to its one-sided interpretation, particularly in dealing with the then “current processes” in the folk culture. More and more critics, particularly in folkloristic articles, pointed out that the message of P. Bogatyriov’s and A. Melicherčík’s works failed to be applied. Ethnology copied, rather successfully, the European trends, e.g. in the modelling theory or the systems theory, but also in applying the ethno-cartographic methods (Leščák, 1992; Krekovičová, 1998; Slavkovský, 2006; Hlôšková, 2009). One of the main goals of the European ethnology in the sixties was to capture the development aspects of the studied cultural phenomena and to incorporate them in broader cultural areas.

The Czech colleagues commented these facts in their evaluations too. Zdeněk Uherek (Uherek, 2004) stated that the Marxist ideology “was implemented rather decoratively” in the Slovak ethnology of the fifties. Those, who survived that time span in ethnology, will certainly agree with Jiří Langer too: “Slovak ethnology in the second half of the 20th century succeeded, in contrast to many other branches of social sciences, to protect its scientific autonomy from ideological impacts quite well” (Langer, 2005: p. 338).

b) from material studies towards scientific syntheses

It is not our intention in this study to enumerate scientific activities of the Institute of Ethnology of SASc, which has been publishing *Slovenský národopis* journal, at that time; nor do we want to comment the content of the journal or evaluate its professional level. This was already done in a qualified way by Václav Frolec (Frolec, 1978) when he evaluated the past twenty five volumes, Milan Leščák (Leščák, 1992) on the fortieth anniversary, Marta Šrámková (Šrámková, 2003), Vilmos Voigt (Voigt, 2003), Z. Uherek (Uherek, 2004), and Martin Mešša (Mešša, 2005) in evaluating the fifty volumes of the journal. I wish to remind just five framework expert areas to which the Institute paid most attention in the second half of the 20th century:

1. development of folk culture in Slovakia
2. impacts of industrialization on traditional culture
3. folk culture in the Carpathian region
4. culture of Slovak communities abroad and culture of non-Slovak ethnic groups in this territory
5. history, methodology, and theory of ethnology and folkloristics (Horváthová, 1973: p. 172).

Despite political pressures from official decision-makers and their attempts to dictate the main goals of the scientific research ideologically, one should positively assess the fact that the Institute of Ethnology was receiving the necessary funding. At that time, it covered the fundamental goals – to build an ethnological institution that started to coordinate the principal tasks of both the Slovak and Czech ethnology and folkloristics. A documentation section, which was processing materials gained in field research, was built up; bibliography began to be published sys-

tematically, a central scientific journal started to be issued, tenths of scientific studies, monographs, new science syntheses were issued (Slavkovský, 2006).

I think that one can only agree with Eva Krekovičová's view in this respect, namely that the Slovak ethnology of the second half of the 20th century "was only seeking its position in Europe, where all these issues were already resolved long ago; there existed extended material basis, which was published already in the 19th century, and on the basis of which one could develop comparative Europeistic syntheses. Slovakia, however, still needed a "positivist" work that is irreplaceable in building up a branch of science" (Krekovičová, 1998: p. 78).

Thus, the first volumes of the *Slovenský národopis* journal included, first of all, material studies of the traditional vocations, popular food, popular building and housing, social relations, spiritual culture, and creative arts. Folklore studies (Leščák, 1996; Hlôšková, 2009) were represented in a significant way already in the early volumes. As stated by M. Šrámková in her study, "the journal provided an immediate testimony on the state and ways of development of the Slovak contemporary folkloristics". Professionals from non-academic workplaces and those from abroad were authors of a number of articles too. The *Slovenský národopis* journal turned into a "forum of new theoretical and methodological starting points in folkloristics and of its internationalization in Slavonic studies in particular" (Šrámková, 2003: p. 216) Its openness toward foreign authors was appreciated by Z. Uherek too (Uherek, 2004: p. 56), who considers articles of foreign experts as one of the evaluation criteria for any ethnological journal.

Apart from traditional topics as popular poetry, popular prose and the cultivating of obvious continuity with the previous research traditions, a new topic was introduced, namely peasants' songs and anti-fascist resistance in folk art. All this necessitated its theoretical interpretation, too. At that time, the journal presented studies that addressed the issue of the "occurrence of new folklore in Slovakia", and also of the „relations and mutual influence of artificial literature and verbal art". While the *Slovenský národopis* journal had to deal with lack of theoretical articles in the beginning, from the sixties there appeared first theoretical studies of both the Slovak and Czech ethnologists and folklorists. In the sixties, the journal entered a stabilization stage, leaving material descriptiveness and entering a period when a stable reservoir of local and foreign authors.

Obviously, there were still limiting ideological factors affecting social sciences not only in the sixties, but especially in the seventies. Still, as the Czech colleagues stated, while the seventies negatively impacted the Czech ethnology including the contents of the *Český lid* journal, *Slovenský národopis* was very slightly affected by the normalization period" (Uherek, 2004: p. 57).

The content of ethnology has included the way of life and culture of ethnic communities. Thus, the study of ethnic processes was also reflected in *Slovenský národopis*. The attention focused on the study of common and differentiated expressions in traditional culture of the Slovaks and other minorities living in Slovakia, but also of the Slovak enclaves and diasporas abroad. The ethnological and folkloristic research in the Carpathians and the Balkan regions played a significant role in the research on interethnic links, too. Material grounds together with

theoretical results of this internationally coordinated scientific and research cooperation were published in the journal *Slovenský národopis* (Podoba 2006). It should be appreciated that throughout the history of *Slovenský národopis*, the editorial boards supported the extension of cooperation with related branches of science in order to get to know, as much as possible, the subject of interest for both ethnology and folkloristics. In the course of its sixty years existence, a number of articles dealing with ethnological museum science were published in it. As stated by M. Mešša: “they do not reflect only the interest of the journal editors in the museum activities, but they have demonstrated the efforts of museum employees – ethnologists to present their work in a scientific journal” (Mešša, 2005: p. 76).

At the same time, both the journal and the branch of science were able to maintain their gnoseological autonomy. As V. Frolec commented: “ethnology worked together with related scientific branches, without replacing them” (Frolec, 1978: p. 28). Though at that time, the interdisciplinary research in social sciences was considered to be the highest form of scientific study. All that was based on common gnoseological goals – scientific interpretation of the people’s model as the creator and representative of cultural values. Obviously, with respect to natural, historical and economic-social conditions shaping them. That period contributed mostly to heuristic, to the search and verification of the extent of information validity of concrete sources and their publication. This stage of the research process cannot be overlooked, because only those scientists who know well their sources, can select proper methods in utilizing their cultural and historical potential. The growing number of material, methodical and theoretically generalizing contributions in *Slovenský národopis* can prove it.

It is a natural ambition of every branch of science to draft a scientific synthesis that will resume and generalize scientific knowledge on the research subject at the level of scientific outputs of different generations. This applied also to the generations that shaped the scientific level of the Institute of Ethnology of SASc for the past decades. Since any human activity outcome shows the way of reaching it, we should make a tour into the history of our scientific discipline and of the Institute of Ethnology of SASc too. There could be found initial attempts to draft scientific syntheses on the traditional values of the way of life and culture of the past generations, which lived next to each other in Slovakia, and to study the role that this journal played.

When the *Ethnografický atlas Slovenska* [Ethnological Atlas of Slovakia] was under preparation, there were already tenths of science studies and professional monographs that constituted, already in the sixties, a very good ground for drafting a scientific synthesis. An article *Slováci* in the Soviet edition of *Narody mira* (1964) represented the first attempt. The Institute’s researchers contributed to the Slovak part of the 3rd volume of *Československá vlastivěda, Lidová kultura* [Czechoslovak Homeland Study – Folk Culture] (1968). In 1972 it was followed by *Die slowakische Volkskultur* [Slovak Folk Culture] and in 1975 there was the most extensive synthesis prepared by the first generation of professional ethnologists and folklorists of the Institute of Ethnology of SASc: *Slovensko 3 – Eud*, 2nd

part [Slovakia – The People]. This generation made a draft of the Slovak part of the international synthesis entitled *Etnografia Slovanov* [Ethnography of the Slavs].

We recall the above facts in order to demonstrate that the then accomplished professional and scientific outcomes of the Institute of Ethnology prepared the future grounds of three large team works that could be followed up by the next generation of researchers. Scientific continuity is related to generations too. A new generation, as a rule, is reluctant to repeat the work of its predecessors. It is important for its members to realize that no progress would be possible in scientific thinking without their predecessors' input.

The history of scientific branches and institutes includes projects that mark a quality turning point in the development of that or the other research discipline, but also of the institution implementing such projects. The large team projects, which were initiated by the Institute of Ethnology of SASc, certainly represented that trend. Minimum two conditions were necessary for the publication of these projects: to have sufficient knowledge ground in the pertinent branch of science as well as the institutional backing to conduct and implement such a demanding project regarding its organization, expertness, or funding. The knowledge ground of the branch of science, which includes *Slovenský národopis* journal, was sine qua non of such research outputs as *Etnografický atlas Slovenska* [Ethnological Atlas of Slovakia] (1990), *Encyklopédia ľudovej kultúry Slovenska* [Encyclopaedia of the Folk Culture of Slovakia] (1995), *Slovakia. European Contexts of the Folk Culture* (1997), *Európske kontexty ľudovej kultúry a Slovensko* (2000).

c) from ethnography to ethnology and cultural anthropology

The fact that scientific continuity has a generational character and that the new generation is reluctant to follow up the work of its predecessors was also evident on the *Slovenský národopis* pages after the social and political changes in the nineties. When reading some articles of my younger colleagues dissatisfied with the then quality of the theoretical level in our branch of science, I was surprised by the lack of understanding of the contemporary contexts that I would not expect on the part of social scientists. It does not mean, however, that our branch of science should not be searching for new theoretical and methodological goals and new themes. It did search and the *Slovenský národopis* journal reflected this fact. It was rather natural that under new social atmosphere the editors of the journal responded to it and they were searching for new topics that were absent on its pages until then. In this respect, it was very useful to conduct discussions on current ethnology and to publish a series of interviews with foremost personalities of the European science as Ernest Gellner (Gellner, 1992), K. Beitzl (Beitzl, 1993), S. Švecová (Švecová, 1993), A. Divičanová (Divičanová, 1994), M. Mitterauer (Mitterauer, 1995), G. Barna (Barna, 2001) and other colleagues from abroad that were source of inspiration for both the branch of science and the journal. *Slovenský národopis* offered publishing space to authors who came from western countries, e. g. J. Fabian, V. Schwarz, I. Schneider, and K. Köstlin. New topics raised by local authors appeared too – ethnic identity, tolerance and intolerance issues, religious life, social conflicts, unemployment, homelessness, living envi-

ronment. Interpretation of individual themes has turned rather subjective, e.g. the views of collectivization and its impacts on the way of life in rural community, but also the new issues brought by the current time as e.g. privatization, restitution and a number of other issues connected with transformation of the society.

Innovations in scientific topics and views concerning their interpretation were reflected in the journal too, particularly with respect to personal reflexion and continuity in ethnology. E.g. contributions made by S. Kovačevičová (Kovačevičová, 1996), M. Kubová (Kubová, 1997), and D. Klímova (Klímová, 1999). On one hand, specialized studies appear in English and German languages, on the other, due to lack of funding, the journal's content, both the text and pictures, had to be reduced.

Best characteristics of the then situation in both ethnology and *Slovenský národopis* provided the former director of the Institute and the editor-in-chief M. Leščák when he said to Zora Vanovičová in an interview for *Slovenský národopis*: "We are standing with one foot in the local scientific tradition, with the other one in the west; we are split between theory and experience, between journalism and attempts at statement exactness, between life culture and its virtual models thinking that we will get help from outside to reach a balance. Let us learn from our neighbors, but search for our own expression corresponding to our options and abilities. Slovak ethnology as a whole cannot overcome its own pace in a week or a year" (Vanovičová, 2000: p. 330).

M. Leščák in his paper dating back to 1991, already somehow anticipated how ethnology will look like in the beginning of the 21st century (Leščák, 1991: 4) and he saw ethnology's prospects at two principal gnoseological levels:

1. in research on the traditional culture and of its comparative study,
2. in shifting our branch of science to a more complex study than sciences dealing with people.

To estimate the extent that these two trends were accomplished in the nineties, it was possible only in 2001 when the Institute of Ethnology of SASc held an International Scientific Conference „Ethnology in Slovakia on the Threshold of the 21st Century: Reflexions and Trends.1

A long-term, internal development of our scientific discipline and the social requirement of a study and presentation of the cultural heritage did, to a great degree, shape its content and consequently also the *Slovenský národopis* journal in the nineties. Researchers ranking from older generation concluded their works that resulted in summarizing studies, large monographs (Ethnological Atlas of Slovakia, Encyclopaedia of the Folk Culture in Slovakia, Slovakia. European Contexts of the Folk Culture), extensive atlas-like and monographs on traditional culture of the Slovaks in the central and southern Europe, or a number of thematic, local and regional monographs. All this enhanced the comparative study of ethnology in Slovakia.

At that time, great attention was devoted to social groups as a mediating factor between individuals and the traditional community (Filová, 1990). Folkloristic projects focused on the well-known role of folklore and folk culture in the modern society (Leščák, 1966; Hlôšková, 2009). Thus, ideas of the founding generation

employees of the Institute, concerning both the subject and object of ethnological interest, were being implemented from the aspect of gnoselology. "A particular research stage was concluded in the Slovak ethnology. This conclusion was accompanied by both methodological and theoretical impacts. Diversion from historical, developmental and typological (traditional) culture of one's own nation and from a narrow national history research to a more complex study of men, culture, and society was the most significant shift in ethnology research" (Kiliánová, 2002: p. 279-281).

On the other hand, there appeared new scientific inspirations, but also ambitions of younger colleagues in particular. Results of urban-ethnological studies in the second half of the nineties came as real breakthrough of the ideas concerning the subject of ethnological research. "It was the urban ethnology that helped ethnologists to turn their attention to the current research on economic, political, social macro-processes and their impact on small groups or on micro-social environment" (Kiliánová, 2002: p. 279-282). Trends of interdisciplinary collaboration were strengthened, there appeared new topics quite naturally, resulting from new social reality, i. e. the adjustment of the traditional value systems in everyday culture to social changes, to new concepts concerning the study of ethnic communities living in Slovakia (Jews, Germans, Roma); nationalism, religiosity, impacts of political decisions on the way of life and on life strategies of both urban and rural population, etc. – issues that were all taboo until then.

Theoretical reflections underwent a different change. One can only agree with G. Kiliánová's opinion that "immediately after 1989, one could hardly expect intense theoretical discussion. Researchers needed more time to get acquainted with issues discussed in ethnology, cultural and social anthropology. The experience from other countries, which underwent significant social and political changes, showed that only after ten or more years one can expect principal scientific discussions" (Kiliánová, 2002: p. 281). Obviously, all the above issues of scientific interest, including new theoretical discussions, were reflected in *Slovenský národopis* at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries.

Conclusion

The study of the history of any scientific discipline is an important presumption for the drafting of both theory and methodology in each branch of science. It provides not only the necessary historical continuity, but it has practical significance in extending our knowledge of history of the studied objects and phenomena. While following them, one should not forget that the facts concerning the people's way of life and their expert interpretations, which were preserved in the *Slovenský národopis* journal, were affected by the period from which they originated, often with differentiated views of various representatives of that or the other periods. Thus, it is necessary to study the history of one's own branch of science, historical and social contexts under which it was developed.

The second reason for knowing the history of a particular discipline consists in understanding the development of theoretical and methodological presump-

tions. In comparison with its European neighbors, Slovak ethnology did not have good, but rather non-existing conditions for a continuous development and for a long time, it remained on amateurish level. This is another reason to get deeper knowledge about cultural heritage, which we inherited from the past generations of scholars, to learn about their views on the research object, on theoretical thinking, methods of work; but also to comprehend motivations of concrete researchers with regard to historical conditions that shaped individual stages of the development in our branch of science.

This statement is especially true when interpreting the way of life of the Slovak society in the second half of the 20th century. The period of discontinuity in the way of life was more objectively clarified through research and articles in the *Slovenský národopis* journal from the eighties, and particularly after 1990.

With respect to the historical and political reality under Socialism, one could understand that the actual findings of ethnologists did not correspond with ideas of the then political elites and in fact, they could not be published at that time. Under every period, researchers should interpret their subjects of interest with regard to the value system that they believe in. It is the outcome of acquired education and knowledge that he or she reached through life experience and the life philosophy as its result. Freedom of scientific research and interpretations of the obtained knowledge should be based on the fact that researchers can join, without any limits, a scientific discourse following their best conviction deprived of any political, ideological, and other limitations.

Unfortunately, the development of scientific thinking in social sciences did not allow this freedom. Moreover, during those years, scientists could not remain in silence on controversial topics. They were forced to provide a clear answer on the Marxist methodology in social sciences that corresponded to the former vulgarized ideas of the then political elites (Slavkovský, 2011).

In spite of that, it holds that every scientist is a part of a social environment that affects his or her perception and the interpretation of social reality. In this regard, there are no “objective” scientists. Both the selection and interpretation of facts are based on their world views, on theoretical models of the given period, on development of a branch of science, and they are often affected by opinions of the contemporary decisive social groups. In this regard, they are often made and changed reflecting the actual world and its relations (Wallerstein, 1998).

Receptive and critical readers of the *Slovenský národopis* journal, if they can perceive the articles in their contemporary historical and social contexts, have got a chance to learn about the past reality that was other than theirs. They can acquire a new cultural and historical experience. Every period of the society development brings specific challenges and limits, too. This is true of scientific disciplines, scientific institutions, and personalities that are shaping them. The unique configuration of individual features characterizing all scientists, the state of their branch of science including the social conditions under which they worked, is a determining factor for their contribution in shaping the development of scientific knowledge. Personalized image of science is not only its outcome, but a precondition for further development. Thus, we find it important to remember the

contribution of individual personalities, of the team of researchers and institutions for the science history. Such a contribution represents an inevitable presumption for the shaping of a particular branch of science, providing the necessary historical continuity too. This is the way toward a historical objectivity as defined by a philosopher Adam Schaff: “Cognition acquires the form of an endless process, in which, based on various approaches to reality that we perceive from various aspects, our cognition improves and only partial truths are gathered. This process leads not only to a simple gathering of facts, i.e. to quantitative changes in our cognition, but also to a qualitative transformation of our own perception of history” (quoted by Le Goff, 2007: p. 125).

I suppose that with criteria set in this way, the *Slovenský národopis* journal had and will have an irreplaceable position in the history and in the shaping of our branch of science. In the past decades of its existence, the content of the journal justified this fact. V. Frolec (Frolec, 1978: p. 4) stated that “the history of the journal has considerably represented the history of ethnology in Slovakia”. When evaluating its sixty volumes, we should express our thanks to all our colleagues and members of the editorial board, who helped to make *Slovenský národopis* the principal ethnological journal of the Slovak Academy of Sciences between 1953 – 2012.

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