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TRADITIONAL ČIČMANY ORNAMENTS¹**OLGA DANGLOVÁ**

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The paper is devoted to ornamental tradition that in a historical perspective became a characteristic part of local architecture, clothing and decorations in Čičmany. The author formally analyses the ornamental motives and draws attention to particularities of the local ornamental style. She pays attention to social and environmental contexts. The paper describes the history of interest in Čičmany ornament and highlights the individuals and institutions that contributed to its continual development. The author examines contemporary visual aspects of ornamental tradition that has crossed boundaries of the local context and entered into the wider coordinates of global cultural circulation. It became a characteristic cultural component valued by experts as well as public, a cultural element transformed into the national representative symbol.

Key words: ornament, Čičmany, identification symbol, clothing, log houses, Dušan Jurkovič

“Whatever our eyes see, – the buildings, the traditional dresses, the instruments – along with primitive and simple motives we would find everywhere the tasteful original decorations indicating a profound and decent sense for beauty. These motives are precious inheritance of ancestors; we will find them at whatever human hands adorn – from cradle to coffin” (Jurkovič, 1897: 123).

“A Čičmany house is notable in Slovak folk architecture for three main reasons: first, we find here a wooden storeyed house; second, extended family lived in such a house in one common room with a furnace where they burned an open fire; and then, in particular, because only there people decorated outer walls of log houses by very elaborated paintings, in a unique way, which is not documented anywhere else” (Pražák, 1963: 9).

¹ This article was written as an informative text for the purpose of evaluation by the committee qualifying the inscription of Čičmany ornaments as an element of the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Slovakia.

A well-known architect, art historian and an admirer of visual aspects of folk culture Václav Mencl described his impression of ornaments on walls of houses in Čičmany when he visited the village in the 1930s: “In this way they created the surfaces written by suggestive magic signs, filled with geometrical patterns – some protective wall against anxiety of the magic world, behind which they could live in safety” (Mencl, 1980: 456).

“Luxury is manifested in amazingly embellished clothing: even a girl who has twenty dresses in her hope chest might lack the most precious things” (Jurkovič, 1897: 123).

I presented the mosaic of quotations as an introduction to my paper with a certain intention. The citations show how authorities and experts – in particular architects and ethnographers – perceived and evaluated the elements of traditional material culture in Čičmany; and how these experts were captivated, regardless of their profession, by a relict character of the village, by its striking specific features of architecture and clothing, and in particular by the unique local decorations on buildings and dresses. In the local chronicle we will find a self-identification similar to those sentiments. Needless to say, we cannot ignore the possibility that this self-evaluation might have been influenced by the opinions of reputable experts. Introductory pages of the chronicle include the following statement: “Čičmany is a unique village... Painted houses, richly embroidered traditional costumes, and exquisite folk songs are particularly remarkable. Many of our artists drew from this well of the beautiful folk art” (Chronicle of the village Čičmany).

THE HISTORY OF INTEREST IN ČIČMANY ORNAMENT

Čičmany with its unique ornaments on the buildings and costumes attracted public attention, mainly the attention of elites – educated people and artists – in the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Its “discovery” was part of raising interest in folk culture related to the national awareness of the bourgeoisie from Central Europe. Elements of material culture and art including unique folk ornaments were in the centre of this attention. The ornaments were perceived as a symbolic expression of the national Slovak (or Slavic) identity. In accordance to the contemporary romanticizing ideas the decorative ornaments on any object, costume, or building were considered as a manifestation of the national soul.²

The oldest image documenting the local forms of Čičmany folk costume is a Josef Mánes’ watercolour painted in 1854. It is a portrait of Mária Kurincová from the village of Valaská Belá belonging to the same micro-region as Čičmany, Zliechov, Košecké Rovné and Čavoj – the localities characterized by the specific cultural features. An ar-

² In 1893 a German art historian Alois Riegl published a detailed study on Eurasian ornamental forms (Riegl A.: *Stilfragen: Grundlegungen zu einer Geschichte der Ornamentik*, Berlin 1893). In the same period in Hungary Jozef Huszka published a book on Hungarian ornaments (*Huszka, J., Magyar díszítőstíl*, Budapest, 1885). At that time distinctive so-called national ornaments were cultivated in schools and inspired artistic industry (i.e., the Industry School in Vienna). The ornaments were part of teaching courses and were propagated by pattern books.

chitect Jan Koula was the first Czech ethnographer-amateur interested in folk culture who highlighted Čičmany's traditional costumes and their decorative aspects; he published their images in the journal *Český Lid* in 1891 (Koula, 1891: 182, 275, 277, 376, 475). Čičmany needlework was displayed in the ground-breaking exhibition of Slovak embroidery organized by the organization *Živena* in 1887 in Martin.

However, the actual discoverer of Čičmany as a notable ethnographic site was an architect Dušan Jurkovič (1868 - 1947). He was a protagonist of an architectural part of the mentioned exhibition; he also designed a replica of Čičmany homestead with a storeyed house at the Czechoslovakian Ethnographic Exhibition in Prague in 1895. He visited Čičmany in 1894 for the first time. He was enthralled by the village and repeatedly returned to these impressions in his architectural work.³ Jurkovič became an enthusiastic propagator of Čičmany. It was his credit that Čičmany became a live museum of folk architecture, housing, costumes, and related ornamental forms, and that the village attracted public attention. Čičmany became a popular place visited by experts and admirers of folk art (Baranovič, 1992: 22). Due to this promotion the drawings from Čičmany were included in a well-known representative book *Österreichisch - ungarische Monarchie in Wort und Bild* (Austro-Hungarian Empire in words and pictures) published in Vienna in 1898. They showed a balcony log house of a village mayor Gašpar Jokl built in 1714, as well as girls and women in Čičmany traditional costumes.

In 1937 Jokl's house was dismantled and moved to Prague. It was to become a part of a museum in nature. The transfer happened despite protest of the Slovak institutions - the Regional Office in Bratislava, the Slovak Museum Association, and the Slovak National Museum in Turčiansky Sv. Martin. These organizations pleaded for preservation of the precious object in situ. During the turbulent pre-war period the planned exhibition of the museum in nature was not realized. To this day it is not known what happened to the object (Dudáš, 2004: 7).

DUŠAN JURKOVIČ AND REVITALIZATION OF TRADITIONAL LOG HOUSES

The lives of inhabitants of Čičmany and its physical environment were devastated by three fires that broke out in the wooden village during the last century. In 1905 a school as well as central and lower parts of the village were burned to ashes; 45 families lost their lodgings. In 1921 fire destroyed the lower part of the village and ruined houses of 49 families. In 1945 the village was burnt by withdrawing German army that destroyed 25 houses and 10 build grounds. Each fire was followed by a migration of inhabitants.

After the second fire Dušan Jurkovič enthusiastically contributed to renewal of the burnt lower part, taking into account authentic architectural aspects of the buildings and their decorations. Thanks to him the Heritage Institute granted the state subsidy for afflicted families only to those people who built new houses as traditional log houses decorated by local authentic ornamental paintings. Thus in 1927 people built 66 painted wooden houses in the burnt parts of the village.⁴ A competition on the most

3 Dušan Jurkovič was inspired by houses from Filipovce (part of Čičmany) when he was designing the hotel Mamenka in the tourist centre Pustovne in the Moravian town Frenštát pod Radhoštěm.

4 Miloš Dudáš and Viliam Pražák provided a detailed description of the renovation of the burnt part of the village (Dudáš, 2004: 7-13; Pražák, 1963: 55).

embellished house was organized to support preservation of the decorative painting that gradually started to decline: it required skills, efforts and time. Prizes were handed over to the painters by Alica Masaryková.⁵ In 1934 she also handed over prizes in the form of natural products to women who won a competition on the most authentic embroidered traditional costume. Today we would consider the choice of prizes as bizarre: the first prize was a heifer, then followed two geese, two rams, and two turkeys (Kaňová, 1980: 128; Praženicová, 1992: 182).

THE VILLAGE ATTRACTIVE FOR EXPERTS AS WELL AS FOR PUBLIC

Apart from the painted houses, Čičmany's basic attraction was enhanced by a local folk costume decorated by embroidered geometrical patterns. For some ethnographers an archaic white woman's dress with two aprons was a model for reconstruction of old Slavic clothing. Its admired ornamentation was made by demanding embroidery techniques of openwork and cutwork, keeping traces of Renaissance needlework. All these aspects attracted attention of the renowned photographers Pavol Socháň and Karol Plicka. Their images of Čičmany and portraits of local inhabitants were used in a design of artistic cards and in films. The artists Martin Benka, Janko Alexy, Miloš A. Bazovský, and Matilda Čechová also paid significant attention to Čičmany. And furthermore, during the 20th century the village as a "living museum" was interesting for ethnographers, folklorists and museologists who repeatedly came to Čičmany and the nearby villages located in Strážov Hills to collect vast amounts of empirical data.

Thus Čičmany became a popular location for native as well as foreign tourists, first of all during the interwar period. A long publicity of the village and growing tourist interest enhanced the inhabitants' belief in the uniqueness of their cultural heritage, primarily embodied in folk architecture and folk costumes. The value and quality ascribed to the local cultural phenomena by people from outside influenced local people's perception and opinions. This process initiated their efforts to present the values of the local culture outward (Danglová, 2006: 138-139). A folk ensemble was created in Čičmany in 1934. During the interwar period it represented the village at folklore festivals and social events in Slovakia and the Czech Republic (Krekovičová, 1992: 212).

Reviving and strengthening awareness of local traditions' value persisted during the socialist period, even when the life in the village declined and the number of inhabitants was steadily decreasing. Elements of the local cultural tradition were displayed at the regular ethnographic festivals. They influenced activities of the local folk ensemble and embroidery produced by the Centre for Folk Art Production in Bratislava. In the 1970s the sentiments associated with local identity initiated celebration of the 700th anniversary of the village. It became a great memorable event in the life of Čičmany. Commemoration was coupled with a procession of people dressed in traditional costumes that included allegoric carriages. The event was attended by 6000 people, mainly the natives of Čičmany. The celebration was preceded by renewal of the last preserved balcony log house built in 1934 (Raden's house, *Radenov dom*). In 1967 the Museum of Považie in Žilina installed in the house a permanent exposition consisting of artefacts coming from Čičmany. In 1977 Čičmany was declared a conservation area of folk architecture.

⁵ The prizes were handed over in natural products, such as timber, cattle and sheep (Dudáš, 2004:13).



Joklovce Property, dwelling. The house of the mayor from 1714. Transferred to the Museum of Ethnography in Prague in 1937. © Karol Plicka, from the publication Plicka, K. 1938: Slovensko, p. 64.

During the socialist period the visual message of Čičmany log houses, folk costumes and their adornment attracted an attention of renowned artists; even the avant-garde yielded. In the 1970s Július Koller, a pioneer of conceptualism, wittingly used it in his fictional photographic project U.F.O.⁶

ORNAMENTS ON HOUSE WALLS

Wall paintings occasionally appeared on log houses in other regions of Slovakia – in Kysuce, in the areas under the Tatra Mountains, and in Spiš region,⁷ and they were documented also in Moravia, Poland, and Ukraine. However, in comparison with them paintings from Čičmany are outstanding because of their specific ornamental style, which adapted its ornaments from local embroidery.

Some local people say that the tradition of painting in Čičmany is more than one hundred years old. Viliam Pražák scrupulously analysed related documents and concluded that the paintings originated in the middle of the 18th century. He argued that initially local single storey houses were built from unworked rounded logs; the uneven

6 Universal folkloristic custom, photo print SNG IM 116; Universal folkloristic ideals, photo print SNG IM 120.

7 See the map of expanding wall paintings on the territory of Slovakia published in the Ethnographic Atlas of Slovakia (Jeřábek, 1992: 90).

surface of their exterior walls was not suitable for paintings. Thus exterior walls could be painted only after the logs were made flat: this created an underlying smooth surface allowing painting. Eventually only poor people lived in old single storey houses: from the middle of the 18th century well-to-do farmers began to build storeyed houses with flat exterior walls. Their surface exposed to humidity after some time blackened and for practical reasons was covered by a protective paint coat made from white red-dle mixed with water. The red-dle was mined from a site nearby the village. Later it was replaced by lime. Those two kinds of paint coats produced slightly different colour effects. Using white red-dle resulted in a white-and-yellow tone; the lime coat of paint was in a more intensive contrast with dark wooden background.⁸

Initially people coated/whitened a continuous surface of the most stressed areas of walls such as corners, lower parts of basement, door cases and window cases. Later they started to decorate their margins by very simple geometrical motives: waves, horizontal crosses, triadic leafs, spiral lines, and zigzag lines arranged in horizontal and vertical stripes. Those simple painted motives were similar to the simplest ornamental motives of the basic embroidery stitches. The décor sectionalized the surface of the front and side walls into regular symmetrical orthogonal fields. They contained dark non-decorated areas of wooden background alternated with decorated whitened areas in a balanced sequence. Ornamental composition contained only a few repeated motives, but the whole image had a great visual effect.

Décor as a social sign

Later, in the beginning of the 19th century, peasants of middle status also used such decorative style to embellish their storeyed houses. Photographic documentation from this period as well as subsequent photos made by Málko and Vavroušek in 1906 and 1919 respectively, demonstrated adaptation of the thin repertoire of older ornamental motives (Pražák, 1963: 62, 66; Kantár, 1992: 108, 109).

Smallholders and peasants without land painted their houses in a slightly different way. In the 19th century they also started to build storeyed houses from trimmed timber; they also whitened and decorated the exposed exterior areas. However, the composition of stripes was simpler. Ornaments started at the whitened corners, door cases and windows cases and continued to the whole length of log. Thus in the end the ornamental stripes covered the whole surface of the wall. Every log was decorated along the whole length with the same patterns; patterns on neighbouring logs differed. It was a simpler, more mechanistic style of painting that could be used even by women who were not very skilled or talented (the ornamental wall paintings in Čičmany have always been a product of women's creativity). It should be said that the choice of ornamental motives in this case was also related to the existing repertoire. The difference with the wealthier houses was that the individual elements were not linearly connected. They became independent and arranged side by side. This procedure led to some modulations of their shapes. Older motives were supplemented by new patterns, such as symmetrical spiral lines (so-called *výkrutky*) and twigs with three tips in the shape of bird tracks (so-called *dlabky*). They can still be seen on the decorations of Čičmany houses.

⁸ Viliam Pražák conducted a detailed analysis of the development of ornamental paintings on Čičmany log houses (Pražák, 1963: 9-87).

Ornamental paintings after the fire in 1922

At the end of the 19th century – the beginning of the 20th century, concurrently with the mentioned changes in decorating houses, people started to whiten the whole surfaces of log walls. It was a simple way of conservation that was gradually replacing the ornamental paintings. This way of protection was also used in the neighbouring villages – Zliechov and Košecké Rovné.⁹ However, in Čičmany the wall paintings had such strong roots that whitening progressed only slowly. People rather preferred a compromise: they whitened continuous surfaces under windows, but painted the rest of the walls. Yet they tended to enlarge the whitened areas. In some cases such an area was extended to the half of the windows' height, sometimes its height exceeded the windows' height. Probably this process would have led to extinction of wall paintings. Paradoxically, their revitalization was aided by the fire in 1922 that destroyed the whole lower part of the village. People had to build new houses; they continued the authentic tradition. New houses were decorated by paintings; they were developed by local women into unprecedented diversity and richness. Ornaments incorporated more of the decorative principles and motives commonly used in embroidery. They were still painted in horizontal stripes, but in a freer way and the stripes were widened. Some large motives required the surface of two or three logs. Women always painted by hand, but now in a more precise way, because they replaced coarse straw brushes with softer ones (Pražák, 1963: 34). Women were competitive. The beauty of paintings was especially important when there was a maiden in the house.

Decorating houses today

How are houses decorated today? First of all, it is important to remember that the social and cultural context nowadays is very different from the situation during the inter-war period. The number of inhabitants dramatically decreased: today the number of permanent residents in Čičmany is approximately 180, while during the period before the Second World War it was 1649. On the other hand, since the middle of the 20th century there was a strong influx of cottagers related to increasing popularity of spending summer time in cottages as a way of leisure. Attractive log houses in the protected lower part of the village since the 1970s –1980s have been purchased by *outsiders* – cottagers from Bratislava, Prievidza, Trenčín, and other towns. From an architectural perspective this part of the village has been homogenous and has preserved marked traces of *genius loci* with specific cultural and historical characteristics as well as a peculiar rustic atmosphere. During the war there was a fire in the upper part of the village; then it was renovated. There the cottagers are mostly the *natives* from Čičmany: they are either descendants, or relatives of Čičmany families; today they live and work elsewhere. The upper part does not belong to protected areas. From an architectural perspective it is more heterogeneous and spontaneous. The land-use plan includes construction of new log houses there.¹⁰

It can be assumed that emotional connections with the village, the relationship with the local history and cultural symbols as manifestations of cultural heritage, and therefore perception of wall paintings are different in cases of cottagers and permanent res-

⁹ It was preserved until today in Čičmany only on one house situated on lower end of the village.

¹⁰ Danglová, O. (2006: 129-130).

idents. However, there are no differences in houses' embellishment. Dissimilarities are rather manifested in the arrangement of courtyards. Natives as well as cottagers adhere to the inherited ornamental style of painting. They know traditional forms and names of particular patterns; they combine them and configure ornaments according to their own taste. Therefore final paintings differ from house to house. Those who do not have sufficient skills use templates. This way, however, is less valued, as well as the use of latex instead of authentic lime or white redde. During recent decades some people have made efforts to revitalize the older ways of paintings and to return to the simpler elements known from the old visual documents. Others prefer more decorative way of painting inspired by the richness of embroidery patterns. In summary, both natives and cottagers today contribute to Čičmany's hallmark of excellence and representativeness.¹¹

ORNAMENTS ON FOLK COSTUMES¹²

Technology of embroidery, especially the techniques that were commonly used in Čičmany, have belonged there to the basics of girls' education from a very young age: it started when they were 4-5 years old. As girls were growing up, they were improving in mastering techniques and were refining a sense for specifics of the local decorative style. At the age of ten girls were skilled to such a degree that they could embroider their first traditional dresses.

Until the middle of the 20th century all Čičmany women could embroider. Embroidery on traditional costumes did not manifest property differences. Rather the final products depended on embroiderers' skills and talent. A poor woman could have made more beautiful embroidery than a wealthier one.¹³ Women's cooperative participation resulted in creative innovations. They refined the local decorative style that was characteristic not only for Čičmany, but also for the neighbouring villages located in the Strážov Hills - Zliechov, Košecké Rovné, Gápeľ, Valaská Belá, Dolná Poruba, Čavoj, Temeš. Particular details of folk costumes and embroidered ornaments could serve for identification of a locality where one lived.

Supportive initiatives of institutions and individuals

One of the impulses for the development of Čičmany embroidery were initiatives coming from outside. The interest toward embroidery rose at the end of the 19th century - the beginning of the 20th century. Then the village was frequently visited by merchants interested in embroidered textiles. Their interest was positively influenced by a workshop - *šijáreň* - that has functioned since 1925 under the leadership of a local

11 These data were obtained from field work in Čičmany, which the author of this article realized for the Slovak Intangible Cultural Heritage Centre in 2013.

12 The part of the text concerning ornaments on folk costumes was based on my own repeated field work which were realized at the end of 1970s in Čičmany during collection of data for the Ethnographic Atlas of Slovakia and another one realized between 2003-2005 within a project of the Center of Excellence of Slovak Academy of Sciences which was orientated on tracing and recording of the Čičmany ornament in his contemporary forms and meanings. Apart from my source of information were also given publications: Danglová, O. (2009), Chlupová A. (1985), Kaňová, M. (1992), Kaňová (1976), Praženicová (1992).

13 Poor women earned money during summer by seasonal agricultural work. Despite daily hard work they always embroidered in evenings (Kaňová, 1980: 232).

forest manager's wife. There embroiderers used relatively demanding techniques of cutwork and openwork and produced to order embroidered household textiles – sheets and tablecloths. In 1934 there was a competition of the most beautiful embroidery in Čičmany. Apart from technical aspects, the jury evaluated choice of ornamental elements and their colour composition. Since the 1950s some embroiderers began to cooperate with the Centre for Folk Art Production in Bratislava that established high standards of technical perfectionism, quality of materials and artistic design. Often the embroideries were made according to artists' drafts.

The cooperation with the Centre was indeed edifying for the local women and contributed to cultivation of local creations. In the 1970s and the 1980s embroidery tended to be applied in the embellishment of household textiles and souvenirs for tourists. Then production of embroideries was supported by the office of the local National Municipal Committee. A local ethnographic exposition organized by the Museum of Považie in Žilina mediated embroideries' marketing. At present the Municipal Office supports activities and traditional clothing equipment of the Čičmany's folklore ensemble Lastovienka and cooperates with the local embroiderers. Čičmany embroideries or decorated parts of traditional dresses could be purchased also in the local souvenir shop Folk Art in Čičmany (Ľudovomelecké Čičmany).

Colour matching

Čičmany traditional dress is characterized by whitish tones. This colour tuning was conditioned by materials used for making costumes for men as well as for women. The fabrics included creamy white cloth made from fleece, whitish homemade linen and hemp canvas, and snowy white manufactured cotton chiffon, since the beginning of the 20th century gradually replacing homespun canvas. Even the oldest embroidery yarns initially were made from whitened or non-whitened homespun threads. White coloured compositions eventually were enlivened by red and orange threads. This dominant combination was later diversified by yellowish hues (light yellow – *húsiatková*, lemon yellow – *vrbová*), orange hues (light orange – *plavožltá*, more accentuated – *ohnivá*), and red hues, from rose pink – *mäsová* to claret – *bordová*.

People who visited Čičmany in the beginning of the 20th century were immediately captured by the contrast between women dressed in snowy white embroidered traditional costumes and the appearance of the interior where they moved. The interior was dominated by a room with rough undecorated walls and open fireplace. It was dark, smokey and furnished by simple deck furniture. But the dresses were shiny white and beautifully decorated by compositions arranged in rhythmic waves of repeated geometrical patterns.

Decorative emphasis on ceremonial clothing

The most decorated parts of young women's traditional dresses were ceremonial aprons – so-called *záponky*. The middle part of apron was dominated by a wide stripe of precious openwork embroidery (so-called *žilinské šitie* – Žilina stitch work) displaying large motives of roosters, lilies, and chalices. On both sides it was framed by repeated motives of flowers and twigs. After an apron wore out the inlay embroidery was moved to a new apron. Rectangular decorative areas of holes for sewing sleeves on women's dresses (*prieramky*) were covered by repeated abstract motives of rhombs,

stars and hearts. Rims of young woman's ceremonial wrapping shawl (*podvika*) were decorated by a similar kind of ornaments in recurrently repeated stripes embroidered with silk threads. Folds of ceremonial skirt (*rubáč*) were embellished with stripes embroidered with striking colourful rhythmic ornaments.

The most decorative part of a man's traditional costume was his shirt. Its cuffs and bib were rimmed by a characteristic Čičmany décor – rhomboid ornaments arranged in continuous stripes.

The link between technology and ornaments

From a technological point of view Čičmany embroidery belongs to the so-called counted-threads needle work techniques: stitching corresponds to the structure of fabric, and stitches are made by counting fibres. This kind of needlework includes a number of techniques: the oldest utility stitches, demanding openwork and cutwork, openwork insertion, network embroidery, the most common cross stitch, and fill stitch “thread by thread” (*poniti*). All of them were used in Čičmany embroidery.

Technically, counted-threads techniques require rather thick and structured fabrics. In Čičmany it was homespun hemp canvas or linen that was common even in the beginning of the 20th century. Probably it was one of the factors that contributed to the long preservation of the counted-threads embroidery as well as geometrical ornaments that were most frequently used in such needlework. Many women memorized them and knew their names in the local dialect. The ornaments became part of the local identity and later were used also in needlework on finer manufactured fabrics.

The technique that is almost forgotten today is needlework “overfolds” (*viberanie po riasoch*) that decorated stripes on women's skirts, so-called *rubáče*. It was made on the base material that was pretreated and organized into regular small folds.¹⁴ This old technique was known already in antiquity and was popular during the Middle Age period. It implies horizontal drawn stitches of different colours alternated with recurring rectangular patterns.

The openwork technique – so-called Žilina needlework (*žilinské šitie*) – determines the local profile of embroidery tradition in Čičmany. The name indicates that initially it was used in the embroidery centres near Žilina. It probably was brought to Čičmany and other villages in the Strážov Hills by merchants. Any skilled woman in Čičmany tried to learn the technical secrets of openwork. Its basic element is a transparent network that is created by pulling out or cutting out fibres of the base fabric in both directions – vertical as well as horizontal. The fibres then are sewn around; that creates transparent eyeholes alternated with non-transparent eyeholes. The network serves as a background for drawing ornaments. Needlework corresponding to the fibres' naturally implied geometrical patterns: eight pointed stars and rosettes. Apart from these, the most common motive was a stylized rooster with varied patterns of its tail – indications of feathers, flowers, or stars (*kohútkovia s kaľichami, kohútkovia s vetvičkú*).

Since the beginning of the 20th century, in the time of expansion of openwork, in the villages in the Strážov Hills the techniques started to vary. The changes were manifested in different choices of the old motives and creation of new ornaments, as well as different combinations of colours. In Čičmany the dominating colour was yellow, while in

¹⁴ The canvas first was put into water; then it was placed on board and arranged by nails in narrow folds. After it was dried the folds were stitched and fasten by a simple running stitch.

the villages of Zliechov and Košecké Rovné embroiderers preferred more diverse and colourful solutions.

Another common popular embroidery technique in Čičmany is cutwork. Its name implies that the basic method of this Renaissance technique is cutting: either embroiderers cut out spots from the base fabric, or – similarly to openwork – they pull out fibres from the base fabric in both directions. Cutting and pulling out could also be combined. Openwork somewhat differs from cutwork: openwork implies creating a network base for patterns formed by areas of intact canvas; cutwork means that ornaments include transparent areas of network or cut holes (Pražák, 1963: 153). In Čičmany cutwork became an inherent part of local embroidery. In new stylization the laborious cutwork patterns were replaced by the simpler technique of stitching “thread by thread”. But even then the characteristic visual form of rectangular and heart motives was transferred to ornaments embroidered by fill stitches in counted-threads needlework.

The fill stitch in counted-threads needlework or so-called fill needlework (*poniti*) is another technique that belongs to the common methods in Čičmany embroidery. Its main principle is parallel, dense, regular stitches put one by one; the embroiderer takes into account the structure of the base fabric. She puts stitches in horizontal, vertical and diagonal directions and thus creates small geometrical patterns – rhombs, triangles, stars, and stripes. The patterns made by fill stitch are rarely independent. They are combined with patterns formed by cutwork, openwork, or cross stitch, and are complemented by decorative stitches. In reduced form they sometimes repeat patterns used in different techniques: counted-threads needlework allows relatively easy reproduction of patterns.

Characteristic signature of Čičmany ornamental style

If we compare ornaments painted on houses with ornaments embroidered on textiles, we will notice their similarity at first sight. Of course, they also display some differences related to differences in materials and shapes of objects that require corresponding placement, sizes of motives and their composition. Colours also emphasize the contrast. The visual impression made by colourful ornaments on white fabrics differs from the impression made by the same ornaments painted with white redde on a dark brown background.

The local decorative style in Čičmany influenced other artistic expressions as well. It could be seen in dense ornamental compositions on knitted stockings (*kopytce*) or in decorations on slippers. It also influenced embellishment of utility objects and wooden musical instruments produced by a famous local carver Martin Pieš. In the past it marked decorations on Easter eggs where spiral patterns appeared (*zákrutky*).¹⁵

There are some illustrations of ornamental motives which in various compositional arrays created a basis of Čičmany ornamental style in picture supplement of this issue.

¹⁵ The drawing on the Easter egg decorated with spiral patterns (*zákrutky*) from Zliechov. It has been preserved in the Archive of Drawings in the Néprajza Museum in Budapest.

ČIČMANY ORNAMENT AS AN IDENTIFICATION SYMBOL TODAY

Local inhabitants and some cottagers consider the visual message of ornaments on Čičmany log houses and traditional costumes a powerful cultural value. The ornaments embody their roots that evoke emotions and a feeling of fellowship. Their symbolic meaning referring to the past still plays an important role in conceiving local identity. On web pages Čičmany is presented as a locality that attracts attention primarily by decorative specifics of folk architecture, clothing and embroidery. We can read there: “The village of Čičmany is known by its ancient unique architecture – painted log houses; local architecture reminds one of *gingerbread houses*, mainly due to ornamental embellishment of exterior walls”. Furthermore, the village “is known for the famous painted wooden houses. Their decoration was inspired by the ornamental motives of Čičmany embroidery”.¹⁶ Numerous web pages invite tourists to stay in the traditional log houses.¹⁷ Visualization of the local forms of decorative tradition in mass media implies a specific way and quality of representation. By means of the internet communication the elements of traditional local decoration have been incorporated into the broader cultural circulation.

REVITALIZATION OF TRADITION, THE ENTERPRISE AND THE ACTIVITIES OF THE INSTITUTIONS

The web pages associated with Čičmany provide sufficient space for records of folkloristic festivals organized by Mr. and Mrs. Kudjakov. The couple has significantly contributed to the revival of the moribund village with elderly inhabitants since the middle of the first decade of the 21st century. Čičmany with its cultural specifics became an attraction for tourists and visitors. The couple’s activities provide a positive example of possibilities to revitalize local cultural heritage.

I would like to make several remarks on Juraj Kudjak’s life story. He was born and lived in the Orava region. He visited his grandparents in Čičmany only during the summertime. As an adolescent boy he was enchanted by the village with painted houses. After his grandmother died he inherited a log house in Čičmany. He decided to renovate it with the help of his family and to use it as a souvenir shop to support tourism in the village. Later he purchased another log house in Čičmany dated 1760. With the help of family (his father was a builder) and financial support of the fund “Renovate Your House” he managed to renew the house in a sensitive way. The building with preserved open chimney and black room is considered a unique monument. Kudjak made efforts to maximally respect the authentic appearance of the house and its specific qualities. The reconstruction inspired him to broaden his enterprise activities. He

¹⁶ *Village Čičmany - Slovakia*. online quoted 5.4.2013
Available on-line: <<http://www.sunflowers.sk/atrakcie/obec-cicmany-51>.

Slovakia.travel - Živé tradície Čičmian. online quoted 5.4.2013

Available on-line: <<http://www.slovakia.travel/entitaview.aspx>

Čičmany - ľudový skvost v Rajeckej doline. online quoted 5.4.2013

Available on-line: <<http://cestovanie.aktuality.sk/clanok/1092/cicmany-ludovy-skvost-v-rajeckej-doline/>

Skanzen Čičmany. online quoted 5.4.2013

Available on-line: <<http://www.skonline.sk/skanzen.php?id=27>

¹⁷ *Accommodation Čičmany. Log house Brundzovce*. online quoted 5.4.2013

Available on-line: < In <http://www.cicmany.info>

now reconstructs old log houses and builds new ones in accordance to traditional standards.

In the case of architectural adaptations and decorations of the houses Kudjak tries to preserve the authentic local ornamental style. The painting on his house dated to 1760 was renovated by means of simple ornaments similar to the oldest decorative style. On the other hand, criteria for the choice of souvenirs in his shop are less austere. He offers artefacts with local emblems: miniatures of wooden houses decorated with wall paintings, canvases embellished with characteristic Čičmany embroidery, parts of traditional costumes, dolls in Čičmany folk dresses, slippers produced by local people, but also things from other parts of Slovakia. All the bags, t-shirts, mobile covers, or ceramics (produced in a ceramic workshop in the Orava region) are decorated by some version of Čičmany ornament. Apart from souvenirs referring to Čičmany, the shop offers a mix of other “nostalgic” products. Visitors can always choose something according to their taste.¹⁸

It is necessary to say that the souvenir is extended to exterior space where the visitors can have a nice refreshment stop (the couple usually wears traditional dresses there). During the tourist season they can enjoy folklore music and dances performed by small ensembles. They also can meet artisans who produce and display their products there. Thus happenings organized by Kudjakovs create a new dimension of the shop. This place became a new centre of local life and is popular due to its references to the past and tradition. Tourism plays an important role in this. Many happenings offering spectacular performance of tradition aim to attract folklore lovers who are also tourists (Marcinová, 2013: 31-35).

The village mayor perceives tourism as an important factor of the future as well. She includes elements of local tradition to her numerous activities.¹⁹ She supposes that they will serve as a powerful identification sign and will contribute to the development of the village. She supports the local folk ensemble Lastovienka and local embroiderers' activities. She pays attention to local production of slippers as well as to the courses of making folds which are essential for preservation of local traditional clothing. She is making efforts to establish cooperation with representatives of the local institutions as well as the institutions with wider responsibilities: the Self-government of Žilina region, the Cultural Centre in Žilina, the Museum of Považie in Žilina. She is well aware of the importance of local folklore elements for the local development.

ČIČMANY ORNAMENT AS A NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE ATTRIBUTE

There is yet another dimension of cultural transfer of Čičmany ornaments. Together with embroidery from other parts of Slovakia it could be seen on the souvenirs produced by the company Slovakia gift: embroidery ornaments appear on emblems, t-shirts, caps, mirrors, and cards. Čičmany ornaments also inspired the firm Alpine Pro a. s. that designed clothing for the Slovak Olympians. Their intention was to introduce a typical Slovak element into clothing of sportsmen representing the country. Thus Čičmany ornaments on a blue background evoking blueprint cloth appeared on the

¹⁸ About art production offered in the shop Folk Art Čičmany see also Marcinová, 2013: 33-35.

¹⁹ She often appears in public dressed in a folk costume embellished by Čičmany embroidery.

Olympians' t-shirts and neckerchiefs and joined other folklore elements: Šariš hats, wind jackets and smocks. The reference to the Slovak nation was enhanced by white-blue-red scale of colours. Propagation of the Olympic collection was preceded by medialization of allegedly precious coins with Čičmany motives found near the village: the information was broadcast by the TV channels Markíza and Joj and appeared in the newspaper Nový Čas. Today it is obvious that the coins were not authentic.²⁰

The Olympic collection probably contributed to a fixation on Čičmany ornaments (or rather its simpler stylized version) in public awareness as something typically national. For instance, Čičmany ornaments are used as a scenic element in the Radio and Television of Slovakia (RTVS) programme "I love Slovakia". The characteristic geometrical motives even inspired people practicing feng shuei who created Čičmany mandala. They propagate it as "an excellent example of harmonization in the spirit of feng shuei".²¹ Thus visual elements inspired by Čičmany embellishment appear in a global space in new and unusual contexts.

* * *

Čičmany ornament as a manifestation of cultural heritage was successful in a long historical perspective. It has been preserved and valued as a product of manual creativity linking the template of tradition with individual inventiveness. Up till today it has been an important part of the local architecture, clothing, and decorations. It was incorporated into surrounding environment and became its natural part. Its meaning, however, was modified due to time and cultural changes. It has crossed the boundaries of the local context and entered into the broader coordinates of cultural circulation. It became a characteristic cultural component valued by experts as well as the public, a cultural element transformed into the national representative symbol.

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20 Čičmany treasure was fiction. It was supposed to propagate the official Olympian collection (photos and video) » HNonline.sk, 24.10.2011 14:25

21 "For example, the interesting elements are rosehip motives that are supposed to direct energy to windows or doors; or wave patterns on lower edges (which probably prolong their life and protect them against moisture); and also various "coupled" symbols or mandala forms evoking love and harmonious human relationships; they alleviate an impression of cumbersome logs by means of vertical decorative lines." See Čičmany mandala. <http://www.mandala-fengshui.eu/index.php?page=slovenske-feng-suej—cicmany>

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CALL FOR PAPERS

Visual anthropology

Call for the next issue of *Slovak Ethnology / Slovenský národopis*, volume 62, number 4/2014, focused on the visual anthropology
 Hosting editor: SAM PACK

This special issue on visual anthropology seeks submissions from both new and established scholars that explore the various ways in which culture is mass mediated. Beyond the traditional encoder/decoder model, this volume is committed to the study of media in the broader context of everyday lived experiences that interrogates and transforms conventional understandings. Articles should be based upon ethnographic research on topics concerning the production, circulation, and reception of media forms and practices. We are interested in both “old” media (photography, radio, television, film) as well as “new” media (Internet, video games, smart phones). How does technological change shape and transform media landscapes? What is so specific about media communication and its aesthetic expression? Are the messages transmitted by audiovisual documents different to those transmitted by written text?

Slovak Ethnology invites submissions from international and multidisciplinary perspectives that explore some of the key debates around visual anthropology (or studies inspired by it) to produce original empirical research.

Possible topics include but are not limited to:

- Challenges and opportunities, strengths and weaknesses of visual anthropology
- Ethical concerns
- Media ethnography, social activism and social change
- Sensory ethnography and anthropology of the senses

Submission guidelines: please follow the guidelines for submissions as given on the website of *Slovak Ethnology* <http://www.uet.sav.sk/?q=en/slovak-ethnology>

Year round the *Slovak Ethnology* journal invites, apart from contributions focused on above mentioned issues, also major articles, research reports, essays, discussions, overviews, annotations, book reviews and review essays beyond the thematic call for papers.

Final date for abstracts: 15. 4. 2014

Authors of accepted abstracts will be notified at the end of April, 2014 and will then be invited to submit a full paper. An invitation to submit a full paper does not constitute a commitment for publication; all papers will be subject to anonymous peer review following submission.

Final date for papers: 30. 6. 2014

Please send your abstract as an e-mail attachment to the editors, at slovensky.narodopis@savba.sk

The 2014 Annual Meeting of the Gypsy Lore Society and Conference on Gypsy Studies

Callfor Papers and Proposals

The 2014 Annual Meeting of the Gypsy Lore Society and Conference on Gypsy Studies will be held in Bratislava, Slovakia, September 11 to 13, 2014. The meeting is being organized on behalf of the Gypsy Lore Society by the team of the Institute of Ethnology, Slovak Academy of Sciences in cooperation with the Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences, Comenius University in Bratislava, Roma Institute and European Information center of the Representation of the European Commission in Slovakia. The meeting will be held at the Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences building.

Contributions from various disciplines and perspectives on any aspect of Gypsy Studies are most welcome, but substantive scholarly papers will be given priority. Papers should be 20 minutes long with an additional 10 minutes allotted for discussion.

Proposals for open panels, pre-arranged panels, individual papers, and poster presentations are welcome.

Requirements for proposals:

Open panel: Please send your proposal for an open panel of no more than 500 words. This can be published as a call for papers after approval.

Deadline: February 15, 2014

Pre-arranged panel: Please send your proposal for a pre-arranged panel of no more than 500 words. We also ask for an abstract of 250 words for each individual paper.

Deadline: February 15, 2014

Individual papers: Please send your abstract of no more than 250 words and indicate whether this is an open submission, or a submission to a particular panel. Abstracts will be peer-reviewed by the academic organising committee, which includes representatives of the Gypsy Lore Society Board of Directors and local organisers. If your paper is submitted to a panel, the conveners of the particular panel will also review the abstract.

Deadline: April 15, 2014.

You will be notified if your contribution has been accepted by May 31, 2014.

Poster presentations: The conference provides facilities for poster presentations. Posters will be displayed during the duration of conference. Depending on the number of submissions accepted, a few poster-presentation sessions are planned as "guided tours". Posters must present research projects and results. Posters should meet academic standards in both content and form. The presentation of the poster should not exceed 5 minutes. Please send your proposal for an poster section of no more than 100 words before April 15, 2014.

Deadline for abstracts: April 15, 2014.

You will be notified if your contribution has been accepted by May 31, 2014.

Please send your proposals for panels, contributions and posters in plain text format (no tables or charts) in the body of an e-mail message (not as an attachment) to the Program Chair, Dr Tatiana Podolinska, gls.2014@savba.sk. Submissions should include the author's name, institutional affiliation (if relevant), address, daytime telephone and e-mail address.

Please address all conference inquiries to gls.2014@savba.sk. More information about the conference will be published in coming issues of the Newsletter, and on the Gypsy Lore Society web site, <http://www.gypsyloresociety.org>.