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### INHALT DES 40. JAHRGANGES



## THE PERIODICAL "SLOVENSKÝ NÁRODOPIS" ("SLOVAK ETHNOLOGY") AND ITS ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SLOVAK ETHNOLOGY

(On the 40th Anniversary of its Establishment)

MILAN LEŠČÁK

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Forty years ago, with the rise of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, the first specialized scientific periodical for ethnological science was established. Its establishment and publishing was unusually important in the Slovak circumstances. The periodical arose becoming a certain basis for the collecting of results of the systematic work of a few individual professional workers. These were ethnologists, who were generally concentrated around the Philosophical Faculty of Comenius University, where a Department of Ethnography had been in existence since 1921, and at the Ethnographic Museum in Martin and in the Ethnographic Institute of the Slovak Academy of Arts and Sciences, which had been established in 1946, and then was renewed again within the framework of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in 1953 under the new socialist government.

Slovak ethnology had its own tradition going back to the 18th century, which it was able to lean upon. It could base itself on a rich collection of ethnological material that had been organized by a generation of nationbuilders from the mid-19th century, whose romantic conceptions had been particularly influenced by the German Enlightenment, the romantic movement and by collection work which had been developing along parallel lines by the related Slavonic nations.

*Matica slovenská*, the organization which, upon its founding in 1863 was, and to this day still is, the guardian of Slovak national and cultural interests, began publishing activity from its very outset. This occurred despite not having very favourable situation for its activities under the strong pressure of Magyarisation and not having professional conditions in which to carry out scientific work.

The establishment of the Slovak Museum Society (SMS) in 1893 and *The Bulletin of the SMS* and *The Review of the SMS* gave a new impulse to the professional publishing activity. Numerous ethnographic and folkloristic works were being published in these periodicals. Along with them, further publication possibilities were opened up for those collectors of folk work and those interested in folk culture in the magazine *Slovenské Pohľady* (*Slovak Views 1881*) and *Český lid* (*Czech Folk 1893*), which gave the possibility to publish original Slovak material from Czech and Slovak collectors and scholars.

An immediate precedent to *Slovak Ethnology* was the annually published *Národopisný sborník* (*Ethnographic Collection*), which *Matica slovenská* had begun to publish in 1939 as its scientific ethnological magazine. It was closely connected with the professional processes of ethnographic science and the purposeful coordinative action of the Ethnographic Committee of *Matica slovenská*. Besides the collections of descriptive material studies, it is possible here to search out the expressive attempts concerning the forming of theoretical and methodical orientations in Slovak ethnology. Besides influences of positivism, *Ethnographic Collection* was made significant by works with a marked functional-structural orientation. These could be seen especially the works of A. Melicherčík, a student and co-worker of P. G. Bogatyriov, who in the 1930's had worked with *Matica slovenská*, which published his well-known work *Function of Costumes in Moravian Slovakia* in 1937. The functional-structuralist movement's growth was particularly characteristic of the volumes of *Ethnographic Collection* during the years just after the Second World War. (See my article in



Slovenský národopis N<sup>o</sup> 3-4, 1991.) The established *Ethnographic Cabinet* in the original Slovak Academy of Arts and Sciences from 1946 was shown as a small professional workplace, which, by its own theoretical and practical conceptional purposes and personell, embodied conditions that were quite equal to the context of the Central European scientific community.

The rise of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in the early 1950's was, on the one hand, an opening for the organizational possibilities for Slovak ethnological science, but on the other hand, it definitely closed the possibilities for theoretical experimentation and exploration of any different scientific directions besides the Stalinist interpretation of Marxist methodology. Thus was the first issue of the periodical *Slovak Ethnology* introduced, an issue which indicated with what direction it would later be diverted by its contextual intention and also the purposes of all work in Slovak ethnology, of which the periodical is undoubtedly a good reflection of, doing justice to the Slovak ethnological science's conflicts, losses and successes. Slovak ethnological science in the late 1940's was trying not to succumb to the vulgar and politicized pressure of Marxist-Leninist ideology and its different interpreters and explainers, looking for away towards an objective perception of Slovak folk culture. Many articles, or the conceptions of the whole volumes, can only possibly be understood in view of the political and social context in which the social sciences existed in periods that were sometimes less than favourable. This influenced not the science, but also managed to catch in its web, to the same degree, the fates of people and their very possibilities to dedicate themselves to scientific work. These were, of course, very complicated circumstances and cannot be taken up in this article sufficiently to make clear.

In any case, it was in this first period that the sincere attempts to transplant and empower Marxism and be oriented towards Soviet science, through the resigning and the adapting to new political situations were mixed up with the certain concealed mistrust towards these mainly political changes and pressures. The content of the first issue testifies to this, where, in the introduction, there is a translation of a Stalinist article by I.B. Astachov, which argues vehemently against the residues of the Marr theory about the rise of art, although in Slovakia, and especially in ethnology no one had ever tried implement and utilize this Marr theory before.

Other articles about the history of the Slovak ethnological science, customs, folk dress, occu-

pations, the organization of research and the documenting of work indicated in what ways *Slovak Ethnology* would be a positive contribution towards the development of the young Slovak science.

During the periodical's forty years, it has been divided into several consistent parts. From the view of the contents, the rubric of scientific articles and studies and the publishing of interesting and less well-known field and archival materials became stable. Later the rubric of discussions and comment was opened and this carried over the discussed problems to the pages of the periodical. The rubric of the "Outlook" section carried considerable valuable information about conferences that had taken place, about yearly individual investigations, about research, exhibitions and so on. Finally, its informative function periodically also filled the rubric of reviews and references from domestic and foreign productions.

While bibliographies of volumes did not come out regularly on the "five-year plan" cycles, the periodical published a whole range of bibliographies of Slovak ethnology from individual years.

Also, when the scheme of the periodical was preserved, the rubric did not always exactly fulfill the criteria that had been determined beforehand. In the "Studies" section, contributions also appeared, which by their contents belonged among materials and oppositely, theoretical contributions appeared amongst "Materials". The rubric of discussion indeed brought impulses to argument, but these remained mostly without the reactions of readers, and so, besides marginal arguments, the scientific discussion in the pages of the periodical was not developed very far. Nor were the critical analyses of domestic or foreign book and periodical production very well developed and it remained more or less on the level of making known to its readers the contents of scientific production. It appears that the atmosphere of these years contributed to this, as the discussions and arguments about purely scientific problems had to remain more or less on the ground of internal seminars of individual institutions or within closed circles, because we can later see that in the second half of the 1960's, in that time of liberatization, the periodical came to life.

If we go through individual volumes, we can find that the editorship attempted to avoid the required purely by ideological articles. As long as some of such articles appeared, it was understood as a degree of inclination to requirements of Marxist methodology or as the prescribed tax of the whole societal condition.



From today's point of view, it is not possible to sufficiently separate the attempts of the sincere mastering and applications of Marxist methodology, with certain covering of scientific results to the prescribed definitions and quotations, which made secure the results of scientific research, from a criticism of positivism and structuralism, which could later carry certain political and personal consequences. While there were some attacks against the bourgeois influences in the social sciences, the periodical did not ever become one of the artificial platforms of organized criticism against the bourgeois theory in science, which was organized from the start of the 1970's. Again it would be possible only to acknowledge that the basic flow of the scientific contribution to *Slovak Ethnology* during the whole forty years of its existence leaned on serious scientific research results, which were either not at all in touch with political movements and with the deformations of Marxist methodology of that time, or, could at least be preserved at their core after making some simple corrections and deletions of quotations and definitions. In the 1950's, in the new ascending generation, there was more than enough distaste to work in the area of theory. This was due primarily to the collections with translations from Soviet authors.

The effort of an orientation towards Soviet science was evident, nonetheless. Besides the Marxist theoretical starting-point, which had been formed before the rise of *Slovak Ethnology*, for example on the grounds of *Ethnographic Collection*, (volumes IX and X), this orientation began to project the thematic direction of individual published studies and articles. Contributions were about the development and results of the collectivization of agriculture, about research into workers' culture, about the folklore associated with the partisan movement during the war, etc. These, in the final result, later brought impulses to a new orientation in the methodological mastering of contemporary processes in the transformations of the traditional folk culture. From the whole viewpoint, however, these attempts and adaptations of the Soviet impulses remained on the proclamative level or are from the quantitative standpoint on the edge of the contextual purposes of the periodical.

A leading Czech ethnographer, Václav Frolec, analyzed this in 1978's 25th anniversary issue of *Slovak Ethnology*, as follows:

"When we follow the contributions published in *Slovak Ethnology* according to their thematic direction, we find that individual sections of the ethnographic work and

individual areas of folk culture are not represented uniformly. This reflects not only the activity, but also the personal orientations, of the individual specializations on individual institutes. During the whole analyzed period, there stands, in this regard, in the first place, articles with themes of folk occupations, comprising 19% of all of the published articles, with theoretical and methodological contributions in second place with 17%. In third, there are the problems of oral literature (12.3%), followed by residences, buildings and interiors (10.3%), music and dance folklore (7.1%), the histories of ethnography and folkloristics (6.3%), the folk creative arts (5.9%), the related historical sciences (4.8%), social relations (3.1%), ceremonies and customs (3.1%), folk clothing (2.3%), folk beliefs (2%), transport (0.9%), food (0.6%) and so on."

These numbers confirm to us that the content of the periodical in the first twenty-five years had been directed towards research of archaic traditional phenomena of folk culture, often to such where basic information was missing, because systematic ethnological research in the past had related to the historical and political conditions in Slovakia in comparison with the surrounding countries in the absolute professional beginnings.

The attempt to publish material articles and archival notions was exhibited to criticism and ethnographic science was accused of bourgeois nationalism and of positivism, by which were marked, especially, the contributions which described empirically found explanations from the field. When V. Frolec wrote his essay about the quarter-century of the periodical, he did not take into consideration that this timely section was separated sufficiently to two slightly different development stages, both of which had characterized the movement of Slovak ethnology:

- a. its reaction to the political and societal movements, and
- b. its inner immanent development, in which efforts are evident about qualitative changes in the direction of research and also in theoretical orientation.

Accordingly, with Slovak folk culture's basis upon farming and shepherding, the greatest attention of ethnologists has been concentrated on this basis and its research oriented almost exclusively on the village environment. Also, when it has not been justified theoretically, the theme of Slovak ethnography and folkloristics research has been, in fact, identified with research of the village environment. Further research areas of spiritual culture and the whole area of folk artistic creation were led



away from research into the farming and pastoral way of life. The descriptive ethnographic material gradually acquired a new classifying-analytic quality and, at the same time, the efforts to explain their historical development went that much deeper. Each time it was further reconfirmed, that the land of Slovakia was not composed of culturally homogeneous areas with separate development tendencies, but Slovak folk culture was, in regard to its geographic and historical conditions, heterogeneous and delineated regionally and locally. The cultural areas overcame divisive stages of development and represented comparatively different cultural models. They were the basic ways of distinguishing high and low culture. Different regional peculiarities were determined by waves of colonization (especially the German colonization and the so-called Wallachian colonization), religious influences (in particular, the Catholic, Protestant and Greek Orthodox influences), and by the interethnic correlations and influences, especially in the southern part of Slovakia in the mixed areas of Slovak-Hungarians and Slovak-Ruthenians (north-eastern parts).

Logically, from this there resulted, the effort in the explaining of local and regional particularities of Slovak folk culture. In *Slovak Ethnology* in many studies, the periodical reflected this prepared work, especially in two regional monographs; *Horehronie I - III* (1974-88) and *Hont, Traditions and Contemporary Times* (1988).

Thanks to this conception, which was realized from the founder of the Ethnological Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, its director and the first editor-in-chief of the periodical, Ján Mjartan, there was the combining of an orientation towards regional and local traditions with the thematic specialized study of an individual area of life and culture with the goal of a monographic elaboration of themes for the whole of Slovakia. Besides agrarian-oriented ethnography on the pages of the annual of the periodical, studies appeared, especially in the beginning, about folk architecture and dwellings, folk subsistence, folk costumes, folk ceramics, textiles and embroidery as well as oral folk literature, musical folklore, and customs and rituals. Invaluable was the rubric of the "Material Archives", where there were published historical archival sources, as well as information from old literature in foreign languages. The rubric has thus complemented entries from the field. The periodical has also tried to comment exhibitions and work in museums and to inform about happenings in Czecho-Slovakia and in the international ethnological community.

Reviews had usually been limited because the lack of foreign literature available, limited essentially to domestic production and to that of the surrounding socialist countries.

Comparatively greater attention has been dedicated to personalities of Czech and Slovak ethnography and folkloristics, which has tried to replace the incomplete conclusions in the history of Slovak ethnology.

We can state that the periodical *Slovak Ethnology* is mainly based on the descriptive methods of using preceding periods. New trends gradually were appearing especially in the theoretical articles of J. Mjartan, A. Melicherčík and B. Filová, who initiated the need for researching the phenomena of folk culture which documented the revolutionary nature of the societal changes of that time.

In the first issue, articles appeared concerning the need for research of collectivized villages, investigating newly-arising creation, especially the cooperative songs. From the year 1946, the need was emphasized for the research of narratives and songs about the Slovak National Uprising. Individual attention was devoted to the research of the working class. These new impulses, which upset the conceptual understanding of ethnological research which always had been one of researching the archaic forms of farming and pastoral culture and its local and regional variants. These impulses installed the question of a new formulation of a methodological approach to actualized societal processes in their often contradictory form. Methods of field research were especially emphasized. A single research idea, which J. Mjartan outlined and, according to which, in the research of collectivized villages, was to catch the process of the dying archaic non-functioning forms, was not realized in practice. Even though the reports about fieldwork spoke about its realization in central and eastern Slovakia, we do not encounter wider spread results in the form of articles or monographs in the periodical up to the 1970's. Perhaps S. Burlasová reached the most expressive results in research of songs with the problems of cooperativization. The same methodological confusion endured also in the work in worker culture. Ethnology had the difficult task in this direction for the not-yet-underway Slovak industry and then also the worker's class, as well as for the inability of the applying of the propagated Soviet methods.

The whole problem was oriented towards research of old mining localities where, at the turn of the century, two occupations had been dominant -- that of mining, complemented by that of farming.



The methods into the research of the working classes did not differ very much from the valued methods in the classic monographs about the traditional culture of Slovak villages, methods such those a research team presented in the monograph, *The Mining Village of Žakarovce* which was published in book form in 1956 (Bratislava). The efforts concerning the research of worker culture and industrial areas waited for their concrete results substantially longer.

The natural "interdegree" of this problem became the studies of A. Pranda. These studies were about the importance of the double occupations (metalworking farmers or farming metalworkers) in Slovakia as an transitive type in the rise of the worker in the village agrarian-pastoral environment. That is, the subjects were neither fully the land-tilling peasants, nor the factory-toiling workers in the classic sense; they instead were at various "degrees" between these two idealized niches. The greatest problem of researching changes as the result of industrialization and collectivization was their realization under directed planning. It had a negative effect, especially in the first stages of the forced collectivization of Slovak villages in the 1950's and the early 1960's in the processes of rapid industrialization, which had, as its outcome, an unusually high growth in the migration of inhabitants to the manufacturing centers and an enormous and non-harmonic growth in the space and facilities in the towns, leaving them inadequate to cope with this influx. It influenced changes in lifestyles, the orientations of values and the forms of social communication. There was an absence of cultural patterns and an institutionalization of cultural forms on the negative side, but a growth in education on the positive. It all took place in the course of not quite two decades.

Only since the end of the 1960's, have these questions been really put on the table and have been productively solved in the pages of *Slovak Ethnology*. It is stated that it is impossible to mechanically make use of the definitions of historical materialism in the development of folk culture (as a culture of the exploitatee classes). It is possible to read of these opinions, either quite openly or by reading between-the-lines, in several published articles from the end of the 1960's.

The traditions of Czech and Slovak science were reflected in the relatively independent development of the study of oral literature to which literary science devoted particular attention. The study of musical

folklore remained conceptually and institutionally connected to the context of musicology. Although the study of oral literature gradually came closer to ethnological disciplines, it remained at its expressively differentiated methodological starting point. Folkloristics in Slovakia was, and still is, understood as an autonomous scientific discipline situated between ethnology and the art sciences. The editors of the periodical understood it as such, and gave separate space to it; we can see this in whole blocks of published contributions. From about the mid-1960's, a theoretical assertiveness and greater adaptive ability to react to the new impulses of European sciences was significant, especially for folkloristics. I tried to characterize the developing tendencies of folkloristics over the course of thirty years in the pages of *Slovak Ethnology* in the study, "Slovak Folkloristics, 1945-1975", (1975). This study was a certain complement to the E. Horváthová's article, "Theoretical Questions of Current Ethnography" which tried to explore the values of scientific development. It was in Horváthová's study, that, carefully and cautiously, she criticized the existing lacks in view of the research of contemporary processes. Although ethnographers and folklorists proclaimed themselves towards Marxism, from the mid-1960's they took a more critical stance on this unambiguous understanding, especially in the studies of current processes in the development of folk culture. Each time more and more voices in folkloristic work were loudly calling attention to the non-utilized cause of functional-structuralist school based on the works of P. Bogatyriov and A. Melicherčfk.

The year 1966 can be considered the breakthrough year in the gradual democratization of ideas in scientific research in Slovak ethnology. It was then that a group of young folklorists broke with its programme, demanding a return back to the more consistent values of the principles of the synchronic studies proclaimed in the 1920's and 1930's by R. Jacobson and P. Bogatyriov, instead of research of the new elements of folk culture under the influence of "building of socialism" task. The research of the then current state of the folklore tradition assumed the research into the lives and functions of its individual elements, their real dispersion, determining mutual relationships between folklore genres in a concretely limited time-stage, and, lastly, determining relationships and the places of folk culture in the framework of the model of the whole national culture. Concrete impulses to the utilization of new fieldwork methods came of this, such as the research



of latent and manifest repertoires, sociometric sound uses, the indications towards the ecological study of folklore, that is, the study of the bearers in their natural cultural and social context. A. Melicherčfk came to such an understanding of this programme, though he passed away not many months later. A seminar also opened new views in historically-oriented research of material and spiritual culture by working out the developmental periodization of traditional folk culture in Slovak (A. Pranda).

We are able to state today that the favourable periods in the 1960's came about in the whole of Czechoslovak culture, which made possible the relatively rapid acquisition of new ideas and the release of the restrictive understanding of Marxism from the oppressive Stalinist period. The observant reader must notice in the periodical the activity of the young generation not only in scientific work, but also in the organization of scientific life. It is possible to state that this trend more or less latently continued as well in the years of rigid normalization after Soviet troops occupied Czecho-Slovakia in 1968.

The conference, "Concerning Perspectives of the Development of Ethnological Science in Slovakia" took place in December of 1968 (the papers were published in 1969). At this conference, new views were formulated as to the task of Slovak ethnography, the need for changes, for the understanding of its research condition, for the need for defining categories of folk culture and tradition, for the possibilities of using methods of different disciplines and so on. An "Open Letter to the Czech Ethnologists" arose from this and was published in *Slovak Ethnology* in which the five nations occupying Czechoslovakia were condemned for their action.

In this period, also, the *Ethnographic Atlas of Slovakia (EAS)* was first profiled. This was realized over the course of subsequent two decades and allowed the possibility of realizing truly objective research in ethnological science in Slovakia. This accomplishment, which saw light in 1990 and 1991, was awarded the National Prize of the Slovak Republic 1992, and belongs among the most important results of Slovak ethnology, bearing the most rigorous of scientific criteria. The atlas was the result of work of two generations of Slovak ethnologists, who, in its preparation, gathered extensive material from the field and from archival research. On the pages of the *Slovak Ethnology*, articles about the problems and informative articles gradually appeared concerning the progressing work of the *Ethnographic Atlas of Slovakia*, as well as the first

results of the mapping work. The collective of contributors and editors, under the direction of S. Kovačevičová, tied into the thematic conception of Slovak folk culture study, attaining in many areas, synthesized notions concerning its regional and inter-ethnic connections.

While the period of the 1950's and the 1960's could be noted by the study of traditional forms of material culture, occupations, folk art and folklore, in the years subsequent, we can see a more expressive inclination to the study of spiritual culture and social relations, from the study of archaic forms and survivals to the study of living processes; from the thematic typological study to the solving of the questions of function and the social context of changes. Essays appeared which demonstrated or proved procedural utilizations in theories of communication, in semiotics, in systems theories, in structural analysis, sociopsychological methods and so on.

Slovak ethnology is attempting to go about an open dialogue with related sciences, as well as with international sciences. In the periodical, space is regularly granted to Czech scientists and scientist from abroad, though this has been primarily to those from neighbouring countries. Among others, the reflection of the work of the International Commission for the Study of Carpathian and Balkan Folk Culture has been of these important results. Although this regeneration has not been propagated very much, the reader of *Slovak Ethnology* can easily identify it according to the titles of articles and regular German and English summaries. Part of the published production, in particular, in the editorials, in the research projects and in the whole issues dedicated to different political jubilees, there have been preserved clear signs of the fateful Slovak equivocation, of giving to Caesar, what is Caesar's. Without this however, the existence of the periodical would not have been thinkable. The periodical did, on the other hand, open up more possibilities for the publishing of scientists, who had been caught politically on the outside, from Slovakia and the Czech Republic. As far as this goes, the merit of editorial committees is, as well as that of editors, was quite evident. With the distance of time, all can be more objectively evaluated.

The periodical reflects, to a great extent, certain generational programs and methodologies which were, however, often overlapping and, as a rule, were tied into themselves. The oldest generation, which was supported by such personalities as J. Mjartan, A. Melicherčfk, S. Kovačevičová, M. Markuš, R.



Bednárík, M. Kosová, Š. Apáthy, formulated a basic program towards the end of the 1960's and in the 1970's, preparing the ground for a systematic working of individual themes (occupations, folk architecture and dwellings, folk subsistence, fishing, folklore, etc.). Especially surrounding J. Mjartan, a group was created, a group of ethnographers starting out, forming a generational nucleus of founders of the Ethnological Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in the 1950's. These were, for example, V. Urbančová, oriented towards agricultural and the history of Slovak ethnology; V. Nosálová, working on folk dress; J. Paličková-Pátková, in folk art products such as textiles and embroideries; E. Plicková, the creative phenomena, E. Horváthová, researching the Romany, rituals, folk medicine and other areas of spiritual culture; V. Gašparšková, working particularly in folk prose; S. Burlasová, in folk songs; J. Podolák, agricultural and shepherding; and R. Žatko, folk theatre and bibliography. To this list it is also possible to add the names of E. Marková, S. Švecová, J. Koma, O. Zylinský, M. A. Huska, J. Komorovský and Oskar and Alica Elscheková, and so on.

Later in the pages of the periodical there appeared the names of A. Pranda, who expressively is deserving of note from the area of contemporary ethnography, as well as J. Michálek, Š. Mruškovič, V. Valentová, F. Kalesný, K. Ondrejka and others.

In the 1960's, an "in-between" generation appeared in the pages of *Slovak Ethnology*. These were L. Droppová, M. Leščák, J. Botfk, S. Důžek, O. Danglová, Z. Apáthyová-Rusnáková, and S. Švehlák. Gradually, a generational group made its profile seen, a group that included E. Orszáryová-Krekovičová, D. Luther, M. Mušynka, M. Sopoliga, V. Feglová, K. Jakubšková, A. Sulitka, J. Langer, Z. Škovierová, M. Sigmundová, D. Ratica, M. Benža, P. Maráky. In recent years, young talented collaborators have begun to work with the periodical, the majority, the students and "offspring" of the Ethnological Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences.

The participation of Czech and Moravian scientists has been significant as well. Their cooperation was from a number of the periodical by unconsidered current of work of the editorial committee and flowed numerous contributions. Some names brought to mind are those of V. Frolec, O. Sirovátka, B. Beneš, J. Kandert, R. Jeřábek, J. Jech, K. Horálek, A. Robek, P. Popelka, V. Hrnčíčko and others.

Understandably it is not possible to name all of those, that in the past forty years, have shaped the periodical. They were, besides a number of communities of ethnologists and folklorists from Slovakia, Moravia, and the Czech lands, also foreign experts from the areas of history, linguistics, literary science, sociology, psychology, law, philosophy and the history of art. This clearly shows the efforts of the periodical to be open towards foreign and other scientific disciplines that were given in dutiful possibilities.

The growth of interest in solving new theoretical problems and finding new points of view in ethnological research to the same extent interrupts and also resolves the thematic variations of the periodical and about this there is held completely individual rubric. Multi-theme issues have appeared, dedicated relatively often to the results of seminars and conferences or compilations in regard to the planned tasks of scientific research of the moment time, which were controlled by the state institution. These single-theme issues, inspired by and organized by, for the most part, the young succeeding generation of scientists demonstrates such revived problems from the mid-sixties which were in the foreground of interest of Slovak ethnology and folkloristics. After November 1989, in discussions deciding the future direction of the periodical, profiles of studies written in English were arranged, the rubric of discussion was revived, regular discourse with international academics and scientists was established and so on. The worsening financial situation of the Slovak Academy of Sciences has brought a tightening of the belt, limiting the periodical's range and restricting illustrated sections. This is a time of transition, a time demanding new forms of financing for the sciences. The editorship will be making great efforts to get over the next few years to make up for some of these areas of lack.

The goal of my contribution herein has been to bring attention to the fact that *Slovak Ethnology* has been and still is the basic scientific periodical of Slovak ethnology. Its important value has been well-known and important to the understanding of the Central and Eastern Europe cultural area. It has also reflected the varied positions of Slovak ethnological science, in its pages of both positive and negative value. We begin now a new stage in the work of the periodical and we will endeavour to express the positive scientific program of current Slovak ethnology. While we have no ambition to overvalue the past, we do want, however, to give it very careful thought and consideration. The fortieth year of pe-



riodical is also a good occasion to do express our gratitude to its editors J. Mjartan, J. Podolák, V. Nosáfová, P. Stano, V. Gašparíková, Z. Vanovičová,

and L. Chorváthová and, last but not least, to B. Filová, for the fact the review survived and contributed largely to the development of Slovak science.

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