

Current Serbian Ethnology and Czech-Serbian Cooperation: Introduction to single-topic volume

The following pages of the *Český lid* : Ethnological journal again focus on the Balkans. We follow up on the single-topic "Bulgarian" issue (2/2008) by publishing the research results of the colleagues at the Serbian Academy of Science and the Arts (SANU) in Belgrade in an effort to connect the broader sphere of Central and Southeastern Europe by taking readers over attractive and somewhat neglected ground. By publishing of selected texts we discover themes that resonate in Serbian ethnology/anthropology and Balkan studies. Therefore, this issue of *Český lid* : Ethnological Journal should be of great value for the authors themselves as well as for the scientific communities in both countries and worldwide.

The issue opens with a study by Aleksandra Pavičević of the Ethnographic Institute of SANU "Current and/or Relevant? Some reflections on autonomy of scientific opinion based on experience of Serbian ethnology/anthropology at the beginning of third millennium". The author takes up the theme of autonomy of the sciences and autonomy of current intellectual thought: The intensity of social changes and postmodern market ideologies are reflected both in official scientific policy and in the internal determination of context and concept of ethnological/anthropological research, which quite often runs aground in the shallows of topicality.

Her colleague from the institute Mladena Prelić presents her long-term research in a study called "Conceptualization and Symbolization of Ethnic Identity: Serbs in Hungary". She deals with the conceptualization of ethnic identity among members of groups, the process of symbolization of ethnic divergence and the boundaries of the group.

The article by Miroslava Lukić Krstanović is entitled "Political Folklore on Festival Market: Power of Paradigm and Power of Stage". It takes a look at the life, function, and role of folklore in Serbian society, and introduces the question of comparison with the Czech environment.

The historically-oriented text of Miloš Luković of the Balkanology Institute of SANU, entitled "Development of the Modern Serbian State and Abolishment of Ottoman Agrarian Relations in the 19th Century", deals with the development of the modern Serbian state in the 19th century (the Kingdom of Serbia), its gradual political emancipation from the Ottoman Empire, and at the same time casts light on the process of transforming the Ottoman feudal agrarian relationships into private ownership of land, which led to deep social and political changes, and changes in the traditional folk culture of Serbia in the 19th century.

This section of articles includes a study of stereotypes by Miroslav Válka of the Institute for European Ethnology, Masaryk University (MU) in Brno "The Reflection of the South Slav in Czech Social Magazines of the Second Half of the 19th Century as a Source of Study of the Formation of Ethnic Images". The article contributes to the discussion of ethnic stereotypes.

Close bilateral cooperation with Serbian ethnologists, folklorists, and Balkans experts was begun at the Ethnological Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences (EI CAS) in 2006, when the institute branch in Brno received an invitation to a conference on Slavonic folklore and folklore studies at the turn of the millennium, organized by the Balkan Studies Institute SANU and the Commission of Slavonic Folklore under the international committee of Slavonic scholars represented by Ljubinko Radenković. The conference, attended by folklore scholars from eleven Slavonic countries, produced a proceedings reviewed by Ivan Dorovský in *Český lid* 3/2009.

The cultural ties between the Czech lands and Serbia or Yugoslavia have roots in long-ago and not-so-long-ago history, as described recently in the book *Relations of Czechs with the Nations and Countries of*

Southeastern Europe in an article by Tomáš Chrobák and Jana Hrabcová (in Hladký 2010). Today's highly varied contacts between Czech and Serbian ethnological and anthropological communities are demonstrated especially by the ties of interest between the EI CAS and the Ethnographic Institute of SANU, which was signed at the beginning of 2008 by the institute's directors Dragana Radojičić and Zdeněk Uherek a cooperation agreement. The social transformation after 1989 is the topic of the joint research project between the Ethnological Institutes of the Academy of Sciences in Belgrade, Prague, Brno, and the Institute for European Ethnology MU in Brno.

Another part of the bilateral agreement is the reciprocal publication of academic texts in journals, participation in academic conferences, exchange of publications, supervision of field research, and participation in projects. These goals are step by step becoming reality: during recent years a number of study stays have been carried out in the Czech Republic and Serbia by scholars as part of the international academic exchange. During these stays the invited guests presented the results of their current research or articles on issues of interest to colleagues from the host countries. In 2009 researchers from the SANU Balkanology Institute (Miloš Luković, Miroslav Svirčević) lectured at the Brno offices of the EI CAS, and at Masaryk University at the Institute for European Ethnology and the Institute of Slavonic Studies. In 2010 the director of the Belgrade Ethnographical Institute Dragana Radojičić was invited to lecture at the Institute for European Ethnology MU on current research problems. At the Ethnological Institute the topic *Folklore and Folklore Studies in the Post-Socialist Era* was presented by her, and a round table discussion held on the new musical form *Turbofolklore* in the Serbian environment. As part of a cycle of international lectures organized by the SANU Ethnographic Institute in May–October 2010, Czech researchers from Brno Jana Pospíšilová (EI CAS) and Miroslav Válka (MU) gave the lectures. Last but not least during his stay in Belgrade Jaroslav Otčenášek from Prague (EI CAS) formed a team (Lada Stevanović and Aleksandra Pavičević) for the Serbian part of work on the project *Dictionary of Verbal Folklore of Slavonians, Lithuanians and Hungarians*.

Under a project submitted to the Grant Agency CR, the EI CAS in 2011 (applicant J. Pospíšilová, Brno and co-applicant J. Linda, Belgrade) *Czechs in the Serbian Banat: An Example of Co-existence in the Multiethnic Environment of Vojvodina*, colleagues from the SANU were invited to work on the project. In addition, in 2009 Dragana Radojičić was named as a member of the international editorial board of the journal *Národopisná revue*, and in 2010 Zorica Divac became member of the international editorial board of the journal *Národopisný věstník*, while Jana Pospíšilová and Miroslav Válka became members of the international editorial board of the journal *Glasnik EI SANU*. The cooperation was also reflected in the partners' participation in conferences (in 2009 in Sirogojno and in Luhačovice and this year in Vršac and Arandjelovac) and Czech ethnological documentary films were also presented at the Ethnological Film Festival in Belgrade (in 2007 and 2011 films by Jiřina Kosíková (EI CAS) and in 2007 the film by Petr Hajn and Pavel Popelka).

Academic cooperation between the Czech and Serbian academies of science is increasing, and on the level of European humanistically-oriented academic scholarship it has been successful in both its professional and human aspects. Since the beginning of the academic cooperation planned activities have been realized, but new perspectives have also opened up for cooperation in seeking common bilateral or broader projects using contemporary and new methods in the region of the Balkans and all over Europe. Joint field research in either Vojvodina or Wallachia is under consideration.

A promising avenue of cooperation would seem to be to organize a bi-lateral conference or international round table, with discussion of methodological issues, transforming cultures in Europe and the Balkans, new patterns of migration, symbols in ethnic identity, development of the smaller regions, or other current issues. Likewise the issues of financing scholarship and project strategy, or how to get one's work cited, is of extraordinary importance for the growth of scholarship and future contacts, both in the Czech Republic and in Serbia.

Jana Pospíšilová – Dragana Radojičić – Jiří Woitsch