

Summary

Vojvodovo: Historical and Ethnological Hints

The Origin, subsistence and Clothing

This monograph has a dual purpose. First, to repay a debt to material culture focused ethnography and elaborate previously neglected areas in Vojvodovo research (subsistence, housing and settlements, clothing, diet, etc.). Second, we would like to pay respect to the informant's voices and provide them a space in academic writing. The situation of Vojvodovo studies is mapped in the first chapter.

The second chapter provides a brief overview of the complex history of Czech occupation in Vojvodovo. In order to understand the arrival of the Czech-speaking population in Bulgaria, this history must start in St. Helena (Romania), where they came to Bulgaria from. The question of national and confessional structure of the Vojvodovo population and the rate of their contacts with other regions of Bulgaria is discussed here. The story of „Czech Vojvodovo“ ends in the 1950's, when most of the Czech population responded to the call of the Czechoslovak Government to re-settle in the Czech borderlands. After their departure the village was inhabited by Bulgarians as a result of state organized resettlement. The story of the „Czech Vojvodovo“ ends in Southern Moravia, where the emigrants from Vojvodovo were accommodated.

Chapter three examines archival research and the search for ancestors of the Czech Vojvodovo population who came to Bulgaria via St. Helena. This issue was still very unclear, the only data about the origin of Saint Helenian Czechs spoke only vaguely about Czech regions, not concrete villages or towns. The researcher,

who can use sources in Czech archives, should not be satisfied with such a broad unit. This chapter attempts to search for references to people recorded in Chronicles of the deceased from the village of Gernik (Romania), including records about St. Helena as well, in the Czech regional registries of births, deaths and marriages. An emphasis was placed on the Protestants, because they were the ancestors of the emigration wave to Vojvodovo. This truly painstaking work resulted in the creation of a specific register of Czech municipalities where emigrants went to St. Helena from. It includes the villages of Brník, Střechov, Velim, Xaverov, Nova Ves, Staňkovič, Stašov, Oselce, Bohounovice, Ostředek and Vehlovice. This precise targeting of the origin of Saint Helenian Czechs makes great progress in research of the history of Czechs in Romanian Banat and also in the village of Vojvodovo.

The fourth chapter elaborates the key themes of ethnographic research of Vojvodovo. It is based on a manuscript from the former Vojvodovo dweller Miroslav Štrbka. Štrbka covers a wide range of topics that are typically ethnographic. Here it is obvious that the studied population is able to create a detailed and informed ethnographic text. In this case we cannot expect such analytically sophisticated arguments like we encountered in the texts of Petr Klepáček (Jakoubek 2012: 87–153), but the more Štrbka's text fits into the tradition that we are familiar with in the Czech environment – the positivist tradition of Czech ethnography. The goal of ethnographic research is obvious in the etymology of the discipline's name – description. Štrbka's text is descriptive; he records with great precision and tries to quantify the material side of everyday life in “Czech Vojvodovo”.

The above implies a number of questions. What are the place and role of the researcher in relation to the researched community, which is able to create texts in a similar quality as someone who has dedicated a significant part of their life to studying social sciences? Is it more efficient to ignore texts created by the studied population, or to take a hands off approach, or to collaborate with the studied population in accordance with the principles of collaborative ethnography? Who are the recipients of texts produced by academics and studied populations? Is there any intersection of these two target groups of recipients? Due to the fact that in Czech academia there is a lack of discussion about collaboration with people in studied populations, this book intends to open the topic and create a discourse with researchers who have long-term field experience.

The fourth chapter not only raises a number of questions aimed at the very epistemological foundations of ethnography and anthropology, but also fills the incomplete areas of the existing ethnographic profile of Vojvodovo. The chapter deals with a number of topics that could be included in the category of traditional subsistence and production in “Czech Vojvodovo”, including detailed descriptions of crop rotation and proportion, focusing on issues of class infrastructure and

architecture of village farms. The topics of diet, food storage (including technical scheme of *bricoleur* non-electric refrigerator), system of holidays, traditions, folk customs, traditional clothing, crafts, healing, home births, child care and education are elaborated in detail here. Štrbka actually encompass a significant portion of ethnographical scope.

The last chapter follows Štrbka's manuscript and is dedicated to the theme of traditional clothing and footwear in “Czech Vojvodovo”. The text puts considerable emphasis on emic perspective of clothing. This chapter is rich in detailed descriptions and contains visual documentation as well. The author separates in the text (in accordance with her informant's emic view) clothing for females, males and children, and describes the differences in clothing in accordance to age groups and different occasions. The category of clothing is joined by the closely related topic of soft furnishing, which had a similar ethnodifferential function as clothing in Vojvodovo.