

ESSAY

NOTES TO THE WORK OF JÁN ČAPLOVIČ: „SLOWAKEN IN UNGARN“

Pavol Parenička

*Comenius University in Bratislava
Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences
Research Centre for Human Rights
Mlynské luhy 4, 821 05 Bratislava
pavol.parenicka@fses.uniba.sk*

Abstract

Ján Čaplovič belongs to the most prominent European intellectuals, polyhistorians and encyclopaedists of the first half of the 19th century. The focus of his scientific and publishing activities consisted mainly of legal, national, national-economic and ethnographic works in which he drew from the wealth of ideas of enlightenment, rationalism, physiocracy and Josephinism. His theoretical works, mainly on ethnographic research, are based mainly on numerous field studies and journeys throughout the Habsburg Empire. Thanks to them he perfectly understood the Slovak nation, and influenced by the French enlightener Montesquieu, he characterized the Slovaks as a separate nation. He compared them to the English, in the conditions of then multi-ethnic Hungarian state. This Čaplovič's ethnographic parallel is the main subject of the submitted study notes, because it attracted attention at the time of its creation. From a methodological point of view, the notes are based on an analysis of a historical text and a comparative principle.

Key words: *Ján Čaplovič, national awakening, ethnography, Slovaks, English*

1. FAMILY OF ČAPLOVIČ AND JÁN ČAPLOVIČ

Ján Čaplovič (1780-1847), an intellectual of enlightenment and national awakener, was amongst the most educated personalities, from the large family ¹. His

¹ In 2003, the National Biographical Institute of the Slovak National Library in Martin and Oravské múzeum P. O. Hviezdoslava in Dolný Kubín organized a seminar called Čaplovičs' in Slovak Culture, from which the genealogical, biographical, library and cultural-historical contributions were published in the Biographical Studies (2004), XXX, reg.

significance is proven by the fact from the recent past, when on the occasion of his 200 birth anniversary in 1980, UNESCO included him in the calendar of significant intellectuals. In this calendar people of world history and science are represented, and rarely there are also Slovak personalities there.

2. LIFE AND WORK OF JÁN ČAPLOVIČ

Čaplovič's life destiny and his scientific and publication activities are well known, mainly thanks to the monography of Vendelín Jankovič: *Ján Čaplovič – Life, Personality, Works* (1945). From this and other publications it is clear that Čaplovič was author of over thirty monographs. He also wrote about four hundred professional and popular articles, published in about thirty Austrian, Hungarian, German, Czech and Slovak periodicals [Rizner 1929: 254-257]. This incomparable, quantitative fact made Čaplovič one of the most active professional writer and publicist in the first half of the 19th century in Slovak, Slavic, Austrian and Hungarian – Central European and even European relations and context. In this regard Viera Urbancová stated: *„More than 450 bibliographic units, represent this part of his life, and his whole work is remarkable synthesis and reflection of the then economic, political and cultural direction.“* [Urbancová 1975: 237]. Equally exceptional was Čaplovič's thematic focus, on whose mark Vendelín Jankovič commented: *„Indeed, his publishing activity covered almost the whole area of human culture and art. His works in fields of law and economy were related to his employment as a custodian of properties located in Schönborn. But Čaplovič's interest in books, magazines, literature and art, especially in music and theater etc., was much more important and remarkable. All Čaplovič's publishing activity was, in the true sense, a reaction to a given political, economic and cultural situation“* [Jankovič 1945: 22–23].

Čaplovič's biography, as well as his scientific, publicist and, last but not least, national awakening activities, are well-defined to Slovak professional culture from a number of entries, in a number of encyclopaedic dictionaries, from several studies of reputable historians and editors of resources in scientific proceedings and professional journals, from several references,² and entire articles in various academic and other syntheses, from Jankovič's constructive monograph, but also from a number of popular – educational journals and newspaper articles and contributors. Because Čaplovič published most of his work in German, less in Hungarian and Latin, and only sporadically in Slovak or Czech, scientifically commented re-editions of his work in contemporary Slovak language also has an extraordinary value for contemporaries. In this context, we must mention Čaplovič's anthology or a selection of his works *„About Slovakia and Slovaks“* (1975), which was compiled by Viera Urbancová and supplemented by the study: *„Ján Čaplovič in Slovak culture and national awakening“*.

3. ČAPLOVIČ'S PARALLELS IN THE WORK “SLOWAKEN IN UNGARN”

² Čaplovič, Ján... in *Encyklopédia slovenských spisovateľov I* (1984), p. 97, Obzor, Bratislava. Čaplovič, Ján..., in *Encyclopaedia Beliana III* (2003), p. 28, Encyklopedický ústav Slovenskej akadémie vied, Bratislava. Čaplovič, Ján..., in *Biografický lexikón Slovenska II* (2004), p. 101–102, Slovenská národná knižnica, Martin.

Based on these two main literary sources (Jankovič, Urbancová), we would like to approach, comment and update one of his most remarkable works, namely the monograph: „Slowaken in Ungarn“ (Slovaks in Hungary). Already Čaplovič contemporaries, his supporters and critics agreed that for this intellectual Hungary was like a small Europe, which was summed up in the memorable sentence – „Ungarn ist Europa im Kleinem!“ From our point of view, the most interesting fact is that when Čaplovič compared Hungary to Europe, he considered and presented the Slovaks as the most prosperous nation - in the position of Hungarian English. Čaplovič devoted to proving this premise for over thirty years, practically from the end of Napoleonic wars in 1815, until his death in 1847, interpreting this issue in the works: „Slowaken in Ungarn (1818-1820), „Ungarn ist Europa im Kleinen“ (1825) and „England and Ungarn. Eine Parallele“ (1842, second edition 1846). Although Urbancová gave the Čaplovič's work: Slovaks in Ungarn³ a subtitle: „Semi-joke and Semi-serious arguments that the Slovaks are Hungarian English“ . Let the readers of these lines to make their own picture and decide what is semi-joke and what is semi-serious:

1. Englishmen are experienced ships' boys and sailors – Slovaks are experienced rafters, Čaplovič sees the difference in relation to the water element only, in the fact that Englishmen return home on boats, whereas Slovaks from waterways come to their homes on foot.

2. Englishmen are enterprising businessmen – the Slovaks also have their traditional business (safron trade, linen trade, trade with butter, lacemaking, trade with oils, bag makers, honey combers, glassmakers, tinkers, harness makers, manger makers, sieve makers, Liptauer sheep cheese makers), which had become known and sought after throughout the Habsburg Monarchy, in Europe, especially in the Balkans occupied by the Ottoman Empire, further in Asia, especially in Siberia, but also in overseas.

Hereby Čaplovič noted that the Slovak merchants and craftsmen were open-minded and educated, possessed a topographical, historical and homeland knowledge. Moreover they appeared to be polyglots, when apart from, Slovak, they could speak Hungarian, German, Romanian and Serbian languages. Many of them could also speak Latin, and exceptionaly also English and French.

3. Englishmen are resourceful producers - Čaplovič appreciated the developed manufacture industry in Slovakia, but especially the high level of the so called domestic crafts and textile production (drapery, linen, millinery,), wood industry (wheelwright, barrel making, manger making, sieves making, shingles making, sticks making, carpentry, artistic woodcarving), food industry (cheese production, sheep cheese production, bakery, viticulture), metallurgy and mining (blacksmith, iron production, feeloes making, mortar making, weaponry) and also chemical industry (gunpowder making, potash-nitre making).

³ The part of Čaplovič's work „Slovaks in Hungary“ was published in the Hesperus in 1818 (č. 49, 55, 57, 59) and in 1820 (No. 19, 21, 22, 23), while the author sent it to a literary competition announced by the editor of this periodical Kristian Karol André. Čaplovič already that published extracts from his work with the title Erinnerungen aus Slawonien in Pressburger Zeitung (No. 81, 82, 85, 87, 88) – it was before 1816 year. The whole Čaplovič study was translated into the Slovak language by Viera Urbancová and she published it in book „About Slovakia and Slovaks“ in 1975.

4. Englishmen are skilled and hardworking farmers - in this chapter Čaplovič first focused on describing the natural conditions of agriculture in Slovakia, which were particularly in its mountainous regions negatively affected by the poor and barren soil, the harsher climate and weather conditions and the insufficient road system. Slovaks nevertheless successfully developed agriculture, namely cereal growing and viticulture and in the livestock production, cattle breeding. Čaplovič raised the issue of sheep breeding, mountain farming and cheese making.
5. Slovaks as well as Englishmen, often travel in large or small groups and settle in better regions - Čaplovič devoted this to the question of the high birth rate among the Slovaks, and the resulting process of rapid population growth, which was determinant of the first mostly socially motivated emigration of people from Slovakia and the construction of new Slovak colonies in the south of Hungary, pointing to one of the national features of Slovaks, which he called Slovak cosmopolitanism.
6. Englishmen have nice and good women... – he also considered the Slovak women to be nice, good and healthy, physically and spiritually, harmoniously developed women, according to Čaplovič, the most obvious of them were from Turiec region.
7. Englishmen are good pedestrians – Čaplovič noticed that the Slovaks also enjoy walking, while in the past they become fast and reliable couriers, in this connection he referred in particular to Slovak merchants, craftsmen and handicraft journeymen who took on their own feet long and challenging journeys as they travelled through Habsburg monarchy, and often wandered beyond its borders; similarly, the Slovaks and Englishmen were excellent carters and coachmen.
8. Englishmen like to bet - Čaplovič noticed that passion also for Slovaks, from his time compacted to the characteristic phrase: „I bet you...“ , he included here also popularity of the enchanting guess work and in England, Hungary and in Slovakia, betting was already connected with horse racing.
9. English people enjoy watching the fire - the Slovaks also like looking into the fire, and in their homes and cottages they prefer open fireplaces to closed furnaces.
10. Englishmen people like to look not only to the fires, but also in the bottom of the glasses ... (they like to drink an alcohol) – the Slovaks also never miss a chance for entertainment, especially family events (weddings, christening parties, funerals, birthdays) and great holidays (Christmas and Easter, Shrovetide Carnival). Traditional pig slaughtering cannot be without alcohol (they drink typical alcohol as borovička-gin, čerešňovica-cherry brandy, žitná - rye brandy, vinovica - wine brandy, medovina - mead, or honey brandy), they also like beer and wine, they are happy to visit pubs and inns; Čaplovič compared ways of eating and food in both English and Slovak cuisine, especially focused on the frequent use of potatoes and bacons in both ethnic groups.
11. Englishmen are good soldiers - Čaplovič described recruitments in Slovakia, Slovaks did not want to be recruited, but when they entered into the army, they were excellent and courageous soldiers, especially in the famous Upper Hungarian regiments.
12. Englishmen are passionate hunters - the Slovaks, if they were allowed by the strict laws of the feudal system included in smaller regional rights, also loved hunting very much and were excellent shooters and hunters.
13. Englishmen like wrestling - the Slovaks wrestle mostly at holidays, on fairs, and in pubs, often to half-dead, or dead. The most common pretence is just for the fun, but the motive is also the jealousy of rivals in love. The Slovaks wrestle furiously with the fists, the Slovak slap in the face (facka) became notorious. The craftsmen

and tradesmen even use a variety of stick techniques for their defense, but they usually wrestle only for passion, which is especially popular among young men.

4. THE IMPORTANCE OF ČAPLOVIČ PARALLELS

Although Čalovič's work: „The Slovaks in Hungary“, cannot deny some contemporary aggradation of apologetic and slovakophile tendencies, he as the first one pointed out to high spiritual and material culture of the Slovaks, more complex in European relations with unprecedented acceptance“.4 Čaplovič's research method was interesting too, when in the characterisation of the Slovak nation he formally combined ethnographic research with a humorously led fiction style, creating an engrossing story about the Slovaks, within educational along with entertaining genre of literature.

For this reason, the first monograph about the Slovaks had more journalistic than scientific attention, although it was based on ethnographic material, but less on historical, geographic and statistical facts. In conclusion, I guess I had to explain why Čaplovič pronounced and defended the thesis that „*Slovaks are in Hungary the same as the Englishmen in Europe*“ [Urbancová 1975: 8].

Čaplovič admired the English and England because of that at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century, in the context with the defeat of Napoleonic France, it became the world's first superpower and imperial colonial empire. It can be said, that Ján Čaplovič also succumbed to the widespread anglophilia, and here it its necessary to look for the origins of his analogies, comparisons and parallelism. They at last led to and resulted in Čaplovič's work written in German language „Slovaks in Hungary“, which aroused interest in the professional and scientific circles of the then Europe and which has become one of the basic works of the Slovak ethnography. This fact was pointed out by Vendelín Jankovič, who had appreciated Čaplovič's work „*Slowaken in Ungarn for several reasons. Especially for his slovakophile tendency, his apologetic focus and his friendliness to the Slovaks*“ [Jankovič 1945: 61].

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⁴ He won the first prize for the work „Slowaken in Ungarn“ in a literary contest in Hesperus and got 200 goldens in 1818. Ján Čaplovič was the member of Imperial Royal, Natural Science Society in Vienna from 1814. He became foreign contributing member of the Natural Science Society in Halle in 1815.

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