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THE NOTIONS „PERSON" AND „PERSONALITY" AND GOLLIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY – SOME REMARKS

The notions "person" and "personality" held an important position in the terminology of Czech academic historical writing in the first half of the twentieth century. The Gollian tradition contained elements of primitive anthropocentrism, which were peculiar to various currents of political-factographical historiography. However, insofar as Gollian historiography inquired into the problems of the conception of person or personality as an agent in the historical process, it did not work out a firm, sophisticated standpoint. Significantly, Goll and his adherents took up a reserved attitude to the controversy about Individualism and Collectivism.[1] Their emphasis on the need to find a viamedia was merely a formal matter. And in fact some of the historians, including J. Šusta and K. Stloukal, considered the vagueness of methodological positions to be profitable.

Yet it is possible in considering the topic to set up two paradigms shared by the great majority of the representatives of Czech "official" historical writing, i. e. the principle of viewing a concrete person in close connection with an age-epoch — "doba", and the presupposition that a personality, at its core, cannot be fully comprehended or explained.[2]

[1] Goll, J.: *T. G. Masaryk, Otázka sociální*, in: Goll, J.: *Vybrané spisy drobné*, I, Praha 1928, pp. 226—227. Goll, J.: *Dějiny a dějepis*, in: Goll, J.: *Vybrané spisy drobné*, I, p. 11. Pekař, J.: *Spor o individualismus a kollektivismus v dějepisectví*, Český časopis historický (ČČH), 1897, pp. 146—160.

[2] Stloukal, K.: *Význam osobnosti v dějinách*, in: Rohden, P. R.: *Tvůrcové dějin. Čtyři tisíciletí světových dějin v obrazech dob a osobností. I. Starověk*, Praha 1934, pp. XX, XXII. Stloukal, K.: *Jaroslav Goll*, ČČH, 1946, p. 118. Stein, E.: *Studie k základům noetiky historie*, Česká mysl, 1930, pp. 130—131. Goll, J.: *František Palacký*, in: Goll, J.: *Vybrané spisy drobné*, I, p. 45. Ka-

Albeit historians of Goll's school often operated with the term "age", the extent of its conceptualization remained low. Evžen Stein defined the age in relation to the personality as a "collective and its works", sometimes as an environment in the widest sense.[3] Otherwise he confronted individuals with "things" or with "historical reality". At the same time the age represented for him an objective limit to human activity.

Similarly, František Kutnar considered the relationship between the man and the age to be analogous to that between the individual and the collective. He maintained that "the age as a collective is a directed corpus of individual manifestations of reason, emotion, and will".[4]

In comparison with Kutnar's notion of the age Stein emphasized more strongly that the age represented a quality which is superior to that of the person.

Karel Stloukal promoted the more traditional Gollian concept of the age as a "given temporal milieu", affirming that history in its most proper form is a history of the spirit.[5] The principle, that all historical phenomena must be considered in terms of the age, was then foregrounded by J. Pekař and Z. Kalista, who made great efforts to rehabilitate the so-called "Catholic epochs" in Czech history.

The core of the age was, in the view of Pekař and Kalista, a spiritual one. Both these historians were strongly influenced by an organicist notion of the age. Zdeněk Kalista deliberately underlined decisive character of the relationship between the individual and the age. For him, the age was primarily a particular cultural milieu.[6] Nevertheless, he also employed the term "age" in a wider sense, occasionally even as a substitute for the concept "society".[7]

The widely accepted call to consider persons and historical phenomena in close connexion with the age, "only with it and within it", was interpreted in various ways. But this principle was firmly rooted in the Gollian tradition, and, in fact, it could not be dismissed without a destruction of the heritage of Goll. That was the case of Jan Slavík.[8]

The second paradigm, the presupposition of the unintelligibility of the core of the personality, appears to have been even more self-evident than the first one to the Czech academic historians. A historiographical approach of this kind could not seriously claim to provide insights into the deep

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lista, Z.: *Cesty historikovy*, Praha 1947, pp. 183—185. Pekař, J.: *Žižka a jeho doba, I. Doba*, Praha 1927, p. IX. Pekař, J.: *O periodisaci českých dějin*, ČČH, 1932, pp. 1—11.

[3] Stein, E.: *Mistr Jindřich z Bitterfeldu*, ČČH, 1933, pp. 502—503.

[4] Kutnar, F.: *Život a dílo Ignáce Cornovy*, ČČH, 1930, p. 327.

[5] Stloukal, K.: *Jaroslav Goll*, p. 118. Stloukal, K.: *Význam osobnosti*, p. XXIII.

[6] Kalista, *l. c.*, p. 184.

[7] Kalista, Z.: *České baroko*, Praha 1941, p. 30.

[8] Slavík, J.: *Dějiny a přítomnost*, Praha 1931.

structures of the phenomena studied. What is more interesting, however, is the context into which that paradigm was incorporated.

E. Stein approached the problem of an understanding of the personality in the context of a dualistic conception of the historical process, where the 'iron causality of events' was balanced against the acts of irrational individual human subjects. Stein of course supposed that acting individuals could not substantially overcome the basic conditions of the event and thus reverse the line of development.[9] At the same time, however, the activity of irrational individuals was for him an important factor of change, which made the historical event partially irrational too. If scholarship does not presume to penetrate to the depths of personality and to grasp the will — this 'last and irreducible driving force ef events' — then it is necessary to reveal which of the linkages between personalities and their environment can be generalized. Stein hoped that by doing so it would be possible to define an "extrinsic objectivity" — inevitable, general forms of events, research into which should be the proper purpose of the science of history.[10]

To comprehend the personality meant for Stein to comprehend primarily its relationship to the historical reality. But that was not relevant for research into the personality as a unique, psychic phenomenon. Stein's problem was not to comprehend the personality as a historical phenomenon-product but to find an adequate approach to the "intrinsic", psychic personality.[11] Hence, the dualistic concept of the historical process found a parallel in a basically dualistic concept of personality. The problem which stood behind the problems Stein tried to solve was this: what is the relationship between the "extrinsic-historical" and the "intrinsic-psychic"?

Stloukal's starting point was similar to that of Stein: the activities of individuals represent an irrational but also a "fertilizing" factor in history. He assigned to the role of great figures in history much more importance than Stein did. He admitted that they might decisively intervene in the course of events and might "re-make the age".[12] Great historical figures appeared absolutely irreplaceable to him. Stloukal stressed that the personality is such a unique phenomenon that it can never be fully comprehended.

Stloukal rejected the "exaggerated" claims of sociological-positivistic historiographical currents and Marxism to be able to explain history as a logical process with laws of its own. His aim was to affirm history as an exclusively idiographic science, the subject of which — "humanity" — coud never be fully enclosed in a causal chain.[13]

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[9] Stein, E.: *Studie k základům noetiky historie*, pp. 130—131.
[10] Stein, *l. c.*, pp. 131—132.
[11] Stein, E.: *Mistr Jindřich*, pp. 39, 47.
[12] Stloukal, K.: *Význam osobnosti*, p. XX.
[13] Stloukal, *l. c.*, pp. XIV-XV, XX, XXIII.

Stloukal was anxious about possible conclusions which might be drawn from the conception of history as a logical process. This indicates why a certain "obscurity" in the history-making forces could become something positive for historians of Stloukal's kind. What Stein tried to reduce, Stloukal wished to sacralize.

Doubts about the possibility of comprehending the personality did not, in fact, restrain the tendency to offer a psychological interpretation of events. This tendency was often taken as a sign of "modern" historiography. At the beginning of the century one of the Gollian historians, Bohumil Navrátil, criticized the old historical writing which, precisely because it did not put the crucial question "what determines the fact itself", remained necessarily on the surface of events. The proper purpose of historical investigation was then to reveal ideas, emotions, manifestations of the will, these "ultimate motives"[14]

However, about thirty years later, the Catholic-oriented wing of Czech historiography came up with similar arguments against Goll's school, seeing it as a kind of dry-as-dust, descriptive, sterile historical writing.[15]

But polemics led in the name of "man" against impersonal, descriptive historiography brought very few advances towards a solution of the riddle of personality. This fact became more and more evident.

Josef Matoušek pointed out that modern historiography had — from Ranke on — carried out much psychological interpretation, but had left the methodological presuppositions for the characterization of the personality almost completely aside. The result of this was a disproportion between the great amount of source material amassed and the quality of its psychological interpretation. He recommended paying more attention to "intimate" records and putting into practice methods taken from psychoanalysis and behavioristic psychology.[16]

An intensified interest in more "intimate" records was shared by other historians, notably Stloukal and Kalista. As far as the possible widening of the methodological basis of Czech academic historiography by means of psychoanalysis was concerned, the standpoint of representatives of Goll's school was reserved, if not reluctant. Their apprehensions that such attempts might end as a "mournful catalogue" of arrant nonsense proved, after all, to have been well-founded.[17]

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[14] Navrátil, B.: *Vincenc Brandl*, Časopis Matice moravské, 1902, p. 323.

[15] Dostál, J.: *Spravedlnost historikova*, Akord, 1932, p. 429.
Dostál, J.: *Historik a jeho dílo*, Akord, 1932, p. 314.
Dostál, J.: *Žižkova doba*, Rozmach, 1927, p. 247.

[16] Matoušek, J.: *K problému osobnosti Rudolfa II. Poznámky o pramenech, literatuře a metodě*, in: *K dějinám československým v období humanismu. Sborník prací věnovaných Janu Bedřichu Novákovi k šedesátým narozeninám 1872 až 1932*, Praha 1932, pp. 360—362.

[17] Šusta, J.: *Kadlec, V., Vladařská cesta Přemyslova*, ČČH, 1938, pp. 122, 124.

An interest in "intimate" records was closely connected with a growing emphasis on a vivid, colourful, "artistic" representation of the "scientifically investigated" past. The adherents of Pekař in particular promoted the principle of "limiting and shaping atomistic criticism by intuitive imagination".[18]

The critics of the Gollian tradition of history as an ethically non-committed science focused their attention most often on the problem of an adequate representation of the past, and usually left aside the question of the linkage between the representative and the explanatory levels. But this question was of crucial importance. If the discourse of Gollian historiography was to be changed, then it could only be done as a whole. However, the problem could only be posed in such a way by those historians who kept themselves aloof from the Gollian tradition and thus from Czech academic historical writing.

The "scientific approach" of the Gollian platform consisted primarily in methodical postulates placed on research into the causal nexus among events. The form of its representation was thus more or less secondary, and it was defined rather indirectly. This relationship between the explanatory and representative strategies therefore presupposed a careful choice of concepts and tropes, which ensured in this case the coherence of the protocol. In this respect, however, the development of Gollian historiography gradually departed from Goll's original platform. From the point of view of the means of expression used, there was a shift in favour of a metaphorically "colourful" representation of the past. The metaphor of the historical process as drama played an especially important role.

In V. Kybal's monography "Henry IV and Europe in 1609 and 1610" single "characters" or groupings of them were in fact the exclusive agents on the historical scene.[19] Kybal's hero and thus the integrating figure of his narrative was the person of Henry IV. Significantly, Vlastimil Kybal evoked the feeling that a vacuum followed the death of the French king. The fact that certain given possibilities remained unfulfilled had a profound influence on the course of events — according to Kybal, the Battle of the White Mountain would never have taken place if Henry IV had still been alive at the time.[20] At the same time, the death of a prominent figure brought the opportunity to point out a tragic feature of the history of every nation, that it is governed by an unknown "higher fate".[21]

Kybal made extensive use of the terminology of drama. Sometimes

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[18] Holinka, R.: *Dílo Josefa Pekaře*, in: Holinka, R. (ed.): *O Josefu Pekařovi. Příspěvky k životopisu a dílu.* Praha 1937, pp. 40, 46.

[19] Kybal, V.: *Jindřich IV. a Evropa v letech 1609 a 1610*, Praha 1911.

[20] Kybal, *l. c.*, p. 301.

[21] Kybal, *l. c.*, p. 301.

this terminology determined the character of the narration. Occasionally Kybal comprehended events by turn in tragic or comic terms.[22]

On the other hand Kybal absolutely refused to conceive of Czech history as a kind of tragedy, preferring, in this case, the more "natural" metaphor of the "broad course of a river, driven by unknown forces".[23] He felt that the concept of a drama might easily lead to an inadequate comprehension of historical persons, situations and history itself, which "frequently was as ordinary, banal, and disgustingly lazy as the present and life in it.".[24]

Although he generally agreed that history is not a kind of drama, Kybal did not abandon the use of the metaphor of drama, especially in the case of the representation of individual "closed" stories. But history as a process remained the "broad course of a river". The "closed" metaphor was therefore complemented with an "open" one.

R. Holinka pointed out that for Josef Pekař Czech history was an "organic drama".[25] Pekař liked to depict the "dramatic tensions" and decisive character of some moments in Czech history. However, his tendency to moralize was reduced by an awareness of the existence of chains of events which preclude the use of a moral criterion.[26]

The term "scene" was of notable importance for Pekař in representing the proper "action level" of events. As in Kybal's works, this level was characterized by the confrontation of the emotions, purposes, and ideas of agent-actors with the "iron logic of the situation".[27] Pekař conceived this logic of the situation as being, in the long run, a more powerful force, though the reasons for this remained obscure.

On the other hand, Pekař maintained that historical figures-persons have been able, by accepting ideas and programmes, and through their own energy, to 'set a trend' and to create a new situation. Occasionally, a crowd could second these figures, but its power was more of a destructive nature.[28]

Susta and Stloukal appeared to be less dependent on the concept of historical persons as dramatis personae. Moreover, Stloukal showed a growing interest in the "ordinary man" ando his mentality. At the same time he was aware of the fact that traditional historiography had been incapable of penetrating to the depths of the lives of ordinary people,

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[22] Kybal, V.: *Jindřich IV. a Rudolf II. Dvě studie o zahraniční politice Francie a domu rakouského v letech 1592 až1610*, Praha 1907, pp. 91, 120—121.
[23] Kybal, V.: *Arnošt Denis a Bílá Hora. Kritická studie*, Praha 1912, p. 22.
[24] Kybal, *l. c.*, p. 66.
[25] Holinka, *l. c.*, p. 76.
[26] Kalista, Z.: *Český barok u Josefa Pekaře*, in: Holinka, R. (ed.): *O Josefu Pekařovi*, pp. 170, 190 (Note n. 73). Pekař, J.: *Žižka a jeho doba. III. Žižka. Vůdce revoluce*, Praha 1930, pp. 315, 328.
[27] Pekař, *l. c.*, pp. 184—185.
[28] Pekař, *l. c.*, pp. 8, 11, 17, 18, 114, 200, 229.

who left no writtem records.[29] Stloukal himself was of course too handicapped to undertake an elaboration of new methods relevant to that purpuse.

The explanatory and representative strategy of Z. Kalista was characterized by a shift from the construction of a "narrative thread" to a search for the cultural and psychological "roots" of personal decisions. Kalista supposed that uncovering these roots would lead to an understanding of the linkage between the fact-datum and its original milieu, and that it was thus necessary for the "inner totality" of every story.[30]

Kalista mysticized and treated as inevitable the person-environment relationship.But he frequently conceived of the milieu more as a „painted backdrop" — and it could well be doubted, as J. Prokeš pointed out, whether this "painted backdrop" had any intrinsic connection with the individuals under study.[31]

Zdeněk Kalista also foregrounded the principle of the comprehension of all historical phenomena in terms of the age. In this respect his defence of a spiritual concept of the personality of Charles IV against the "modern ideology" was especially characteristic.[32]

The metaphor of drama remained widely used in the works of Z. Kalista. From time to time he "enriched" the scene with some supernatural elements, such as Providence.[33]

For Kalista, events were not simply given, as they were according to the Gollian conception; history was full of lost opportunities, was basically a space for alternatives — and as such it could be experienced again and again. From this point of view, his standpoint resembled that of Bohdan Chudoba.[34]

Václav Dobiáš remained in many respects a true adherent of Goll's explanatory and representative strategy.[35] He shared an ironical attitude to the "higher" historical writing, which ignored the lives of ordinary people, but, of course, in his own works persons were the privileged agents, because they had names and therefore distinctive identities, while ordinary men and women did not. Hence persons and the forces orga-

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[29] Stloukal, K.: *Dvojí tvář doby Karlovy*, Praha 1949, pp. 26—27.

[30] Kalista, Z.: *Mládí Humprechta Jana Černína z Chudenic. Zrození barokního kavalíra. I. Část textová*, Praha 1932, p. 126.

[31] Prokeš, J.: *Z. Kalista, Mládí Humprechta Jana Černína z Chudenic*, Díly I a II, Časopis Matice moravské, 1933, p. 281.

[32] Kalista, Z.: *Doba Karla IV.*, Praha 1939, pp. 15, 18.

[33] Kalista, Z.: *Čechové, kteří tvořili dějiny světa*, Praha 1939, p. 221. Kalista, Z.: *České baroko*, p. 31.

[34] Vojtěch, T.: *Česká historiografie a pozitivismus. Světonázorové a metodologické aspekty*, Praha 1984, pp. 95—96.

[35] Konrad, K.: *Dějiny husitské revoluce. Literární pozůstalost Kurta Konrada*, Praha 1964, p. 52.

nized by them formed the rational structure of history — in contrast with the largely destructive actions of the masses.[36]

A certain concision and dry irony in Dobiáš and Goll undercut any tendency towards moralization or pathos. It would seem that there was a deliberate limiting of the expressivity of the narrative in their works. What is more important, the Gollian explanatory strategy seems to have had very strong limits too. In fact, it did not attempt to solve seriously either the issue of "what determines the fact itself", or the riddle of personality. The "psychologizing" tendencies were only compatible with the Gollian platform to a certain extent: insofar as they did not interfere with Goll's understanding of the causal nexus among events. In the inter-war period, however, Goll's platform gradually ceased to be the point of departure for the bulk of academic, "official" historiography.

The shift in favour of a metaphorically "colourful" representation of events marked a transformation of the whole representative strategy of Czech academic historiography. It might easily have resulted in a devaluation of the explanatory aspect — with distinct conservative ideological implications. Frequently, the rational elements of the original Gollian methodological tradition were done away with in this way, and this was the real purpose behind the "disposal" of the heritage of "dry-as-dust" positivism by the right wing of Czech historiography.

But it was an utter illusion to suppose that observing the historical process through the prism of metaphor leads automatically to a true picture of history in its totality. The use of metaphor for this purpose has had a logic and limits of its own, and it has not been ideologically and methodologically neutral at all.

Undoubtedly, the concept of "historical" individuals as dramatis personae was more appropriate than other less sophisticated comparisons — the great personality as the queen-bee and so on. But it could not compensate substantially for the shortcomings in the terminology of Czech "official" historiography. The use of the metaphor of drama often seemed to be making a virtue of necessity: there was simply no other adequate pattern available for comprehending situations and agents. However, a personality remained still an "obscure" phenomenon.

Representatives of Czech academic historical writing were able to operate with the term "person", but they could not develop the potential of the concept of personality. The concept of personality was treated primitively by them — as a "great man", or it was taken as a synonymum for the terms "person" or "individual". E. Stein was a possible exception in this case, but he too found it extremely difficult to overcome the prevailing methodological stereotypes.

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[36] Dobiáš, V.: *Dějiny římské provincie syrské. Díl I. Do oddělení Judaie od Syrie*, Praha 1924.

It was quite significant that Josef Šmída in his work "Insights into History" — published in 1947 — again expressed an absolute scepticism about the possibility of a "scientific" understanding of personality.[37] At that time, the age of Gollian historiography — already disintegrating — was nearing its end. As far as the problem of personality is concerned, this kind of historiography was doomed to move from nowhere to nowhere.

POJMY „OSOBA" A „OSOBNOST" A GOLLOVSKÁ HISTORIOGRAFIE – NĚKOLIK POZNÁMEK

Historikové Gollovy školy často operovali s výrazy „osoba" a „osobnost", přičemž míra jejich konceptualizace zůstávala ovšem velmi nízká. České akademické dějepisectví nebylo schopné využít potenciálu, který v sobě skrýval pojem osobnosti, navíc pak — především jeho pravicové křídlo — v teoretické i praktické rovině rezignovalo na možnost „vědeckého" poznání podstaty osobnosti. Historiografie tohoto druhu si ostatně ani nemohla klást vysoké cíle, pokud šlo o proniknutí k podstatě historických jevů a procesů. Je však příznačné, že princip nepoznatelnosti podstaty osobnosti — a v širším smyslu dějinotvorných sil vůbec — zvlášť horlivě hlásali historikové konzervativního ražení, kteří nepřáli snahám o „zvědečtění" metodologické základny českého dějepisectví. V této souvislosti nepřekvapuje zjištění, že česká „oficiální" historiografie ani v meziválečném období nerozpracovala modely pro pochopení vztahu „železné logiky situace" a činnosti individuálních a kolektivních lidských subjektů. Metaforické zkratky, k nimž se někteří čeští historikové uchylovali, byly nanejvýše nouzovým řešením. Analýza těchto metaforických zkratek umožňuje ovšem konkretizovat metodologické a ideologické pozice jednotlivých představitelů gollovského dějepisectví a je svým způsobem nezbytná pro ozřejmění možností a mezí postupů, jež tito historikové používali při vysvětlování a líčení minulosti.

[37] Šmída, J.: *Pohledy do dějin*, Praha 1947, pp. 19, 27, 47.