

Jeřábek, Richard

The oldest documentary evidence of folk textile art from the region of the White Carpathians

Sborník prací Filozofické fakulty brněnské univerzity. F, Řada uměnovědná. 1966, vol. 15, iss. F10, pp. [83]-99

Stable URL (handle): <https://hdl.handle.net/11222.digilib/111086>

Access Date: 28. 11. 2024

Version: 20220831

Terms of use: Digital Library of the Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University provides access to digitized documents strictly for personal use, unless otherwise specified.

RICHARD JERÁBEK

THE OLDEST DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE
OF FOLK TEXTILE ART FROM THE REGION
OF THE WHITE CARPATHIANS

From the ethnographical aspect the territory of Moravia is differentiated to an unusual degree. The most complicated structure appears in the South-East area, known as Moravian-Slovakia. The little region lying at the foot of the White Carpathians, known as Horňácko, became distinct as a characteristic ethnographical area at a comparatively early date. It consists of only ten communities grouped round the townlet of Velká nad Veličkou and is a region of highly individual folk culture, some of whose elements have retained traditional forms which are still living today. The most vital expressions of folk culture in Horňácko are folk music, song and dance, holiday costumes of men and women, folk embroidery and some other branches of visual folk art.

The Horňácko folk culture of today is the result of a long and complex development, of which we can grasp only the last phase in its full range. We assume that an individual, specific folk culture existed in Horňácko long before it was discovered by ethnographic investigators. This assumption is supported by the oldest documentary evidence of folk culture and folk art discovered in the second half and especially at the end of last century and now preserved in the collection of ethnographical museums. Many of these objects date from the 18th century and a few pieces of evidence date from as early as the 17th century. One fact, which along with others is significant for the whole question of the distinct character of folk culture in Horňácko in the 17th and 18th centuries, is that the majority of the evidence preserved of folk art in that period is strikingly different from the art of the surrounding East Moravian and West Slovakian regions.

It is not unusual to encounter the opinion that visual folk art is not only a recent product, but also almost completely a development dependent on oral art. It is not the purpose of this article to refute incorrect opinions on the cause and period of origin of folk art, of its secondary (non-original) character, etc. Nevertheless we consider it necessary to draw attention to one important factor which is often consistently neglected in the course of assessing the autochthonous character and age of samples of folk art. This is the very simple fact, that

folk art was not invented at a late date, but discovered at a late date. In Moravia, which is not and was not in the past lacking in expressions of folk art, there does not exist a single example of collector's or specialist's interest in visual folk art before 1880. The oldest collections of examples of folk art, especially of textiles, occurs in the years 1884—1885, when the Museum Society was founded in Olomouc and the enthusiastic collector and expert on Moravian costume, Josef Klvaňa, began his work in Moravian Slovakia. The collector's examples of folk art at that time had all the negative features typical of the initial stages of scientific interest: continuity was lacking, by no means all the branches of folk art were dealt with, the examples obtained were not provided with even the most fundamental scientific evidence as to origin, age, producers or artists, the circumstances of origin or at least of their discovery were not given, etc. (Present-day research is very much complicated by the fact that much of this evidence was, after a long interval of time, inexpertly added to inventories and catalogues of museum collections.) However in spite of these unfortunate characteristics the pioneering period of ethnographic collecting activity in Moravia was a very important one, mainly because the oldest, and, from the ethnographic standpoint, the most valuable examples of visual folk art, above all textiles, were concentrated in several museums such as those in Olomouc, Brno and Prague.

The study of the whole development of folk artistic textiles, from the earliest known example to the present state, is undoubtedly of importance for our knowledge of the development of folk culture. It allows us to follow the changes which have taken place in the outlook of folk art, changes in the attitude to the purpose and content of textile decoration, the development of ornamentation and motifs from more or less concrete elements to greater abstraction or naturalism, changes in technique, etc. From the genetic aspect however the most important place is held by the study of the oldest examples preserved of folk artistry, in the present case folk embroideries, which to a much greater degree than their more recent forms allows us to probe the ethnic and historical roots of folk culture. It is thanks to Josef Klvaňa that we have today a fairly large number of folk embroideries from South and South-East Moravia dating from the second half of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century. The oldest known embroideries from the Břeclav and Kyjov district and from Hornácko and other ethnographic regions in Moravia come from his collections. Without his efforts we should today scarcely know of the existence of certain older types of folk embroideries, which have completely died out and are now completely unknown in the countryside. Among other discoveries, Klvaňa found several very rare examples of the oldest Hornácko embroideries from the region of the White Carpathians. Although he drew attention to them by several minor references in his descriptions of folk costumes in Eastern Moravia and published reproduc-

tions of some of them on this occasion, his discovery did not attain the publicity which its importance warranted. It is almost incredible that over the period of more than seventy years which has passed since the discovery of this group of rare embroideries, they have received no attention in specialist literature. Up to the present day these unique embroideries have not been published as a whole, no attempt has been made to clarify their origin, to date them accurately, to ascertain the various influences which appear in this type of embroidery, etc.

The first references to these embroideries were published by Josef Klvaňa in about 1894.¹ He returned to them in his further works but added nothing new.² Klvaňa's reports on the oldest embroideries from Hornácko are however, in spite of their brevity and incompleteness, nevertheless of very great significance. On the other hand the isolated references in the work of other authors are valueless from the scientific aspect, since they merely reproduce the information given by Klvaňa.³ The few reproductions have comparatively slight importance for the identification of the embroideries of this type which have been preserved, mainly because they are inadequately presented or else they are described only approximately and are based on unreliable evidence from museum collections.⁴

All the examples of this type of embroidery which have been preserved are assumed by us to exist in museum collections; no traces can be found of them in the countryside, nor can any of those interrogated recollect them or identify them according to the photographs. The largest collections of these embroideries is preserved by the Moravian Museum in Brno, to which they were left by Josef Klvaňa, some items are to be found in the collection of the National Museum in Prague, where they evidently appeared after the conclusion of the Czecho-Slavonian Ethnographical Exhibition in Prague in 1895, and one example belongs to the Museum in Olomouc.⁵ According to Klvaňa's notes one of these old embroideries was presented by the Olomouc Museum to the Empress Elizabeth on the occasion of the meeting of the three Emperors in Kroměříž in 1886;⁶ nothing however is known of the fate of this embroidery and we have had no success in discovering its present owner even in the Vienna Museums, where the embroidery most probably might have come from the property of the imperial court. All attempts to find this type of embroidery in the museums throughout the Moravian countryside, especially in Moravian Slovakia, and also in Slovakia, have been vain. Isolated examples of old many-coloured embroideries which have some common features with the oldest embroideries from Hornácko, but are far from being identical, have been discovered in the embroidery collections of the Slovácko Museum in Uherské Hradiště and in the Slovakian National Museum in Martin;⁷ we refer to these again elsewhere.

In order to clarify the question of the unique character of the Hornácko em-

broideries here dealt with, we must observe their function in the life of the people. One important feature is undoubtedly the fact that all the embroideries of this type which have been preserved belong to one species: without exception they are adornments for women's holiday and ceremonial head-coverings. This species of head-covering is spread almost throughout the whole of Moravian Slovakia and evidence for it exists from the 18th century also from the Haná region in central Moravia and elsewhere. It extends far into Slovakia and in some Moravian and Slovakian regions it is known in a curtailed form. In Hornácko this article of dress, known in the countryside as "šatka" (head-scarf), takes the form of a long band of fine linen with symmetrical embroidery at both ends, at times with a lace edging and insertion. The embroideries on these head-coverings have in Hornácko on the whole a similarity of style, and in spite of considerable variety, in the kind of motifs used and in their combinations, in colours, richness, precision of embroidery, etc., they form a characteristic, individual and easily identifiable group among the other regional groups of embroideries on this type of women's clothing in Moravia and Slovakia. One strikingly different exception is provided by the oldest type of embroideries, dealt with in the present article. Throughout the period since the 18th century, so far as the evidence preserved can show, these embroideries no longer had anything but a representational function. However the fact that they were part of a women's ceremonial, e.g. wedding costume and holiday costume could entitle us to assume another potential function in the past, connected with the folk ceremonies and customs and with folk beliefs. In any case, however, we may assume that the older, original function as well as the secondary function furthered the preservation of the few samples of these embroideries. For if it had been merely a case of ordinary adornment of everyday garments, the embroideries would have disappeared along with the garments when they were worn out. But since these embroideries were part of garments worn only on special occasions and compared with other embroideries were very expensive, greater attention was devoted to their care and preservation and as a result at least a few examples were preserved in comparatively good condition. In these matters however we can only resort to guesswork, since the fragmentary nature of the reports relating to the embroideries dealt with in the present article does not permit us to draw conclusions as to whether the head-gear adorned with these embroideries was spread throughout all the strata of society, whether all women, without regard to social position, age, etc., wore them. All this would be of fundamental significance for the explanation of the character and origin of these embroideries.

At one point in his writings Klvaňa remarks on the fact that the embroideries at the ends of the head-coverings were identical with the embroideries on the collar of the women's short outer chemise, popularly known as "rukávce".⁸

If this had really been the case, it might somewhat affect our attitude to the exclusively ceremonial and holiday significance of this type of embroidery. Today it is however practically impossible to control the accuracy of Klvaňa's assertion, since unfortunately not a single material piece of evidence has been preserved to support this possibility. It is however possible that Klvaňa's remark arose by analogy with the fact that in Horňácko all the other types of embroidery on women's clothes formed a more or less unified whole with the same ornamental basis, the same scale of colours and the same technique. However, not even this harmony was completely consistent or existed at all times; the more recent type of embroidery even on the same female costume differed both in motif and in colour.

The embroideries with which this paper deals are considerably smaller than all other types of embroidery on the same species of head-covering. Their measurements range from between 32 to 37 cm on the longer side and 4 to 8 cm on the shorter. The difference is thus not so much in the length of the embroidery, which in other types ranges from 35 to 37 cm, as in the breadth, which in other types is as much as 20 cm. It is further usual for the older types of embroidery to be less spatially developed. In addition it is remarkable that one variation of this type consists of embroideries sewn together from two identical parts. There can be no doubt that the embroidery was arranged in this way at a much later date, probably not until the time when it was presented to or bought for a museum collection. The case of one example from the Brno Museum collection is particularly striking: the embroidery at each end of the linen band is made up of two identical parts, but the two ends differ from each other; besides this the older embroidery at both ends is supplemented at the junction with the linen band by a new embroidery, which copies one of the motifs common in the oldest type of embroidery. This is obviously an example of adaptation of embroidery with the intention of selling it to a museum collection.

Further differences are found in the material used and in the colouring. The embroideries are carried out exclusively with untwisted silk, like that supplied to Horňácko by peddlars or sold locally by merchants mostly of Jewish origin. It is only in embroidered textiles of the oldest stratum that this untwisted silk is used, and this includes embroideries of our type. Their specific character however appears not only in the kind of material used but also in the colouring. Multi-coloured embroidery is characteristic for the type described: various shades, never very bright, are used, of brick red, blue, yellow, green and cream, with black outline. In most of the embroideries these colours are repeated rhythmically in the same order. A remarkable feature however is that the use of these shades in these combinations is a colouring nowhere repeated in other species and types of embroidery in Horňácko or in the neighbourhood. The colouring of these embroideries is thus a very important means of identification,

which allows us to recognize them at a glance. A superficial acquaintance with the various species and types of embroidery in Horňácko leads to the impression that the general tendency is characterized by a development from monotone to variety of colours. The type of embroideries discussed in the present article, however, refutes this false impression. They demonstrate that multi-coloured embroideries existed along with monotone and that their development took place simultaneously from the mid-18th century. The colouring of the Horňácko embroideries, however, underwent such striking changes that the embroideries of the 19th and early 20th centuries bear no trace of the scale of colours used in the oldest examples from the 18th century.

A further significant element for identification of the oldest stratum of embroideries from Horňácko is the technique used in producing these samples of textile art. A characteristic feature is that the individual ornamental motifs and their whole composition respect the structure of the material on which they are sewn. This is one of the factors which produces the distinctive character of the embroideries over a much wider territory in Eastern Moravia than Horňácko and one of several factors which create the individual character of the Horňácko embroidery. This basic principle prevails in the great majority of the embroideries and is bound up with the use of the various techniques whereby Horňácko embroidery either coincides with the surrounding types or differs from them. The most characteristic technique for the old stratum of Horňácko embroideries is the so-called two-sided or dual stitch, wrongly termed also the Holbein technique.⁹ This is the most laborious and most difficult of techniques, which is found in Horňácko embroideries from the oldest known examples down to the middle of the 19th century, when it begins to give way to the less exacting one-sided flat stitch which prevails completely from the end of last century. The two-sided stitch is carried out with such perfection in the majority of examples that it is impossible to distinguish the right from the wrong side. It was most commonly used for embroidering those parts of garments which were likely to be seen from both sides, but in the older examples it is no exception to find two-sided embroidery even on those garments whose wrong side remained hidden, as for example the crown of women's caps. The group of embroideries discussed here are made solely with this two-sided stitch, with such craftsmanship that the embroideries suggest professional work or at least a very high level of technique and great experience and skill on the part of the folk embroideress.

The sum of the characteristics would not be complete if we were to omit that the oldest embroideries from Horňácko are not finished with lace but with a fringe of untwisted silk. These fringes are of the same colour as the embroidery and follow each other in this order: blue, red, green, yellow, etc. We consider that lace gradually took the place of these fringes from the middle to the end

of the 18th century. At that period fringes also occurred probably on other types of multi-coloured embroidery; the example quoted from the Olomouc Museum supports this.

The most important element from the ethnographical aspect is the ornamentation. In the case of this group of embroideries it is very closely connected with the technique. The two-sided stitch entails a rather limited possibility of guiding and developing the ornamental elements and contributes to their geometrical character. In embroideries of the type we are dealing with, the motifs differ from the majority of motifs common both in the older and the newer types of Horňácko embroidery and as a result (in addition to the effect of the otherwise unusual colours) the whole appearance of these embroideries is different. For most of the motifs no popular terms today exist. They consist mainly of eight-pointed stars, chalice-shaped motifs, such as at the present day are widespread in folk embroideries from the neighbourhood of Uherský Brod, then tiny petals which are not to be found at all in more recent embroideries from Horňácko, etc. The combination of the different motifs is also different from that in the other types of Horňácko embroideries but similar embroideries can be found in other parts of Moravian Slovakia. One of the few motifs preserved in 19th-century embroidery from the oldest Horňácko embroideries is composed of small spiral elements repeated reversed on both sides of the main motif, eight to twelve times. It is obviously one of the oldest motifs in Moravian folk embroidery and is known by various popular names from other branches of folk art as well, for example from Easter egg ornamentation, wall painting, decoration of metal objects, etc. Its appearance need not be explained as the result of the influence of some artistic style. Nevertheless the way of placing the spiral motifs on the diagonal axis, which is very common in folk embroidery of the 17th and 18th centuries, leads us to suppose that it was a Renaissance influence which accounts for the formation of this motif in the manner which we know from these embroideries. This is supported especially by the rare find of Renaissance garments dating from the 17th century in Poysdorf near Mikulov, which include a collar adorned with embroidery using the same spiral motifs.¹⁰ A similar example is known from embroidery of the year 1686 from the neighbourhood of Těšín on the Moravian-Polish border.¹¹ We consider this to be one of the rudimentary motifs of folk visual art and it originates certainly in the remote past. Today, however, the original substance and meaning of these motifs cannot be ascertained.

The degree of stylization of some further motifs, which occur in the group of Horňácko embroideries described, is so considerable that their meaning cannot be precisely determined. We consider that the eight-pointed stars may be a luck-bringing motif, such as we find in other branches of folk art, for example in some articles used in ceremonies and customary rites, in the ornamentation

of some parts of movable folk properties made of wood, especially furniture and certain kinds of tools and implements. Less clear is the significance of the so-called chalice motif, whose hypothetical original form has been so completely changed by geometricalization or in some cases by likeness to vegetable growth that it can scarcely be recognized. The appearance of this motif on some embroideries however suggests that it might be a stylization of horses' heads or a stylization of birds. These questions cannot be answered at the present stage of research into folk ornament; their solution requires a widely-based comparative study.

Of fundamental importance for the ethnographical study of examples of folk art is the ascertainment of the exact origin of these embroideries, and if possible the clarification of the circumstances under which they arose and spread. The probability of finding a satisfactory solution to these problems is however unfortunately very slight. First of all an attempt was made to clarify the circumstances of the finding of these embroideries by means of the catalogues of the museums which own them. The results of this attempts were not encouraging. Not a single one of those museums contains in its inventories or catalogues any information which would enable us to fix the place of origin or at least of discovery with any reliability or to ascertain details as to the manner in which these embroideries were acquired for museum collections. The notes in the inventories were always made after a considerable lapse of time and their value depends on the possible accuracy of guesswork. A characteristic feature of the museum collection from the Hornácko region is that the embroideries, so far as any place of origin is given, were attributed to the centre of Hornácko — to Velká nad Veličkou — or are shortly designated as being from Hornácko. The greatest difficulties are encountered in the collection of the National Museum in Prague, where the rare embroideries from the 18th century have not been at the disposal of research workers for several years, while their description in the catalogue is fragmentary: they are tentatively localized in Velká nad Veličkou and Hrubá Vrbka. The evidence of museum catalogues, etc. can thus be of no use in this case as a starting point.

A second potential source might be direct evidence from those interrogated in the countryside. Unfortunately this possibility has turned out to be without foundation: none of the suppliers of information approached was able to identify the old embroidery according to the reproductions shown.

The most reliable source of information thus remains the scattered and brief references in Josef Klvaňa's articles. They can be accused of being too brief, insufficiently exact, unscientific, etc., but they cannot be denied the qualities of immediacy and reliability. Klvaňa was the most important, if not actually the only collector, who succeeded in discovering the unique examples of folk art and bringing them together. According to his reports these embroideries

originated in a single community in Horňácko, namely the most remote and, in this part of the White Carpathians, the most recently founded village of Nová Lhota. In connection with other communities Klvaňa makes absolutely no mention of these embroideries. We consider this fact to be decisive for their exact localization.

Nová Lhota occupied and still occupies today a special position among the communities of Horňácko.¹² In order to understand its exceptional character, which had a demonstrable influence on the large number of different categories of local folk culture, we shall explain shortly what were the factors which influenced the development of folk culture in Horňácko and especially in Nová Lhota.¹³ As in other ethnographic regions two types of factor influenced the formation of folk culture in Horňácko: one type was constant, long-lasting, the other type was only temporary.

Among the constant factors we must count not only those which are dependent on the development of society, such as the agricultural situation, but also those which arise from the historical course of the settlement of the region studied and of the neighbouring regions, e.g. the ethnic origin of the inhabitants, their economic and cultural level, their religion, etc. Naturally none of these factors is unchanging. Certain influences in themselves and in relation to other circumstances in the course of centuries change, some of them develop further, others degenerate, some are modified, others die out. At times another kind of influence appears, such as isolated cases of colonization, military attacks, revitalizing impulses of an intellectual character, etc.

It generally holds good that these factors do not affect the formation of folk culture in isolation, but usually in mutual dependence and sometimes even conditioned by each other, and not always all at the same time and with the same intensity, but in varied succession and in various groupings and with the most varied degree of intensity. A constant factor in influencing the formation of folk culture in Horňácko was the geographical situation. It was the main cause of the rather late settlement of this region, especially of its hilly part. Nevertheless it cannot be said that the situation of Horňácko on the North-Western slopes of the White Carpathians entailed its isolation from the communities on the opposite slopes on the Slovakian side. On the contrary, during the last two or three centuries, when the continuous settlement of the Southern part of the White Carpathians took place, Horňácko became the natural intermediary for economic and cultural relations between parts of Eastern Moravia and Western Slovakia. The impulse for such relationship was given however not by geographical circumstances favourable to communication, but above all by economic interests. At the same time we must however point out that economic development, especially that of the prevailing branch — agriculture — was strongly influenced by the geographical conditions. Elements of the old

Highland character mingled with more advanced and more progressive elements from the River Morava valley and from that part of Western Slovakia where the geographical conditions are similar to those in the lower-lying communities of Horňácko. Further instances of the influence of the Carpathian and Lowland elements could be quoted from most of the branches of folk culture in Horňácko. The mingling of these two basic ethnographic influences was not however by any means caused only by geographical factors, which in the case of Horňácko are nowhere very extreme, i.e. neither particularly active nor particularly passive. A large element in this intermingling was provided by the existence of a national and political frontier, which began to be formed comparatively early — from the beginning of the 13th century. This frontier was however at no time impassible: not only did it permit the mutual contact of inhabitants from the Moravian and Slovakian sides, but also individual migration and more numerous colonization. For example, in the 17th and 18th centuries migration took place from Horňácko to the neighbourhood of Myjava in Slovakia and on the contrary, occasional colonization occurred from Slovakia, e.g. from the Trenčín neighbourhood. Inter-marriage, journeys to markets and fairs also furthered the movement of the population. Thus there occurred a mutual influencing of folk culture on both the Moravian and the Slovakian side of the border, which in some branches of folk culture and aspects of way of life tended towards a cultural unity.

The mutual contacts of the Moravian and Slovakian inhabitants not only enabled the transfer of local peculiarities from one side of the border to the other. It was also a means of spreading more remote influences, some of which are evident, while others can only be sensed. Horňácko was affected by some colonizations whose influence is clear in certain branches of folk culture. Specially worthy of note is the marginal interference of what is known as the Valašsko pastoral colonization, which began in the Horňácko region in the 17th century and is still felt in the 18th. Its traces remain in certain personal and place names and in fragments of the pastoral terminology, but more remote echoes can be recaptured also in some expressions of visual folk art, especially in embroidery. In any case it is very difficult to distinguish the effects of the pastoral colonization from the other cultural influences of the Carpathian region of Moravian-Silesia and Slovakia. Apart from elements appearing in agriculture and clothing, a number of Carpathian elements can be clearly seen in folk prose composition, such as in the matter relating to outlaws, in dances, etc. On the whole we can consider that the Carpathian elements are older in Horňácko, on the one hand because they formed the very basis of the folk culture in this region, and on the other because they are more conservative than the absolutely older elements from the River Morava valley, which as a result of more favourable conditions underwent a more radical development and were

more exposed to exterior influences. It would be vain to seek in the present-day folk culture in Horňácko remains of early Slav culture from the region settled by the Great Moravian Realm; at the period when the oldest Slav state existed on the territory of what is today Czechoslovakia, the Horňácko region was not settled, and the historical distance from the time of the break-up of the Great Moravian Realm to the period when folk culture took shape in Horňácko is quite abysmal. The older stratum of folk culture in Horňácko began from the mid-19th century to be submerged by more recent elements from the Moravian Lowland, especially in the most westerly of the Horňácko communities. This process of assimilation continues and is gradually blotting out the remaining distinct characteristics of folk culture in Horňácko.

We have already mentioned the fact that the meeting of two ethnic groups on the Eastern border of Moravia was the means of spreading still more remote cultural influences. We assume for example Pannonian and Yugoslavian influences from the South, possibly Balkan. On the other hand we can trace from the Carpathian region East Carpathian influences whose origin can be sought in the regions settled by Polish, Rumanian and Ukrainian ethnic groups. Apart from the principles of composition and the motifs of the oldest type of embroidery, these relationships are born out also by prose compositional matter localized in Transcarpathia. It appears that the transmitter of these remote influences is in the first place the folk culture of the most Eastern of the Highland communities of Horňácko — Nová Lhota. According to oral folk tradition the founders of this village came from Bukovina or from Poland and were either Ruthenians, Rumanians or Poles. Any answer to this most significant question would be so far premature. We can only state that the analysis of certain expressions of folk culture supports the correctness of this oral folk tradition.

It would not of course be correct to consider all the foreign elements in Horňácko folk culture to be the result of historical colonizations. It is very probable that some elements are local autochthonous reflections of certain historical events (perhaps even some of the material dealing with outlaws and some tales of the Turkish wars), or else occur generally in Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia or may even be international. Finally certain elements decidedly originate in the process of civilization, and were brought to Horňácko by the school or the Church.

So far we have devoted attention mostly to those factors which acted externally in the formation of folk culture in Horňácko. We must also examine those which acted within Horňácko itself, both in forming an ethnographic unit, whereby Horňácko gradually differed from the surrounding regions as a strikingly individual ethnographic district, and also in causing the internal differentiation of Horňácko. These factors must be considered as a whole, since mostly they do not exclude each other. In spite even of a greater or less degree of mutual antagonism, they affected the formation of the unique character of folk

culture in this district. Here we must take into account the strong effect of religious differences and the complicated religious development, which however was not merely part of the general development in Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia. In Horňácko, however, lack of religious unity was so marked that it became not only one of the causes of the differences in the folk culture as a whole, marking it off from that of the neighbouring districts, but was also one of the causes of the internal differentiation of this small region. Various religious beliefs (Catholic, Czech Brethren, Lutheran and Helvetian) affected the development of folk culture both directly and by means of other factors, especially by intermarriage between the inhabitants of the different communities. For example the highly individual character of some of the expressions of folk culture in the village of Javorník was certainly affected by the biological isolation of the Helvetian families which did not intermarry with Catholics and only exceptionally with Lutheran families. However, religion was not the only factor regulating marriage; in some villages economic or social reasons acted simultaneously, especially in the case of Nová Lhota, where during the last hundred years extreme biological isolation of the Catholic population existed with all the usual consequences.

A further factor which cannot be forgotten is the allocation of the Horňácko communities to different feudal estates. The fact that the majority of the villages belonged to the Strážnice Manor could have contributed to the strengthening of influences from the River Morava valley. However, differences of religion divided even neighbouring villages within one manor. Here we have very complicated relationships which cannot be laid bare in all their details and consequences even by a thorough all-round study, especially in the older stages of development, understanding of which is rendered more difficult by the lack of source material.

The name of the ethnographic region dealt with in this article is a recent one (it became accepted as late as the end of the 19th century) and in itself does not prove the existence of an ethnographic region. On the contrary, the relative use of the term Horňácko (Highland), i.e. a territory lying higher than the neighbouring Dolňácko or Lowland, might suggest rather that Horňácko as a distinct ethnographic region did not exist; this supposition would also be supported by the fact that the term Horňácko was understood in regional ethnographic literature of the last quarter of last century in very different senses. This impression however would be false. While it is true that greater differentiation in the Eastern and South-Eastern regions of Moravia occurred comparatively recently (towards the end of the 18th and during the 19th century), older documents show that the whole of this territory was once more unified culturally. Nevertheless it is clear that even at that time certain branches of folk culture on the territory of what is now Horňácko were so clearly and strikingly different

from similar expressions in the neighbouring regions, that we are bound to suppose a previous tendency to differentiation. This difference of the Horňácko of the present day from the surrounding neighbourhood is clearly substantiated precisely by folk embroidery as early as the end, or possibly the middle of the 18th century. The term Horňácko may be recent, but the formation of this region as an ethnographic whole with a distinct individual character underwent a long process of development. The mutual relationships of the ten villages, which today are considered to form Horňácko, did of course change in some respects. It appears that the last to become an organic part of Horňácko were the most recently founded villages, especially Nová Lhota. Generally speaking, we can say with truth that the folk culture of Horňácko is in many individual respects identical or similar to the culture of other Moravian and Western Slovakian regions. But the grouping of these details and the general character of Horňácko folk culture is specific and unique. Folk embroidery is one of the most striking expressions of this individuality.

If we project the fact of the existence of the type of embroideries dealt with in this article against the complex development of the ethnographic region of Horňácko and if we devote special attention to the role played in this region by Nová Lhota, it will appear completely natural that this specific type of embroidery should have originated precisely in this strikingly individual village. Apart from Klvaňa's remarks it is true that we cannot supply any decisive evidence of the origin of these embroideries in Nová Lhota, but certain actual and potential factors, such as for example the hitherto unexplained remote origin of the settlers of Nová Lhota, the heterogeneous nature of the inhabitants of this community, etc., support our supposition. Unfortunately we have very little comparative material at our disposal, which would help us to assess the degree of the individual influences present in the composition of this exceptional and isolated type of embroidery. The immediate neighbourhood offers several isolated, non-localized or indefinitely assigned pieces of evidence. None of these examples is identical with the embroideries from Nová Lhota, in most cases there is only a similar composition of the embroidery or related colouring. We consider that some of these examples might originate most probably from the near-by Slovakian villages lying at the foot of the White Carpathians. Although some of the principles and elements characteristic of the embroidery from Nová Lhota can be found even in some more recent types of embroidery from the neighbouring Moravian and Slovakian regions, we consider that the roots of this type of embroidery spring from the embroidery of other, possibly quite remote ethnic groups. Comparison with some West Ukrainian embroideries from the territory of the former Subcarpathian Ruthenia show that the similarity of certain motifs, in some cases of compositional principles, need not be accidental;¹⁴ in our case, however, the possibility of comparison is limited since

the number of published or otherwise accessible examples of embroideries from the Eastern regions of Czechoslovakia and from the territory of South-Western Ukraine is strictly limited. Comparison with some Balkan embroideries also shows some similarities.¹⁵ But so far it is impossible to assess the degree of similarity or to ascertain the route which led to it. Under the present conditions prevailing in research on folk embroideries it would be premature to express a final opinion as to the oldest embroideries from Nová Lhota. While the ascertainment of the origin of the Nová Lhota villagers would be of great significance for determining the origin of the oldest embroideries, the solution of the problem of origin of the embroideries would be of uncommon importance for explaining how the settlement of Nová Lhota developed, a community which in many other respects forms a highly individual enclave among the communities lying at the foot of the White Carpathians. And finally, from the standpoint of folk embroidery seen on a broad comparative basis the analysis of this unique but striking and no longer practised type of embroidery from the Moravian-Slovakian border in the White Carpathian region has no small importance.

Translated by Jessie Kocmanová

REFERENCES

- ¹ J. Klvaňa, *O lidových krojích na moravském Slovensku*, in the periodical *Český lid* III, 1894, p. 427.
- ² e.g. J. Klvaňa, *Kroj lidu slovenského na Moravě*, *Časopis Moravského musea zemského* (Periodical of the Moravian Provincial Museum) VIII, 1908, p. 252; the same *Lidové kroje na moravském Slovensku*, in the publication *Moravské Slovensko* I, Praha 1923, p. 202; the same, *O technikách výšivkových na Morav. Slovácku*, in the periodical *Náš směr* VII, 1920—1921, p. 110—111, further, the same in *Český lid* V, 1896, p. 227—228, and in *Český lid* VI, 1897, p. 509.
- ³ e.g. V. Havelková, *Šata česko-slovenská*, in *Národopisný věstník československý* III, 1908, p. 197; F. Kretz, *Výtvarné umění lidu slovenského*, in *Moravské Slovensko* II, Praha 1922, p. 590.
- ⁴ e.g. *Český lid* III, illustration 6 on p. 429 (embroidery at foot of page), *Moravské Slovensko* II, illustration 384 on p. 568, *Náš směr* VII, illustration on p. 109, further A. Václavík in the work *Textile Folk Art*, London 1956, illustration 239.
- ⁵ The Moravian Museum in Brno owns 6 examples in the exhibition collection, and has in its depository one reconstructed example of a head-covering with two original, but different embroideries, and further 2 embroideries, all from Klvaňa's collection (inv. no. 4130, 4131, 4185, 9355, 9391, 10245).
The National Museum in Prague possesses 6 examples (inv. no. 3362, 3363, 3365, 3366, 3371, 20781).
Institute for Homeland Studies of the Museum in Olomouc has only one example (inv. no. E 695).

- ⁶ *Casopis moravského musea zemského* (Periodical of the Moravian Provincial Museum) VIII, p. 252–253; *Moravské Slovensko I*, p. 202.
- ⁷ The *Slovácko Museum in Uherské Hradiště* (inv. no. 1560), attributed to Velká n. Veličkou; the *Slovakian National Museum in Martina* (inv. no. 1166, 1163, 1085, 1086, 18394, etc.).
- ⁸ *Moravské Slovensko I*, p. 202.
- ⁹ The inexact expression “*Holbein technique*” was adopted evidently from the technique depicted in embroideries occurring in portraits by the younger Holbein (16th cent.), by the Viennese embroidery expert Frau E. Bach. cf. V. Havělková, *Stehové kvítky* (Stitchery Flowers), *Casopis Vlasten. spolku muzejního v Olomouci* (Periodical of the Museum Friends of the Homeland Society in Olomouc), no. 15, 1887, p. 104; M. Vanklová, *Moravské ornamenty II*, Viedeň 1890, p. 7. This technique is comparatively widespread in the older strata of embroideries in Moravia and Slovakia and is considered to belong to the Renaissance. cf. *Národopisný věstník československý XXIII*, 1930, p. 219.
- ¹⁰ A. Walcher von Moltheim, *Der Renaissancefund von Poysdorf*, in *Werke der Volkskunst I*, Wien 1914, table XXXI.
- ¹¹ B. Bazielič, *Znaczenie techniki wykonania w badaniach nad haftem ludowym* (Na przykładzie śląskich haftów krzyzykowych), *Polska sztuka ludowa XVII*, 1963, p. 95, illustration 27.
- ¹² For the sake of clarity we must add a number of branches of folk visual art developed in Nová Lhota. Special attention must be drawn for example to interior wall paintings, carved benches, wooden figures dealing with religious subjects, illuminated hymn-books of the 18th century, etc.
- ¹³ We may support our conclusions by the results of collective research carried out under the direction of the author, and summed up in a collective work dealing with folk culture in Hornácko. This monograph, to which the author contributed, among other matters, a paper on visual folk art, is to be published in 1966.
- ¹⁴ cf. A. Kožmínová, *Podkarpatská Rus*, Praha 1922, table I b, V, XVII; S. Makovskiy, *Peasant Art of Subcarpathian Russia*, Prague 1926, table VIII, X, illustration 75, 77 and 85 d, e.
- ¹⁵ e.g. Z. Čulić, *Narodne nošnje u Bosni i Hercegovini*, Sarajevo 1963, table I, VI, IX and XXV.

ILLUSTRATIONS

33. 18th-century embroidery from Nová Lhota, in two-sided stitch in blue, yellow, green, red and black, with fringes in the same colour. The embroidery is carried out on linen with untwisted silk. Moravian Museum, Brno, inv. no. 10.245. (Obtained from a private source in Kyjov as a companion piece to the same embroidery from Klvaňa's Collection, inv. no. 9391. The embroidery was the property of the Kozánek family, who were friends of Klvaňa.)
34. 18th-century embroidery from Nová Lhota. Colours: blue, red, green, yellow ochre, black outline. Moravian Museum, Brno, Klvaňa Collection, inv. no. 485, new inv. no. 9355 b.
35. A variant of the preceding Nová Lhota 18th-century embroidery. National Museum, Prague, inv. no. 3362.
36. 18th-century embroidery from Nová Lhota. It is sewn on to a more recent ceremonial

- head-covering, evidently to facilitate sale to a museum collection. The embroidery is carried out in two-sided stitch in brick red, blue, yellow, green and black. Moravian Museum, Brno, inv. no. 4131, Klvaňa Collection.
37. Companion piece to above ceremonial head-covering. Embroidery is carried out in the same stitch and colours, and differs only in the conception of the motifs and density of stitching.
38. 18th-century embroidery from Nová Lhota. Carried out in the same technique and colours as the preceding. Published by J. Klvaňa in the periodicals *Český lid* 1894 and *Náš směr* 1920—1921. Moravian Museum, Brno, exhibition collection.
39. An unattributed embroidery from the Moravian-Slovakian border, 18th century. Colours: brick red, blue-green and light blue, dark green and pink. Moravian Museum, Brno, inv. no. 1430.
40. Embroidery from the Moravian-Slovakian border, Hornácko region, attributed tentatively to Hrubá Vrbka. Primitive technique, considerably damaged. Colours: blue, brick red, cream and faded green. Institute of Homeland Studies, Olomouc Museum, inv. no. E 701.
41. Embroidery from the end of 18th or beginning of 19th century, attributed tentatively to Velká n. V. Colours: black, brick red and yellow. Moravian Museum, Brno, inv. no. 1599.
42. 19th-century embroidery from Hornácko. The spiral motif rhythmically repeated is a relic of the ornamentation in embroideries of the 17th and 18th centuries. Colours: black, brick red and yellow. Moravian Museum, Brno, inv. no. 5292.
43. Unattributed embroidery from Hornácko of the 19th century, continuing an old motif of 18th-century embroideries (cf. illustration 33). In embroideries dating from the end of the 19th century this motif no longer appears. Colours: black, brick red and yellow. Moravian Museum, Brno, inv. no. 6279.

(All the illustrations are taken from the archives of the author and of the Department of Ethnography and Folklore Studies, Purkyně University of Brno.)

NEJSTARŠÍ DOKLADY LIDOVÉHO TEXTILNÍHO UMĚNÍ V OBLASTI BÍLYCH KARPAT

Nejstarší dochovanou vrstvu výšivek na moravsko-slovenském pomezí v oblasti Bílých Karpat představuje výzdoba konců šatek z Nové Lhoty na Hornácku z 18. století. Přestože všechny známé doklady byly soustředěny v muzejních i soukromých sbírkách již v posledních dvou desetiletích 19. století, podnes o nich nebylo souborně pojednáno a nebyl objasněn jejich původ; nikdo se nepokusil o zjištění různých vlivů, jež se v tomto typu výšivek odrážejí. Studium těchto lidových uměleckých textilií, tvořících jednu z našich nejstarších skupin dochovaných projevů lidové výtvarnosti, má základní význam nejen z hlediska vývoje lidového estetického názoru, ale především z hlediska genetického; mnohem více než mladší formy odhaluje etnické i historické kořeny lidové kultury. Bádání o novohotských výšivkách je však značně ztíženo tím, že je velmi chudá a nespolehlivá jejich adjutace v muzejních sbírkách, v Nové Lhotě je již nikdo není s to identifikovat a podat o nich informace. Tento článek tedy vychází především ze studia samotných výšivek v muzejních sbírkách a z drobných zmínek, jež o nich před půlstoletím porůznu uveřejnil Josef Klvaňa.

Abychom přispěli k objasnění okolností vzniku těchto vzácných výšivek, věnujeme pozornost jejich funkci, spočívající ve výzdobě obřadní a reprezentační součástí ženského oděvu,

dále použitému materiálu, jímž bylo nekroucené hedvábí, jejich jedinečné barevnosti, mimořádně obtížné technice dvojného stehu, která vytváří výšivku na líci i na rubu stejnou téměř k nerozeznání, a zejména ornamentice, jež je spolu s ostatními složkami důležitým identifikačním a datačním prvkem. Pokoušíme se vysvětlit specifičnost těchto výšivek v souvislosti s dosud nedostatečně objasněným vzdáleným původem obyvatel Nové Lhoty a ukázat výlučnost této obce v rámci Horňácka, projevující se v poslední fázi mj. v biologické izolaci obyvatelstva. Výšivky, jímž je tento článek věnován, považujeme za doklad někdejší vysoké úrovně lidové kultury v oblasti Bílých Karpat, který zároveň nutí uvědomovat si složitost etnografického studia starších vrstev projevů lidového umění výtvarného.

