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JAN JELÍNEK'S ROMANIA, 1974

ABSTRACT: The Moravian Museum tracks the historical development of the scientific fields of anthropology and archaeology as part of its professional activities. The library and archive of the anthropologist and museologist, Jan Jelínek (1926–2004), who founded the journal Anthropologie in 1962, occupies an important place within its rich collection. Jelínek's personal diaries, written in the years 1961–2001, often accompanied by rich photographic documentation, are a very valuable part of the archive. This material has so far only been excerpted in part and represents an extraordinary source from which information on the history of the institution and the personality of the writer can be drawn. An example is also Jelínek's shorter ethnographically focused expedition to the Inner Eastern Carpathians – the Maramures Mountains – in the northern part of Romania on July 8–29, 1975, to which this text is dedicated.

KEY WORDS: Jan Jelínek – Personal diaries – Romania – Maramures

Jan Jelínek (1926–2004), the founder of the post-war journal *Anthropologie*, an anthropologist, and sometime director of the Moravian Museum, has been regularly featured in this journal and elsewhere (Dočkalová 2004, Dočkalová, Frayer 2005, Fojtová 2019, Jelínek 1986, Kostrhun 2016, Nerudová 2016, Oliva 2004, Podborský 1996, Pospíšilová 2006, Sklenář 2005: 260–262, Stloukal 1986, Stránský 2004, Valoch 1991). Jelínek was unquestionably one of our institution's most outstanding scientific and managerial figures. However, his professional output was very diverse, and the countless professional and public activities that he was able to implement continue to defy comprehensive critical evaluation.

Jelínek studied anthropology at the Faculty of Natural Sciences in Brno and graduated from this field in 1949. As part of his graduate studies, he took classes in other fields at the Faculty of Philosophy and Medicine. He did this in order to achieve a multidisciplinary view of his field of interest, anthropology, which he quickly understood in the way we use the word today: culturally and anthropologically. In this respect, he was one of the few Czech experts who directed anthropological research in this way – in the times before 1989, cultural anthropology was perceived as a bourgeois i.e., undesirable, science. Perhaps also thanks to his personal contacts with Karel Absolon, whose training in the field Jelínek was happy to sign up for, he soon established

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himself as an excellent organiser and populariser of science. Jan Jelínek permanently connected his career with the Moravian Museum while still a student, when, in 1948, he temporarily joined the Department of Ethnography. As early as 1950, he transferred to the then Department for Diluvium (today's Anthropos Institute), of which he became head in 1952. Here he gradually united the collections of physical anthropology, Paleolithic, and Quaternary geology (after the war scattered over several departments) and thus founded the Anthropos Institute, which continued its famous international reputation built by Absolon during the period of the First Republic. He then headed this specialty department until 1986. Within his institute, he developed an interdisciplinary study of pre-agricultural prehistory and prehistoric populations, which soon gained considerable international prestige. As part of his extensive activities in the field of popularisation of science, he organised the building of a specialised

museum building – the Anthropos Pavilion at the turn of the 1950s and 1960s, which is still the most popular exhibition of the Moravian Museum (Brodesser 2006, Jelínek 1964a, b, 1980, 1987, Kostrhun 2016, Koutný 2022, Seitl 1987, Špét 1984).

In addition to his rich organisational and scientific activities, Jan Jelínek developed unusually active foreign contacts and cooperation during the times of real socialism in Czechoslovakia. As part of these efforts, he carried out important foreign expeditions (1969 and 1973 Arnhem Land in Australia, 1971 Eastern Siberia, 1973–1976 Iran, 1987 study of the Lapps in Scandinavia, etc.). Also significant was the 1976 expedition to the central Sahara, where Jelínek became the president of the International Council of Museums (ICOM; he held the position from 1971–1977; Kostrhun 2017, Lehmannová 2015), focused on the study of rock art and also with the mission of designing and building a new Libyan National Museum in Tripoli.



FIGURE 1: Original personal diaries of Jan Jelínek from 1961–2003. Archive of the Centre for Cultural Anthropology of the Moravian Museum.

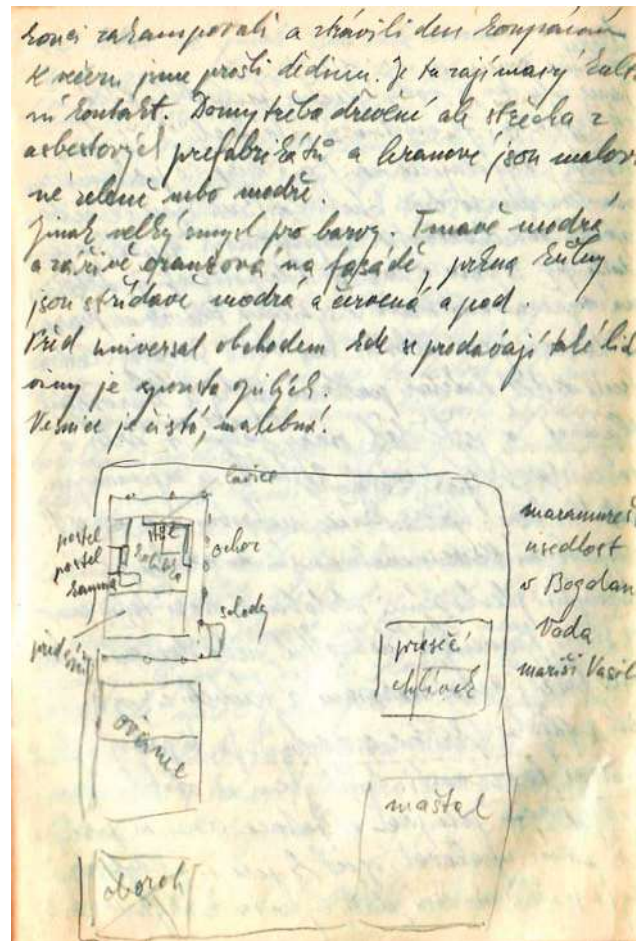


FIGURE 2: A sample of a manuscript from Jan Jelínek's diary, discussing a visit to Mariša Vasil's farm on July 25, 1974 (see also Figure 8), where the owner of the house invited them for breakfast. Jan Jelínek then recorded in his diary the layout of the entire farm.



FIGURE 3: Maramures, Rodna, Květa Jelinková captured with a bacha and his assistants in front of a farm in the hills above the village. Photo by Jan Jelínek 7/10/1974.



FIGURE 4: Maramures, Rodna, view of the interior of the farmstead with a farmer and his helper making cheese. Photo by Jan Jelínek 7/10/1974.



FIGURE 5: Maramures, Rodna, view of the traditional water mill in the village. Photo by Jan Jelínek 7/10/1974.



FIGURE 6: Maramures, Rodna, interior of a mill with a miller processing corn flour. Photo by Jan Jelínek 7/10/1974.

However, a characteristic feature of Jelínek's personality was that he did not intentionally leave a large number of archival traces after his various activities. We would appreciate them from today's point of view, during the reconstruction of a number of events connected with the history not only of the Moravian Museum but also of the scientific fields in general that Jelínek represented in Czechoslovakia in the second half of the 20th century. In this direction, however, a new impulse came in 2018, when the Moravian Museum was offered the purchase of the personal library of Prof. Jan Jelínek, who laid the foundation of the specialist library of the Centre for Cultural Anthropology in the Anthropos Pavilion (Kostrhun 2019). Part of the transferred library was also a very valuable set of Jelínek's personal handwritten diaries, in which the most important work and study trips, professional knowledge, and personal observations recorded by him in the years 1961–2001 are recorded (*Figure 1*). It is a completely extraordinary piece of material from which information can be drawn on the history of the institution and the writer's personality. A continuous series of a total of 33 diaries of a uniform format of 13.5 × 18 cm (suitable for inserting into a jacket pocket), written in pencil, was started by Jelínek at the age of 35, in January 1961, on board a plane bound for the West African city of Conakry.

The content of the diaries has high informational and literary aesthetic value. From the beginning, Jelínek formulated his notes from the position of an anthropologist – observer, even in cases where he was attending to his duties within the official agenda of ICOM, which he completed during many trips to Paris during the 1970s. His observations are recorded with a considerable sense of narrative, and contain a large amount of factual data as well as personal reflections that shed light on a number of events that were not reflected at all in the official literature (*Figure 2*). The potential of the diaries was fully demonstrated for the time being during the reconstruction of Jelínek's first important foreign trip to African Guinea, where he was to cooperate in building a national museum in Conakry. Almost nothing was otherwise published about this relatively significant, although not through Jelínek's fault, unsuccessful mission (Kostrhun 2021, Nerudová 2021). The diaries are also a unique source for the new processing of materials from the expedition to Australia in 1969, which is currently underway. On the contrary, with a number of Jelínek's activities in various countries (apart from a number of European destinations, for example in Tunisia, Algeria, Central Asia, Siberia, the USA, India, New Guinea, Iran, Sri Lanka, Libya, Azerbaijan, etc.), the potential of the diaries has not yet been fully realised.



FIGURE 7: Maramures, Rodna, traditional sunken lime pit before the selection of burnt lime. Photo by Jan Jelínek 7/10/1974.



FIGURE 8: Maramures, Bogdan Voda, a traditional Maramures homestead, captured with the landlord Mariša Vasila in work clothes and his daughter in front of the barn. Photo by Jan Jelínek 7/15/1974.



FIGURE 9: Maramures, Sapanta, contemporary view of the well-known "cheerful cemetery" (Cimitirul Vesel), with colorful tombstones depicting images from the lives of the deceased with humorous epitaphs. Photo by Jan Jelínek 7/16/1974.



FIGURE 10: Maramures, Mara, documentation of folk architecture, gate with carved symbols. Photo by Jan Jelínek 7/18/1974.



FIGURE 11: Maramures, Sirbi, water drive and facilities for washing and dyeing wool. Photo by Jan Jelínek 7/18/1974.



FIGURE 12: Maramures, Sirbi, view of the courtyard of a traditional homestead. Photo by Jan Jelínek 7/18/1974.



FIGURE 13: Maramures, Desesti, a view of the distillery of the traditional Romanian spirit "cujka" with its owner, distilling apples. Photo by Jan Jelínek 7/19/1974.



FIGURE 14: Maramures, Desesti, interior of the distillery with a helper turning the handle of the still. The young man spoke fluent Russian, which he learned during three years of Russian captivity during the Dombas conflict. Photo by Jan Jelínek 7/19/1974.

On the occasion of the annual issue of *Anthropologie*, we have selected Jelínek's rather episodic trip to the Maramures Mountains on the Romanian-Ukrainian border as a small sample from the contents of the diaries, also preserved a structured photo archive from this trip, which significantly complements the observations recorded by Jelínek (*Figures 3-14*). He focused mainly on ethnography, which he always compared on these occasions with his experiences from other areas and from archaeology. In doing so, he always took critical notice of various acculturation processes and clashes between "traditional" and "modern" societies. In the mountain region of Maramures, Jelínek made a tour of several hundred kilometres in three weeks. Through the crossing in Satu Mare, he chose the town of Dej as the starting point, from where they headed north through the village of Rodna (*Figures 3-7*) to Bogdan Voda (*Figure 8*), from there west to Baia Mare (*Figure 9*), and from this point, through the Peștera cave back to Dej. Towards the end of the trip, they visited the impressive market in Cluj and headed back to Czechoslovakia via the spas in Oradea.

Jelínek's trip to Romania represents only one of many foreign experiences and observations, recorded

in personal diaries that cover more than 40 years of Jelínek's professional and personal life. The description of these diaries and a short sample of their content aimed to draw attention to the potential of this unique archival source, stored in the collections of the Centre for Cultural Anthropology of the Moravian Museum.

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