

Thesis's

Subject designation and hypothesis

The changing of villages in the socialist period and the decomposition of peasants' lifestyle came into my area of interest during my museum work. As a museologist being responsible for the collection of Gőcsej Museum, from 2004-2008 I have spent many times studying the archive documents of the museum so that I get to know the story of the houses being exhibited in the open air museum.

The result of this work made me to continue this research with studying the changes in the 1960 years during the process of the socialist changes conducted in the villages of the country and its recent prevailing impacts. I have been driving my research in 5 villages in Zala County each representing a type. I was endeavoring to have my statements' being able to expand to West Hungary, not only being valid in the researched villages.

The examined villages were the following:

- Kávás – that is a small village 11 km distance from the county center town Zalaegerszeg. Kávás is situated on the end of the road leading to the village, from where the road doesn't continue.
- Gellénháza – is also not far from the county center Zalaegerszeg, it is situated 13 km south from this town. Gellénháza was called „olajos falu”, because this village took a very important role in the time of oil mining in Zala County which times resulted a very visible development in the village life.
- Szentgyörgyvölgy – is situated some kilometer distance from the Slovenian border. Before the socialist time the village was having a great influence on the region where lived many well to do farmers who were relocated during the socialization of the agricultural property.
- Nemesnép – is also situated close to the Slovenian border, where also lived well to do farmers before the socialist time but the village itself was not as influential as Szentgyörgyvölgy was.
- Resznek – is situated near the highway nr. 86 leading to the Slovenian border. Because the proximity of the highway and the work possibilities in the near this

villages still acquires better position than Nemesnép or Szentgyörgyvölgy has now.

- Csesztreg – is the administrative center of the west part of Zala County, situated in the cross of many lower function roads. There are many small companies in the villages offering work possibilities for the inhabitants and there is also kinder garden, primary school.

The subject of the research was the cube house and the families living in these houses. According to my assumption the cube house which was newly born and widespread during the socialist turning of the country can symbolize the most important transformation of the villages and its inhabitant's life changing in this period. In this process the life manner and the strategy of the peasants have been changed irrevocably and with this house which differed in any sense from the past houses the picture of the villages have already been shifted.

The houses being examined have been built between 1960 and 1976, which period was the summit of private house building time in the middle of the 20th century in the villages of the country. This time period is also a term that can be examined as a sequence in the long 40 year time socialist period.

In my fieldwork aiming to improve the museums archive I wanted to find out what kind on life strategy the families drove during socialist time and how these new cube houses were part of this new life.

How they built these house? Did they resort loans for building? Where there any type of design? If yes, was it obligatory that made this type of houses widespread or what other circumstances helped it to spread throughout the country? Are these houses really similar or do it has variations?

In the sense of the changing everyday life we also have to examine how the families living in these new houses with very small farm lands could henceforward maintain their farming life that was deeply rooted in this society for centuries.

What kind of influences were shaping the life of the villages? Because after the socialist turn there remained almost similar properties and possibilities. The families could work in the collective farms or in the newly opened factories earning almost same wages. Under these

circumstances what kind of individual life strategies could be developed if there were any? And what is the situation now? What kind of impact the past 40 year still has now?

In my research I was examining families that were in their young adult age between 1960 and 1976. They started their separate life from their parents, they married, and they raised their families in these radically changing days. We have met them between 2005 and 2010 when we have seen their everyday life they were driving recent, we have seen their houses, their farms which situation made me not to overlook on the past years impact on their actual life.

According to my assumption the forthcoming social, economic and infrastructural changes had led to twoness that still has an impact on the life of the villages' inhabitants. The past days peasants' society didn't disappear with the collectivization but it has started a very long transformation process that lasted until the political transition. The society of the villages was expected to drive a life style that was closer to the town inhabitants life strategy where they live out of their paid work and don't run own any farming. But because the socialist times' shortcoming collective farms it was impossible to live out of their paid work so as a result during this period the past days peasant's traditions and the new agricultural strategies were functioning together and developed a strategy of living.¹

Regarding the examined villages the other important change was the region's infrastructural development. According to the settlement developing plans published in 1971 the examined region's villages didn't reached the size that could be developed in economical way. Although some kind of road building projects has reached our region that helped the villages to be approachable and in some sense the inhabitants could travel easier than in the past decades.² Furthermore schools, kinder gardens, medical centers, administrative possibilities were opened. But these changes that were entered without taking in consideration the region's regional specialties, when the state funding felt out the infrastructure couldn't be run in economical way, because the inhabitants of the villages was so low that it couldn't maintain the already built system. But these symptoms didn't appear similar and in the same time in every village. The appearance of the effects have depended in the villages' actual situation and state.

¹ Kovách Imre, 2010, 39.

² Juhász Pál, 2004, 264.

The examined cube houses which in time of their born have foregone the time of they lived, in the following decades has followed the changes of the families living inside and has transformed in several forms according to the need of its inhabitants.

Methods

My raw data have been collected in research camps where museologist, teachers and university students were working together. I have collected the other part of my data from archives.

The research field was anticipated by a preparatory fieldwork which aim was to explore the best fitting villages to our research. During this work I was going from village to village making photos about, analyzing its structure, the houses and its surrounding. Afterwards analyzing my photos and my notes I could choose the six examined villages. During my preparation work I have made preparatory fielwork the following villages: Kávás, Gellénháza, Felsőszenterzsébet, Alsószenterzsébet, Márokvölgy, Csesztreg, Resznek, Baglad, Kozmadombja, Magyarföld, Pórszombat, Vargaszeg, Becsvölgy, Kustánszeg, Bajánsenye, Kerkafalva, Kerkaújfalu, Szentgyörgyvölgy, Kógyár, Csöde, Kálócfa, Ramocsa.

The examined villages mostly belongs to the small villages with less than 1000 inhabitants. On their example we could examine those villages life circle have fallen out from the 1971 settlement developing plan. Two villages passing through this inhabitants number Csesztreg és Gellénháza, were good field to make the comparison with the small, out sorted villages.

We could examine how these villages history have been proceeding during socialist time and how their past facilities influenced its destiny. We could also examine whether these cube houses told to be wholly similar are similar indeed or the will, motivation and economical possibilities of the builders could make them in a way individual.

Principle of the examined buildings was its shape. Beside I was taking in consideration to have in the examined group as many forms, types and inside settings as it was possible in order to see the more variations. Other aspect was to be built between 1960 and 1976.

During the fieldwork I have spent altogether 75 days in field, 150 interview have been made and thousands of photos were taken during our work.

The research camps were the followings:

2008. – OTKA program driven by the Szabadtéri Néprajzi Múzeum, the camp leader was: Dr. Sári Zsolt. The examined villages were: Kávás, Gellénháza. (The OTKA program title was: Rurális építészet, lakáskultúra és életmód a 20. században. A Szabadtéri Néprajzi Múzeum OTKA K 82103 sz. kutatási programja)

2010. – Zala County Museums research camp financed by the EU, the camp leader was: Zsuzsa Kovács. The examined villages were: Szentgyörgyvölgy, Nemesnép, Csesztreg, Resznek. The camp was driven also cross the border in Dobronak but the data we have collected were not meeting the requirements to be compared with the data collected in the other villages so I couldn't use it in my analyses. (The research program title was: Múltunk közös értékei - Élő örökségünk, SI-HU-1-1-007 címet viselő, Szlovénia-Magyarország Határon Átnyúló Együttműködési Program 2007-2013 keretében végzett kutatás. The results of the work was published in the following volume: *Kódisállástól a kockaházig és tovább*)

The structure of the thesis

The work itself contains 16 chapters, followed by the appendix, the photos and the interviews enclosed on a CD, altogether 430 interview segments sorted by its topic and 773 photos also sorted by its topic.

Considering the thesis scale, half part it deals with the cube houses, examining its form, its circumstances of its building, the furnishing, the inside settlement, and its changing during the decades. The other part is about the political, social circumstances and its effects to the individual families living in these houses.

One separate chapter presents the examined region itself, and about my methods of examination.

Introducing the main issue I have been looked through and summarized the so far published, most important articles and books related to the architectural researches of the peasants housing tradition, and the history of everyday life in the related period. Regarding, I was driving my research as a museologist I also looked through the essays published under the topic showing the methods of the researched period results presenting possibilities in the museum.

The chapter nr. 6 is about the changing of everyday life during the Kádár era in general, in our region as well, and also about that period settlement developing projects and plans, published in 1971. In this government decision those settlements were involved in the developments that have at least reached the 1000 inhabitants which criteria could only be fulfilled in our region by Csesztreg and Gellénháza at that time.

In the 7th and 8th chapter I was making the analysis of the reasons of cube houses spreading countrywide. Trying to find out whether were there any government decision obliging the builders to use this form and structure or if not what was the reason of its easy spreading? I was also trying to find out what kind of historical roots these house form had been before.

I was continuing my examination with researching the way how it were built, what kind of material could the builders use, what kind of material resources were used, could or did the families wanted to use state or other loans. Dealing with the house and garden itself I was going from outside to inside, presenting and examining first the surrounding and the outside parts of the house, than I turned to analyze the layout and the decorations of the buildings, the social fashion that was applied in the decoration and building also. Inside the house I was examining the furnishing of it, the furniture's of the houses that was changing by decades showing the material resources of the family, their own preferences the fashion and also the possibilities of the buyable furniture's of the actual period. There is a separate chapter negotiating with the transformation of the houses after the finishing its building that are related to the changing needs of the families or to the reparation needed meanwhile on the house.

The last chapter before the synthesis is about the farming the families have henceforward continued. In my last chapter I make the summary of my findings and statements.

Results

The cube houses with its modernizations – electricity, gas, running water, good sealant, big green garden with flowers – implied all the possibilities which could ensure the families living in these houses a comfortable suburb life. But these houses during their time of coming of were quite alien part of the villages and its society also because the families living it were socialized in a time when farming was the natural way of life. But continuously the society has

changed during the socialist time, the houses itself as well and in the beginning on the last part of the 20th century it has found its part in the villages and the family's life also.

I could state there weren't any direction that would made it to be obligatory to built but the fashion and the materials could be bought by builders made it to spread all over the country. This statement could be extended for the inside layout and furnishing also.

In our county the coming of these house was in a way necessary while the building tradition here was laid on wood houses that were quite dangerous when the electricity was entered in the villages. The form of these small peasant houses were impossible to modernize because the rooms could be only reached from inside, there wasn't any inside passage. To have this outside corridors cover would cost enormous expensive and still couldn't solve the danger of electricity in the wood house, so it was more rational to build a new one.

The cube houses could be built and finished more or less in 1 or 1,5 years when the families moved in but the stage of final finishing was fare away. Making all the paintings, the cover and to finish all the rooms took some times for more than a decade. The years of the transformation could easily be trailed in the furnishing the layout of the house that I have shown though examples and pictures.

New part of the garden the green part of it with its possibility of flowering and making a place to rest which function has been lacking in the previous peasants gardens.

Because the farming was still needed the farming part of the garden and the surrounded land still remained with its farming edifices and other equipment's. The farming was a necessary activity of the families to help to serve their everyday needs not for selling in big amount or to drive it as a professional living.

The cube houses and its modernizations compared with the past time wood houses and the infrastructural development that has reached although the region has solve this regions general problems rooting in the low number of its inhabitants but the problem running this services in an economical way with the low number of inhabitants was still laying there. And nowadays we experienced the failure of the services without any or not as high state funding, so the rarefaction of buses reaching the villages, the closing schools and kindergartens that makes the possibilities to stay here very hard.

Gellénháza has driven a very special lifecycle here with taking an important role in the oil mining and elaboration. This village was the same size as Kávás, close to the county center town, with very bad soil and agricultural possibilities but from the 1950's years as the result of the oil industry the well-being years has started in this village. This period was only temporary because with the depression of the oil industry the working possibilities were enormously decreasing but the well-developed infrastructure remained here that has made the way for this village to turn into a suburb close to the county center.

As we have seen during our research although the cube houses were in the beginning very extraneous both in the village society and the settlements itself but during the decades have transformed much enough to require the families' needs and with the modernity has connected to it ensured the families a much comfortable life.

My aim in this thesis was to show and examine the process how these cube houses transformed and kept the print of the changes of the society and the historical periods

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