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# Jolana Darulová: MESTO PRIESTOR ETNOLOGICKÝCH VÝSKUMOV. NA PRÍKLADE BANSKEJ BYSTRICE (A City, Space for Ethnological Research. On the Example of Banská Bystrica)

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Cities constitute worlds in relation to other cities, but, at the same time, each city is a multitude of worlds. Jolana Darulová, assistant professor at Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica (Slovakia) decided, in her long-awaited synthesis, to present the most transparent worlds of a city that is regarded as the most beautiful urban center in Slovakia. Banská Bystrica (founded in 1255) was a medieval mining center that was transformed (17th–19th centuries) into a trade and craft center. Then, in the first half of the 20th century, it belonged mainly to businessmen, craftsmen and white-collar workers. In 1930, Banská Bystrica had 11,347 inhabitants; in 1950, 13,045 (p. 42). In 1991, the number of inhabitants increased to 85,007 (p. 43). Until the Second World War, the city was multiethnic, multiconfessional (Catholic-Protestant-Jewish) and multicultural (bilingual and trilingual): alongside Slovaks, who became the majority in the interwar period (in 1919, they represented 77% of the more than 10,000 inhabitants), lived Jews – Neologs (from the second half of the 19th century), Germans, Hungarians (in the 19th century, Banská Bystrica was pro-Hungary oriented), Bulgarian vegetable growers (from 1890), Czechs – representatives of the pro-Czechoslovak intelligentsia (from 1919) – and Roma. The uniqueness of the city, however, also came from its position between two distinctive Slovak ethnographic regions. Darulová, an author of many microprobes, decided this time to present Banská Bystrica as a whole organism. She bases her data on oral-history interviews, personal observations, excerpts from the local press, memoirs, biographies, diaries, archives, and collections of local folklore. In view of the quality of the sources and with regard to the methodic approaches of contemporary Slovak anthropology, however, she focused primarily on the middle class as a city-creating class during the period between the two world

wars (understandably with time lapses). The author's highlighting the delayed urban processes in Slovakia and, connected with them, the development of urban anthropology (ethnology) in Slovakia, must be called stimulating. Attempts at grasping the development of tradition of urban research in Slovak ethnology, like attempts at periodization of their development, are among the most interesting parts of the text. Along with Darulová, I advocate a wider comparative view of the "western" and "eastern" European city. However, comparative research of the so-called post-Socialistic cities seems to me to be very meaningful. The presentation of the Banská Bystrica material itself is thematic, while the author connected the micro- and macro-space of the population of the city. She followed the historical development of the city and its social stratification. The author accentuated the fact that industrialization began in Banská Bystrica in the last quarter of the 19th century and markedly influenced the spatial structuring of the city. Further, she focused on the relation of the majority population to the minority (including their views), on the function language and folklore, etc. She devotes a separate chapter to the typology of the Banská Bystrica family and, generally, to the functioning and importance of the middle-class patriarchal family in the city. The researcher studied its everydayness, festivities, child-rearing, values and morals as related to the needs of the city. As with family space, she wrote about public city space (streets, squares, places of traditional enjoyment, the corso [promenade], magic places, water sources) – in the words of the French ethnologist Gérard Althab, communication spaces, and traditional urban activities (markets and fairs, club membership, but also excursions and walks) or communication events. Jolana Darulová's book is interesting and, in many aspects, inspirational. I would see a certain problem only in chronological imbalance (time leaps) of the work, in the lack of connection of the development of the city with the development of the entire Slovak society and in the interpretation of the city on the basis of the lifestyle of only one (even if determining) social level: the Slovak middle class. At the same time, however, it is necessary to emphasize the difficulty of writing a monograph of a city and open methodic search of a new field – urban anthropology.

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