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Ethnic Peculiarities and Inter-ethnic Parallels in the Traditional Material Culture of the Hungarians of Ugocsa

Abstract

The Hungarians living in the present-day Transcarpathian region have lived peacefully for centuries together with the majority Ruthenian/Ukrainian population, as well as with the Romanian, German, Roma and other ethnic groups, who live in a similar minority to the Hungarians. Ethnographers and tourists visiting the region are convinced that these nationalities have retained the characteristics of their culture to this day. At the same time, it is worth observing how this long historical coexistence is reflected in the way of life and mentality of these people.

The parallels between Ruthenian and Hungarian language and folklore, folk customs are excellent examples of interethnic relations, but I have also encountered similar examples when researching the traditional material culture of the villages in *Ugocsa*. In the field of folk architecture, for example, the gate called *tőkés kapu*, as well as the *abora*, *aszaló* [the dryer] and the barn. Interethnic phenomena between Hungarians, Ruthenians and other nationalities of the region can also be observed in folk costumes (the *guba*, or the shoes called *bochkor*).

Throughout history, in Transcarpathia, which belonged to different state formations, it was noticeable that culture was not strictly tied to peoples. Thanks to the tolerance shown towards each other, the nationalities of the region have preserved their ethnic and religious characteristics and identity, but we can also find many similarities in their cultures. When studying the interactions that mutually enrich each other's culture and provide a colorful and attractive image to the region, it is often impossible to find out who borrowed from whom and when. During the ethnographic research



of the local communities, the main point is to take into account the ethnic interaction of the nationalities living here, as the folk culture of the local Hungarians is determined by the aggregation of the cultures of different ethnicities.

Keywords: Hungarians of Ugočsa, Ruthenian population, interethnic parallels, ethnic peculiarities, historical coexistence, material culture, folk architecture, traditional clothing

Introduction

For centuries, the Hungarians living in the present-day Transcarpathia have been living peacefully with the majority Ruthenian/Ukrainian population, as well as with Romanians, Germans, Roma and other ethnic groups, who are in a minority position like the Hungarians. Ethnographers and tourists visiting the region witnessed that these nationalities have preserved the peculiarities of their cultures to this day. At the same time, it is worth observing how this long historical coexistence is reflected in the lifestyle and mentality of the local people – primarily the Hungarian population I researched – and to what extent these nationalities influenced each other's language, customs and education.

The parallels between the Ruthenian/Ukrainian and Hungarian language and folklore (folk tales, ballads, folk songs, etc.), folk customs (Easter egg painting, nativity scenes, etc.) are excellent examples of interethnic relations, and I personally encountered similar examples while researching the traditional culture of the *Ugočsa* villages.

The purpose of my paper was to illustrate the aforementioned interethnic phenomena with some examples from my field of expertise, material culture, mentioned in the literature and found by me during fieldwork. Of course, I could not aim for a comprehensive description or a complex characterization of the material culture of the local Hungarian population. Within the material culture, I selected a few examples from folk architecture and traditional clothing, but similar examples can be found in work tools, furnishings, folk games, or any other area of traditional folk life. The locations of the research were the former *Ugočsa* (and partially *Ung*, *Bereg*) villages inhabited by Hungarians: *Salánk*, *Tiszaszászfalva*, *Karácshalva*, *Beregújfalu*, *Nagydobrony*, etc.

Folk architecture

Ethnic characteristics and interethnic parallels can be found in the most striking way in the field of folk architecture. According to the Hungarian and Slavic literature, in the researched area these are, for example, the gate called the *tőkés kapu* (it is a tilting, counterbalanced, but reversible structure, where the gate can be easily tilted using the two-arm lifting mechanism), the hay storage *abora*, the drying shed and the barn, which were still in use in the first half of the 20th century. According to ethnographers, the early German settlers in the Upper Tysa region may have introduced them among the Ruthenians and Romanians through the mediation of Hungarian shepherds and peasants. It is no coincidence that when studying the folk architecture of the Northeast Carpathians, social factors must also be considered, such as the ethnic interaction of the nationalities living here. Béla Gunda gives specific examples of these effects on the example of the *abora* and the tilting gate, which are known not only to Hungarians but also to the surrounding Ruthenians.¹ Therefore, in order to detect possible parallels, it is useful to get to know the traditional architecture of the Slavic population of the region.² In the book by ethnographer Pavlo Fedáka from *Uzhhborod*, for example, we find many parallels (*abora*, open entryway, fireplace, carved porch, etc.) between Ruthenian and Hungarian architecture.³

Let's familiarize ourselves with this phenomenon based on the examples I have collected and selected. In the villages of the *Szernye* swamp in the first decades of the 20th century, the so-called *tőkés* [tilting] gate, in some villages was used to close the exit roads. In the specialized literature, the tilting gate is also referred to as *tönkös, gémes* [stump or heron] gate.⁴ The upper beam of the gate was made of a huge stump of oak, and the wall was made of hedges, slats, and boards attached to it. The stump provided the counterweight, thanks to which the gate could be easily tilted, lifted and turned.⁵ Ferenc Katona⁶ gives a precise description of the tilting gate in *Tiszászászfalu*, which was called a carved or "*sáran*" gate in this settlement, and which was considered the old-

¹ Gunda 1984: 125, 129.

² Sopoliga 1989.

³ Федака 2005. The drawings of Ruthenian porch carvings published in the publication are worth comparing with Hungarian porch carvings.

⁴ Barabás–Gilyén 2004: 111; Dám 2014: 220.

⁵ Dám 1997: 222.

⁶ He conducted research in an *Ugočsa* landscape and folk research camp in *Tiszászászfalu*, a Slavified but mixed-identity settlement in *Ugočsa* in 1943–44.

est form of gate in the village: "... Until about 1910, these gates were common as street gates. The column on which the gate rotates on an axis is called a 'sáranc'. And the 'carved' indicator refers to the main part of the gate, the uppermost horizontal piece made of a tree trunk and its stump."⁷

The tilting gate was also present in other Transcarpathian settlements. The photos taken by the Hungarian ethnographer Judit Morvay, who researched *Salánk* in 1968, prove that it was known in the Hungarian settlement of *Ugoicsa* (also inhabited by Slavic and Romani minorities) in the same way as in *Bereg-újfalu*, which was captured in the photographs of Transcarpathian ethnographer Mária Punykó.



Pic. Nr. 1: *Tilting gate, Beregújfalu, 1975.* Photo: Punykó M.

Some Transcarpathian settlements, such as *Nagyfalád*, which was separated from *Szatmár* region, have become famous for their peculiar covered small gates.⁸ Even today, the *lóca* [small bench] is an indispensable accessory of the gate and the fence – it is a favorite place for conversations and smoking the pipe. As Ferenc Katona writes, women used to discuss what had happened in the village on the banks of the ditch, while men used to talk to each other

⁷ Katona 1943–1944: 93.

⁸ Kész 2005/5: 13.

on the *lóca* (a hardwood bench laid on four wooden legs hammered into the ground).⁹



Pic. Nr. 2: *Schwab-style rooftop*. Archive image: Nagydobrony

According to the literature, it is likely that, similar to tilting gates, the so-called Schwab-style roofs became popular instead of the bun-shaped roofs that were previously common in the region, which was influenced by the German carpenters that arrived from *Szatmár*. According to Grozdova and Kovalskaia, the Soviet ethnographers who researched Hungarian villages in Transcarpathia in the 1960s, the most common type of roof for the Hungarian houses here was the *gable* roof, followed by the bun-shaped roof, and *the truncated gable roof* in some settlements.¹⁰ On the other hand, in *Salánke*, the settlement which I examined, longhouses with bun-shaped roofs dominated until the spread of square houses with tent roofs, although there were also houses with gable roofs (Schwab-style) and truncated bun-shaped roofs.¹¹ In other *Ugocha* settlements (*Tiszakeresztúr*, *Karácshalva*, etc.), on the other hand, I mostly observed the transitional type of truncated bun-shaped roofs introduced by the Schwabs, as the

⁹ Katona 1943–1944: 32.

¹⁰ Гроздова–Ковальская 1979: 153.

¹¹ I also base my statement on the opinion of László Dám: “The eastern part of the Hungarian-speaking area, primarily Transylvania, Szabolcs, Szatmár and Bereg, is still predominantly an area with bun-shaped roofs...” Dám 1992: 54–55.

dominant roof form, with the two small characteristic ventilation windows on the pediment.¹²

Another example of the interaction of Ruthenian and Hungarian folk architecture is the prevalence of peasant houses covered with short wooden shingles and long *dránica*, or, for example, the carved porch and the open entryway (open eaves). Ferenc Katona's research in *Tiszasszékfalu* also confirms that

“... straw or shingles, dránic were used to cover the roof. The shingle was made of beech wood and its two edges were grooved or they were made with a protrusion so that they could be fitted onto each other. These were approx. 25–30 cm long, while the ‘dránica’ was 50–60 cm long and approximately 10 cm wide, made of pine wood and had no protrusions or carvings for fitting together.”¹³

We know from the literature that the *dránica* was a 60–100 cm long and 10–30 cm wide oak or pine plank, which lacked grooves and was attached to the roof slats with wooden nails, and it was less durable compared to grooved shingles.¹⁴

As for houses with porches, they became widespread from the middle of the 19th century and markedly defined the architecture of the *Tiszabát* area. László Dám also comments: “Besides the open eaves, the distinctive feature of the region's folk architecture is the widespread use of gable and round porches.”¹⁵ The porch became the best-known and most spectacular formal element of Hungarian folk architecture.¹⁶ Geyza Deák also emphasizes the role of *porches* in his research of the *Ung* region.¹⁷ The simplest form of a porch that surrounds the house on one or two sides (its technical names are side porch and front porch) had eaves supported by wooden columns. The columns between the porches were most often supplemented with a 1–1.2 m high railing, i.e. an elbow beam, or a parapet made of carved boards. This was called a *rédeley*

¹² “The truncated bun-shaped roof is a transitional form, which is also indicated by the fact that it spread during the decline of the bun-shaped roof in the second half of the 19th century in the characteristic regions of the bun-shaped roof... The change of roof form is expressed in the vernacular of the Upper *Tisza* region, where the name of the gabled roof is *svábos* [schwab-style], that of the gable roof is *félsvábos* [half-schwab], while the original bun-shaped roof has no distinguishing name.” Barabás–Gilyén 2004: 121–122.

¹³ Katona 1943–1944: 46.

¹⁴ Cseri 1997: 137

¹⁵ Dám 1989: 98.

¹⁶ Barabás–Gilyén 2004: 125.

¹⁷ Deák 1998: 84.

or a *gang* in Hungarian. The board parapet is considered in the specialized literature to be a distinctive feature of the north-eastern regions (“*rédeley* houses”).¹⁸ The often ornately carved porch was the main decoration of the side of the house facing the yard, which also expressed the social and economic status of the owner of the house.¹⁹ Russian (Soviet) ethnographers also observed the peculiarities of the *porch*, *gador* (*gator*), *gang*, their Ruthenian and Slovak parallels, and the transformation of the porch into a windowed corridor and terrace.²⁰



Pic. Nr. 3: *House with porches in present-day Salánk*. Photo: B. Kész

The surviving longhouses with porches still illustrate that the traditional peasant dwelling usually consisted of three rooms: front house (clean room) + hall/kitchen + back house (pantry).²¹ The hall served as a kitchen in the summer (in many places also in the winter), and the front door and a yard window were placed here. A room opened to the right and left of the hall: the front house and the back house, i.e. the former pantry.

As Iván Balassa M. pointed out, in the north-eastern part of the Carpathian Basin, including Transcarpathia, unlike in other regions, the hall was a room with a general function (transportation, storage, etc.), but it did not mean the

¹⁸ Barabás–Gilyén 1979: 97.

¹⁹ Barabás–Gilyén 2004: 137; Bakó 1997: 265.

²⁰ Гроздова–Ковальская 1979: 156–157.

²¹ Kész 2016: 65.

kitchen, but its front room. As László Dám writes, this is a typical phenomenon of the *Alföld* [lowland] house type.²² Unlike the closed oven-heated kitchen, the hall was often open. There was no heating equipment in it, as in the food-processing room, i.e. in the kitchen.²³

Here we have to discuss the question of the so-called open eaves: it occurred mainly in Slavic and Transylvanian houses that the central room of the three-room house did not function as a heated kitchen, but as an empty, unheated storage room. According to László Dám, the open hall, also known as an open eaves or dog's room, was a characteristic of the houses in *Szatmár*, which Zsigmond Móricz already drew attention to in the description of a house in *Tiszabát*. According to Dám, the house with a completely open eaves is typical of a narrow area, and it has parallels only in *Székegy* land.²⁴ He considers it possible that this is an example of an archaic form of the house culture of the eastern region of the Carpathian Basin that once had the same roots and which survived in isolated areas – for example, *Salánk* in *Ugocsa* – until the present day. The originality of the house with an open eaves was also noticed by Nándor Gilyén, who managed to find nine more such buildings on the *Tiszabát* and in the nearby regions in the late 1950s and 1960s, according to the example of the *Milota* house from the Upper *Tisza* region exhibited in the landscape unit of the Szentendre Ethnography Museum. He notes that Márta Belényesy also found similar houses in *Mezővári* in Transcarpathia in 1943. Previously, Tivadar Lehoczky presented the floor plan of a “Russian” house in *Bereg* County, in which the open eaves are called a hall, and the room in front of it is called a pantry.²⁵ As Gilyén writes, the name of the open eaves is uncertain, it is called a free hall, a hall, a porch, smoke house, oven, dog's room etc.²⁶

The Soviet ethnographers researching in Transcarpathia in 1968 and 1969 also noticed the *open eaves* as one of the rare and archaic elements of the traditional Hungarian peasant house.²⁷ Both Grozdova and Kovalskaia emphasized that the *open eaves* is an ancient, transitional form that was typical of the 19th century, but in some places was still built in the 1930s. They provide a photo of an open hall from *Salánk* from the end of the 19th century, and also a floor plan of a house with an *open hall* in *Tekebáza*, built in the middle of the 19th century.²⁸

²² Dám 1992: 173.

²³ Balassa 1989: 75.

²⁴ Dám 1989: 97.

²⁵ Lehoczky 1881. II: 200.

²⁶ Gilyén 1989: 53–54.

²⁷ Гроздова 1972: 102.

²⁸ Гроздова–Ковальская 1979: 159–161.

The authors write that the Ukrainian population of the Carpathians still have such cold open eaves to this day, because, unlike the Hungarians, they did not transform it into a warm kitchen.²⁹

In addition to the residential building, we can also find beautiful examples of interethnic relations among other objects of the peasant yard. As in other regions, in the villages of the researched area, the yard was decorated with a well with a wheel or a so-called *heron well*. The open or closed *heron* or *whip end* of the heron well were often carved, decorated, which was typical of the region of the Upper *Tisza*.³⁰ Deák Geyza also mentions the carved decoration of the wells.³¹ At the end of the heron, wooden stumps, stones or scrap pieces of iron were hung as weights. The bucket was held by a hook at the end of the whip (heron) of the well. While there are fewer and fewer heron wells, the roller well known as a wheel well is still common in *Ugočsa*. In its well house, covered with a tent roof and covered with slats, there is a cylinder driven by a crank, which moves the chain-mounted bucket up and down.³² The casing, reservoir of the well was most often made of wood, more recently it is made of concrete rings. There were³³ also³⁴ called *bodon* wells carved out of thick tree stumps. But the walls of most dug wells were not lined with wood, but were laid out with stone from the second half of the 19th century, and more recently they are lined with concrete rings. Next to the well, there was a cow trough hollowed out of a tree trunk, a water tank and a washing chair. We know from Ferenc Katona, who described the situation in *Szászfalu* in January 1944, that the heron wells placed near the street sometimes obstructed traffic on the sidewalk, which is why the authorities did not approve of them.³⁵ Áron

²⁹ Гроздова–Ковальская 1979: 179. Grozdova and Kovalskaia write, for example, that the Hungarians, wedged between two great cultures – the Germanic and the Slavic – developed over centuries under their influence. This is how they first adopted the cold open porch characteristic of the Slavs, and later the warm closed porch (kitchen) from the Germans. From a Hungarian point of view, we accept this with some skepticism, although we do not deny the mutually enriching relations and interaction of the peoples living in the region – Hungarians, Ruthenians, Slovaks, Romanians.

³⁰ Barabás–Gilyén 2004: 114; Gunda 1984: 60; Kész 2005/4: 10. László Dám writes that in some villages of the *Bereg Tiszahát* wells were equipped not with not with a fork-shaped stick, but with carved ones, the top of which was decorated like a wooden headstone, with buttons, stars, and horse heads. Dám 2014: 244.

³¹ Deák 1998: 86.

³² See Dám 1997: 220.

³³ Barabás–Gilyén 2004: 114.

³⁴ Barabás–Gilyén 2004: 114; Móricz 1995: 103.

³⁵ Katona 1943–1944: 98.

Bocskor vividly describes the types of wells that were used in *Akli* in the past, describing in detail the construction and operation of the *deben well*, the *heron well*, the *wheel well*, as well as other types of wells.³⁶

Moving on to the rear, farmstead part of the yard, we come across structures for storing crops as the next examples of interethnic relations. Referencing Péter Lizanec, Jenő Barabás claims that the barn could have spread relatively late in Tanscarpathia, from two directions. The name *csűr* was brought here from the lowlands, and the name *stodola* from the regions inhabited by Ruthenians.³⁷ In the past, in the villages of our region, cross barns or barns with cross corridors at the end of the yard were common, in which the livestock's winter food was stored, and it was possible to drive straight into it from the yard with a cart.³⁸ The entrance to such barns was on the longer side of the building, under the eaves, and according to the literature, this type, typical of our region, dominated over other types of barns.³⁹ The inside dimensions and height of the barn were set so that the hay wagon could comfortably fit under it.⁴⁰ As the land plots became narrower and narrower, the place of the cross barn was taken over by barns built along the plot and by other farm buildings. Today, we can only rarely meet cross-barns in our settlements. The wall of the barn was made of wood, and covered with adobe or plank covering, and the top was covered with straw. The beams making up the frame were provided by the nearby oak forests, and their carving and assembly did not cause any problems for the skillful carpenters of the villages. The structure, also called a threshing barn, sometimes had a double-winged barn gate on both sides, but usually had no door, and it was possible to walk through it without obstacles. In winter, poles were propped up at its entrance and covered with straw to prevent snow from blowing in. Only an opening wide enough to walk through was left out. The wider, central, open part of the barn in our region was called *csűrpiaccá* (in other regions, *széru*), and the two sides *fiók* (elsewhere, *csűrfia*).⁴¹ Barns were usually double-ended, rarely single-ended. The ends of the barn were divided into additional compartments by the base beams and the perpen-

³⁶ Bocskor 2008: 50, 72. Árpád Csiszár describes the various wells in the same way in his paper entitled Village water supply, dug wells. Csiszár 2002: 164–183.

³⁷ Barabás 1989: 87.

³⁸ According to László Dám, to the north and west of the *Tisza*, in *Bereg*, cross-corridor barns were widespread, while around the *Ecsedi-láp*, and between *Tisza* and *Szamos*, long-corridor barns were common. Gunda 1984: 50; Dám 2014: 235.

³⁹ Barabás–Gilyén 2004: 39.

⁴⁰ Bocskor 2008: 50.

⁴¹ Selmeczi Kovács 1989: 313; Kész 2005/4: 10.

dicular columns supporting the roof beams. Clover, alfalfa, hay, bran and chaff were stored in these. The *csúrpiacca* was a place for loading and threshing, but sometimes dance parties also took place here. In winter or in rainy weather, the cart stood on the *szerű* (in some places, a separate carriage house was built for the cart).



Pic. Nr. 4: *A barn with a straw roof in Nagydobrony in the first half of the 20th century. Archive image*

The barn enclosed the rear end of the yard and separated the yard from the garden. The *abora* (hay storage with an adjustable roof) was mostly built near it,⁴² in which the hay was better protected from moisture.⁴³ The *abora* or *zabora* was a construction very typical of our region, and it was also a unit of measurement, which has a long history. According to some assumptions, it was brought to *Ugocsa* by German settlers in the 11–14th centuries.⁴⁴ In some

⁴² László Dám writes about the *abora*: “A hay storage structure with a movable roof, which is a characteristic structure of the Hungarian and Ukrainian villages of the historic Zemplén, Ung, Bereg, Ugocsa, Máramaros and Szatmár counties in the northeastern part of the Carpathian Basin.” Dám 1992: 191–193.

⁴³ Gunda 1984: 53–55; Gunda 1989: 125; Kész 2005/4: 10.

⁴⁴ “... the *abora* is common in the plains adjacent to Transcarpathia, elsewhere it occurs only sporadically. It appeared presumably the XIII–XIV centuries from Western Europe in the northeastern, rainy regions of the Carpathian Basin. In the XVI–XVII century, it was already widespread among Hungarians in the Upper Tisza region. It is still common today in the

yards there were two or three *aboras*.⁴⁵ Holes were drilled in the four columns and poles of the *abóra*, into which pegs, iron rods or nails could be inserted to adjust the height of the tent roof.⁴⁶ Ferenc Katona, who collected data in *Tiszaszázszálfalu* in *Ugocea* in 1943–1944, writes: “The roofs of the *aboras* were covered with shingles or thatch. In one or two places, I saw a case where the *abóra* was placed above a small stable, or the bottom of the *abóra* was converted into a stable.”⁴⁷ Nowadays, the traditional *abóra* with a mobile roof has only remained in 1–2 yards, most of the time hay and straw are stored in stable hay storages or in drafty attics of barns.



Pic. Nr. 5: *Abóra* in Nagydobrony. Archive image

North-Eastern Carpathians.” Barabás–Gilyén 2004: 45. Attila Paládi-Kovács also describes *abóra* in detail in his research. See e.g. Paládi-Kovács: 1969; Paládi-Kovács 1979: 254.

⁴⁵ Katona 1943–1944: 2.

⁴⁶ Bocskor 2008: 50.

⁴⁷ Katona 1943–1944: 2.

Clothing

Similar to traditional construction and farming, we can also discover certain ethno-cultural similarities and parallels between the Hungarian folk clothing of Transcarpathia and the traditional clothing of other peoples in the vicinity. Such common points can be defined, for example, as *guba*, *bocskor*, clogs, etc. in addition to the individual elements of the motif treasure that adorns the garment. Clothes make a person, they say, and based on what they wore, in the past you could not only find out which social class they belonged to, what their family status was (e.g. mourning), but also their ethnicity. What's more, the traditional clothing differed by areas and even by village, until the globalization process of the last half century put an end to the centuries-old traditions.

The Slavic ethnographers who visited Transcarpathia were amazed to see that the Hungarians living here, although they have lived together with several other nationalities for centuries, stubbornly stick to their traditions and culture, thus preserving the specific features of their clothing.⁴⁸

Attila Kopriva, who as a painter from *Munkács*, as a teacher at the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education, has extensive knowledge on the research of both Hungarian and Ruthenian folk clothing, approaches the Transcarpathian folk clothing from a slightly different perspective. In his dissertation *Embroideries in the National Clothing of Transcarpathian Hungarians*⁴⁹, published in Ukrainian, he writes that the clothing of the Hungarians of *Bereg*, *Ung*, *Ugocea* and *Máramaros* was not overcrowded with embroidery. According to the author, the reason for this is the specific aesthetic sense and taste of the Hungarians, which contradicts the aesthetic standards of the Slavic-speaking *Boykos*, *Lemkos* and *Hutsuls*, and on the other hand, the Transcarpathian Hungarians wanted to distinguish themselves from the surrounding Ruthenians. This is how the terms “*hutsul object*” (overly decorative object) and *hutsul blue* (bright blue, which the *Hutsuls* painted the walls of their houses with) appeared in the Hungarian language. The content of these expressions shows that the Hungarians were wary of overly ornate, gaudy objects and colors. According to Kopriva, this is the explanation for the fact that in terms of decoration, the Hungarian folk clothing of Transcarpathia lags

⁴⁸ In the 1960s, ethnographers from the Soviet Academy of Sciences conducted research in the Hungarian villages of Transcarpathia, and tried to reconstruct the traditional clothing of the 20s of the 20th century. The results of the research were summarized in Grozdova P's thesis in Russian. Гроздова 1972: 105–107.

⁴⁹ Kopriva 2008.

behind not only the costumes of the surrounding Slavic peoples, but also the Hungarians living in the central and western areas of the Carpathian Basin.⁵⁰ Attila Kopriva also highlights the well-known colorful and unique character of the *Nagydobrony* clothing. According to the author, this traditional folk clothing was able to survive because the people of *Nagydobrony* were rigidly isolated not only from the Ruthenian population, but also from the surrounding Hungarian villages.⁵¹

Even though the Transcarpathian Hungarian folk clothing is markedly different from the traditional clothes of the Ruthenians and Romanians, parallels can be found here as well. For example, the *guba* (a characteristic piece of clothing of *Ugočsa*, *Bereg* and *Ung*), or the wearing of *bocskor* boots, which in the Hungarian public is considered Slavic or Romanian footwear.

The cheap *guba*, which was once considered a poor version of the *shuba* [fur coat], was considered a characteristic piece of clothing in *Ugočsa*, similar to the neighboring *Szatmár* and *Máramaros*.⁵² This is what the saying also refers to: “*guba gubával - suba subával*” [*guba with guba, and shuba with shuba*]. Mária Kresz writes that “the *guba* was worn in one of the particularly poor regions of the country, in the northeastern part of *Alföld* [the Great Plain]. It was mainly manufactured in *Munkács*, *Beregszász*, *Szatmárnémeti*, *Miskolc*, *Gömör* County and *Debrecen*.”⁵³ According to István Györffy, the making of *guba* cloth, the crafting of *guba* cloth spread from *Ungvár*, *Munkács*, and *Beregszász* to the interior of the country, towards the *Alföld*, from the beginning of the 18th century.⁵⁴ The smooth and curly versions of *guba* thus conquered the Carpathian basin from present-day Transcarpathia and *Debrecen*, and these regions preserved the making of *guba* for the longest time. Even at the beginning of the 20th century, *guba* was woven in *Tiszabát* and *Szamosbát* of *Szatmár*, *Bereg*. The last examples of these short white *gubas* have been kept by the women of the upper *Tisza* region almost to this day.⁵⁵ The *guba* was primarily worn by the common people, but sometimes the nobles also wore it. Although the *guba* was worn by both sexes, men’s and women’s *guba* were designed differently.⁵⁶ Jenő Nagy also notes that the *guba* is also used as a ceremonial outerwear in Transcarpathia and Transyl-

⁵⁰ Kopriva 2008: 3–4.

⁵¹ Kopriva 2008: 12.

⁵² Luby 1927: 145; Ratkó 2014: 603–610.

⁵³ Kresz 1956: 36.

⁵⁴ Flórián 1997: 630.

⁵⁵ Flórián 1997: 632.

⁵⁶ Men’s *guba* had round sleeves, while women’s *guba* had flat sleeves. The “eyes” of the *guba* were made of rolled up linen, also called *cifra* or *rózsa*. Luby 1927: 154.

vania.⁵⁷ This is proven by the part of Kálmán Móricz's monograph on *Nagydobrony* dealing with the description of the settlement's clothing.⁵⁸ The prevalence of *guba* is also evidenced by a saying collected in the south of Ugocsa: *Örök harag – gubadarab* [Eternal anger – *guba* piece; Margit Celics, *Nevetlenszál*]. The *guba* was also a popular winter garment of the Ruthenians under the name *bunya* (*gunya*), so the interethnic parallel can be observed here as well.

Ethnic separation and interethnic interaction can also be demonstrated in the case of footwear: in the collective consciousness of Transcarpathian Hungarians, the wearing of *bocskor* boots is associated with the Ruthenians. According to the interviewees, the Ruthenian harvest workers brought *bocskors* to the Hungarian villages for sale. At the same time, the Hungarian men of *Salánk* also wore *bocskor* in the summer, and during harvest, the women also wore round *bocskor* with wrinkled noses on their feet. According to the literature, the round-nosed *bocskor* is known by the Hungarians of the *Alföld* as the *borjúszájú bocskor* [calf-mouthed *bocskor*], and Ottó Herman considered this to be the Hungarian *bocskor* form.⁵⁹

Ferenc Katona, who collected data on the wearing of *bocskor* in *Tiszászfalu* in 1943–44, also confirms that:

“The *bocskor* is made from boot shafts and is considered very comfortable because it is light. Sunday clothing for people under 30s is generally trousers and shoes, and for those over 30 it is usually boots. Older people wear only boots. I saw some poor old men in the church in wide pants and *bocskor* boots.”⁶⁰

Hungarians therefore mostly wore boots, but not always. In summer they usually walked barefoot (especially women and children), in winter and on holidays they wore boots, and later shoes. The boots, and later the shoes, were mainly made by the bootmakers from *Tiszaujlak*, who were the most famous in *Ugocsa*.

The types of boots and their production are described in detail in the literature.⁶¹ The men's boots were *bokszicsizma* [black boots] with a hard or ruddy shank, studded soles, and sewn at the back. In the past, women's boots were side-stitched, hard-soled, and had studded soles. Its color was also mostly

⁵⁷ Nagy 1959: 443.

⁵⁸ Móricz 1995: 121.

⁵⁹ Flórián 1997: 687; Györffy 1941: 359–361.

⁶⁰ Katona 1943–1944: 40.

⁶¹ Flórián 1997: 692–693; Györffy 1941: 362–364.

black, but one of my interviewees (G.E., *Salánk*) also wore red boots when she was a maiden. Those who could afford it, had two pairs of boots made for themselves. One was used for celebrations and the other for everyday use, but in rainy weather it was also possible to replace soaked boots.



Pic. Nr. 6–7: *Guba and gúnya* (folk clothing of Tiszabát and a Ruthenian couple as depicted in the 19th century. Archive images

Conclusions

The listed examples prove the words of Zsigmond Bátky, according to whom culture is not connected to peoples, and peoples are only temporary carriers of education and culture. This is particularly noticeable in the multi-ethnic Transcarpathia. Throughout history, the nationalities of the region belonging to different state bodies have preserved their ethnic and religious characteristics and identity thanks to the tolerance shown towards each other, and at the same time, we can find many common features in their cultures. When studying the interactions that mutually enrich each other's material culture and provide the

region with a colorful and attractive image, it is often impossible to find out who borrowed, from whom and when. Maybe it's not even that important. The point is to take into account the ethnic interaction of the nationalities living here during the ethnographic research of the local communities, since the folk culture of the local Hungarians is determined by the combination of the material culture of the different ethnicities.

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