

serfs, not only in the period examined in the book ranging from the last third of the 18th century to the Treaty of Versailles, but also in preceding centuries. This modifies the generally ideological image that has been formed of production autarky and the closed nature of the village lifeworld. From as early as the 15th to 16th centuries serfs, mainly farming on small plots, in Gömör County and other villages of Upper Hungary undertook paid cartage, performed the compulsory socage service also for wages and even formed economic associations with the aim of acquiring income and profit, while other, more prosperous farmers with larger plots did not participate in such activities. In other words, the trade in goods between regions and settlements not only eroded the feudal ties and developed entrepreneurial skills, but within the serf peasantry created differences in status that were also manifested in the way of life. Or – in connection with all this – the question can be raised (and could be a topic for further research), whether such mobility, getting to know other regions and ways of earning a living, and the expansion of personal contacts played a role in the trends in migration, free and illegal movement that differed from region to region and from one period to another.

I have mentioned that the society exchanging goods also appears in the book, but I have a slight feeling of something missing in this respect. We can read more about structures, the social division of labour and social groups (e.g. Slovak itinerant peddlers selling linen fabric, saffron and medicines, carters from Zólyom County, railwaymen) than about individuals, their experiences or personal interactions. There are sources available from the 19th to 20th centuries (financial accounts and other records, peasant diaries, in cases material collected by earlier generations of ethnographers) that can bring to life exchange, trade or the various forms of mobility as part of everyday life, the experiences of the individuals involved and the meaning they attached to it.

Tamás Csíki

Péter BERTA (ed.): *Használtcikk-kultúrák. Ideológiák, gyakorlatok és értelmezői közösségek.* [Second-Hand Cultures. Ideologies, Practices and Interpretive Communities]. MTA BTK Néprajztudományi Intézet: Budapest, 2012, 309 pp, 79 photos, 2 figures

The collecting, buying and selling of used goods and antiques, the handling and utilisation of waste materials have only recently attracted the attention of cultural studies. However, as the editor Péter Berta points out in his recommendation on the back cover of this book: “the anthropological and sociological study of second-hand cultures not only gives an insight into the world of objects but also contributes to a deeper understanding of the relationship of the subjects to each other and to themselves, to their identities, their social and economic differences, etc.” Péter Berta is pioneering research on this topic in Hungary. Already in 2008 in No. 63 of the social sciences journal *Replika* he edited an excellent thematic compilation on *Object transformations: border-crossing, biography, identity*.¹ In his introductory essay examining the interaction between objects and indi-

¹ This thematic issue of *Replika* edited by Péter Berta with the full text of the studies can be accessed on the website of the MTA BTK Institute of Ethnology: http://etno-joomla.etnologia.mta.hu/images/stories/personal/bertha_p/targetytranszformaciok_replika_63_2008_november.pdf

viduals, based on a broad cultural historical overview, he outlines the modern theoretical background of the topic. The ten studies in the present volume edited by Péter Berta apply an interdisciplinary approach to historical and contemporary examples from Central Europe to show the changing social and cultural patterns and internal dynamics of the attitude towards second-hand items. The studies deal with a wide variety of object groups and subcultures while at the same time they are linked at different points. There are two studies in each of the five thematic units. Some of the authors are research fellows at the Institute of Ethnology of the MTA Research Centre for the Humanities, others are active in different fields and institutions.

In the first chapter two studies deal with special manifestations of the transformation of second-hand items, (re)sacralisation and commodification. In a lengthy article supplemented with original object descriptions, in connection with a recent liturgical practice in the Calvinist Church, open-air mass services – principally to mark the *Day of Hungarian Calvinist Unity* – and in particular the debates that have arisen over the ceramic communion cup used on the occasion, Károly Zsolt Nagy writes about the church rules, innovations and opinions regarding the *clenodia* or communion cups and the attitudes towards these objects. With a “thick description” of the problem of the new kind of a communion cup, he attempts to throw light from a particular angle on the phenomena related to the changing situation of the United Hungarian Calvinist Church that is still taking shape.

On an imaginary time trip to 17th century Hungary based on historical sources, Éva Deák focuses on the question of used clothing. In early modern Europe clothing was one of the most valuable second-hand items and under the conditions in Hungary at that time it was not easy to obtain fabrics of suitable quality needed to make clothing. It is also obvious that most fabrics or items of clothing must have been used by several generations practically until they disintegrated; they represented a real, quantifiable value, although a steadily declining one. In the society of that time items of clothing that could still be worn – or fabrics – must have served as valuables that could be given as gifts, pawned or used as a means of payment. Items of clothing that were no longer suitable for wear were repurposed. By following their fate the social relations of the period are brought to life for the reader.

The next two studies deal with the collection of two types of second-hand articles and their subcultures whose life is determined by and imbued to a significant extent with the desire to possess a certain type of object. Since 1998 Péter Berta has been studying the situation of the Transylvanian Gabor and Carhar Roma communities who live in a double minority status. There is more than two and a half years experience in the field behind his study in the present volume. After an overview of the literature on the ways of approaching and analysing the possession history as a symbolic characteristic influencing consumption, he uses “the multilocal fieldwork method” to trace the history of “an exceptionally valuable Gabor Roma prestige item” (an antique silver beaker) to give a sense of the associated values, systems of connections, marriage strategies and social hierarchy. The principal values of the study are the very rich extracts from interviews and the high-level scholarly interpretation of the observations made on the spot, while at the same time the reader can enjoy the excellent writing of what amounts to a real “documentary novel”.

Another very interesting piece of writing is the next study in which Gábor Vályi, a versatile teacher-researcher at the University of Technology's Department of Sociology (who is himself a collector and so knows the subject of his study "from the inside") gives a glimpse into the world of collectors of bakelite records. Gábor Vályi in his study "following Levi-Strauss and Stawt in the Hungarian scenes where microgroove records circulate and 'settle'" traces the cultural practices and ideas "associated with the records that are gradually disappearing with the decline in the material culture of recorded music". In the first half of the study he visits the private collections that can still be found in various places and through the personal narratives recorded there he explores the problem of personal attachment to bakelite records and the sentimental value attributed to them. In the second part, again on the basis of personal experience he examines the factors shaping the commercial value of used bakelite recordings. Finally, the author uses the example of the small DJ community of his own friends to give an insight into the collective ideas "in which the aesthetics of the recordings and the moral evaluation of record collecting practices are inseparably intertwined with notions of personal authenticity and prestige".

The two authors in the next chapter of the volume focus mainly on the period of socialism. Ágota Lídia Ispán looks at the activity of the *Bizományi Áruház Vállalat*, the central state institution for commerce in second-hand goods, that was set up to replace the private second-hand goods trade that had earlier flourished but was judged as foreign to the values of socialism. On the basis of workplace newspapers of the time and other documents found in the archives she outlines the trend in the demand and supply of second-hand goods. Her findings paint a striking picture of the main periods of socialism in Hungary, from the beginnings of the dictatorship marked by shortages to consumer socialism, then up to the time of the change of system.

Gábor Michalkó, a research fellow at the Geographical Institute of the MTA Research Centre for Astronomy and Earth Sciences, approached the topic of second-hand goods from the angle of tourism, inviting the reader to join him on a "junk tour". In his study he gives a theoretical overview of the role of (shopping) tourism in the production, transport, sale, consumption and repurposing of second-hand goods. He examines all types of travel that can contribute in some way to the accumulation of used goods in the traveller's living environment. He thus deals with the consumption by tourists of goods in flea markets, at junk shops, second-hand bookshops and antique shops, the collection by travellers of items placed in the street for rubbish collection, the repurposing of superfluous objects originally purchased as souvenirs, the sale through second-hand shops of items smuggled in from trips abroad, and the passing on as gifts of shoddy articles obtained on trips combined with product presentations. Since 2000 within the frame of two OTKA programmes, the author has examined many different aspects of shopping tourism, supplementing this with extensive research and source processing by students of tourism at the Kodolányi János College. The article sums up the results of these years of investigation, and the author concludes by emphasising the importance of interdisciplinary dialogue among representatives of geography, ethnology, sociology and economics (of which the volume edited by Péter Berta is itself an excellent example).

The fourth chapter deals with a special way of reutilising waste, with two different manifestations of recycling art. Ágnes-Éva Varga makes a comparative analysis of two

“Budapest ventures for the production of objects endowed with aesthetic value created by recycling used materials”, the *Cellux Csoport* and the *Balkan Tango*, published here as a case study, a version of the dissertation she wrote in 2011 at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the University of Pécs. After an overview of the literature on consumption research and a theoretical and methodological introduction, she first presents the activity of the two recycling art groups and the objects they create. In her comparative analysis she discusses the motivations of producers and consumers, attempts at self-definition, deals with the “cultural biography” of the materials used and the question of authorship, and the main characteristics of the products; she compares the scenes and strategies of self-representation, the relationship to the market and goods status, the logic determining price and value; and finally the issues of authenticity, originality and the search for difference, consumer aversions to recycling products and the counter-arguments. Ágnes-Éva Varga’s article is thought-provoking as she makes it obvious that the utilisation of waste and the recycling technologies are a highly complex problem and it cannot be proved unequivocally that they have a genuinely positive impact on protection of the environment.

Two museologists from the Museum of Military History, Gergely Pál Sallay and Szilvia Závodi wrote about an unusual group of objects, various decorative objects and implements made from battlefield waste. As historical museologists it is not principally works of art that they see in objects made from used military equipment, they are much more interested in the creators themselves and the circumstances in which the objects were made. The first such objects entered the museum together with the material from the First World War, then the collection was expanded with similar pieces made during the Second World War. After the Museum of Military History jointly held an exhibition in 2006 together with the American collector Gary Hollingsworth that was both moving and aroused much interest, it received many offers of gifts and loans. As a result, in 2007 a renewed and much larger exhibition was opened, enlarged by the curators with objects from other exhibitions. Their study presents the main types of objects and ornamentations, as well as the historical and social background and the life situation in which these objects were made, objects that often symbolised survival and a new beginning after the horrors of war.

The topic of the last two studies in the volume is also waste, but from a more general viewpoint. Emese Gulyás defended her PhD dissertation at the Corvinus University Department of Sociology in 2012; its topic was ethical consumption. This is the term used nowadays for a concept that is gaining ground in the developed consumer societies, namely that consumer decisions should reflect the most important (community) basic values and norms. Empirical research by Cooper-Martin and Holbrook in 1993 showed that ethical consumption can be manifested in six main forms of action: non-consumption, value-loaded routine shopping, boycott, positive boycott (buycott), careful usage, and placement after usage, disposal. Among the various interpretations of ethical consumption, the author interprets it as political consumption, that is, she places the emphasis on the instrumental nature of consumption and the possibilities it offers for exercising political pressure. On the basis of Ulrich Beck’s reflexive modernisation and subpolitics theory, she regards consumers not only as market actors but also as political actors. The research done by Emese Gulyás (with the support of MTA – Sasakawa Young Leaders Fellowship

Fund), in which she conducted interviews with ethical consumers participating in self-organising consumer groups, confirmed Beck's theory that the wish to participate in public affairs plays a big role among the motivations for ethical consumption. In presenting the results and conclusions, the study in this volume places special emphasis on the details regarding the utilisation of waste.

The last study in the volume is by Veronika Murányi who has been carrying out field research for years in the Gyimes region of Transylvania (Romania) on change in waste handling and reutilisation and the relevant socio-cultural background. The traditional culture of the Gyimes was characterised by almost total (100%) recycling of material. Since the change of political system the traditional order has been gradually disintegrating, its elements have been blended with elements of western consumer civilisation, creating a local variant that regards western culture as its pattern but nevertheless differs from it. People who had in the past put aside every iron nail now find it difficult to deal with the changed quantity and quality of waste. The behaviour patterns serving reutilisation are able for a while to cope with the implements and new materials mass produced by the modern market economy (for example, empty plastic bottles can be used to make objects serving as many as twenty different purposes), but they do not know what to do with the unprecedented quantity of waste. Veronika Murányi examines the consequences for waste handling of the two different ways of thinking and problem-solving strategies found in the region (the formerly adaptive environmental nature for the circulation of materials of the local culture, and the official, institutionalised forms of environmental protection). She concludes that effective environmental protection is inconceivable without building on the local cultural tradition.

The book published by the MTA BTK Institute of Ethnology is striking in appearance too. The editing, graphic design and preprint were all done by associates of the institute. In addition to the editor, mention must be made of Károly Zsolt Nagy, who designed the cover and Krisztina Fancsek, who was responsible for the typography. In short, the volume edited by Péter Berta is interesting in both appearance and content. We can also welcome the fact that the full content has been made accessible online. This would enable the subsequent addition of brief presentations of the authors and foreign-language abstracts, at least to the online versions, especially desirable in view of the volume's outstanding scholarly importance.

The book is available in print from MTA BTK Institute of Ethnology, or can be downloaded from the Hungarian Electronic Library (<http://mek.oszk.hu/11200/11239/11239.pdf>), or from the institute's own website http://www.etnologia.mta.hu/images/stories/tu-dastar/hasznaltcikk/Hasznaltcikk_kulturak_2012.pdf).

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