



GEOGRAPHIA EST VIA VITAE: THE SLOVAK ANABASIS OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK ANTHROPOGEOGRAPHER JIŘÍ KRÁL (1893-1975)

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Abstract

Professor Jiří Král was, together with Viktor Dvorský, one of the most important founders of Czechoslovak anthropogeography. This Prague native and son of the eminent Czech philologist Josef Král studied Slavic philology, history and geography at the Charles University in Prague. His primary research interests were in the field of literary history and geography of Slavic countries. He worked briefly as a high school professor and in 1919 took up a position as an assistant to Professor Václav Švambera at the Geographical Institute of Charles University in Prague. In 1924 he was habilitated and in 1929 he filled a vacant post at the Comenius University in Bratislava after the departure of František Štůla. In this paper, we will discuss his stay in Bratislava in 1929-1938, which turned out to be the culminating period of his academic career. Král was an enthusiastic geographer who was not afraid to open new research agendas in accordance with his personal motto "Geographia est via vitae". However, his journey through life was an anabasis, i.e. full of hardships in overcoming various obstacles and problems. He had very difficult relations in the academic community and in the following period faced multiple persecutions and early retirement as a result of the rise of the totalitarian regimes of Nazism and Communism. Despite formal rehabilitation in 1966, he was not allowed to resume full participation in academic life. In this paper we will discuss in more detail the pedagogical, research and organizational activities of J. Král during his time in Bratislava. Based on a detailed study of archival materials, we will highlight some of his lesser-known initiatives.


Key words

Anthropogeography, applied geography, Comenius University in Bratislava, Czechoslovak geography, Geographical Seminar, history of geographic thought, interwar period, Jiří Král, military geography, persecuted geographers.

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INTRODUCTION

Along with Viktor Dvorský, Jiří Král is one of the important founders of Czechoslovak anthropogeography. This year marks the 130th anniversary of the anniversary of his birth. Král was an enthusiastic geographer who was not afraid to open new research agendas in accordance with his personal motto "Geographia est via vitae". Until now, his personality has not received systematic attention. References to his work can be found in more broadly focused works on the history of geography and geographic departments in Czechoslovakia (Häufner 1967, Carpathians, Slavík 2014, Martínek 2010, 2017, Matlovič 2008, 2018, Matlovič, Matlovičová 2018, Matlovičová, Matlovič 2019, Trávníček 1984). The most detailed data can be found in entries of biographical dictionaries (e.g. Martínek 2008, pp. 128-130, Martínek et Martínek 1998, pp. 253-254) and in medallions on the occasion of life anniversaries (Korčák 1968, 1973, Lukniš 1974).

The aim of this paper is to provide a comprehensive picture of his activities and their effects during his service at Comenius University in Bratislava in 1929-1938. The presented knowledge is based not only on the study of secondary sources, but was obtained on the basis of detailed research in the archives - the Archives of Comenius University in Bratislava (ACU)¹, the Literary Archive of the Slovak National Library in Martin (LA)² and the Masaryk Institute - Archives of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic in Prague (AAS)³. We consider the present paper to be a suitable model example illustrating the complexity of the situation, in which the establishment of geography as a university discipline at Comenius University took place. Throughout the whole period it was a struggle for

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- 1 The following fonds were the subject of research in the Archives of Comenius University in Bratislava (ACU): the fonds of the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University, Minutes of the Professors Meetings A1 1921-1938, the personal fond of Jiří Král, the fonds of the Geographical Seminar, the fonds of the Rectorate of CU - List of persons and institutes and state examination commissions and list of lectures for the winter and summer semesters, issued by Academic Senate of Comenius University. These fonds contain a number of documents relating to the running of the department. An important source of information are the minutes of the meetings of the professors at the Faculty of Arts and documentation concerning the efforts to establish a lectureship in military geography. There is also J. Král's personal collection, which contains personal and official correspondence, appointment decrees, documents relating to the proposal for his appointment as full professor and bibliographical summaries
 - 2 In the Literary Archive of the Slovak National Library in Martin (LA) there is in the fond Bokes František (1906-1968), sign. 137) the correspondence of F. Bokes with J. Král.
 - 3 The Masaryk Institute - Archives of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic in Prague (AAS) holds the personal collection of Jiří Král, which contains documents in 59 boxes. There are personal documents, personal and official correspondence, manuscripts of scientific, professional and popular articles, separates, clippings from contemporary press, biographical and bibliographical summaries, personal notes, documents concerning other persons, texts of lectures. The collection has not been processed, there is an accession protocol only.



its existence, especially in the clash with historians. For a better understanding, we also present the vicissitudes that Král went through.

BEFORE COMING TO BRATISLAVA

Jiří Král was born on 31 October 1893 in Prague. He grew up with his two siblings in Prague's Vinohrady (Mánesova Street) in the family of prof. Josef Král (1853-1917) and Anna, nee. Sychravová. He grew up in an intellectually stimulating environment that belonged to the Czech elite. His father was a classical philologist and translator from ancient literature. In 1909-10 he was the rector of the Czech Charles-Ferdinand University. The fact that he was buried in the Slavín - pantheon of important personalities of Czech national culture at the Vyšehrad cemetery - is a symbolic expression of his important social position. His mother was the daughter of Ferdinand Sychrava, a fighter for Czech Jihlava. These facts not only predetermined the young Král's professional career, but also influenced his values, expectations and attitudes. His writings preserved in the archives show that he was extremely active, ambitious, very demanding and critical, which quite often brought him many complications in his interpersonal relationships and professional activities.

In 1904-1912 he successfully graduated from a classical grammar school. In 1912-1916 he studied Czech language, history and geography at the Czech Charles-Ferdinand University. Geography was provided by prof. V. Švambera, prof. J.V. Daneš and doc. V. Dvorský in that period. It was at this time that the Institute of Geography acquired premises in a new building in Prague's Albertov district (Häufner 1967, p. 115). In 1914-1916 Král worked as a librarian in the Slavonic Seminar of the Faculty of Arts. After the death of his father, he worked briefly as a tutor in the family of the landowner Harrach. In 1917-1920 he was a teacher at the Second State Real School in Prague-Vinohrady. At the same time, he devoted himself mainly to the study of Slavic languages. Professionally, he devoted himself to literary history, from which he received his doctorate in 1917. In 1920 he accepted the offer of prof. Švambera and took up a position as an assistant at the Geographical Institute of Charles University, which became vacant with the departure of V. Dvorský to the College of Commerce. In his later memoirs he stated that he preferred this offer to the lucrative offer of the Harrach family to accompany Jan Harrach to England⁴.

After joining the Institute of Geography at Charles University, he began to work on the geography of Slavic countries at the instigation of Švambera. He made several study trips to universities in Bulgaria, Poland and Belgrade, from which he brought valuable scientific literature to the Institute's library. These efforts resulted

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in his habilitation in 1924 in the field of geography of Slavic countries. This also influenced the focus of his teaching activities. The Ministry allowed substituting lectures in the geography of Slavic countries for 3 hours a week, which created the conditions for the establishment of a separate chair for the geography of Slavic countries in Prague (Král 1936e, p. 2). Král provided lectures in several subjects - Introduction to the Geography of Slavic Countries, Bulgaria, Subcarpathian Rus, Anthropogeography of the Southern Slavs, Natural Areas of the Czechoslovak Republic, Economic Geography of the Czechoslovak Republic, European Russia, and from 1927 he also headed one of the departments of the geographical pro-seminar⁵. Král also reflected on the teaching of the geography of Slavic countries in two review articles (Král 1926d, 1936e).

Research activities were predetermined by Švambera's assignment to carry out field research in Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus. Král went to the High Tatras for the first time in 1919, and in the following years he made research trips to various localities. He focused in particular on research in sparsely populated and developed rural areas, with a view to studying pastoralism in the Carpathian Mountains in Subcarpathian Rus. The French geographer E. de Martonne's 1904 „*La vie pastorale et la transhumance dans le Carpathes meridionales in Romania*“/ *Pastoral life and transhumance in the Southern Carpathians in Romania*“ and the eminent Polish geographer L. Sawicki's 1911 „*Wędrówki pasterskie w Karpatach*“/ *Wanderings in the Carpathian Mountains*“ were the impetus for these investigations and the methodological inspiration for them (Korčák 1968). From 1924, Král was a member of the Slavic Commission for Research on Pastoralism in the Carpathians and the Balkans. This commission was initiated at the First Congress of Slavic geographers and ethnographers in Prague. This congress was held on the initiative of the eminent Serbian geographer J. Cvijić, who had already proposed it to the Slavic geographers during the International Geographical Congress in 1913 in Rome. The congress was organised only after a delay of more than ten years. Král became involved in the work of the commission immediately after its establishment, during a scientific excursion of the participants. In the following years he headed the Czechoslovak section of the commission. Thanks to this, he became part of the network of international cooperation (Král 1928e), and he cooperated particularly intensively with W. Kubijowicz. In 1926 he carried out field research on Hutsul settlements together with the Ukrainian geographer S. Rudnycky. Král repeatedly reported on the results of the work of the Czechoslovak section of the Commission at congresses and in review articles (e.g. Král 1929d, 1930e, 1961a). Král's greatest contribution in this period was his work on Subcarpathian Rus. He prepared a very detailed bibliographical survey of the state of research on this territory, which he later updated (Král 1923a, 1928a). He assessed the state of knowledge

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in several review articles (Král 1924c, 1930d, 1935, 1938a). He also published several studies on the settlement of Subcarpathian Rus (Král 1923c, 1926b), shepherding and pastoral life (Král 1925b, 1928b, 1929a), the regionalisation of Subcarpathian Rus into production areas and natural agricultural areas (Král 1924b), as well as a comprehensive work on Subcarpathian Rus (Král 1924a). In particular, his synthetic studies on the settlement and economic use of several mountain territories in Subcarpathian Rus - Chorna Hora (Král 1923b), Polonina Rivna (Král 1925a) and Svidovets (1927a) - are considered to be a very valuable contribution. Král also reacted to the establishment of the new state and prepared a geographical guidebook on Czechoslovakia (Král 1921), and was also involved in the creation of the first tourist guides on Czechoslovakia, which were published in English and German (Král 1928c, 1928d). He also edited a collection of essays dedicated to the jubilee of V. Švambera (Král 1926a).

In 1929 this stage of Král's professional career came to an end, as he left Prague for Bratislava to attend Comenius University. In his later memoirs, Král is quite critical of his departure for Bratislava. He regretted that he could not devote himself to the geography of the Slavic countries to such an extent. He attributed his departure to the tactical manoeuvres of Švambera, who, in his opinion, was only a cameral geographer with no experience of field research. Král, stressing the need for field research, was therefore reportedly disgusted with him and so sent him to Bratislava instead. However, other documents show that Švambera had a favourable attitude towards him. The best evidence of this is the favourable opinion and recommendation, which Švambera prepared at the request of the commission for the appointment of J. Král as a full professor of antropogeography at the Comenius University in Bratislava in 1933⁶.

KRÁL AT COMENIUS UNIVERSITY IN BRATISLAVA

From the overview so far, it is clear that Král came to Comenius University already as a profiled and internationally accepted scientific and pedagogical personality. His arrival in Bratislava triggered a chain of events. At the beginning of March 1929 V. Dvorský had a stroke during his business trip in London. The consequences were so severe that he could no longer continue his work as a professor at the College of Commerce in Prague. František Štůla, who had been working at Comenius University since 1925, took over the post vacated by him. He was the first full professor of general geography appointed on the basis of a proposal from Comenius University. Paradoxically, his appointment took place on 30 April 1929, i.e. already in the time when it was obvious that his tenure in Bratislava was over (Matlovič, Matlovičová 2022). The announced departure of Štůla to

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Prague was already addressed by the professorial board of the Faculty of Arts of the Comenius University in Bratislava at its meeting on 13 March 1929, when it approved a commission to fill the vacant professorial chair composed of K. Chotek, F. Štůla and V. Chaloupecký. On the basis of the proposal of this commission, the professorial board, at its meeting on 15 May 1929, approved the proposal for the appointment of Jiří Král as an extraordinary professor of anthropogeography at Comenius University⁷. On 10 October 1929, the Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment entrusted Král with substituting lectures in geography in Bratislava for 8 hours a week as well as with holding relevant exercises. Soon President T.G. Masaryk on 23. 10. 1929 appointed J. Král as an extraordinary professor of anthropogeography at the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University (decree issued on 27th November 1929), which finally resolved the situation of the vacant professor's chair⁸. J. Král first attended the meeting of the professorial board on 20th November 1929, where he made a proposal on behalf of the absent prof. Chotek to appoint a commission for the habilitation proceedings of J. Hromádka (composed of Chotek, Štůla, Král).

Král as director and organizer

In 1929, Král took over the management of the Geographical Seminar⁹ and the Geographical Proseminar from Štůla. He was a very agile director. According to the surviving correspondence and other documents, he worked tirelessly to improve its spatial, personnel and material conditions. Practically from the beginning, however, he encountered problems and the hostility of his colleagues, especially historians. For several years he was unable to resolve the official takeover of the Geographical Seminar's inventory, entering into conflicts over this. For example, at a meeting of the professorial board on 29 January 1936, his announcement that he no longer intended to serve as director of the Geographical Seminar and the Geographical Proseminar was discussed. He justified this on the grounds that he had been exercising it for more than 6 years without proper appointment by the Ministry and without remuneration, and he asked the Dean's Office to take over the responsibility for the management of the Geographical Seminar. However, the professorial board did not accept this. Finally, it was not until 1937 that a proper takeover of the Geographical Seminar was completed¹⁰.

Král also sought to expand the staff of the department. In 1930, as a member of the commission, he participated in the habilitation of J. Hromádka, who

7 ACU Bratislava, Fond Faculty of Arts, minutes of the professorial board 1921-1939

8 ACU Bratislava, Personal fond of Jiří Král

9 Geographical seminar was a basic institutional unit, which delivered geographic education and research at the Faculty of Arts Comenius University

10 ACU Bratislava, Fond Faculty of Arts, sign. 80.



subsequently began to work at the Geographical Seminar as a private associate professor. During his stay in Paris in 1931-1932, Král arranged for some subjects to be taught by his Prague colleagues V.J. Novák and K. Kuchař. The Geographical Seminar was struggling with a shortage of additional support staff. Initially, Král had at his disposal the scientific auxiliary assistants of V. Maříková (1929-1932) and J. Hubáček (1932-1934). In the following years, due to cuts in the financial endowment, even this position could not be filled. It was not until 1937 that F. Pätoprstý (1937-1938) began to help out, and after him came F. Toporcer (1938-1940) (Matlovič 2018, p. 165). Due to the aforementioned unfavourable financial situation and the lack of students, the private associate professor docent J. Hromádka did not hold classes in some semesters (e.g. in 1937), which put an even heavier burden on Král. He tried to stabilize the situation in terms of personnel and agreed to the division of the Geographical Seminar into the Seminar for Physical Geography and the Seminar for Anthropogeography, which actually took place already in 1936 and was formally confirmed by the Ministry in 1938. J. Hromádka became the director of the Seminar for Physical Geography and J. Král continued as the director of the Geographical Proseminar and the Seminar for Anthropogeography. In 1938, Král was instrumental in getting J. Hromádka appointed as an extraordinary professor of physical geography (Matlovič 2018, p. 174).

The Geographical Seminar also struggled with problems of space and material equipment during this period. At the time of J. Král's arrival, it was housed in the Gymnasium building at 33 Dunajská Street, in a side wing facing Reichardova (now Rajská) Street. Immediately after his arrival, Král successfully applied for the establishment of a photographic chamber. In 1930 the lecture room was taken away from the seminar. In 1931, Král demanded new facilities for the seminar, but in the end he had to vacate the premises to the Gymnasium in the summer and for half a year the seminar was in a state of stopgap. From 1932, the premises on the first floor of the courtyard wing of the Municipal Savings Bank building at 22 Republic Square (now SNP Square) were made available to the seminar. The conditions were not satisfactory and the Král often complained. Finally, in 1937, after a water main failure caused the premises to flood, it was possible to obtain premises for the Geographical Seminar in the building at 32b Reichardova Street (now 12 Rajská Street) opposite its original seat in the Gymnasium building (Martínek 2017, pp. 224-5). These premises housed the geography department until 1986.

Král tried to solve the inadequate state of the library by founding the edition "*Geographical Works-Les Travaux géographiques*", in which 13 volumes were published in 1930-1938. He took great pains to secure financial support for this publishing activity, publishing many of the works from his own funds. He exchanged these publications for foreign literature with many universities, geographical societies and editorial offices around the world, thus enriching the Bratislava geographical library immeasurably.



Král's organisational activities were also related to the work of the Czechoslovak Geographical Society. Together with V. Dědina, he initiated the 1st Congress of Czechoslovak Geographers in 1930 in Brno and was the main organizer (together with Hromádka and Žibrita) of the 2nd Congress of Czechoslovak Geographers in Bratislava in October 1933, which was attended by 114 experts, featured 63 papers in 4 sections and included an exhibition of student papers and maps and 3 excursions. At this event, Král presented a paper entitled *'The latest anthropogeographical maps of Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus'*, in which he presented nine anthropogeographical maps. His aim was to show the different possibilities of cartographic interpretation of individual anthropogeographic phenomena. In his later memoirs, the Král complained about various obstacles in the organisation of this event, which was originally supposed to take place in 1932. He even mentioned Hromádka, who allegedly sabotaged the preparation of the congress¹¹.

Král was instrumental in the development of international cooperation. One of his closest collaborators was the Polish-Ukrainian geographer W. Kubijowicz from Cracow, with whom he made joint field research in the Carpathian Mountains (Borzhava). Král invited him to Bratislava for a lecture in March 1930. Kubijowicz gave two lectures - the first on the spread of cultures and folkways in Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus and the second on the main types of pastoral life in Slovakia) (Matlovič 2018, p. 171). As part of the Geographical works series, Kubijowicz published three volumes: 'Participation of the inhabitants of Spiš in pastoral life' (vol. 3, 1932), 'Pastoral life in Subcarpathian Rus. I.' (vol. 8, 1935), "Pastoral Life in Subcarpathian Rus. II" (vol. 10, 1937). Another monograph on pastoral life in Slovakia, which was already ready for printing, could not be published, because lack of finance (Matlovič 2018, p. 171).

Pedagogical activity

Král taught at the Comenius University in Bratislava for 19 semesters. He taught a full range of core courses: General Physical Geography, Introduction to Human Geography, General Economic Geography, Geographical Seminar, Geographical Proseminar, Field Exercises and Excursions. He also introduced new subjects not provided by his predecessors: Geography of Trade, Geography of World Transport, People and Mountains, Geography of Rural Settlements, Regional Geography of Australia and Oceania, Geography of Poland, Geography of Bulgaria, Geography of the European part of the Soviet Union, Geography of Eastern Europe, Anthropogeography of the Czechoslovak Republic, Natural Areas of Czechoslovakia. He emphasized new publications and maps in his seminars and devoted some semesters to the analysis of specific geographical monographs by

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P. Deffontaines “La vie forestière en Slovaquie” and W. Kubijowicz “Pastoral Life in Subcarpathian Rus”. Král was also instrumental in expanding the range of courses to include a cartography course, which was provided by J. Hromádka, with K. Kuchař substituting in his absence. One of the most important students of J. Král was František Bokes (1906-1968), who in 1943 became the first director of the Geographical Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences and Arts (Matlovičová, Matlovič 2019, p. 78). Král maintained contact with Bokes until his death, as evidenced by their correspondence from 1966-1968¹². Král was also concerned with issues of geographical education and its support in the form of textbooks, maps, atlases and other aids (Král 1933a, 1936d).

Scientific research activity

Král partly continued the focus of his scientific research activities, which he carried out in Prague. As pointed out by M. Lukniš (1974, p. 67), Král significantly influenced the fate of geography not only at Comenius University, but also in the whole of Slovakia.

His first research domain was the research on the occasional settlements and pastoral life in the Carpathian Mountains with special regard to Subcarpathian Rus, which he carried out in the spirit of the French school of regional geography of P. Vidal de la Blache. The main results include a three-volume interdisciplinary monograph on Borzhava - a mountain area in the Eastern Carpathians, which Král prepared with several experts - W. Kubijowicz, A. Hilitzer, L. Jonáš, K. Kuchař, M. Maloch, A. Matějka, E. Perfeckij. Král contributed to this work with chapters on local places names, pastoral life (together with Kubijowicz), settlement development, occasional and permanent urban and rural settlement units, unoccupied buildings, rural and mixed rural-urban permanent settlements, and characteristics of the main settlement districts of the Borzhava area (Hilitzer et al. 1932, Král et al. 1933, Král 1936a). A fourth volume was also in preparation, which was to be devoted to the population and economic land use and transport of the Borzhava area (Král 1936a, p. 3).

The second research domain was the questions of anthropogeographical research of Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus. Among the main outputs was a study on the state of natural history and anthropogeographical research in Slovakia (Král 1930b). In it, Král clearly inventoried the results and status of research on the natural environment of Slovakia according to its individual components. He limited himself to a list of researchers and institutions that carried out this research. He described anthropogeographical research in more detail. He considered Slovakia to be a very suitable area of interest. He justified this by the existence of relatively isolated small areas that had not yet been exposed to foreign influence,

12 LA Martin, Personal Fond Bokes František



where many anthropogeographical curiosities could be found. He was looking for analogies with geomorphological research, which in Slovakia finds relatively distinct units suitable for monographic research. Král also pays special attention to the results of the work of W. Kubijowicz and J. Pohl and announces his own research programme aimed at anthropogeographical monographs of some natural areas. In the next part of the study he presents the works of foreign authors that can serve as methodological inspiration for research in Slovakia. In the case of J. Cvijić, he appreciated his emphasis on field research. French geographers P. Vidal de la Blache, J. Brunhes and P. Deffontaine provided models for the development of regional monographs of small areas. In the case of Brunhes, he also mentioned his recommendation to investigate place names, which are a similar tool for the anthropogeographer as fossils are for the geologist. Among other authors, he mentioned L. Sawicki and V. Dvorský. Král then discusses the characteristics of two ways of conducting research. The first relies on secondary sources, mainly the results of research in related disciplines and the study of maps. The second method relies on collecting primary data directly in the field. In addition to observation, he identified interviewing as an effective method. Consequently, it assumes either an analytical orientation resulting in a deep knowledge of a partial phenomenon or a synthetic orientation which may result in a monographic work of a particular area. Within these considerations, in a footnote, he also reflects on the problem of the inconsistent and chaotic understanding of the division of the Carpathian territory into natural areas of their nomenclature in contemporary literature. Another problem he has pointed out is the fragmentation and dispersion of research activities on initiatives into many institutional units - the Committee for Research on Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus and institutes of Charles University in Prague, the Commission for Research on the Tatra Mountains and their immediate areas and institutes of Masaryk University in Brno, the Šafárik Learned Society, institutes of Comenius University and the Society of the Homeland Museum of Slovakia in Bratislava, the Slovak Matica and the Slovak Museum Society in Turčiansky St. Martin. According to Král, it would be necessary for these scholars to join forces and produce a joint synthetic monographic work on Slovakia (Král 1930b, pp. 344-6). According to archival materials, Král worked on two monographs in 1934-1938 - Anthropogeography of the Turčianska kotlina/Turčianska Basin and Anthropogeography of the Malé Karpaty/Small Carpathians. He was unable to complete either due to his forced departure to Prague at the end of 1938.

The third important domain of his research interests was the question of the division of the Carpathian Mountains and the territory of the Czechoslovak Republic. He began to address the problem of the delimitation of the natural areas of the Czechoslovak Carpathians as early as 1922 and 1923 in discussions with the botanist K. Domin, to whom he presented the first rough and provisional proposal for the delimitation and naming of these areas. Subsequently, as early as 1925, at



a meeting of the Czechoslovak Geographical Society in Prague, he proposed that attention should be paid to unifying the location, delimitation and naming of the larger mountain groups in Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus. He reopened the issue at the 2nd Congress of Slavic Geographers and Ethnographers in Poland in 1927, and he also reported on it at the 1st Congress of Czechoslovak Geographers in 1930 in Brno and in the same year at the 3rd Congress of Slavic Geographers and Ethnographers in Ljubljana. His speech provoked a rather rich discussion, which resulted in the draft of another resolution prepared by J. Kral and F. Koláček. Král then expanded his report with several suggestions by J. Moscheles and published it as a separate study (Král 1930a). The study begins with a definition of the term natural area, by which he understood an internally relatively homogeneous part of the Earth's surface separated from other neighbouring parts by distinct orographic boundaries. In addition, a definition is given of a cultural (sociological) area as a unit formed from a natural area by social and cultural coexistence with natural forces. While he regarded natural areas as static, he attributed a dynamic character to cultural areas. He considered transport flows as a key element in their delimitation and also assumed different hierarchical levels of cultural areas. He considered the work of the British geographer C.B. Fawcett to be a methodologically inspiring attempt to define cultural areas. The study continues with a review of previous attempts to subdivide the Carpathians. He then describes his own methodological approach. His regionalisation was based on natural conditions, taking into account anthropogeographical elements. In the empirical part, he presents the delimitation of 41 natural areas grouped into 10 higher order units with a corresponding map (Král 1930a). Two years later he prepared a study of the natural areas of the western part of Czechoslovakia (Král 1932). This study provoked critical reviews by F. Koláček and F. Říkovský. Koláček pointed out, for example, that the orographic subdivision of the Moravian-Silesian landscape was made for the Commission for Local Nomenclature on the basis of his 1931 report, and the subdivision of the Czech landscape on the basis of V. Dědinu and V.J. Novák from 1932, which essentially accused Kral of plagiarism (Koláček 1933). Král reacted to this criticism (Král 1933e). He then invited Hromádka, as a geologist and geomorphologist, to work together on a new proposal. This was prepared in 1933 in 50 pages, but was not published. Král also collaborated with Polish and Ukrainian geographers on this subdivision and discussed it several times with J. Moscheles and also with V.J. Novák¹³.

Král also dealt with other issues. Drawing inspiration from the works of P. Deffontaines on seasonally employed craftsmen and tradesmen in Slovakia, he investigated the life of Bulgarian gardeners in the vicinity of Bratislava (Král 1936b). He also compiled a geographical handbook on the Czechoslovak Republic, which was published in Belgrade (Král 1933d). He also began to devote himself

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to the geographical study of rural settlements (Král 1934, 1936c, 1938b). He also reviewed research in Bulgaria and the contribution of Bulgarian scientists for the development of geography (Král 1933c, 1938d). He also continued to produce tourist guides (Král 1936g).

In addition to publications, he reported the results of his scientific activity at national and international congresses. At the First Congress of Czechoslovak Geographers in 1930 in Brno, he presented a paper on the new division of the Czechoslovak Carpathians. At the Third Congress of Slavic geographers and ethnographers in 1930 in Ljubljana, he presented a report on the activities of the Czechoslovak section of the Slavic Commission for Research on Pastoral Life in the Carpathians and the Balkans. At the 2nd Congress of Czechoslovak Geographers in 1933 in Bratislava he reported on the latest anthropogeographical maps of Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus. He gave two papers at the 3rd Congress of Czechoslovak Geographers in 1935 in Pilsen. The first was on the study of rural settlements in Czechoslovakia and the second was on geography in secondary school textbooks. At the 4th Congress of Czechoslovak Geographers in 1937 in Olomouc, he presented his thoughts on the immediate tasks of anthropogeography in Czechoslovakia. At the 15th International Geographical Congress in 1938 in Amsterdam, he gave a paper in German entitled "Die Durchforschung des Hirtenlebens in den Tschechoslowakisches Karpathen"/ The Pastoral Life Research in the Czechoslovak Carpathians¹⁴.

Expertise for practice

In addition to his purely academic activities, Král was also engaged in expertise for practice. Later, he also wrote on this topic about the need for the development of applied geography (Král 1945, 1949).

In 1938, he submitted to the Ministry of National Defence a conceptual proposal of two alternatives for the construction of a hydroelectric dam on the Hnilec River near the village of Dedinky and for the diversion of water through an underground pipeline to the Slaná basin for the Dobšiná hydroelectric power plant. In the same year, for the Bata company, he prepared a conceptual proposal for the construction of an artificial lake in the High Tatras by flooding the former moraine lake below Kamzík on the Studený Potok river in the two-stage alternative with a pumping hydroelectric power plant. In 1948 he repeatedly submitted this proposal to the State Planning and Statistical Office in Bratislava.

On the basis of the request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, J. Král was to prepare a revision of the delimitation plan of the Catholic dioceses in Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus, which had been prepared by František Machát, and possibly to prepare a new revised proposal. In the period March-September 1938, he drew up

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a provisional proposal for the delimitation of the dioceses, taking into account the comments of church dignitaries and also the national conditions in the dioceses¹⁵.

THE MAIN KRÁL'S STRUGGLES DURING HIS STAY IN BRATISLAVA

The issue of housing

Král was the first Czech professor of geography at Comenius University who undertook to move to Bratislava. His predecessors J. V. Daneš and F. Štůla were so-called "suitcase professors" who commuted to Bratislava for two and three days a week, respectively. However, he had a condition that the apartment should be cheap and reasonable. In Prague, he lived in a four-room apartment that belonged to his father-in-law. In Bratislava, he first gave his residence on Hradobna Street. Later he was given an apartment in the professor's house at 2 Dankovského Street. At the same time, he was reimbursed for his moving expenses. Soon, however, Král complained in letters about the disproportionate increase in rent (by 30 % on 1 October 1932 and by a further 30 % on 1 April 1933) in the flat in the professor's house at 2 Dankovského Street and asked for the possibility of moving back to Prague and subsequent reimbursement of travel expenses on the Prague-Bratislava route. He also complained about the high prices in Bratislava, which was the most expensive city in the whole of Czechoslovakia. He documented his income and expenses in great detail and argued that his family budget was unsustainable. He also pointed out that he still had to travel to Prague on business, particularly to access the latest literature, because there was no suitable professional library in Bratislava and also several disciplines with which he had had contact at the Prague faculty were not being developed at the Comenius University, which negatively affected his scientific activities. He also mentioned that he could not count in the future on his wife's financial income from renting three apartment buildings in Prague-Podolí, of which she was a co-owner. There had been a sudden fall in rents as a result of the economic crisis and the insolvency of several tenants. These efforts were unsuccessful and Král lived in the Bratislava apartment until the end of his stay in Slovakia.

Limiting the field of geography

As director of the Geographical Seminar, Král faced a significant threat to its existence. The impetus was a resolution of the professorial board of the Faculty of Arts on 27 April 1934, which, on the basis of the low number of students and the financial crisis, proposed to limit it considerably and even contemplated the abolition of geography as a field of study. A decree of the Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment of 7 June 1934 subsequently abolished the study

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of geography for future secondary school teachers, leaving only the professional studies preparing for the rigorous examinations. As a consequence, the financial subsidy of the Geographical Seminar was reduced, exercises were restricted, the part-time substitute private assistant professor J. Hromádka was not allowed to increase his workload, and the assistant post could not be occupied. This was a paradoxical decision because there was an acute need for secondary school teachers in Slovakia. The attitude of the Faculty of Arts changed in the autumn of 1934. However, requests for the resumption of teaching studies went unanswered by the Ministry for a long time. Král tried to draw attention to the problem. He also appealed in an article published on 16 February 1936 in the newspaper. In it he presented arguments in favour of the establishment of a Faculty of Science and drew attention to the marginal position of geography as the only natural science department at Comenius University. He emphasised mainly scientific arguments, linking the need for the development of natural sciences with the needs of economic practice (Král 1936f). It was not until 1937 that it was finally possible to reinstate the study of geography teaching (Martínek 2017, p. 225)¹⁶.

Professorship

The weakened position of geography at Comenius University is illustrated by the peripeties related to the proposal to appoint Král as a full professor. At a meeting on 1 February 1933, the professorial board approved a commission consisting of prof. Chaloupecký - historian, prof. Klecanda - auxiliary historical sciences and prof. Kalda - German philologist. Due to the absence of an expert in geography, the commission requested an opinion from prof. Švambera and also asked for the opinion of prof. Vitásek and Horák from Brno (who ultimately did not agree to its publication). Their aim was to evaluate the results of Král's work in the period after his appointment as an extraordinary professor. Švambera sent a positive opinion. He praised Král for having already directed his research interests to the eastern part of the Czechoslovak Republic during his time in Prague. He noted that after his appointment as an extraordinary professor, he began to devote himself to the organization of geographical education and research in Slovakia. He pointed out that in his activities Král followed a very broadly conceived programme. First, he undertook a detailed documentation of the state of existing knowledge and published a bibliography of works on Subcarpathian Rus. This is valuable material not only for him, but for other researchers dealing with this territory. According to Švambera, Král was very familiar with contemporary literature, not only anthropogeographical, but also more broadly focused. He greatly appreciated his study on natural history and anthropogeographical research in Slovakia, in which he rightly pointed out the unsystematic nature of Slovak exploration.

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He appreciated the results of Král's many years of anthropogeographical research in mountainous areas. According to Švambera, Král developed his own research procedure, although he was undoubtedly inspired by French geographers (he mentions Arbos). Král was particularly active in discussions with Polish and French geographers. Švambera highlighted the fact that Král regularly reported on the work of the Slavic Commission for the Study of Pastoralism in the Carpathians and the Balkans at congresses and other events. According to him, Král himself had achieved remarkable results in the study of the Hutsuls in the Marmarosh Alps. Švambera also pointed out that Král did not limit himself to anthropogeographical research on mountain areas, but also devoted himself to the regionalisation of the territory of Czechoslovakia. This is a challenging issue, especially in relation to the application of physical and anthropogeographical criteria in the delimitation of natural and cultural areas. Švambera appreciated the fact that Král did not base his proposal for the subdivision only on a good knowledge of the literature and the study of maps, but also knew the territory from his detailed field research. He appreciated the fact that, in delimiting the natural areas of the western part of the Czechoslovak Republic, he had tried to be reasonably proportionate to his proposed division of the Czechoslovak Carpathians. In his final summing-up, he highlighted Král's diligence, his strictness with himself and his very clear idea of the definition of geography as a science. Of his style of expression, he said that it was factual, concise and more akin to the language of the exact sciences¹⁷.

The Commission considered the proposal at its meeting on January 22, 1934. It concentrated on the evaluation of the candidate's performance since his appointment for extraordinary professor, approved on May 15, 1929. It proceeded according to the standards agreed upon at the meeting of the seniors of the various disciplines and subsequently approved by the Faculty of Arts. However, the members were not unanimous in their evaluation of Král. Historians Chaloupecký and Klecanda were convinced that Král's research activities after 1929 were not of such a scope or nature as to warrant nominating him for appointment as a full professor. In their view, Král's articles were short, several-page reference papers. They faulted him for two larger articles, not exceeding 20 pages, which he had co-authored with W. Kubijowicz. In the three larger articles (Král 1930a, 1930b, 1932), it was not possible to identify the author's own contribution to the production of original findings. They also pointed out that one of the studies (Král 1932) provoked a very critical response in the reviews (Koláček and Říkovský). They therefore recommended that the proposal be postponed and that time be allowed for Král to show improvement. The third member of the commission, the philologist Kalda (who was dean at the time), did not share their views. He argued that the favourable opinion of Švambera should be taken into account. The commission's proposal was

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presented to the professorial board at a meeting on January 24, 1934. Professor Kolář took the floor and objected to the proposal of committee. He reproached the committee for not taking into account in the proposal another extensive work by Král on Czechoslovakia, published in Belgrade, and for not taking into account the map-making and extensive organisational activities of the applicant. He disputed the arguments about professional inadequacy by confirming it in the opinion of Švambera. The appellants, who were not active in the field, should, in his view, have submitted the opinions of other experts which would have provided suitable reasoning. He recalled that at the meeting of the professorial board on 17 May 1933 they had announced that they had approached Prof. Vitásek and Horák. Therefore, Kolář suggested that the professorial board should agree with the opinion of Dean Kalda. Chaloupecký, in response, objected to the claim that he was not an expert and stated that he had drawn up the proposal in accordance with his best knowledge and conscience. He defended himself on the matter of expertise, citing his background in anthropogeography. If the Board approved the proposal, he would exercise a minority veto against it. He then left the meeting. Kolář countered that at the time of the discussion of the proposal at the meeting of the seniors on February 1, 1933, Chaloupecký himself had stated that, in the absence of an expert on the commission, he recommended that an opinion be solicited from Prof. Švambera. Klecanda then took the floor and described in detail the results of Král's publications, repeating the arguments about their small size and the fact that several of them were co-authored. Klecanda mentioned that the commission had also requested private opinions from other experts, but that he could not mention them because they had not given their consent to their publication. Kolář rejected the fact that some of the information could not be known by the board because it was private and stated that Klecanda had not convinced him that the commission had considered all aspects of Král's work and accused him of trying to devalue Král's work even more in his statement than the commission had done in its written proposal. The board then voted first on the committee's proposal that Král not be nominated for appointment as a full professor. There were 15 members present, 7 in favor and 8 against, so the motion did not pass. The board then voted on the proposal of the third member of the commission, Kalda, that Král be proposed for appointment as a full professor. By a vote of 9 to 6, the board approved the motion. Chaloupecký and Klecanda immediately announced that they would file a minority vote against the motion, in which they presented arguments against the appointment of Král as full professor. Kolář subsequently pointed out that the minority vote was submitted in violation of the regulations. The Professorial board, at a meeting on 14 March 1934, therefore rejected the minority vote and attached it only as an appendix to the proposal sent to the Ministry¹⁸.

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This, however, was not the end of the obstacles with the appointment. The Ministry of Education subsequently approached the faculty to see if it would be possible to extend Král's professorship to a broader field than anthropogeography. This proposal was reconsidered by the committee at a meeting on 22 January 1935. The majority (Klecanda and Chaloupecký) were opposed to the extension of the field (*venia docendi*); a third member, Kalda, after privately consulting the question with professors from Charles University Švambera, Dědina, and Šalamon, recommended the extension of the field for Král on his appointment as full professor. Finally, President T. G. Masaryk, by a decision of August 21, 1935, appointed J. Král as a full professor of anthropogeography at the Faculty of Arts Comenius University in Bratislava with retroactive effect from 1st July 1935¹⁹.

Efforts to establish a lectureship in military geography

In November 1937, Král began activity with the intention of establishing a lectureship in military geography. He proposed that compulsory classes in physical and military education be introduced at Comenius University. He envisaged that military geography should be compulsory for all students of the university to the extent of 2-3 hours per week. In the justification of the proposal, he argued that military geography was one of the most important components of the military education of youth. He pointed out that in Germany special professorships were being set up for the subject. He also envisaged the lectureship's external educational influence in the wider community. He specifically mentioned the Boy Scouts, physical education and other organizations serving in the field of military and security training. Part of Král's argumentation in favor of the establishment of the lectorate included a warning about the limited capacity of the Geographical Seminar and the overload of its two staff members, including only one professor and a private associate professor (J. Hromádka), who would not be able to provide instruction in military geography. His argumentation ends with a warning of the necessity to quickly ensure the readiness of the population for the defence of the state. With this proposal, Král sought to significantly strengthen the position of the geography in the structure of Comenius University, taking advantage of the contemporary context of the militarisation of the economy and society. Král subsequently made great efforts to obtain the approval of the professorial board. He was looking for a suitable expert who would be willing to accept the position of lecturer. Gradually he communicated with U. Kolařík, A. Mrzena, Š. Andreas and F. Houdek. In the end, the intention to establish a lectureship in military geography was not realised²⁰. The turbulent political events in the autumn of 1938, which led to the forced departure of J. Kral to Prague, contributed to this (Matlovič, Matlovičová 2018).

19 AAS Prague, Personal Papers, Fond Jiří Král

20 AUC Bratislava, D6, Fond Geographical Seminar, 1937-1938, box 111.



Forced departure from Slovakia

The turbulent events in the autumn of 1938, especially the signing of the Munich Agreement and the declaration of Slovak autonomy, created a very unfavourable atmosphere for the continued stay of Czech professors at Comenius University. The situation was gradually becoming more serious, which apparently left its mark on the health of J. Král, who by letter of 9 November 1938 asked the ministry for a medical leave of absence. He justified his request on the grounds of his tiring 9-year work for the Comenius University, but also on the suffering brought about by the actions of some Czech colleagues (he was probably referring to the peripeties in the approval of a full professorship) as well as the actions taken against him by the Slovak side at the time. The Ministry granted his request by letter of 1 December 1938 and granted him a proper paid leave until the end of 1938. The Government of the Slovak Republic, by its decision of 19 December 1938, gave, by agreement with the central Czechoslovak Government of 12 December 1938, J. Král (together with most of the Czech professors at the Comenius University) at the disposal of the Land of Bohemia and Moravia-Silesia with effect from 31 December 1938. As a result, J. Král was released from the service of the Faculty of Arts in Bratislava as of 31 December 1938. This marked the end of his tenure at the Comenius University of Bratislava²¹.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL THOUGHT OF J. KRÁL

The most important sources in which we can find reflections of geographical thought are Král's textbooks (Král 1941a, 1941b), a brief monograph on the tasks of Czech geography (Král 1945) and a joint study with J. Kondracki on the state of geography in the West Slavic countries (Král, Kondracki 1951). Král was influenced mainly by the Vidalian tradition of human geography (founded by P. Vidal de la Blache) - especially the Parisian school (J. Brunhes, A. Demangeon, P. Deffontaine) and the Grenoblian school (R. Blanchard, J. Blache, Ph. Arbos) with some inspiration from the American and British schools (I. Bowman, E. Huntington, W. Cushing), some Polish geographers (L. Sawicki, S. Pawlowski) and the Serbian geographer J. Cvijić. He rejected German anthropogeography and defined himself against its successors in Czech geography (Kolářček, Říkovský, Pohl). Král emphasized the activity of man as a geographical agent and traced the development of man's increasing influence on his environment from the people of primitive culture to the peoples of highly developed culture. Under the influence of Cvijić, Brunhes and Demangeon, he strongly emphasized field research, data collection techniques through surveys, map work and inductive procedures. He promoted research in small areas, the

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perfect knowledge of which he considered a prerequisite for understanding large units. This is clear from his position paper:

"only perfect research of small (natural, cultural) areas, and not, as before, only superficial knowledge of large units, leads to perfect geographical knowledge of these large units as well and, of course, to the derivation of certain laws and rules, which are also valid in geography" (Král 1945, p. 8).

This understanding of regional geography as microgeography distinguished him from other colleagues who, under German influence, promoted cultural regional geography (Kolářček and Říkovský) (Král 1945, p. 17). Král also dealt with position of geography in the system of sciences. In his view, he criticized the outdated view that geography belonged to the humanities and promoted the understanding of geography as a natural science (Král 1945, p. 6). He saw the cause of outdated practices in the close connection of geography to history. He rejected the genetic approach of the German school of geography and the use of historical method and statistical approaches. He also considered topographical-statistical-historical descriptions of territories to be unfashionable. He defined human geography (anthropogeography) very strictly and narrowly. He often distanced himself from his colleagues whom he did not consider to be 'pure' geographers:

"the boundaries of human geography are given differently by different authors and, in particular, abound in ancillary sciences, which are by some, certainly mistakenly, elevated to equivalence with anthropogeography... we must finally demand, with unrelenting firmness and with persistence, going to the most extreme consequences, the strict and exclusive specialization of geography as a separate and precisely defined branch of science and, above all, to remove from it everything that simply does not belong to it" (Král 1945, p. 17).

Inspired by historians, he conceptualized the auxiliary anthropogeographical sciences: physical geography, geology, geomorphology, historical geography, statistics, ethnography, sociography, sociology, demography, anthropology. He often considered other colleagues as representatives of these auxiliary geographic sciences (e.g. B. Horák - historical geographer, A. Boháč, J. Auerhan, J. Korčák, J. Pohl and A. Malík - demographers and statisticians, S. Hanzlík - meteorologist and climatologist, B. Šalamon - mathematical geographer and cartographer). He did not consider these auxiliary sciences to be an equal part of geography. On the other hand, he considered them valuable sources of knowledge (Král 1945, p. 17).

AFTER LEAVING SLOVAKIA

Král was a very interesting figure of Czechoslovak anthropogeography. He paid great attention to personal marketing. He published many scientific works in his own edition. He also promoted his works with short annotations in periodicals (e.g. Král 1927c). He also used his own motto *Geographia est via vitae*/Geography is



a way of life (e.g. Král 1945, p. 6, Král 1958, p. 117). He situated it in the context of an analogy with the well-known statement "*historia est magistra vitae*" coming from Cicero (Král 1945, p. 71).

Král was not very popular in the geographical community. He had complicated relations with most of his colleagues. His greatest rival was J. Pohl/Doberský. Král became a victim of the rise of totalitarian regimes. After being forced to leave Slovakia for Prague at the end of 1938, he returned to Charles University. Already in November 1939, however, Czech universities were closed by the Nazi regime. Král did not slack off during this period either and prepared a two-volume textbook on human geography (Král 1941a, 1941b). This was the first attempt by a Czech geographer to provide a global overview of the impact of the natural environment on human economic activities as well as how these human activities change the natural environment. In 1945 the activities of the university were renewed. However, Král had to face a trumped-up charge of collaboration with the Nazis. He managed to prove his innocence and was thus able to head the Department of the Geographical Institute for the Geography of the Slavic Countries. During this period he published a regional study of the Třeboň Basin (Král 1947d) and a geographical guide to Prague (Král 1947a).

The turning point in his career came in 1948 after the rise of the communist regime. He became a victim of purges organized by some colleagues and students. In 1949 he was retired early and was forced to earn a living as a tourist guide. In the following years he unsuccessfully applied for a job in the Department of Economic Geography at the CSAS and at the University of Bratislava.

However, he remained scientifically and publishing active and tried to maintain contact with some foreign colleagues. He promoted applied geography (Král 1949). On the basis of inspiration taken from the French geographer E. de Martonne, he elaborated on the use of aerial photographs in geography. Král had a relationship with aviation already in his youth. In 1950-51 he published 24 articles in the journal „*Letectví*“ and in 1953 he submitted a comprehensive book on aerial geography, which was not published (Korčák 1968, p. 400). He also worked on medical geography and so-called radiogeography (Král 1956, 1958, 1960a, 1960b, 1968, 1969). In these works he drew attention to the negative effects of ionizing radiation. He warned of the environmental consequences of the disposal of radioactive waste and of the consequences of nuclear conflict, nuclear explosion testing and possible accidents at nuclear power plants. He drew attention to the differentiated level of natural radioactivity resulting from the specificities of the bedrock. He pointed out the links with the occurrence of cancer. He even referred to ‘mental cancer’, by which he meant the increasing incidence of socio-pathological phenomena, in particular crime, mental disorders and suicide attempts. In addition, he devoted himself to historical geography and archeocivilizational research in several works (Král 1947b, 1961b). Due to his isolation from the scientific community, some of



these works were considered scientifically problematic and even naive, and the professional community did not accept them (Martínek 2008).

In Although he managed to achieve rehabilitation in 1966, he could no longer return to the university due to his advanced age. His life journey ended on January 24, 1975 with a tragic accident in Prague.

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