

A LOOK AT THE LIFE OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE ESTATE IN RUSOVCE IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY

JOZEF KRÁLIK, KRISTÍNA KRÁLIKOVÁ

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.59505/IRHNS.22352007.2023.3.04>

Abstract:

After the forced annexation of the Principality of Nitra, which was ruled by Prince Pribina, to the Principality of Moravia, a relatively powerful Great Moravian Empire was established in the Central European Danube area. After its disintegration in 906, its eastern part, the Principality of Nitra, gradually became part of the multinational Hungarian state. Although it took centuries to form, it eventually disintegrated in 1918 as well. In the history of the Hungarian state, the Slovaks have always played an important role. Even the Slovak Bratislava was its capital between 1538 and 1848. It was the seat of the Hungarian parliament and all the highest state and church authorities. It was also the coronation city of the Hungarian kings. Rusovce is part of Bratislava. It is dominated by the monumental building of the manor house, the seat of the former manor, whose last noble owners were the Lónyai family until 1945. The wife of the Hungarian Prince Elemir Lónyai was Princess Stephanie of Belgium, the widow of the Austro-Hungarian Crown Prince Rudolf of Habsburg-Lorraine. The article presents a glimpse into the life of this family and also peeks into the operation of the Rusovce estate in the second quarter of the 20th century, as retold by the maid of this aristocratic couple in her memoirs in 1999.

Key words: Rusovce, Bratislava, Slovakia, estate, manor house, Stephanie of Belgium, Elemir Lónyai

Introduction

After the forced annexation of the Principality of Nitra, ruled by Prince Pribina, to the Principality of Moravia in the spring of 833 by the Moravian Prince Mojmir I, a relatively powerful Great Moravian Empire was established in the Central European Danube area.¹ After its disintegration in 906, its eastern part, the Principality of Nitra, gradually became part of the multinational Hungarian state.² Although it took centuries to form, it eventually disintegrated in 1918 as well. In the history of the Hungarian state, the Slovaks have always played a very important role. Even the Slovak Bratislava was not only its capital between 1536 and 1848, but also the seat of the most important financial institution of the Kingdom of Hungary, the Hungarian Chamber, which was permanently established there in 1529. The city was also the seat of the Hungarian Parliament and of all the highest state and, in fact also, ecclesiastical authorities of the time. Bratislava also became the coronation city of Hungarian kings and queens from 1563. Until 1781, the crown jewels were also hidden in Bratislava Castle. Bratislava, at that time the most populous city and the most important centre of royal Hungary, was therefore also inhabited by the high Hungarian nobility, the highest ecclesiastical dignitaries and civil servants of the kingdom. They built representative buildings, many of which are still preserved today, both urban and rural palaces, not only in the protective zone of its fortifications, but also in front of the massive city walls. Near Bratislava stood castles, which were used for defensive purposes of the country. However, some of them were later transformed into exhibition castles. Other fortified castles disappeared in the maelstrom of many wars. They still “survive” as ruins, e.g. Devín, Pajštún, Svätý Jur. Their demise was caused by the marauding armies of the Hussites, Ottoman Turks, Curonian and other rebels, the Napoleonic Empire, and even Hitler’s Germany. The nobility of Hungary, feeling relatively safe after the defeat of the foreign marauding armies and the domestic dissenters, but desiring mainly luxury, abandoned the uncomfortable cold stone castles in droves and built new mansions. The lavish manor houses, the new home of the nobility, as the representative seats of the family, stem from these more or less peaceful times. One of these mansions is the manor house of Rusovce. The location of Rusovce is administratively, but not yet urbanistically, an integral part of the capital of the Slovak Republic, Bratislava. The cadastral territory of the formerly independent municipality lies on the right bank of the Danube River. It is an area with a settlement dating back to prehistoric human settlement, the history of which, however, can also be traced back more than

1 Data documenting development, circumstances of establishment and dissolution of the Great Moravian statesmanship, see in KOLEKTÍV, 2007. *Dejiny Slovenska* .s. 47-58.

2 Details in e.g. MRVA, I., SEGEŠ, V., 2012. *Dejiny Uhorska a Slováci*. p. 8 an.

two millennia. This is confirmed by the results of archaeological activities in the local terrain, which have given material and written testimony, engraved in stone, to the truth of this irrefutable claim. The Roman military camp from the 2nd to the 4th century AD that stood on the site, served as part of the Limes Romanus fortress. It bore the name Gerulata. In the Middle Ages, a castle was built on the site, the existence of which is mentioned in written sources as early as 1208. However, the medieval castles were not the best places to live, even for the castle lords.³ The medieval castle, of course, never offered its noble inhabitants the comfort they later enjoyed in sumptuous castles or luxurious manor houses. The owners of these manor houses, adjacent buildings and entire feudal estates also changed frequently.⁴ A settlement of servants and craftsmen was naturally established near the medieval castle in Rusovce, later a village, which from the 18th century onwards developed as the centre of the estate of the noble Zichy family. In the 19th century, the estate fell into the hands of the noble Lónyai family (Lónyay de Nagylónya et Vasárosnamény), which acted as landowners, counts and eventually princes in the territory of Hungary.⁵ The Belgian royal princess Stephanie, later Crown Princess of Austria-Hungary, also joined the family circle through her second marriage. Widow. Meanwhile, during the existence of the dual Austro-Hungarian Habsburg monarchy existing from 1867 to 1918, history has known only one Crown Princess.

Lónyai family – the last aristocratic owners of the estate

The attention of the aristocracy and the wider public was drawn to the Rusovce manor house from the late 19th to the mid-20th century, especially by its aristocratic co-owner. It was the widowed Crown Princess **Stephanie Clotilde Louise Hermine Marie Charlotte von Belgien** of Austria-Hungary. She was born on the 21st of May 1864 in Laeken near Brussels and died on the 23rd of August 1945 in Pannonhalma. She was the second daughter of King Leopold II of Belgium and Archduchess Maria Henrietta of Austria. In addition to Princess Stephanie, the Belgian royal couple raised Princess Louise (1858-1924), Princess Clementine (1872-1955) and Prince Leopold (1859-1869) very strictly. Because of the atmosphere prevailing among the various members of the royal family, especially

3 Details in DVOŘÁKOVÁ, D., 2010. *Rytier a jeho král*. p. 151-222.

4 On changes of ownership to the properties of aristocracy, also on the property in Rusovce see e.g. DOMINKOVITS, P., 2010. *Úradníci, statkáři, familiári. Stoličná šľachta v západnom Zadunajsku na prelome 16. a 17. storočia*. p. 1-17.

5 Details on Lónyai family e.g. in NOVÁK, J., 1986. *Rodové erby na Slovensku II. Peťkova zbierka pečatí*. p. 94 – 95.

the royal spouses and parents, Stefanie did not acquire any deeper emotional ties to them. The king was indifferent to his daughter; the queen also brought her up by beating her with a wicker whip. As an inexperienced sixteen-year-old princess, Stefanie married Archduke Rudolf Habsburg-Lorraine, Crown Prince of Austria-Hungary (21st of August 1858, Laxenburg – 30th of January 1889, Mayerling), on the 10th of May 1881 in Vienna. Her only daughter, Archduchess Elisabeth Maria (1883-1963), was born from this marriage, and she even disinherited her in 1934. Their relationship had been increasingly disturbed since Rudolf's death, for which she blamed both her daughter and her mother. Meanwhile, the first years of her marriage to Rudolf, the conservative, serious, domestically oriented Stefanie felt happy and in peace. Despite her husband's colourful and publicly known social excesses. The couple lived in Prague, traveled extensively, and socialized with a wide range of prominent people. This effectively helped the princess shed her shyness. Charm, wit, enlightenment, empathy, conversational talent, all that she had not known before, she eagerly gradually discovered on her travels right inside herself. On one of her journeys through Halych in 1887, the twenty-three-year-old Crown Princess met the widower Polish Count Artur Władysław Józef Maria Potocki (14th of June 1850, Krzesowice – 26th of March 1890, Krzesowice), who was bringing up his two elder daughters after the death of his wife Princess Roza Żofia Lubomirska (1860-1881), who had died in childbirth with their third daughter. The marriage was not fulfilling for her, so she became his mistress. She also suffered for her husband's sake because she could no longer give birth to another child, the son he wished for - the crown prince. Rudolf passed on to her the venereal disease that was the result of his sexually promiscuous life. This led to the erosion of their relationship. On the 30th of January 1889, in mysterious, as yet unexplained circumstances, Crown Prince Archduke Rudolf committed suicide, probably at the castle in Mayerling near Vienna. This was also together with his young, last mistress, Baroness Maria Alexandrina Vetser (17th of March 1871, Vienna – 30th of January 1889, Mayerling). The widow, who was only twenty-five years old, was taken in charge, together with her daughter and her granddaughter, by the Austro-Hungarian Emperor Franz Joseph I of Austria. Both King Leopold II of Belgium and Emperor Franz Joseph I of Austria-Hungary sought to have the young widow married to the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, Franz Ferdinand d'Este. In this way, both monarchs tried to prevent his morganatic marriage to the Bohemian Countess Žofia Maria Josefina Albina Chotkova of Chotkov and Vojnín, later Duchess of Hohenberg (the 1st of March 1868, Stuttgart – the 28th of June 1914, Sarajevo). However, everything got out of their hands. Because the thirty-six-year-old Crown Princess, widow Stefanie met Count *Elemire Ödön Lónyai de Nagy-Lónya et Vasáros-Namény* (24th of August 1863, Bodrog Olasz – 29th of July 1946, Pannonhalma) in 1899, she renounced

the title of Crown Princess, left the imperial family, and married him on the 22nd of March 1900 at Miramare Castle near Trieste. The couple lived at Villa Zichy in Kalksburg until 1906. From there they moved to a newly purchased manor house in Rusovce. The conclusion of the morganatic marriage thus transferred the royal princess, now only the wife of a count, to the lower nobility, i.e. only to the status of countess. However, the Lónyai family is an ancient noble family. Their roots date back to the 13th century.⁶ The first members of the family lived in the baronial state / level since 1627. Elemír Lónyai from the middle branch of the family received the title of count on the 29th of May 1869 and the title of prince on the 21st of January 1917 from Emperor Charles I. It was the last promotion to the princely state in the Habsburg monarchy. Naturally, this also led to the forced exclusion of Stephanie from the circle of the two European royal families. Her marriage to Elemír Lónyai, though childless, was nevertheless a happily fulfilled one. Harmonious. The spouses understood each other well, were brought closer by their common interests, and had similar attitudes and positions on reality. During the First World War, both spouses even volunteered their manor house to the International Red Cross and set up a hospital for wounded soldiers in its premises. The princess herself acted as a nursemaid to suffering wounded men. However, the Lónyai family and their Rusovce estate were also indirectly drawn into the maelstrom of the Second World War. In the autumn of 1944, the German headquarters of the retreating Waffen SS took up residence in their manor house. It was commanded by SS-Brigadeführer Edmund Veesenmayer, and on the 2nd of April 1945 the manor was occupied by members of the Soviet Red Army. Prior to their arrival, the German commander had urged the princely couple to leave early for safety reasons, under the protection of a military escort provided by him. The aristocrats declined this offer. For the then eighty-one-year-old Stefanie was suffering from a serious heart condition and her condition was steadily deteriorating. For the last few months, she had been well cared for by her chambermaid. For the Duchess, therefore, her “home” was mainly her favourite chamber of the castle, with its bed and the things she loved. However, with the help of the Benedictines of Pannonhalma, the Lónyai family moved to the monastery of Pannonhalma, which was led by Archbishop Chrysostom Kelemen. Under the patronage of the International Red Cross, the monastery was a safe haven for the terminally ill princess and her husband. They died there after a short time. Both are buried in Pannonhalma in the crypt of St. Stephen's Basilica.

6 The founder of the family is considered to be Michael, who in 1272 or 1285 became the owner of the village of Lónya, today Nagylónya in Hungary. His son Jakub started to present himself with the surname de Lónya as the first member of the family. His son Jakub Jr. became the owner of the village of Vásárosnamény and began to add this second surname to his name. NOVÁK, J., 1986. Rodové erby na Slovensku II. Peťkova zbierka pečatí p. 94.

The manor house of Rusovce, its surroundings and atmosphere

Lord and Lady Lónyai bought the Rusovce manor house in 1906 for four million crowns. It was a comfortable, two-storey mansion with more than two hundred rooms. Later, at the initiative of the enterprising Stefanie, they also built more than thirty greenhouses for growing flowers and vegetables in the surrounding area. The Princess capitalised on her newfound business talent by setting up the “Stephaneum” garden centre, which was economically profitable and brought the owners a profit. Even then she understood that she had to present the results of her work regularly and publicly. In order to expand her business, she also published a quarterly catalogue of the company’s products for commercial purposes. The Lónyai family also invested in the modernization of the manor’s internal infrastructure. They installed a spa in the building, which was supplied with water by a new water tower built in the park next to the manor house. Nowadays, the whole area is a pitiful sight.

The representative aristocratic residence that is the manor house in Rusovce is a monumental building built in 1863 in the neo-Gothic style.⁷ The building has a U-shaped plan. The protruding side wings of the manor house create a courtyard of honour, from which one can enter the representative premises. These are located in the central elevated bay. The exterior appearance of the Rusovce mansion evokes the copy of old English Gothic designs, representative of aristocratic mansions. Mansions of this architectural type and design were built in the Gothic style in England as early as the early 16th century. The Rusovce manor house is also the architectural centre of a still extensive, if dilapidated, complex, originally surrounded by stylish brick fencing, in which the original outer buildings, stables, barns, gatehouses, craftsmen’s workshops and servants’ quarters were located. At the same time, it is adjacent to a romantically landscaped English park, which includes a romantically landscaped church from 1613 built on ancient Roman foundations. It was originally the parish church. Artefacts recovered from archaeological excavations of the park and the surrounding area, such as richly decorated Romanesque stone font, sculptures, columns, fragments of capitals and consoles, have been scattered throughout the park. Their remains were part of the park’s minor architecture. The park, rich in many romantic nooks, clearings, ponds and resting places, was planted with rare deciduous and coniferous alien trees, hiding for example, an ancient stone cross or a Venetian lion on a column in the courtyard of the manor house. The aristocracy often spent its leisure time in this natural park. The manor was not only beautiful to look at from the outside, but its interior was also luxurious. The rooms were

7 Details in KRIŽANOVÁ, E., PUŠKÁROVÁ, B., 1990. *Hrady, zámky a kaštiele na Slovensku*. p. 52-53.

furnished in English style, decorated with original works of world painters and sculptors, collections of historical weapons and other art objects. The manor house prided itself also by very rich castle library. The collections of Meissen porcelain or porcelain of other provenance were also the pride of the manor, but selected sets were commonly used in everyday ceremonial dining. In the interior of the manor house, it was still possible to admire all the architectural elements characteristic of a feudal residence. For example, the ceremonial staircase, the central hall, the numerous salons, all with elaborately decorated walls covered with wood and tapestries. The atmosphere of grandeur of the mansion, directly corresponding to the grandeur of its owners, radiated directly from the interior decoration and furnishings of the mansion, but was visibly presented by the architecture of its construction and the nobility of the park. It permeated the environment of the village and its inhabitants. It even created a background for qualitatively unusual mutual relations of friendship not only between the manor and the leaders of the village. The fruits of such “bonds” were also translated into an optimal relationship that crystallized between the common people themselves, with each other and, of course, especially with the “gracious nobility”. But not only because the people were given bread by the ‘manor’. The refinement of the atmosphere prevailing in and around the manor, and especially the solidity of the interpersonal relations pulsating on the estate, was both a determinant and a barometer of the high popularity of the princely couple among virtually all strata of the local population. Stefanie’s sophistication, intellect and character are also evidenced by the fact that she maintained an extremely friendly relationship with the reigning monarch Francis Joseph I. Until his death. However, it was not until 1935 that she gave a frank account of her life in her memoir *I Should Have Been Empress (Ich sollte Kaiserin werden)*. She dictated the stories and details of her life to the German noblewoman Juliane von Stockhausen, who stayed in the manor for three months and handed over the manuscript of her memoirs to her later husband Count von Cattenburg for publication. The book was published by the Leipzig publishers Koehler and Amelang in 1935. In Austria, the book’s manuscript had already caused a public scandal and provoked efforts to prevent its publication and distribution, especially by some members of the former royal family. However, it was nevertheless published and even translated into many languages. The war events that hit the Rusovce estate in 1945 had a negative impact on its condition. It was first plundered by soldiers. However, after the front passed through, some local inhabitants also began to appropriate the interior of the manor, which had been abandoned by the nobility. Fortunately, the princely couple had the castle’s four thousand five hundred-piece library, precious art objects, jewellery and the most valuable pieces of stylish furniture transferred to the Benedictine monastery in Pannonhalma, Hungary, before

that. It is still there today. The Lónyai family also donated the manor house to the archbishopric. The manor house later became the seat of the state Slovak dance and music art ensemble. This purposeful use did not benefit its statics at all. Nevertheless, it served this unconsidered and imposed purpose. Until after the political revolution in Czechoslovakia in 1989, it gradually began to decay and is now irreversibly becoming a ruin that is expensive to repair. The intention to make the Rusovce manor house a representative residence of Slovak state presidents has not been pursued.

Life on the estate in the memories of the chambermaid maria koller nat. Éder

Princess Stephanie of Belgium (Stephanie Prinzessin von Belgien) was the widow of the Austro-Hungarian Crown Prince Rudolf, the circumstances of whose death are still not entirely clear.⁸ As a member of the Belgian royal dynasty, she received the best education privately. She was educated and brought up, naturally, in a home environment. She herself, in addition to her native Flemish, spoke German, French, English, and Italian. Her second husband, Count or Prince Elemír von Lónyay, knew German, French, English and Italian in addition to Hungarian. The spouses communicated with each other in French. They spoke German to their servants. However, the Prince also communicated with some of his staff in Hungarian. With their guests, the nobility of Rusovce conversed in the language that the guests used or preferred in their normal communication with their surroundings. Many privileged families and well-known personalities of the time were frequent guests of the Lónyai family in the manor house. Both important and less important. Particularly welcome were members of aristocratic families, most often the Windisch-Graetz family, the Battyányi family, the Károly family, the Csáky family, and the Andrássy family.⁹ However, Archduke Franz Ferdinand d'Este, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, and his wife often visited the private home of Princess Stephanie of Belgium. This progressive member of the royal family had in fact also become persona non grata of the Habsburg-Lorraine power clan by his morganatic marriage to Duchess Sophie of Hohenberg, née Countess Chotek. Both were victims of an assassination attempt in Sarajevo, Bosnia, on the 28th of June 1914. The assassination became the pretext for the outbreak of the First World War, which was precipitated by Austria-Hungary's "innocent" declaration of war to the "accused" Serbia on the

8 For more information see DEMERLE, E., 2012. *Habsburgovci*. p. 209.

9 On individual (some) Hungarian aristocratic families and their position in the society as well as on their lifestyle see e.g., ZIEHR W., 1996. *Evropské šlechtické rody*. p. 174-181.

28th of July 1914.

One of Princess Stephanie's greatest hobbies was the artistic painting of nature. She therefore liked to spend a considerable part of the day in the nature park near the manor house, weather permitting. She was hardly ever deterred from her own hobby, painting, by stronger winds or heavier rain. Naturally, the aristocrat loved not only painting, but also horse-riding. So called, "Reiten". Both the princess and the prince therefore had their own riding horses. The prince was also very fond of horse-riding. Therefore, the couple often went on day-long riding trips together to the surrounding countryside. In addition to the riding horses, they also kept three pairs of draught horses at the manor house. They pulled both carriages and hansoms. The estate used the hansoms for longer trips around the estate, especially in the summer sunny season. The lord of the manor, however, put his personal hobby, walking through the vast Danube floodplain forest, first and foremost. The forest and trees were his most loyal companions, which was also reflected in the composition of the trees planted in the park near the manor house. Interestingly, although he often and happily organized hunts, neither he nor his wife took part in the hunt. They were, however, generous and attentive hosts to a select circle of invited nimrods. In this way, they outwardly expressed their special relationship to wildlife, which was unusual at that time. They made their need to protect the forest and wildlife publicly and unashamedly known to their guests. They also led their servants to do the same. In this context, the manor did not pay much attention to the breeding of hunting dog breeds. Nevertheless, the aristocrats bred a few German pointers. The princess, however, particularly enjoyed the two dogs of the companion breed, which made her daily companions. Two more guard dogs were let loose around the manor, another pair of dogs served to protect the outbuildings, stables and barns. The aristocratic couple of Rusovce showed appropriate respect and deference to domestic and wild animals. Because they really believed it. The princess was of the Roman Catholic faith, she was serious, attentive, disciplined and religious. The prince was a convert. He was originally a tolerant member of the Helvetic Reformed Evangelical Church (Calvin). Outwardly, too, he showed an unusual respect for the opinions of others, yet he was markedly liberal in his outlook and, to a certain extent, in his manners.¹⁰ He took up Roman Catholic faith of his wife, who was the Belgian royal daughter and temporarily the Austrian-Hungarian crown princess, because he wanted to marry her. Both of them behaved in a "Christian" manner towards their servants and other people, and treated their employees as such. Supposedly in "the spirit of the Holy Scriptures". They also took care of sick

10 The information, interpreted in the spirit of the recorded memories of the informant, originally working in the manor as a chambermaid, a person over ninety years old, who spoke only broken Slovak, confirms the extraordinary.

employees, providing them with medical care and necessary medicines. They also paid their servants quite well for the times. Therefore, all the employees of the manor valued working for the aristocrats of Rusovce. Many inhabitants of Rusovce were also looking to work at the estate as day laborers. The manor did not only reward its employees in money or in kind, but also with moral verbal appreciation. The landowners also celebrated the Christmas holidays together with the servants under the beautifully decorated, tall, shapely and well-grown Christmas tree. Every employee of the manor received a Christmas present from their benefactors. Everyone sat down at the Christmas Eve table together. Christmas songs, enthusiastically sung by the Christmas guests present, added to the festive atmosphere of the evening. After dinner and the thanks of the nobility to their servants for their honest work throughout the year, the assembly dispersed. To be with their families. And the princess and the prince also retreated to their festive privacy.

The hospitality of the Lónyai family was also evident in the daily observance of customs. The castle priest, who celebrated Mass in the castle chapel every day, always sat at the solemnly set dinner table together with the grandly dressed nobility. The local Roman Catholic parish priest was always invited to Sunday lunch, unless there was another important guest of the manor present. The Lónyai family also occasionally attended Sunday or church holiday services held in the local church. In the local parish church they had a reserved place on the upper floor, in the gallery, behind the glass doors.

The regime of the day had to be observed by everyone in the manor house, and the nobility also paid strict attention to dress, cleanliness of the premises, hygiene of the employees and their behaviour. Lunch started at 1 p.m. sharp. Tea was served at 5 p.m. The aristocrats always dined at 8 p.m. sharp. They were always dressed in elegant evening dress. The Lónyai family followed a relatively stable seasonal regime even outside their own residence, because the princely couple did not live in Rusovce all the time. They spent six summer weeks in Ostende, Belgium. They stayed in the most luxurious local hotel and spent their time walking and relaxing on the seashore. In winter they visited San Remo and St. Moritz. The spring months were spent in Paris, Easter in Rome.

The social feelings of the Lónyai family in Rusovce are realistically documented by their relationship with their employees. Many people from Rusovce worked on the estate and in the manor. This was necessitated by the large size of the building and the accessories that belonged to it. The estate's economic officials kept accurate records and accounts of all income and expenditure, especially taxes and other payments. Particular attention was paid to the income from fields, forests, lighthouses, horticulture and rented farmhouses. Two chambermaids

were employed in the manor house. They mainly looked after the chambers of the manor. They were responsible for cleanliness, decoration and order. They supervised the daily change of linen, the aesthetic accessories, including the decoration of the manor premises with freshly cut and potted flowers. The estate also had several servants at its disposal. A personal chauffeur of a Mercedes factory car and a chauffeur of another passenger car, who was traditionally of Czech nationality, were also employed. The staff of the manor also included other service personnel. It included cleaners, a chef, cooks, kitchen maids, three laundresses, two clothes and linen ironers, three coachmen, a head forester, foresters, groomers and cattle handlers, a shepherd, gardeners and helpers. The estate was thus a major employer. Given the attitude and relationship of the nobility to its servants, there was an atmosphere of family togetherness in the manor house. People were honest and responsible in their own work. They were practically unconcerned about the life of the highest Hungarian aristocracy closest to them behind the doors of their private homes. At the same time, expensive cultural events were often held in the manor. Especially concerts. Although the aristocrats owned a relatively rare radio, i.e. a radio receiver, they did not acquire their own gramophone because they preferred live music.

In 1945, members of the fighting Red Army briefly took up residence in the manor house of Rusovce. The commanders of this unit wanted to see a real, live princess with their own eyes. They asked her to introduce herself to them in person. Always an excellent hostess, she agreed to this proposal. However, the seriously ill, more or less bedridden, eighty-one-year-old princess disappointed their expectations. This was not how they had imagined the princess! Indeed, the aged princess died soon after this visit. Less than a year later, her second husband followed her.

Conclusion

Since 1947 the Rusovce manor house has been the property of the state and since 1951 it has housed the state professional art ensemble, the Slovak Folk Art Collective (SLUK). Nowadays, the proud aristocratic mansion is becoming a ruin. A witness of past times is 'continually losing its glory' because of the indifference, delusion, stupidity, vanity, ignorance and greed of people who are convinced that they not only hold the rudder of history in the present, but will forever turn it with their own hands and only for their own benefit. Perhaps that is why the remaining torso of the suffering mansion will be lost in the dark depths of time. To obliterate even the last tangible memory of the long-lost,

materially and spiritually richly lived life of the aristocracy. But memory does not decay or fade if it is thoroughly captured in writing. It is recalled by once vivid memories. The chambermaid's recorded and presented memories of the life vibrant in the manor house of the Rusovce estate until 1945, until then owned by a well-known aristocratic couple, Princess Stephanie of Belgium and Prince Elemir Lónyai of Hungary, are a subjective but authentic view of the life of the socially highest class of the Hungarian population, the aristocracy. In republican Czechoslovakia, however, it was only the former high nobility. However, until the end of the Second World War, or 1947, the Rusovce estate was part of the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary. Known for the fact that for the entire short period of its interwar existence, i.e. from 1918 until its dissolution, it was not ruled by any king, but only by a regent. Admiral Miklós Horthy. Unlike the republican Czechoslovak legal order, Hungarian law, since the state formation of the Hungarians remained a monarchy until then, did not abolish the nobility. The mansion in Rusovce, now systematically demolished by various anti-social elements, remained the property of the Slovak Republic, which, by its indifferent attitude, and not only towards it, is also demonstrating to Europe and the whole world its own cultural maturity.

References

- DEMERLE, Eva, 2012. *Habsburgovci*. 1. Ed. Bratislava : Slovart, 2012, 259 p. ISBN 978-80-556-0702-3
- DOMINKOVITS, Péter, 2010. *Úradníci, statkári, familiári. Stoličná šľachta v západnom Zadunajsku na prelome 16. a 17. storočia*. In. Forum historiae : Uhorská šľachta v stredoveku a novoveku, no. 2, 2010, p. 1-17.
- DVOŘÁKOVÁ, Daniela, 2010. *Rytier a jeho kráľ*. 2. Ed. Budmerice-Bratislava : RAK a VEDA, 2010, 598 p. ISBN 978-80-85501-46-9
- KOLEKTÍV, 2007. *Dejiny Slovenska* .1. Slov. Ed. Bratislava : Slovart, 2007, 882 p. ISBN 978-80-8085-596-3
- KRÁLIK, Jozef, 2000. *Kráľovská výsosť v Rusovciach*. In. Týždenné roľnícke novinky, 10, 2000, No. 7, p. 19.
- KRIŽANOVÁ, Eva, PUŠKÁROVÁ, Blanka, 1990. *Hrady, zámky a kaštiele na Slovensku*. 1. Ed. Bratislava : Šport, 1990, 260 + 16 p. ISBN 80-7096-093-0
- MRVA, Ivan, SEGEŠ, Vladimír, 2012. *Dejiny Uhorska a Slováci*. 1. Ed. Bratislava : Perfekt, 2012, 397 p. ISBN 978-80-8046-586-5

JOZEF KRÁLIK, KRISTÍNA KRÁLIKOVÁ:

A look at the life of the inhabitants of the estate in Rusovce in the first half of the 20th century

NOVÁK, Jozef, 1986. *Rodové erby na Slovensku II. Peťkova zbierka pečatí*. 1. Ed. Bratislava : Osveta, 1986, 224 p. + 16 p. Annex. No ISBN.

ZIEHR, Wilhelm, 1996. *Evropské šlechtické rody*. 1. Ed. Praha : Grafoprint – Neubert, 1996, 208 p. ISBN 80-85785-41-2

Contact:

prof. JUDr. Jozef KRÁLIK, CSc., MBA

Danubius College

Janko Jesenský Faculty of Law

Richterova 1171

925 21 Sládkovičovo

Slovak Republic

E-mail: prof.kralik@gmail.com

Lt.Col. Assoc. Prof. JUDr. Ing. PhDr. Kristína Králiková, PhD., MBA

Academy of Police Forces

Department of Administrative Law

Sklabinská 1

835 14 Bratislava

Slovak Republic

E-mail: kristina.kralikova@minv.sk