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THE FUNERAL LAMENTS (POHREBNÉ PLAČE) OF THE SLOVAK COMMUNITY IN SERBIA*

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ПОГРЕБНЕ ТУЖБАЛИЦЕ (ПОHРЕВНÉ ПЛАЧЕ) СЛОВАЧКЕ ЗАЈЕДНИЦЕ У СРБИЈИ

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses the funeral laments (*pohrebné plače* or *pohrebné nariekanie* in Slovak) of the Slovak ethnic minority in Srem, Vojvodina, Republic of Serbia. Among the Vojvodina Slovaks, funeral laments are gradually becoming extinct, although they could still be heard during the funeral rites of this ethnicity in various localities of Vojvodina in the latter half of the twentieth century. This study summarizes the state of the research on this issue. It focuses on the funeral laments documented by the author during her field research in Stará Pazova / Stara Pazova, Srem, in 2014.

KEYWORDS: funeral laments, wailing, Slovak ethnic community in Stara Pazova, fieldwork, documentation.

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АПСТРАКТ

У овој студији размотрене су погребне тужбалице (*pohrebné plače* или *pohrebné nariekanie* на словачком језику) словачке етничке мањине у Срему (Војводина, Република Србија). Иако су се током погребних обреда ове етничке заједнице у разним местима Војводине још могле чути у другој половини XX века, погребне тужбалице код војвођанских Словака постепено изумиру. Студија пружа преглед досадашњих истраживања ове теме, а фокусира се на погребне тужбалице које је ауторка документовала током свог теренског истраживања 2014. године у Старој Пазови у Срему.

Кључне речи: погребне тужбалице, нарицање, словачка етничка заједница у Старој Пазови, теренски рад, документација.

INTRODUCTION

As a specific verbal and musical genre, laments have existed, in a certain form, in every traditional culture (Porter 2001). In traditional music, the term 'lament' denotes ritual crying related to either real or symbolic death. Laments have been a part of the traditional rites connected with farewell or departure and made their way into a number of folklore genres. Various ethnicities mostly linked them with the funeral rite (*plač nad mŕtvym* / crying over the deceased) and with the wedding ceremonial (*plač nevesty* / crying of the bride, wedding laments, bridal laments), whereas in some cultures, laments have also been a part of the customs connected with the recruitment of young lads for military service (*regrútsky plač* / recruitment laments) (Urbancová 2009, 33–34). In this study, we deal with laments that formed a part of the Slovak funeral rites and we therefore refer to them as funeral laments.

Today, there are several Slovak ethnic communities, not just in Europe, but overseas as well. Currently, one of the largest is in Vojvodina, in the Republic of Serbia, and it has existed there for almost three hundred years. The Slovak population has been maintaining and developing their traditional culture ever since their arrival to that territory. Slovaks began to move there at the close of the seventeenth century, but the major migration waves have been taking place roughly from the mid-eighteenth century, more specifically 1745, onwards, when several Slovak families arrived in Báčsky Petrovec / Bački Petrovac in the Bačka region of Vojvodina. The Slovak inhabitation of Vojvodina is closely connected to the colonization of the southernmost parts of the Habsburg Monarchy, the so-called Lower Land (Dolná zem in Slovak) in Hungary of that

time (Sirácky 1971; Botík 2007; 2011). This term comes from the translation of the Hungarian word *Alföld* [Lower Land] which, from the fifteenth century onwards, denoted the regions that lay south of the political and administrative centre of Hungary, contrary to the mountainous regions in the north, which were referred to as the *Felföld* [Upper Land]. It is a historical geographical name. Today, however, this term is mainly used in a broader context which encompasses several geographical regions inhabited by Slovaks that lie south of the territory of the Slovak Republic. The term 'Slovaks of the Lower Land' refers to Slovaks living on the territory of nowadays Hungary, Serbia, Croatia, Romania, and Bulgaria (Velký 1977; Botík and Slavkovský 1995).

Today, there are over thirty localities in the three regions of Vojvodina (Bačka, Banat, Srem) where the Slovak ethnicity forms the minority or the majority of the local population. Almost half of them lie in the region of Bačka: Bácska Palanka / Bačka Palanka, Bački Petrovac, Bajša, Begeč, Čelarevo / Čelarevo, Hložany / Gložan, Kulpín / Kulpin, Kysác / Kisač, Lališ / Lalić, Nový Sad / Novi Sad, Pivnica / Pivnice, Savino Selo, Selenča, Silbaš. The number of such localities in Srem is somewhat lower: Ašaňa / Ašanja, Bingula / Bingula, Boľovce / Boljevci, Dobanovce / Dobanovci, Erdevík / Erdevik, Lug, Luba / Ljuba, Slankamenské Vinohrady / Slankamenački Vinogradi, Sremska Mitrovica / Sremska Mitrovica, Stara Pazova, Šíd / Šid, Višnjićevo. The lowest number of localities inhabited by Slovaks in Vojvodina can be found in the region of Banat: Aradáč / Aradač, Biele Blato / Belo Blato, Hajdušica, Jánošík / Janošik, Kovačica, Ostojićevo, Padina, Vojlovica, Zreňanin / Zrenjanin (Kultúrna mapa [Cultural Map] 2022). Apart from the above localities, Slovaks constitute roughly three percent of the population of Belgrade, the capital of the Republic of Serbia (Belehrad [Belgrade] 2022).

The fact that the Slovaks have maintained and kept developing their ethnic awareness, language, denomination, and traditional culture in a multiethnic environment for over three centuries is remarkable (Sklabinská and Mosnáková 2012).¹ Their song tradition forms an indispensable part of their culture. Although the song material that survived among the Slovaks of Vojvodina is relatively rich, it is still a modest corpus compared to the traditional songs from the territory of Slovakia, especially from the aspect of the preservation

¹ Today, the Slovak ethnic minority in Vojvodina is one of the most active Slovak communities abroad in terms of the cultivation of their traditional cultural manifestations. Local cultural-artistic associations have played a major role in preserving these cultural traditions. In addition, the Institute for the Culture of the Slovaks of Vojvodina was established in 2008 and it promotes and actively participates in the preservation and further development of the traditional culture of the Slovak ethnicity in Vojvodina (see Ústav pre kultúru vojvodinských Slovákov [Institute for the Culture of the Slovaks of Vojvodina] 2022).

of the individual song types and genres. Today, funeral laments, as a musical folklore genre, rarely occur among the Slovaks of Vojvodina (if at all). One of the localities where such laments have survived is Stara Pazova. The aim of this study is to introduce, describe, and characterize the funeral laments in this locality, where this folklore genre has survived only in the recollections of the oldest inhabitants. We will focus on several aspects related to this matter. Firstly, we will briefly characterize Slovak funeral laments within the framework of Slovak ethnomusicology. Then, we will focus on the funeral laments of the Slovaks in Vojvodina. We will present an overview of their documentation. Subsequently, we will focus on our own documentation of the laments, which we made as part of our fieldwork in the period from 2014 to 2016. The fieldwork has been conducted in three localities: Stara Pazova (Srem), Bački Petrovac (Bačka), and Padina (Banat).² Lastly, we will concentrate on the locality of Stara Pazova, where we documented the funeral laments, introducing the local people's beliefs and ideas about afterlife. We will describe and characterize the funeral laments that we have documented and indicate their significance today.

SLOVAK FUNERAL LAMENTS – GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Funeral laments (also called *wailing* – in Slovak *nariekanie*, or *telling* – in Slovak *vykladanie* by the locals) denote a ritualized form of parting with the deceased. Their origins can be traced back to pre-Christian forms of folk rites and customs (Zíbrt 1894). In the past, the funeral laments have played a significant role in the death and burial of a person. They usually formed a solid and indispensable part of each funeral (Elscheková and Elschek 1982, 162). They were a part of magical, spiritual rituals but, at the same time, they were to accompany the deceased to their eternal rest in the most beautiful and the most dignified manner possible. In a certain form, laments have been used by almost every ethnic group in the world (Šelcová 1985; Porter 2001, 181–184). In Europe, they have been documented among many ethnicities. They are also

² The research carried out in that period was a part of our doctoral studies under the aegis of the Institute of Musicology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. We did fieldwork in Stara Pazova in 2014 in three phases (from 7 April to 19 April, from 16 June to 26 June, and from 19 October to 26 October). We were given recommendations and contact details of local singers of several generations by Anna Đurđevićová (born in 1944), a retired teacher of music education. We carried out fieldwork in Bački Petrovac in 2015 (from 15 June to 20 June) and 2016 (on 6 and 7 May). All contacts and recommendations were provided to us by a local music teacher, Mariena Stankovićová Kriváková (born in 1957). We conducted fieldwork in Padina in 2016 (from 21 June to 25 June) and 2016 (on 4 and 5 May). We received the contact details of a few informants from Pavol Tomáš senior (born in 1958), a local teacher of music education, but were also given several contacts by the locals.

known to all the ethnicities in the Balkans (Bartók and Kodály 1966; Tolbert 1990, 80, 103). It has also been a common way of honouring the dead among the Slovaks in their new homeland, as well as all the other nations around them.

Slovak ethnomusicology views funeral laments as a specific song genre, which is one of the most archaic musical items. They may be defined as verbal-vocal manifestations that combine a ceremonial character with individual improvisation and have fixed functional ties to concrete singing occasions (Urbancová 2008; Burlasová 2009, 7–8). With respect to the ritual funeral act, funeral laments may be classified as Old Slavonic pagan rituals (Elscheková and Elschek 1982, 162). This testifies to the significance and honour showed to the deceased, as well as to the spiritual background of the ethnic groups, most of which believed in the afterlife and the immortality of the soul. To wail over the deceased in a dignified manner was necessary for this reason as well. Every ethnicity had its own rituals and its own acts when burying their dead. In Slovakian culture, funeral laments were mainly performed by women (Burlasová 2009, 10).

The earliest references to the funeral wailing in the territory of Slovakia come from the sixteenth century and are connected to pagans and pagan customs, which is why the Church forbade them (Ibid., 8). Nevertheless, funeral laments continued to exist in the territory of Slovakia in a certain form, and references to them have also been recorded. They were mentioned by significant Slovak authors, such as Matej Bel (1684–1749), Ján Kollár (1793–1852), and others (Burlasová 2009). They first attracted the attention of ethnologists in Slovakia starting from the 1930s, (Bednárik 1939; Čajánková 1956; Komorovský 1971) and then, from the late 1940s, of ethnomusicologists as well, including Soňa Burlasová (1927–2021), Ondrej Demo (1927–2020), Juliana Kováčová (1927–2009), Kliment Ondrejka (1929–2011), Ladislav Leng (1930–1973), Alica Elscheková (1930), Oskár Elschek (1931), and others. From the 1950s onwards, most funeral laments have been documented with sound recordings. Most of the funeral laments documented by the above authors can be found in the archives of several institutions in Slovakia (the Slovak Radio, the Institute of Musicology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, and the Institute of Ethnology and Social Anthropology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences) (Urbancová 2014). Ethnomusicologist Soňa Burlasová documented these laments in several villages of Eastern Slovakia, in the Upper Hron region, in the region of Hont, and among the Slovaks of the Lower Land (Burlasová 2009, 9). Since part of the Slovak population that arrived in Vojvodina in the eighteenth century came from the above regions, we may presume that they also brought along their rituals and rites connected to death and burial.

DOCUMENTATIONS OF FUNERAL LAMENTS AMONG THE SLOVAKS OF VOJVODINA

In historical and ethnological literature (Lilge 1932), there are few pieces of information about the customs and rites related to death and burial among the Slovak population of Vojvodina. Up to the mid-twentieth century, collectors of folk songs had shunned funeral laments. One of the reasons was supposedly the fact that the Slovak population in that region avoided talking about death. Soňa Burlasová also encountered this phenomenon during her fieldwork among the Slovaks of Vojvodina in the 1960s and 1970s. She documented funeral laments in some of the Slovak villages and described those from the village of Selenča. This was the first, and, thus far, the only description of the laments of the Slovak ethnicity in Vojvodina (Burlasová 1971). Funeral laments do not form a part of extensive song collections of the Slovaks of Vojvodina published in that region in the late twentieth century (Filip, Miškovic, and Kmeť 1996; Tomáš, and Baláž 1997) and in the early twenty-first century (Ferík 2004) either. Below, we will briefly discuss the results of the research conducted by Soňa Burlasová in the village of Selenča in connection with funeral laments.

Selenča lies in the region of Bačka and it is the only locality where two denominations can be encountered among the Slovak ethnicity in Vojvodina: Catholic and Lutheran (in the other localities in this region, including Stara Pazova, the Slovak population is of the Lutheran denomination). Burlasová registered descriptions of funeral laments among the members of both denominations, but she managed to audio record their interpretations only by the Catholic informants. The Lutheran informants were willing to describe their funeral laments but refused to perform them in an unauthentic situation. Burlasová viewed this fact in the context of the way of performing the laments. The funeral laments of the Lutherans had a spoken character and were accompanied with sighs and weeping. They were improvised renderings depending on the situation and the mental state of the rendering person. Among the Catholic population, the author witnessed laments of a melodic character, in which certain melodic formulas were present. These laments were also based on improvisation, but Burlasová noticed certain ties to melodic formulas and a certain schematicism in their texts (Burlasová 1971, 625). Funeral laments from other localities in Vojvodina were not specified in detail by the author. A funeral lament from Selenča, documented and transcribed by Soňa Burlasová, is illustrated in Example 1.

During our own fieldwork, which we conducted in the period from 2014 to 2016 in three settlements in Vojvodina (Stara Pazova, Bački Petrovac, and Padina), we only encountered funeral laments (sung and spoken) in one of them – in Stara Pazova. Therefore, we will focus on the description of funeral

laments in this locality. At the outset, the historical aspect of funeral laments should be noted, as it is very important. Slovaks settled in Selenča in 1758 (Sirácky 1971, 168–169) and it was one of the first Slovak localities in that region. In 1768, a major part of the Lutheran population was forced to leave this village (Miklovic 2002, 9–11). In 1769, they received permission to move to Pazova, which lay in the border regions of the Habsburg Monarchy. The Slovak Lutherans then moved to Stara Pazova in 1770. The preservation of funeral laments in Stara Pazova may be closely connected to this historical event.

SOME OF THE FUNERAL CUSTOMS AND SUPERSTITIONS ABOUT DEATH AND BURIAL IN STARA PAZOVA

References to funeral laments in Stara Pazova in the existing literature are rare. They were not mentioned by the author of the first monograph on the Slovaks of Stara Pazova, Karol Lilge (1888–1953) either, although he did give some partial pieces of information about funerals. Regarding singing, he mentioned songs from the book of *Funeral Rites*, which used to be sung along with the cantor. Lilge mentioned singing during the vigil over the deceased until midnight, on the way to the funeral, and at the funeral banquet given by the closest family members, who sang mourning songs (1932, 204–205). The absence of references to *nariekanie* or *vykladanie* may confirm the fact, also pointed out by Lilge, that the local population was unwilling to talk about death and any acts related to it. We also encountered this attitude during our fieldwork. Funerals in Stara Pazova in the past were described in detail by a Vojvodina linguist, Anna Marićová (1951–2016). Her studies mainly focus on the description of funerals and related acts, superstitions, and practices (Marićová 2014; 2016). There is little information about funeral laments, though. In describing the funeral rites and the superstitions connected to death in Stara Pazova, we mainly drew on the results of the research carried out by Marićová.

Although a Christian framework of funeral customs was present in this settlement, one could not fail to notice certain acts that pointed to ancient magical practices. Superstitions respected, followed, and even feared by the people were deeply rooted in this locality.³ Death represented a transition. Both the pagan and the Christian tradition believe in afterlife. Therefore, the funeral rituals played an important role. It was through them that the separation of the dead from the society took place, and all the social and family ties of the

³ These included the omen of death that appeared as a sound or in a dream. For example, it was believed that if a dog howled in the courtyard or a little owl hooted near the house, someone from the family would die (Marićová 2016, 148–151).

deceased were broken, with the aim to satisfy their soul (Tolbert 1990; Jágerová 2001). Wailing was a certain form of respect and probably even a magical ritual act. If the deceased was not sufficiently mourned, in other words, wailed over, the family had to face collective slander in the locality (Jágerová 2001, 13–28; Marićová 2014, 119). On the other hand, funeral laments could also be manifestations of an individual who was expressing their deepest and most intimate emotions connected to mourning. They were a means for the mourner to release and overcome their grief. The nature of the laments documented by us reveals that they are also addressed to the listeners, which is evident from the various testimonies about the life of the deceased or regarding the difficulties and sufferings that they have faced (Burlasová 2009, 10).

In the past, funeral rites in Stara Pazova would last for two days. The first day included preparation of the deceased for the funeral, such as securing an official death certificate from the physician, and bathing and dressing of the body. The deceased was then placed in the front room of the house, where the family, friends, and neighbours gradually gathered to offer their condolences to the bereaved and keep the vigil (the locals say they *sat /sedělo* in Slovak/ over the deceased, which means they kept the vigil). In the past, the vigil was kept by the side of the deceased for one night. Today, this custom is no longer practised. The second day included taking away the body and the funeral itself. That day, the deceased was placed in a coffin and taken to the courtyard. In the past, this was immediately followed by some other actions, such as opening the windows, sweeping out the room, turning the chairs on which the deceased had been placed upside down, and setting the table with food and drink for the deceased in the room where they had been lying. These remained there until the next day. The reason for this was the belief that the soul of the deceased still lingered in the room for some time. The windows were opened so that the soul would depart, and the food was placed so that it could eat. The religious ritual connected to taking away the body would begin after the arrival of the priest. Subsequently, the people would leave for the cemetery accompanying the deceased, and then the funeral would take place (Marićová 2014; 2016). Next, we will focus on the results of our fieldwork in terms of the funeral laments of Stara Pazova, which was the only locality where we have documented such laments.

OUR OWN FIELDWORK

According to the oldest, both male and female, informants who participated in our research, funeral wailing was still practiced in Stara Pazova until recently. Documenting the funeral laments, however, turned out to be an extremely complicated task. Many informants were no longer able to render

funeral laments, and those who could, kept refusing to do so. The women attributed utmost gravity to the funeral laments. In their view, they could, and should, be sung only in a concrete situation of wailing over the deceased. After several attempts, we managed to make three complete recordings and one incomplete recording, where the laments were rendered by older informants. The laments were performed by two informants: Ján Pecník (1930–2020) and Katarína Forgáčová (b. 1938). Both of them were born in Stara Pazova. It was a difficult task even for the informants themselves, since they were not in an authentic situation—there was no deceased and no funeral. The lamenting was therefore not documented on an authentic occasion, but the case was recording on demand. For this reason, we only have secondary transcriptions. Nevertheless, they retain the spirit and style of local rendering.

According to the information we gained, in Stara Pazova, funeral laments over the deceased used to be performed by their closest family members, most often by women or girls. Usually, a mother would wail over her child, a wife over her husband, a sister over her sibling, or a daughter over her mother. Several people could wail over the deceased at the same time, and there were no pre-constructed formulas for their rendering. Rather, it was their momentary emotional expression. In Stara Pazova, there were no professional weepers among the Slovak population who would have been paid for this service. In some regions of Slovakia, funeral wailing would accompany certain phases of the funeral cycle (Urbancová 2009, 37). Based on the information we acquired, we may presume that this was also the case in Stara Pazova. Funeral laments could be heard in the house of the deceased right after their death, after their closest family and relatives had gathered, during the nocturnal vigil over the deceased, on the day of the funeral when parting with the deceased in the courtyard or in front of the house, when closing the coffin, during the funeral procession, at the cemetery when the coffin was lowered into the grave, and over the grave. In Stara Pazova, these rituals did not have clearly defined phases reserved for wailing over the deceased. One could wail over the deceased any time that the situation within the funeral rites permitted. These situations occurred during the phases specified above.

THE CONTEXT AND MUSICAL COMPONENTS IN FUNERAL LAMENTS IN STARA PAZOVA

According to their way of rendering, we may distinguish between two types of funeral laments in Stara Pazova: melodic and spoken (declamatory) ones. This is a noteworthy phenomenon because, in Stara Pazova, the Slovak ethnicity is Lutheran and a major part of the population moved to Stara

Pazova from Selenča. Unfortunately, due to a low number of recordings in our research, we cannot clearly explain the presence of both types of laments in this specific locality. Since funeral laments were not generally performed by men, we may hypothetically reason that, in this specific case, the melodic form of the lament was determined by the singer himself. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that, on the territory of Slovakia, melodic funeral laments prevail over spoken ones regardless of denomination (Urbancová 2009, 38–50).

Melodic funeral laments were sung by the oldest informant, Ján Pecník. It is interesting and unusual that funeral laments containing melodic formulas were performed by a man, as funeral laments in Stara Pazova were traditionally performed by women, as mentioned earlier. Even the informant must have been aware of this, since he was initially reluctant to perform such a lament for us. The documentation of funeral laments rendered by him is an exception rather than a custom in the respective locality. Ultimately, we managed to document two funeral laments performed by him. In one of them, he played the role of a woman – a daughter wailing over her mother (Example 2) and, in the other one, he performed his own funeral lament over his wife. Although men did not use to render funeral laments in Stara Pazova (or at least not in public), Ján Pecník would perform laments both at the funerals of his closest relatives and to express his grief in private. However, he could not characterize in detail when he would use such a performance during a funeral, as he did so mostly whenever he felt an inner need for it. Nevertheless, based on partial pieces of information that he provided, he presumably mainly wailed at funerals when there were not a lot of people around or when he thought he was alone. Such situations arose during the vigil over the deceased, for example, or right after the funeral at the grave of the deceased, when the mourners were already leaving. This was also confirmed by some of the locals who heard Pecník wail over the grave of his wife. The recordings therefore represent a highly valuable material.

Funeral laments spoken in a declamatory style over a mother (Example 3) and a female friend were rendered by Katarína Forgáčová, although the second recording is incomplete. The informant also provided some information about the wailing itself. As she noted, the intensity and the duration of the wailing would depend on who had died. For example, when a child died in the village, the wailing was very intense. Wailing was usually also intense in case of a mother's death. Forgáčová lamented her parents (father and mother) in an authentic situation. Despite the low number of recordings, we will now try to characterize these funeral laments. It should be noted, however, that more recordings should be made and analysed to provide a general characterization of the funeral laments in Stara Pazova.

An improvised text stands at the forefront of both types of funeral laments. With respect to their textual structure, these laments may be classified as non-strophic items of stichic form (Elscheková 1969; Burlasová 1977). Nevertheless, certain schematicism was noticeable in the rendering of both informants (provided that one may talk about any schematicism in case of such a low number of songs): turning to the deceased (*my mother, my wife / mama moja, žena moja*), expressing grief and sorrow over the loss of a close person (*why did you leave me, oh, what am I to do / čo ste ma nahali, jaj, čo ja budem robiť*), recalling the personal characteristics of the deceased (*good, kind / dobrá, milá*), what the deceased person meant to the wailing person, what their relationship was (*we were together for ages, one without the other nowhere / ke zme naveki dovena boľi, edom bez druhého nigde*); the further course of the rendering focused on a description of their disease and preparation for death (*when you went to hospital, my mother, you remained there / do boľnici ke ste tašli, mama moja, tam ste ostáli*). The above scheme has no strict sequence that would apply to all the funeral laments recorded during our fieldwork. Nevertheless, all of them contain most of the above in a certain order. In addition, rhetorical questions prevail, which enhance the emotional charge of the rendering. The texts of the laments are improvised, but certain contents were present in their rendering. Pazova wailing also includes expressions in the form of interjections, exclamations, and moaning (*oh / jaj*).

A melodic funeral lament is illustrated in Example 2. The melody is in the minor key. In case of melodic funeral laments, the melodic structure consists of a single musical motif of an ascending-descending character with no exceptions. The third degree is the starting point from which the melody ascends to the fifth or the sixth and, subsequently, with a gradual motion, descends to the prime (the base note). Almost all the musical (melodic) lines contain such musical progression. The duration of the motif depends on the text contained in a particular line (phrase). In Example 2, there are as many as thirty such phrases. Their length differs depending on the number of syllables: six or more. The number of pitches in a phrase depends on the number of syllables in the text. During its course, the above motif may be varied by ornamentation and rhythmic changes. The melodic and rhythmic diction of the text consist of small rhythmic values throughout the motif. There are also pauses, which are usually used by the singer to take a breath or rest. In our recordings, however, the performers did not make any major pauses. The lines above the staff in the transcriptions represent the breath pauses of the singer. Longer rhythmic values mostly appear at the end of the textual phrases or in their middle. Another peculiarity of the funeral laments performed by Ján Pecník is the application of ornaments.

Ornamentation is one of the general basic attributes of the Slovak folk songs of Pazova. The ornamentation of the Slovak Pazova folk songs has attracted the attention of several researchers, but the first theoretical reflection on this issue was presented by Martin Kmeť (1926–2011), a Slovak ethnomusicologist from Vojvodina. He discussed it the most in relation to the influences of musical instruments on the development of Pazova singing (Kmeť 1972).

Although the extent of its presence is not the same in all the songs, the ornamentation is obviously a part of the performance style of the Slovak songs in Stara Pazova. This is a specific phenomenon especially because prominent ornamentation is not characteristic for the traditional songs of the Slovaks in Vojvodina. This fact can, for example, be observed in the song collection of Juraj Ferík Senior (Ferík 2004), who documented Slovak folk songs in almost all the Slovak localities in Vojvodina. Moreover, the ornamented singing of the Slovaks of Stara Pazova is also unique in the context of traditional songs from the territory of Slovakia. Ornamentation in the funeral laments in Stara Pazova can therefore be viewed as a specificity of that locality (Lomen 2022).

A declamatory funeral lament is illustrated in Example 3. In declamatory laments, the melody is subject to the intonation of speech. The melody is therefore recitative. Both funeral laments rendered by Katarína Forgáčová are mutually comparable. They are based on sections of the text (phrases) of various syllabic structure: five or more syllables. Contrary to melodic funeral laments, in which an ascending-descending melodic motion prevails, this lament also contains a prevailing descending motion. In some of the phrases, the text is rendered on a static (supporting) note. The intensity of performance or its gradation would be achieved through amplification or weakening of the intonation of the voice. This rendering of a funeral lament is also primarily based on improvisation.

The descriptions of these recorded funeral laments reveal certain shared features. In both types, the dominant text does not have a verse form. It is a freely composed prosaic text. Although the lament is based on improvisation, the text is not that free. This is evidenced by the above-mentioned schematic framework of the texts, which was, in a certain form, present in both types of funeral laments. The funeral laments were not identical and the phrases in them did not repeat. Also, they did not have a specified length: they could last only for a few minutes, or longer. The descending character is a prominent feature of both types of funeral songs. Tolbert attributed this to speech in general, for which descending intonation is characteristic (1990, 93–97).

CONCLUSION

In this study, we have focused our attention on the characteristics of the funeral laments of the Slovak ethnicity in Vojvodina, Serbia. So far, they have not received major attention, which can also be seen from the fact that there are no references whatsoever to funeral laments in the existing Slovak song collections from this geo-cultural region. The largest contribution in this field was made by the Slovak ethnomusicologist Soňa Burlasová (1971), who characterized funeral laments in the village of Selenča. We documented a few funeral laments in Stara Pazova within our fieldwork in 2014, among the oldest generation of singer-informants. The young and the middle generation of singers no longer use this folklore genre in authentic situations. Therefore, these recordings represent valuable material, even though they were not documented in an original context and despite their low number.

We may draw several conclusions by establishing a general parallel between recorded funeral laments of the Vojvodina Slovaks in Serbia and funeral laments in Slovakia. Firstly, this musical folklore genre did not survive in large numbers among Slovaks in Vojvodina. On the contrary, a relatively copious collection of laments captured on sound recordings and in written transcriptions has survived from the territory of Slovakia. Secondly, we may affirm that our recordings of the funeral laments of the Slovak ethnicity in Stara Pazova share several characteristics both with the funeral laments on the territory of Slovakia and with the funeral laments of the Slovaks in other localities in Vojvodina. Thirdly, in both localities, the main bearers of this folklore genre were primarily women. The rendering of a funeral lament by a male performer in Stara Pazova is an unusual, although not a unique phenomenon. Funeral laments rendered by men were also documented in Slovakia, although in rare cases (Urbancová 2019, 74). Fourthly, we documented two types of funeral laments in Stara Pazova: melodic and spoken ones, and certain similarities can be observed even in terms of the text and melody (Burlasová 2009). However, their specific similarities and differences can only be indicated by more detailed analyses, which require further research.

Example 1. Wailing over a mother, rendered by Erža Gašparovská (b. 1931), transcribed by Soňa Burlasová, 1977, Selenča (Bačka region, Vojvodina). Source: Burlasová 2009, 20–21.

Nariekanie za matkou. Selenča (Báčka), 1977. Prednes Erža Gašparovská (nar. 1931).

Jaj, ma-mi-čko mo-ja mi-lá, (vzdych) jaj, ma-mi-čko mo-ja do-brá, (vzdych)
 jaj, od-kád' vás len vi-zí-rat' bu-d'em, (vzdych) jaj, či zho-ra, či zdo-la,
 a či od-mi-lé-ho Pá-na Bo-ha, (vzdych) jaj, ma-mi-čko mo-ja mi-lá,
 jaj, doj-d'i-t'e mi e-š'te raz, (vzdych) jaj, doj-d'i-t'e ma-po-t'e-šit', (vzdych)
 jaj, ma-mi-čko mo-ja mi-lá, (vzdych) jaj, ma-mi-čko mo-ja do-brá, (vzdych)
 ach, ma-mi-čko mo-ja mi-lá, čo s'te ma tak sa-mu na-ha-li, (vzdych)
 aj te mo-je ma-le si-ro-tki, jaj, ma-mi-čko mo-ja mi-lá,
 doj-d'i-t'e mi e-š'te raz, (vzdych) jaj, ma-mi-čko mo-ja do-brá,
 ma-mi-čko mo-ja pre-mi-le-ná, (vzdych) jaj, ma-mi-čko mo-ja, ma-mi-čko.

Oh, my dear mother,
 oh, my good mother,
 oh, how will I see you,
 oh, whether from the mountain, or from below,
 or from our Beloved Lord God,
 oh, my dear mother,
 oh, come to me once more,

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oh, come to make me happy,
 oh, my dear mother,
 oh, my good mother,
 oh, my dear mother,
 why did you leave me so alone,
 and my small orphans,
 oh, my dear mother,
 come to me once more,
 oh, my good mother,
 oh, my beloved mother,
 oh, mother, mother of mine.

Example 2. Wailing over a mother, rendered by Ján Pecník (1930–2020),
 transcribed by Kristina Lomen, October 2014, Stara Pazova.

2' 41"

Jaj, ma-ma mo-ja, ma-mi-ca mo-ja, ma-mi-ca mo-ja mi-lá, čo s'te ma
 na-ha-ŕi. Ma-mi-ca mo-ja kto mňa do-čká, ke ja do to-chto do-mu prí-d'em.
 Jaj, kto za-vo-lá i-d'e mo-ja A-na. Jaj, ma-ma mo-ja, ma-mi-ca mo-ja.
 Jaj, ma-mi-ca mo-ja, ve s'te sa mi cho-ro-be na-mu-či-fi. Jaj, ve som vám
 do-kto-ra hl'a-da-la aj ŕie-ke. Ma-ma mo-ja, a-ŕe som vám po-mosť ňe-mo-hla.
 Ma-mi-ca mo-ja, te-raz pri-sou do-ktor, ke-rie vám ŕe-cke bo-la-s'ŕi aj ra-ŕi za-ho-ju.
 Ma-ma mo-ja, jaj, vo-lám, krí-kam, a-ŕe vi mi ŕišt ňe-o-dho-vá-ra-t'e.
 Jaj, ma-mi-ca mo-ja ŕe-pre-zia-ŕe-ná. Ma-ma mo-ja, ma-mi-ca mo-ja.

Jaj, do - bro - ta mo - ja, ke - rá mi pó - jd'e do ze - mi. Ma - mi - ca mo - ja,
 d'e vás ľem bu - d'ľem hľ'a - dat', ĩi - g'd'e vás ĩe - ná - jd'ľem, ma - mi - ca mo - ja,
 ľem na hro - bách. Jaj, ľem na hro - bách va - še me - no bó vi - pí - sa - nuó.
 Jaj, te - re - ti mo - je, ve - lkie, ľa - šie od ke - me - ľa. Jaj, ĩi - kto
 nak si ĩe - mi - s'ľi, že je ľa - chko ke sa ma - ma stra - ľi. Jaj, ma - mi - no
 me - no, ma - mi - no me - no je pl - nuó, pl - nuó ke sa po - vie „ma - ma“.
 Ma - ma mo - ja do - brá, ma - ma mo - ja cho - ro - be vi - mu - ĩe - ná.
 Ma - ma mo - ja, a - ko vás ľem za - bu - ľem. Ma - ma mo - ja, krí - kam
 od ĩe - ra - jšku od ve - ĩe - ra, a - ľe vi mi ĩišt ĩe - vra - ví - ľe,
 jaj, ĩišt sa ĩe - spi - tu - je - ľe. Ma - ma mo - ja, jaj, aj do bo - ľi - ci ke s'ľe ta - š'ľi,
 ma - ma mo - ja, tam s'ľe o - stá - ľi. Ko - ho s'ľe ľem gu se - be vo - la - ľi,
 jaj, ke s'ľe ĩi - ko - ho svo - jho ĩe - ma - ľi. Jaj, ma - ma mo - ja,
 ma - ma mo - ja, ma - mi - ca mo - ja.

Oh, my mother, mother of mine,
 my dear mother,
 why did you leave me.
 Mother of mine, who will be waiting for me
 when I come to this house.
 Oh, who will exclaim 'my Anna is coming.'
 Oh, my mother, mother of mine,
 oh, mother of mine,
 how much you have suffered in your disease.
 Oh, how I have searched for a doctor and for medicine for you.
 Mother of mine, and I could not help you.
 Mother of mine, the doctor has come now,
 who will heal all your wounds and pains.
 Mother of mine, oh, I call, I cry,
 but you do not answer me.
 Oh, mother of mine, mourned forever,
 my mother, mother of mine,
 oh, my goodness, who is now going into the earth.
 Mother of mine, where will I search for you,
 I will not find you anywhere, mother of mine, only in the grave.
 Oh, only on the grave your name will be written.
 Oh, my burdens, big, heavier than stone.
 Oh, let no one think
 it is easy to lose a mother.
 Oh, the name of my mother,
 my mother's name is complete, complete when "mother" is said.
 My good mother,
 mother of mine, tortured by disease.
 Mother of mine, how will I forget you.
 Mother of mine, I have been crying since last night,
 but you say nothing, oh, you ask nothing.
 Mother of mine, oh, when you went to hospital,
 mother of mine, you remained there.
 Who did you call to yourself,
 oh, you had nobody there.
 Oh, my mother, my mother, mother of mine.

Example 3. Wailing over a mother, rendered by Katarína Forgáčová
(b. 1938), transcribed by Kristina Lomen, October 2014, Stara Pazova.

1,47"

Ma-ma mo-ja mi-lá, ma-ma mo-ja do-brá, ma-ma mo-ja u-bo-ľe-ná,
 ma-ma mo-ja, lá - ska mo-ja, čo mi za-na-ve-ki za-hi-nu-la.
 Ma-ma mo-ja, ke ja te-raz prí - d'em, mo-ju ma-mu tu ňe-ná-jd'em.
 Ma-ma mo-ja, ňi-kto mi viac ňe-po-vie, Ka-tka mo-ja, ke-di prí - d'eš.
 Ma - ma mo - ja, ma - ma mo - ja, ro - bo - tná mo - ja ma - ma.
 Ma-ma mo-ja, ve ňe-bo-lo ľa-chko, št'i - ri - cať ro-kov cho-ro-bu no-siť,
 čo na-ve-ki vo-ľa-čo bo-ľe-lo. Jaj, ma-ma mo-ja do-brá,
 ma-ma mo-ja e-na e-d'i-ná. Ma-ma mo-ja, jaj, ma-ma mo-ja, še-ci zme vás,
 tu o-ko-lo vás, ma-ma mo-ja, a-ľe vi ňišt ňe-dbá-ľe.
 Ma-ma mo-ja, bár bi bo-lo do-vi-d'e-ňa, že bi zme sa sre-t'i tam u Pá-na.
 Ma-ma mo-ja, ma-ma mo-ja do-brá. Ma-ma je ka-ždá do-brá.

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Viem, ma - ma mo - ja, že s'te sa s na - mi trá - pi - ľi, kým zme bo - ľi ma - ľi.

Za še - cko vám ďa - ku - jem, čo s'te pri - kla - da - ľi ru - ke na nás.

Ma - mi - ca mo - ja mi - lá, ma - mi - ca mo - ja do - brá.

My dear mother,
 my good mother,
 my mother who was in pain,
 my mother, my love,
 who died forever.

My mother, when I come now,
 I will not find my mother here.
 Mother of mine, nobody will ever tell me.
 'My dear Kate, when will you come?'
 Mother of mine, mother of mine,
 my hardworking mother.
 Mother of mine, it was not easy
 to carry a disease for forty years,
 something always ached.

Oh, my good mother,
 my one and only mother.

Mother of mine, oh, mother of mine,
 all of us are here around you,
 mother of mine, but you do not notice anything.

Mother of mine, if only it would be the end,
 and we would meet at our Lord.

Mother of mine, my good mother,
 every mother is good.

I know, my mother,
 it was hard for you with us
 while we were young.

Thank you for everything,
 whatever you did for us.

My dear mother,
 my good mother.

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КРИСТИНА ЛОМЕН

ПОГРЕБНЕ ТУЖБАЛИЦЕ (*POHREBNÉ PLAČE*)
СЛОВАЧКЕ ЗАЈЕДНИЦЕ У СРБИЈИ

(РЕЗИМЕ)

Ово је прва студија која пружа детаљан етномузиколошки увид у погребне тужбалице (*pohrebne plače* или *pohrebne nariekanie* на словачком језику) међу словачким становништвом у Срему (Војводина, Република Србија). Након увода у тему и резимирања досадашњих проучавања, фокусирали смо се на сопствени документарни материјал о погребним тужбалицама, прикупљен у Старој Пазови, једном од трију локалитета у Војводини на којима смо спроводили теренска истраживања. Укратко смо представили неке обичаје и радње везане за смрт и сахрану на овом локалитету. Потом смо описали погребне тужбалице и детаљно их специфицирали. Погребно нарицање у Старој Пазови традиционалан је обичај који се више не практикује. Данас се такво нарицање може чути само у веома ретким случајевима и искључиво у аутентичним ситуацијама – као део различитих фаза погребних обреда, а изводи га женска популација старије генерације. Међутим, већина слушалаца и извођача није свесна чињенице да је реч о одређеном фолклорном жанру. На овом локалитету обично се користе два термина за означавање обичаја нарицања над умрлим: *nariekat'* или *vikladat'*. Такво извођење сматра се субјективним изражавањем туге због губитка блиске особе и најчешће доводи до колективног осећања бола међу присутнима. С нестанком најстарије генерације овај обред такође пада у заборав. Средње и млађе генерације имају ограничено знање о самом типу извођења погребних тужбалица, па се вишеструка вредност документованог материјала потврђује и у том контексту.