

LIFE JUBILEE OF PHDR. GABRIEL FUSEK, CSC.

I often find myself pondering a question: 'Is today significantly different from what it was forty years ago?' Undoubtedly! Social conditions in our homeland have undergone a revolutionary transformation. Have people changed as well? In many cases, this is certainly true. However, these sweeping changes have had only a limited impact on our jubilant friend. He has retained his humanity and his character has stood firm amidst the whirlwind of transformation. I cannot recall a single instance when he said: 'It can't be done, it's impossible!' These are all facts that should be immensely valued, particularly in Gabriel Fusek's case, given that he has experienced numerous challenging moments and situations, primarily due to his health issues.

Our jubilant was born in Trnava on 9th August 1957. He completed his primary and secondary education in Nové Mesto nad Váhom. From 1976 to 1981, he pursued archaeology at the Faculty of Philosophy at Comenius University in Bratislava. His noteworthy diploma thesis explored settlements in the Bronze Age, specifically *Society and Economy in Eastern Slovakia during the Period of the Demise of the Ottomány Culture (Spoločnosť a hospodárstvo na východnom Slovensku v období zániku otomanskej kultúry)*. Since April 1981, he has been a dedicated member of the Archaeological Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Nitra. It was here that he began to shape his scientific career,



Photo Jozef Zábojník, 1986.

focusing on topics related to the early Middle Ages. His work quickly earned recognition, not only for his fieldwork but also for a series of innovative contributions, studies, and articles. He demonstrated considerable courage by presenting new perspectives on the stereotypically perceived development of settlements in that era, engaging in discussions with experts. In 1983, he earned the academic title *philosophiae doctor* (PhDr.), and in 1993, following the successful defence of his dissertation, *Early Slavic Settlement of Slovakia (Včasnოსlovenské osídlenie Slovenska)*, he earned the scientific rank of Candidate of Sciences (CSc.). Subsequently, he published his candidate thesis in a slightly altered form as a monograph titled *Slovakia in the Early Slavic Period (Slovensko vo včasnოსlovenskom období)*. *Archaeologica Slovaca Monographiae. Studia 3*. Nitra 1994). In 1997, he embarked on a one-year study sponsored by the Volkswagen Stiftung. During this time, he contributed to pedagogical activities at the Institut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, where he led the seminar 'Early Medieval Settlement of the Carpathian Basin'.

Throughout his career, he conducted numerous archaeological excavations, including but not limited to: Mužla-Čenkov (1981), Chľaba (1982), Komjatice-Legionárske (1982), Nitra-Športový areál (1983), Nitra-Na Vřšku (1983), Nitra-Mikov dvor (1984), Bielovce (1985), Nitra-Šindolka (1985, 1986), Nitra-Castle (1988–1990), Nitra-Šindolka (1995), and Divinka (2013–2019).

Gabriel Fusek's publication record is extraordinarily extensive and inspiring, with over 160 original works. A detailed list was recently published in the journal *Slovenská archeológia* (vol. 70, 2022, 373–382). His role as an editor of valuable publications should not be underestimated. Notable among these is the collection *Frühmittelalterlicher Burgenbau in Mittel- und Osteuropa*. He compiled and edited the collection *Zborník na počesť Dariny Bialekovej* and the collection *Studien zum Frühen Mittelalter*. As a co-author, he contributed to the monograph *Dejiny Nitry. Od najstarších čias po súčasnosť*. His role as the chief editor of the Archaeological Institute of the Slovak Republic's profile periodical *Slovenská archeológia*, from 1998 to 2022, deserves special recognition. His exacting standards for authors who contributed to the journal, both in terms of content and formal aspects, are commendable. Since 2020, he has served on the editorial boards of foreign periodicals, including *Cercetări Arheologice* in Bucharest



Photo Ioan Stanciu, 2005.

and *Přehled výzkumů* in Brno. In 2022, he joined the editorial board of the journal *Študijné zvesti AÚ SAV*.

In 2013, Gabriel Fusek received a medal on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, recognizing his contributions based on the ARRA evaluation. He was rightly awarded the István Schönvisner Memorial Medal for his dedication to the preservation of archaeological heritage. In 2018, the city of Nitra honored him with a commemorative letter during the 770th anniversary celebration of the granting of royal privileges to the city. The village of Divinka, where Gabriel Fusek led multi-season archaeological research at Veľký vrch, also expressed gratitude for his professional approach, collaboration, and contribution to the quality of their work, specifically the monograph *Divinka a Lalinok*.

Notable is his involvement in the implementation of several grant projects for agencies like VEGA, APVV, as well as international projects in Slovenia and Poland. He supervised one diploma thesis and served as the advisor to three doctoral students.

The preceding text highlights the breadth and depth of Gabriel Fusek's contributions to the field of archaeology. Yet, I cannot help but reminisce about a few personal memories. I met my colleague Gabriel Fusek shortly after he joined the Archaeological Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Nitra. At that time, securing a position at the institute

was no easy feat. Therefore, his selection by the institute's leadership is particularly commendable. We quickly became friends who respected and valued each other's insights. Our numerous conversations and discussions led to several collaborative contributions and studies. Some were straightforward to produce, while others proved more challenging due to the complexity of the topics and the intensity of our debates. I firmly believe that the exchange of ideas during our discussions and the resulting products were enriched by our disagreements. One personal memory stands out: in 1984, Gabriel Fusek made a significant contribution to the research of the burial ground dating back to the Avar Khaganate period in Obid, which I was leading. His methods for uncovering and documenting graves were not only inspirational but also invaluable to me.

Dear Gabko, on behalf of our friends, colleagues, and, of course, myself, I am thrilled to wish you many more years of creativity, good health, contentment, and unwavering enthusiasm for taking on new challenges. Lastly, may these upcoming years yield numerous remarkable discoveries in the field of early Middle Ages, further enhancing the positive image of our jubilant.

Jozef Zábojník 

Translated by Pavol Bobek and Michal Holeščák