

Šaľa: Kierkegaard in the Heart of Europe

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The Kierkegaard Collection in Slovakia

Inspired by my studies at The Hong Kierkegaard Library in the United States in 2004, I decided to found a collection of books focusing on the life and work of Søren Kierkegaard in Slovakia. The main reason for doing so was the lack of relevant primary and secondary literature on Kierkegaard in the local libraries, as well as the increasing interest in Kierkegaard's thought in Slovakia.

The Kierkegaard Collection was from its very beginning founded as a part of the Šaľa Public Library. It was primarily designed for university students and all those interested in a deeper study of philosophy or theology. Its aim has been to inform the general public about the work and ideas of Søren Kierkegaard, as well as the broader context of Danish history. Another aim was to provide the students with sufficient access to scientific literature, in order to assist them with their diploma papers and dissertations.

The Kierkegaard Collection includes Kierkegaard's own works, as well as a number of monographs, studies and translations of Kierkegaard in Danish, English, Czech and Slovak.

The Collection was established in 2005 thanks to the support of several renowned researchers, such as Marie Mikulová Thulstrup, Julia Watkin, Robert Perkins, Junius Stenseth, C. Stephen Evans, Abraham Khan, Andrew Burgess and The Hong Kierkegaard Library. The Collection has benefitted greatly also from the support of the Royal Danish Embassy in Bratislava.

We remain grateful to all our supporters.

The Kierkegaard Society in Slovakia

The Kierkegaard Society in Slovakia was officially founded in February 2007. The founding members of the Society comprised Dr. Roman Králik (chairperson), Dr. Peter Šajda (vice-

chairperson) and Prof. Dr. Lukáč Ján Veverka, CSc.

The aim of the Society is to promote philosophical interest in Kierkegaard in Slovakia and Central Europe, to organize conferences, seminars and lectures and to produce publications on Kierkegaard. Yet another aim is to create a centre for local researchers who would closely co-operate with researchers abroad and thus help to broaden the knowledge of Kierkegaard in Slovakia and in Central Europe.

The City of Šaľa

The official seat of the Kierkegaard Society in Slovakia and of the Kierkegaard Collection is the city of Šaľa.

The city lies in the northern part of the Danubian Lowlands, on both banks of the river Váh, and is located 70 km from Bratislava, the capital of the Slovak Republic. It has a rich and inspiring history. In the early 11th century, at the beginning of the literary history of the Hungarian Kingdom, the Váh territory was mentioned as one of the early centres of Christian culture. The region experienced several significant changes and events in the period following the Middle Ages and at the turn of 16th and 17th centuries, Šaľa became a major bastion of re-Catholisation. The city also played an important role in the defence system against the Turks, in the time of Francis II. Rákóczi's uprising against the Habsburgs at the beginning of the 18th century, as well as in the second half of the 19th century. The history provides evidence that the city's inhabitants were able to pull through, to face major challenges and difficulties arising throughout the centuries. Also due to their persistence and tenaciousness the city gradually became an important centre of the region.

The city of Šaľa shares certain features with another city of comparable size: Northfield in Minnesota, USA. They are similar not only with respect to their number of inhabitants and their size, but they also have something else in common – a passionate interest in Søren Kierkegaard. And it was for this reason that Šaľa has been visited by a number of outstanding personalities of academic life recently.

My special thanks belong to His Excellency, the Danish Ambassador in Slovakia, Jørgen Munk Rasmussen, who has been personally engaged in the events organised by the Kierkegaard Society in Slovakia, and who has visited Šaľa four times already. He has written the following about the

Kierkegaard project in Šaľa: “*Roman Králik’s dedicated research on Søren Kierkegaard deserves wide recognition and I feel certain that this latest reflection of his endeavours will be appreciated by scholars around the world.*”

I am also thankful to my colleagues both from Slovakia and abroad, since they made it possible for my dream of Kierkegaard’s town – Šaľa to come true. Among all of them, let me thank especially my friends Cynthia Lund and Peter Šajda.