

# Preface

## *Dear Colleagues!*

It is a great pleasure to all of us that in September 2009 we can take part already the tenth time in the opening session of the Postgraduate Conference of Transylvanian Hungarian Restorers here in Székelyudvarhely. On this round anniversary it seems proper to look back on the history of this prominent event series.

The Postgraduate Conference of Transylvanian Hungarian Restorers was launched in 1999 on Petronella Kovács and Zita Károlyi's excellent initiation. Owing to their hard work and the financial and spiritual support they got, it has arrived to the tenth anniversary. Sincere appreciation and thanks are due to them from all of us. The 80-100 colleagues who annually took part in the conferences could hear more than 150 significant presentations and the exhibitions and conference excursions acquainted the Transylvanian and the Hungarian colleagues with countless values of Transylvania and Romania.

In the followings I will try to sum up, from my own respect, what this conference series has meant for us, mostly Hungarian-speaking specialists, who have undertaken the task of preserving, caretaking and showing to the public the Transylvanian cultural legacy.

We could hear, especially during the first conferences, lectures from teachers who take part in the object conservator training of the Hungarian National Museum of Budapest. In these communications, the essence of the knowledge that had crystallized during nearly three decades of training was clearly passed to the audience. We could get a glimpse of their factual and systemized knowledge and learn an expressive manner of lecturing beside the Hungarian technical terms. The lectures of Hungarian conservators and scholars also contained valuable information and many experiences, while the presentations of the Transylvanian, Romanian specialists pointed to details, problems and successes of local conservations uncovering wonderful elements of the rich material legacy of Transylvania. We really became richer during this concise training. The students of object conservation training university of Nagyszeben whose mother language was Hungarian and those who understood Hungarian language attended all the conferences and emphasised that the lectures contributed to their development. Many of them later returned to Udvarhely as lecturers and the standard of their presentations and the way they presented them clearly demonstrated the beneficial effect of their experiences at the conferences they had attended.

ISIS, which published the contents of these presentations and was available to everybody after the conferences, became one of the most significant periodicals of the

country. Its on-line version and the information it contains can be reached by all the specialists who understand Hungarian wherever they live. The English and the Romanian summaries offer an insight for those who do not understand Hungarian.

The interesting exhibitions and excursions linked with the conference were important complements to the presentation series. During the precisely organised and planned excursions, several significant regions of Transylvania and Romania were visited and not only the ones that could be found on our way. Owing to the professional guiding, we could learn a lot about the history and the specific values of the visited regions, also about causes of deteriorations and the details of reconstruction. At many places, vivid discussions started on these topics. All these gave further impetus to our development.

During the conferences, a direct exchange of experiences could develop between the Hungarian and the Transylvanian, Romanian colleagues and they could get a glimpse of each other's work and build professional and human contacts. We are also grateful for these benefits to the two major organisers: Petronella Kovács and Zita Károlyi.

It is not easy to find faults in the activities of the past ten years. If I insist on finding a fault, it may perhaps be that the rich concise professional information of the ISIS does not stand fully at the disposal to the Romanian colleagues, as we have already discussed it with the organisers. I was glad to find that in the last two numbers of ISIS, the entire texts of the lectures can be read in Romanian as well, which is an important advance. It would be crucial, however, to publish the materials of the first six volumes in Romanian either as a printed volume or in an electronic form.

The technical literature of conservation is fairly poor in Romanian language. We must be aware that colleagues of the Romanian mother tongue are charged with a significant part of the Transylvanian cultural legacy. Most of them are fully experienced, well-intended colleagues and we have to do our best to help their work with the publication of the material. Otherwise we do not have an ethical basis to question doubtful interventions.

I close my greeting words to the Postgraduate Conference of Transylvanian Hungarian Restorers in the hope that we will have the opportunity to meet in ten years time to celebrate the twentieth anniversary.

Székelyudvarhely, 5 October, 2009

*Márta Guttmann*