

Post-Accession Rural Areas Support Programme 2009

Between January and July 2009 a project aimed at the creation of an intergenerational group cultivating the cultural and historical heritage of the Hrubieszów commune was implemented. Under the patronage of archaeologists from the Rev. Stanisław Staszic Museum in Hrubieszów, the Hrubieszów Association “Better Tomorrow” – Local Action Group organised a series of training courses for the inhabitants of the region, during which traditional crafts and rituals of the Goths from the Hrubieszów Basin were presented. Subsequent stages of the implementation of the project were presented in local press, web portals and websites. The overview of the project and the presentation of its results took place during the 6th Archaeological Festival on 25 July 2009 in Masłomęcz. The project was financed from the subsidies obtained by the Hrubieszów Commune from the resources of Pre-Accession Rural Support Programme (PPWOW – Przedakcesyjny Program Wsparcia Obszarów Wiejskich).

1. Training course in bone, wood and leatherworking – January 2009.

In January, the participants in the project took part in classes in leather, bone and woodworking. The instructor was Sławomir Guz – an historian, leader of the group “Bractwo Grodów Czerwieńskich” (Brotherhood of Czerwień Towns) from Chełm, re-enacting life in the early Middle Ages. During the course, skills in making leather footwear, pouches, belts and thongs, which were all integral elements of a Gothic costume, were improved. The participants also gained new knowledge, for a training course in making leather skins for carrying water and other Gothic drinks was organised. The skins were sewed with thick thread and insulated with melted beeswax, and they will become another hallmark of the “Gothic Village”. From ancient times onwards, animal bones and antlers have been an extremely popular material for the production of everyday tools. As part of the course the participants learned how to make bone needles, awls and other objects from materials specifically prepared for this purpose. They have replaced modern needles which were earlier used to sew footwear and costumes. Classes in woodworking required no less energy and precision. Wood was used to make spoons, and even though the work was laborious it regularly brought forth lots of new wooden spoons. Apart from

many hours of practical classes, the participants were also provided with lots of both indispensable and interesting theoretical information on archaeological sources, on the basis of which modern Gothic objects were created.

2. Training course in the manufacture of Gothic jewellery reproductions – February 2009

February in the Gothic Village in Masłomęcz was marked by the development of jeweller's skills. Another cycle of training courses included classes in using copper to manufacture Gothic jewellery reproductions. The workshops were conducted by Ewelina Kokowska from the Institute of Archaeology of the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin. The intergenerational group cultivating the cultural and historical heritage of the Hrubieszów Commune acquired new, extremely valuable skills. Not only are finely crafted clasps, bracelets, pendants and necklaces an attractive complement to Gothic costumes, but they can also become another hallmark of the region. The classes were not easy for the skills being taught required great accuracy, but as it turned out, the experience of the Gothic group increased month by month, and the fact that the Goths acquired new skills in a flash astonished not only instructors but the participants themselves. Their involvement went far beyond the workshops. So willing to develop their skills were they that they spent long winter evenings practising at home.

3. Training course in ancient cuisine – March 2009

Ancient cuisine was the theme of a training course in March. The workshops were conducted by Anna Hyrchała, an archaeologist at the Rev. Stanisław Staszic Museum in Hrubieszów. Traditional dishes, ways of preparing them and information on the availability of individual foodstuffs and seasonings in the 2nd-4th centuries AD were presented, the information being based on ancient written sources. Archaeological finds, in turn, provided information on the fittings of a Gothic kitchen, especially connected with the various types of ceramic and wooden vessels, their forms and uses. The participants in the course were also familiarised with the ways of obtaining, processing and storing food and information on the diet of the population

inhabiting the region in the distant past.

4. Training course in weaving on a vertical loom – April 2009

In April, another stage of the project was implemented in Masłomęcz. For several days, under the tutelage of Marta Wasilczyk, training courses in weaving on such devices as a vertical loom and a simple weaving frame were conducted. Structures of this type, which made it possible to make large linen canvas or wool, have been used for thousands of years, which can be archaeologically proved by characteristic finds in the form of large clay weaving weights. We can state without a doubt that such looms were also used in the Hrubieszów Basin between the 2nd and the 4th centuries AD. In the course of several days of laborious and precise work involving correct interweaving and tying hundreds of threads, the Gothic group acquired this unusually valuable skill.

5. Training course in pottery and firing vessels – May 2009

In May, experimental archaeology workshops were organised as part of the project. The training course involved the preparation of a large batch of ceramic dishes modelled on archaeological finds and then firing them in an open hearth. About 80 vessels made by the inhabitants of Masłomęcz and Marta Wasilczyk, who supervised the workshops, were placed in an appropriately prepared hearth. During the long process of firing, members of the Gothic group learnt the next stages of this difficult art, so that they would be able to carry out such experiments in the future on their own. Despite heavy rain, almost all the dishes, which in the final stage were heated up to 1000° Celsius, were safely fired. However, the effects could be admired the following afternoon, after the hearth was partly cooled down. The experiment was deemed a big success and it was permanently included in the program of attractions presented on archaeological festivals in Masłomęcz.

Parallel with firing dishes, practical classes in ancient cuisine were taking place by another bonfire. In metal pots, dishes garnered from ancient recipes were prepared.

6. Training course in rituals – April-July 2009

Between April and July, training courses in traditional rituals were organised under the tutelage of Bartłomiej Bartecki, an archaeologist at the Rev. Stanisław Staszic Museum in Hrubieszów. The programme of a show which was presented on the 6th Archaeological Festival in Masłomęcz on 25 July 2009, which was an overview of the 7-month project, was drawn up. The programme included: the ritual of electing a new leader, preparation of a military expedition, funeral rituals and a re-enactment of the arrival of the Goths to the Hrubieszów Basin. The realisation of training courses included the presentation of theoretical source information and practical attempts at the presentation of traditional rituals and fights of Gothic warriors.