Innovative advertising strategies of the "Peter Makovický" Bryndza (sheep cheese) Dairy at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries and the influence of Art Nouveau on their visual design

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Abstract: The study examines the advertising strategies of the bryndza-producing company "Peter Makovický" at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, focusing on forms of promotion and the influence of Art Nouveau on their visual appearance. Based on an analysis of period press, calendars, and visual sources preserved in museum collections, it identifies a wide range of advertising tools, from textual advertisements to posters, vignettes, and labels. Particular attention is paid to the motif of a shepherdess derived from the work of Jaroslav Věšín, which became a key visual element of the brand. The study highlights the transition from simple informational advertising to more visually sophisticated solutions influenced by Art Nouveau aesthetics. Although the posters do not fully correspond to formal Art Nouveau principles, they reflect its thematic and ideological aspects, especially the idealization of nature and rural life. The research demonstrates that the company employed innovative and modern marketing strategies that contributed to the successful promotion of bryndza in both domestic and international markets.
Keywords: bryndza, advertising, Art Nouveau, visual culture, poster, Ružomberok, 19th century, marketing strategies.

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Introduction

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, advertising in Slovakia experienced significant growth, both in the periodical press and in public spaces. It took on various forms, and its use gradually intensified, with entrepreneurs, merchants, and manufacturers increasingly employing it as an effective tool for promoting their products and services. The "Peter Makovický" company[1] was no exception in this context. It was a family business that had existed since the 1850s in Ružomberok in the Liptov region. Originally, the company focused on the sale of colonial goods; later, it shifted its focus primarily to the production of bryndza cheese,

[1] In this study, I will refer to the company name "Peter Makovický" in quotation marks to avoid confusion with the historical figure Peter Makovický.

while also investing part of its capital in the paper industry and banking, thereby diversifying its business activities.[2]

The expansion of advertising at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Upper Hungary should be understood within the broader context of economic modernization and the gradual integration of regional markets. Industrial development, the improvement of transport infrastructure – most notably the expansion of the railway network – and the growing circulation of printed media contributed to the intensification of commercial competition.

In the case of the bryndza industry, this process is clearly reflected in the increasing number of producers operating across the northern regions of Upper Hungary. As competition intensified, producers were no longer able to rely solely on the intrinsic quality of their goods or on local reputation. Instead, they were increasingly compelled to differentiate their products through a variety of promotional strategies, including the systematic use of advertising in periodicals, calendars, and visual media.

At the same time, the expansion of literacy and the growing availability of print culture created new opportunities for reaching broader and more socially diverse audiences. Advertising gradually shifted from a predominantly informational and text-based form toward more persuasive and visually oriented strategies, reflecting not only economic pressures but also changing patterns of consumption and communication. In this context, advertising should be understood not merely as a commercial tool, but as an integral part of the emerging modern culture of consumption and public communication, within which individual enterprises sought to position themselves more strategically.

The aim of this study is to identify and analyze the advertising strategies and forms of promotion used in the presentation of bryndza cheese,[3] as well as to specify in greater detail the influence of the emerging Art Nouveau movement on their visual appearance. An important

[2] For more information about the business owners, the Makovický family, see: ĎURIŠKA, Zdenko: *Medzi mlynmi a bankami. Dejiny rodu Makovickovcov*. Martin : SGHS, 2007, 380 pp. Pozri aj ĎURIŠKA, Zdenko – ŠKRINAROVÁ, Ľubica: *Ružomberok II. Rody a osobnosti*. Banská Bystrica : Harmony, 2014, pp. 108-121; MOLDA, Rastislav: Ružena Houdeková. Žena, ktorá nevybočila zo zaužívaných koľají. In: GOLIAN, Ján – MOLDA, Rastislav et al.: *[ne]obyčajné príbehy žien*. Ružomberok : Society for Human Studies, 2019, pp. 102-129.

[3] I analyze the individual advertising strategies of the company "Peter Makovický" in detail here: MOLDA, Rastislav: *Reklamné stratégie bryndziarne „Peter Makovický" na prelome 19. a 20. storočia*. (in print; the paper was presented at a scientific conference: *Od počátků reklamy k modernímu marketingu. Průzkum trhu a odbytové strategie firem ve střední Evropě od druhé poloviny 19. století do počátku 21. století*). In this study, I will only briefly introduce these advertising strategies. I have also provided a more detailed analysis of the advertisements for the "Peter Makovický" company published in Slovak periodicals during

source of information is the collection of the Liptov Museum, which preserves posters, vignettes, and stickers/promotional graphics, allowing for a more detailed understanding of the possibilities and methods of using visual advertising by the "Peter Makovický" company.[4]

The study only briefly touches on the analysis of advertisements published in periodicals and calendars of the time to provide a better context for the reader, while also examining the range of printed materials the company's management used to promote its products.

Systematic research on advertising in the Slovak context during the long 19th century is currently lacking; the topic is addressed only marginally, primarily by historians specializing in economic history. Advertisements published in periodicals of Slovak origin are primarily studied by experts in the history of journalism, who analyze them as part of the development of the press and media communication.[5] In the Czech context, however, this topic is addressed in a significantly more comprehensive and methodologically nuanced manner. Attention is paid to it not only by historians researching the history of everyday life,[6] economic and social history, but also by museum professionals, who utilize a wide range of diverse collection items as relevant primary sources in their research and interpretation.[7]

In the context of this study, the term Art Nouveau is used in a broader Central European sense and requires a more precise specification. The movement did not represent a uniform stylistic phenomenon, but rather a set of regionally differentiated approaches. While the French-Belgian variant, associated with Paris, is characterized by a high degree of stylization, ornamental abstraction, and the synthesis of image and typography, the Austrian form, represented by the Vienna Secession, tends toward more geometrical compositions and a clearer structural organization. In

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the 19th century here: MOLDA, Rastislav: Reklamné stratégie podniku „Peter Makovický"/„Bratia Makovický" v slovenskej tlači do roku 1918. In: *Disputationes Scientificae Universitatis Catholicae in Ružomberok*, 2025, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 43-55, In this study, I will only briefly mention them in order to better explain the use of advertising.

[4] The collection also includes the "History" collection, which contains one copy of a poster, several labels, and stickers/promotional graphics that were previously used to promote bryndza produced by the "Peter Makovický" company

[5] See more, for example: SERAFÍNOVÁ, Danuša: Komerčná inzercia z obdobia monarchie. In: *Reklama 09. Zborník vedeckých štúdií pre otázky teórie a histórie reklamy a public relations*. Bratislava: Book & Book Publisher 2009, pp. 25-46; SERAFÍNOVÁ, Danuša: Svet reklamy. Reklama a inzercia v slovenskej periodickej tlači v období podunajskej monarchie. Bratislava: Book & Book Publisher, 2008, 62 pp.

[6] LENDEROVÁ, Milena – JIRÁNEK, Tomáš – MACKOVÁ, Marie. *Z dějin české každodennosti*. Praha: Karolinum, 2017, pp. 37-42.

[7] See more: VLČKOVÁ, Lucie (ed.). *Mezi kýčem a akademií. Chromolitografie ve službách reklamy a umění*. Praha: Uměleckoprůmyslové museum v Praze, 2020, 245 s.; VLČKOVÁ, Lucie (ed.). *Reč plakátu. 1890–1938*. Praha: Uměleckoprůmyslové museum v Praze 2022, 256 pp.

the Hungarian context, particularly in Budapest, Art Nouveau developed with a distinctive emphasis on national motifs, folk ornament, and architectural and decorative synthesis, often associated with the search for a specifically Hungarian artistic expression. In the Czech environment, Art Nouveau developed in close connection with both international influences and local artistic traditions, particularly in the field of poster design and applied graphics.

In the case of the Liptov region, however, the reception of Art Nouveau should be understood as a peripheral and selective adaptation rather than a direct adoption of its most progressive formal principles. Local commercial graphics combined elements of contemporary styles with more traditional, often realistic visual approaches, reflecting both technological limits and the specific expectations of regional audiences.

The Founding of the Business and the Path to the Bryndza Dairy

The origins of the business producing "Slovak white gold," as bryndza cheese was known, date back to 1850. It was in June 1850 that Peter Makovický Sr. opened a grocery store in Ružomberok.[8] He named the store after himself, "Peter Makovický." Six years later, he took on his younger brother, Daniel Božetech, as a partner, and they changed the shop's name to "Bratia Makovický." The business thrived; the brothers invested in purchasing real estate and expanded both their product range and the scope of their operations.[9] In the late 1870s, changes occurred within the company; the younger of the brothers – Daniel Božetech – withdrew, and the name reverted to its original form: "Peter Makovický."[10] The founder, Peter Makovický Sr., began to be assisted by his son, Vladimír. Probably under Vladimír's influence, they established a bryndza cheese factory in 1880. Two stories are told about its founding. The first is about the spoiled first batch of bryndza cheese, which they threw into the Váh River. The second is about receiving a large quantity of lumpy sheep's cheese as payment for a debt. Due to improper storage and handling, the cheese spoiled and, just like in the first case, ended up in the Váh River. These traditional setbacks did not deter the Makovický family; on the contrary, they expanded their business portfolio to include bryndza production. Peter Makovický Sr. also invested in banking and in a factory

[8] In the second half of the 19th century, Ružomberok was one of the three fastest-growing cities in Upper Hungary from an economic, demographic, and urban planning perspective, primarily due to the construction of the Košice–Bohumín railway. The city's progress is most evident in its population growth: over the course of 60 years, the city's population increased fivefold (from 2,532 in 1851 to 12,805 in 1910).

[9] For more details about the members of the Makovický family and how their business operated, see more: ĎURIŠKA, *Medzi mlynmi a bankami...* 380 pp.

[10] *Obzor. Noviny pre hospodárstvo, remeslo a domáci život*, vol. 18, 1880, no. 16, p. 128.

producing paper wood chips.[11]

Further changes took place at the company in 1886. The elder son, Vladimír, took over its management. In the contract, he committed to accepting his younger brother Peter as a partner once he reached the age of majority.[12] This commitment was fulfilled at the turn of 1888 and 1889, as reported in a newspaper article: "*Mr. Vladimír Makovický, owner of the well-regarded trading firm in Ružomberok, announces that he has accepted his brother, Mr. Peter Makovický Jr., as a partner in his main general merchandise store, grocery and hardware store in Ružomberok, as well as to his branch store of a similar nature in Vrútky, and to his first Liptov steam bryndza cheese factory. They will manage these three businesses jointly and continue under the existing registered firm name: Peter Makovický.*"[13] Their business activities consisted of a store offering a variety of goods and the production of bryndza cheese. The brothers divided their responsibilities; Peter focused on the store and the bryndza cheese factory, while Vladimír concentrated on banking. Another change occurred in 1902; the brothers sold the store, and the company specialized solely in the production and sale of bryndza cheese.[14]

At the turn of the century, they produced approximately 200 tons of bryndza cheese per year; later, production rose to 700 tons. Even that was not the limit; the facility was designed to produce 1,000 tons per year.[15] During this period, the company employed 25 workers and six clerks, about half of whom worked year-round despite the seasonal nature of bryndza cheese production. According to a report issued by the District Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Banská Bystrica, the bryndza cheese factory employed 14 workers and the plant's capacity was 8 horsepower.[16] However, based on preserved visual sources (vignettes), the company also operated under the name "Prvá liptovská parnia brindziareň"/"First Liptov bryndza cheese Factory," through which they sought to emphasize the importance and uniqueness of their product. The official name of the company, however, remained "Peter Makovický."

The construction of the Košice-Bohumín Railway helped the business

[11] ĎURIŠKA, *Medzi mlynmi a bankami...*, pp. 92-93.
[12] ĎURIŠKA, *Medzi mlynmi a bankami...*, p. 131.
[13] Chýrnik. Z obchodného života, In: Národnie noviny, vol. 20, 1889, No. 17 from 9. 2. 1889, p. 3.
[14] ĎURIŠKA, *Medzi mlynmi a bankami...*, p. 131.
[15] ĎURIŠKA, *Medzi mlynmi a bankami...*, p. 164.
[16] Priemyselná výroba na celom Slovensku. Zoznam firiem priemyselných podnikov poťahom na ich výroby, počet robotníkov a motorovú silu, Bratislava: Obchodná a priemyselná komora: [No release year], p. 13.

grow, as it made it easier to transport the product to customers. The importance of the railway for the development of the bryndza-making business was also recognized in 1917 by an anonymous contributor to the Národné noviny:[17] "*Production increased after the opening of the railway, and after 1880, the number of bryndza cheese producers gradually grew in all directions, starting from Spiš and spreading to nearly all the upper mountainous regions. Today, about 40 companies are engaged in bryndza cheese production. Of these, only about 8–9 are Christian.*"[18]

What was the potential for bryndza cheese production in Liptov? The natural and climatic conditions in Liptov, as well as local traditions, were well-suited to sheep farming; sheep have likely been raised here on an extensive basis since the region was settled by Wallachian colonists in the 17th century.[19] In the summer, pastures formed the basis of the feed supply, and in the winter, feed was grown or obtained through free-range grazing.[20] According to Hungarian statistics from the early 20th century, more than 46,753 sheep were raised in Liptov, with the flock evenly distributed among the three Liptov districts of Ružomberok (16,353), Liptovský sv. Mikuláš (16,347), and Liptovský Hrádok (14,053). Across all of Hungary, more than 8,100,000 sheep were raised. Among the Upper Hungarian counties, sheep farming was particularly dominant in the Novohrad County, where there were more than a quarter of a million sheep.[21] According to a report in Národné noviny, the production of sheep's milk cheese needed to make bryndza cheese from the Liptov shepherd's huts by Makovický in 1917 was insufficient: "*The Liptov bryndza cheese industry is making up for the shortfall by purchasing cheese from neighboring counties.*"[22]

[17] "Národnie noviny" was a Slovak political newspaper published between 1870 and 1947 in Turčiansky Sv. Martin and, in 1948, in Bratislava, where it ceased publication that same year. It was published three to six times a week. From 1873 to 1921, it served as the official organ of the Slovak National Party. Prominent figures of the Slovak national movement contributed to it. Until 1918, its print run ranged from 400 to 800 copies.

[18] Priemysel, obchod, hospodárstvo. Bryndza, In: Národnie noviny, vol. 48, 1917, no. 51 from 3. 5. 1917, p. 3.

[19] BEDNÁRIK, Rudolf. Duchovná a hmotná kultúra slovenského ľudu, In: Slovenská vlastiveda II., Bratislava: Slovenská akadémia vied a umení 1943, p. 197.

[20] ZUSKINOVA, Iveta. Liptov. Ovčiarstvo na Liptove, Liptovský Mikuláš: Spoločnosť priateľov Múzea liptovskej dediny 2018, p. 14.

[21] *A Magyar korona országainak. Mezőgazdasági statisztikája. Ötödik kötet. Végeredmények*, Budapest: 1900, p. 22. Available at: http://eprints.edk.oee.hu/1837/1/ak1412a_mo_mezogazd_stat_5.pdf [Accessed 2026-02-02].

[22] Priemysel, obchod, hospodárstvo. Bryndza, In: Národnie noviny, vol. 48, 1917, no. 51 from 3. 5. 1917, p. 3.

Advertising Strategies in Slovak Newspapers and Calendars

The "Peter Makovický" company utilized various forms of advertising in the second half of the 19th century, that is, from the very beginning of its existence. Naturally, it adapted these to the company's current focus (general merchandise, bryndza cheese production, banking, and the pulp industry) as well as to contemporary trends and opportunities.

Advertising for the "Bratia Makovický"/"Peter Makovický"[23] company in the second half of the 19th century primarily took the form of print media and was closely linked to the development of periodicals. The dominant advertising media were newspapers, magazines, and calendars, with the company strategically utilizing various types of periodicals targeting specific reader groups. Advertisements were predominantly text-based, often supplemented with simple visual elements, and served primarily an informational and promotional function. The text emphasized the quality of the products, particularly bryndza cheese, as well as the company's commercial offerings. Calendars played a significant role, becoming one of the main vehicles for bryndza cheese advertising and allowing for a longer-term impact on the audience, as households used them throughout the entire calendar year. At the same time, the company pursued a strategy of diversifying its advertising channels – it advertised in various periodicals, including general-interest newspapers, business magazines, and women's publications, thereby expanding its pool of potential customers. The advertising was thus primarily informational and persuasive in nature, while its form was still relatively simple and only gradually evolved toward the more visually appealing styles typical of later periods.[24]

Such advertising strategies also indicate a shift toward addressing a broader and more anonymous audience, no longer limited to local or personally known customers. Printed media enabled the company to communicate with a dispersed readership, shaping consumption patterns beyond the immediate regional context.

As for the first newspaper advertisements in the Slovak press promoting bryndza cheese from the Makovický company, we identified them only at the beginning of the 20th century. It was a text advertisement in *Národné noviny* from 1901, approximately 1/18 of a page. The first advertisement appeared in the July issue (No. 77), and a total of 46 identical advertisements were published in that year, with the last one

[23] I have listed both names under which the business's advertisements and promotions can be found in periodicals from that time.

[24] See also: MOLDA, Reklamné stratégie podniku „Peter Makovický"/„Bratia Makovický" v slovenskej tlači do roku 1918, pp. 43-55.

appearing on the last day of October in issue No. 128.[25] Similar to other cases, the bryndza cheese advertisement highlighted the "*best quality*" of this company's product. The advertisement in *Národné noviny* reflected the product's seasonal availability; as a time-limited product, bryndza cheese was available only seasonally.

They also advertised in the magazine *Dennica*, which was dedicated to female readers, and here we can speak of targeted advertising aimed at women, since they were typically responsible for running the household. In 1902, in the seventh summer issue, there was a relatively large text advertisement with a decorative frame. The ad states that "*Liptov bryndza cheese, generally recognized as the best in quality, is recommended by Peter Makovický, bryndza cheese producer in Lipt. Ružomberok. Brochures about bryndza cheese with recipes for dishes made with bryndza cheese are available free of charge and postage-paid upon request.*"[26]

Compared to periodicals, advertisements for bryndza cheese appear more frequently in calendars. These were publications intended for the broadest possible audience; they were inexpensive[27] and printed in relatively large print runs. However, calendars could also be found in the homes of teachers, doctors, priests, and businesspeople. These were publications containing a wealth of information that was relevant at the time and useful on a daily basis. Advertising thus reached a relatively wide range of potential customers. We also have records of the print runs of some calendars in which we identified the advertisement in question: *Slovenský domový kalendár* had a print run of 8,000 copies in 1899;[28] *Slovenský kalendár. Kalendár Slovenského týždenníka* was sent to subscribers of the *Slovenský týždenník* and had a print run of 14,000 copies;[29] The *Slovenský obrázkový kalendár* was published in print runs of 8,000 to 10,000 copies.[30]

We were able to identify advertisements for bryndza cheese in the following calendars: *Slovenský domový kalendár*; *Slovenský rodinný kalendár*; *Slovenský obrázkový kalendár*; *Slovenský kalendár. Kalendár*

[25] See the last and second-to-last pages of the periodical *Národnie noviny* in its 32nd volume, from issue 77 to issue 128.
[26] Dennica. Ženský list pre poučenie a zábavu, vol. 5, 1902, no. 7, p. IV.
[27] The *Slovenský domový kalendár* cost 30 grajciars in 1899, while the *Hospodársky kalendár* cost 60 halers in 1914.
[28] Prvé desaťročie mojej kníhtlačiarne. In: Slovenský domový kalendár 1899, Ružomberok: Karol Salva 1898, p. 93.
[29] KIPSOVÁ, Mária– VANČOVÁ, Tatiana– GEŠKOVÁ, Želmíra (eds.). *Bibliografia slovenských a inorečových kalendárov 1701–1965*. Martin: Matica slovenská 1984, p. 100.
[30] KIPSOVÁ, Mária– VANČOVÁ, Tatiana– GEŠKOVÁ, Želmíra (eds.). *Bibliografia slovenských a inorečových kalendárov...*, p. 89.

Slovenského Týždenníka; *Tranovský evanjelický kalendár*; *Malý ružomberský kalendár*; *Hospodársky kalendár*; *Evanjelický kalendár*; *Kalendár úverovej banky*. These were calendars that were largely published or printed in Liptov, according to current research, at the printing houses of Karol Salva, Ján Párička, or Klimeš and Pivko. The only exceptions were the *Slovenský kalendár (Kalendár Slov. Týždenníka)*, which was published in Budapest, the , *Slovenský obrázkový kalendár* a *Kalendár Tatry hornouhorskej banky*,[31] which were published and printed in Turčiansky Sv. Martin. Based on these facts, it can be concluded that the Makovickis were local patriots of Ružomberok when it came to advertising – they published ads primarily in calendars that were published and printed in Liptov.

The Makovicky family did not advertise in Hungarian-language calendars in Liptov; as supporters of the Slovak national movement, they did not endorse this linguistic variant of the press. Nor can advertising in a local calendar be considered adequate from an economic or promotional standpoint. The confessional aspect also played a role, as practicing and active Evangelicals did not support the Catholic calendar. These ideological and cultural orientations were not limited to the choice of advertising media, but were also reflected in the visual language of the advertisements. The emphasis on rural motifs, traditional costumes, and an idealized landscape can be interpreted as part of a broader strategy of cultural positioning, aligning the product with Slovak national identity and values.

Advertisements in the aforementioned calendars took various forms. They were predominantly text-based ads measuring ¼ of a calendar page, complemented by an Art Nouveau-style ornament. The ad was relatively simple: "*Liptov bryndza cheese of the highest quality is supplied by Peter Makovický in Liptovský Ružomberok (Rózsahegy). Ask for a price list!*"[32] or: "*Liptov bryndza cheese of recognized top quality are recommended by Peter Makovický's Bryndza Dairy in Liptovský Ružomberok. Price lists available free of charge upon request and postage paid.*"[33] They stood out primarily for their graphic design, with the then-modern Art Nouveau ornamentation – whether floral or geometric – lending the advertisements a touch of elegance.

Calendars represented a particularly effective advertising medium due to their long-term presence in households. Unlike newspapers, which had a short lifespan, calendars remained in use throughout the

[31] *Kalendár „Tatry" hornouhorskej banky účast. spolku v Turčianskom Sv. Martine*. 1913. Martin: Knihtlačiarsko účastinársky spolok 1912, p. 148 (20).
[32] *Malý ružomberský kalendár 1913*. Ružomberok: Ján Párička 1912, p. 41.
[33] *Evanjelický kalendár 1902*. Ružomberok: Karol Salva 1901, p. XXVIII.

year, ensuring repeated exposure to the advertised product. This allowed advertising messages to become part of everyday domestic space and routine.

An appealing visual as a prerequisite for success

In line with the trends of the time and the advertising strategies that were modern back then,[34] the owners of the bryndza cheese production company realized that if they wanted to succeed in the market, they needed an appealing and interesting visual. They chose the motif of a shepherdess, a young woman with light hair dressed in traditional folk costume, situated in a foothill landscape – likely the Tatra Mountains – with sheep and a shepherd's hut. The motif of the advertising visual is based on a painting by the Czech artist Jaroslav Věšín.[35] The work is undated but was likely created in the late 19th century using the oil-on-canvas technique. The "shepherdess" motif from the painting became a distinctive hallmark of bryndza cheese from the "Peter Makovický" company. It appeared on posters, geletka[36] labels, in a stylized form on Art Nouveau stickers/promotional graphics, and even on the company's letterhead.

The painting by Jaroslav Věšín featuring a young shepherdess was not the only one that the bryndza cheese producer purchased and used for advertising purposes. They also acquired another work from the Czech painter with a similar motif – a shepherd with a flock of sheep in a foothill landscape, likely in the Tatra Mountains. However, this motif was not used as frequently as the one featuring the young shepherdess. According to surviving source materials, it was used only on a poster and in pictorial advertisements in calendars. In addition to advertising bryndza cheese, the company also used the motif of the second painting on the cover of the *Kalendár úverovej banky*, which was a bank calendar from the family business's portfolio.

In connection with the aforementioned visuals, which the Makovickis used in several variations, the question arises: How and where did they encounter Jaroslav Věšín's work? Since they were also prominent nationalists and patrons of the national movement, the answer lies in the

[34] For more on this topic, see: ŠINDLER, Zdenko. *Moderní reklama*. Praha: Nákladem F. Šimáčka 1906.

[35] Jaroslav Věšín (1860–1915) – a Czech painter, professor, and founder of a painting school in Sofia. He also maintained close ties with Slovak nationalists, politicians, literary figures, and artists. The Slovak environment was a significant source of inspiration for him. Věšín's works can be classified as realist painting. From the 1880s, there was a renewed interest in rural people and ethnographic genres, which was also reflected thematically in Věšín's work.

[36] Wooden container for milk and dairy products.

activities of the national movement. Members of the Makovický family likely encountered Jaroslav Věšín's work, as well as the artist himself, in 1887 at the Exhibition of Slovak Embroidery – a major and significant



Fig. 1. Jaroslav Věšín, Shepherdess, late 19th century, source: ĎURIŠKA, Zdenko: *Medzi mlynmi a bankami. Dejiny rodu Makovickovcov*. Martin : SGHS, 2007.

event for its time – organized in Turčiansky Sv. Martin under the patronage of the Živena association.[37] From the perspective of the Slovak national movement, this was a major and significant event, and the Makovický brothers could not have missed it. The Slovak press also reported on the exhibition in great detail.[38] Part of the rich program was an exhibition of Věšín's works at the house of Pavol Mudroň.[39] Later, Věšín's work became known in the Slovak nationalist community not only thanks to the aforementioned exhibition, but also thanks to reproductions of his works ("Sleeping Beauty,"[40] "By the Well"[41]) in the magazine *Dennica*.

Poster advertising as a trend originating abroad

Art Nouveau made a significant impact on posters, particularly in the West, and especially in Paris. However, it was not just Paris, but also Prague, for example, as evidenced by the poster collections of Prague's museums.[42] It can be said that in this regard, Alfons Mucha[43] was the most prominent and, today, the best-known creator and designer of posters. Even at the time of its massive boom – at the end of the 19th century –

[37] Learn more about the exhibition: KOMORA, Pavol. *Hospodárske a všeobecné výstavy 1842–1940. Svetové výstavy. Výstavy v Uhorsku. Výstavy na Slovensku*. Bratislava: Slovenské národné múzeum, 2016, pp. 112-116.

[38] See more articles in *Národné noviny* from August 1887.

[39] Pozvanie. In: Národnie noviny, vol. 18, 1887, no. 63 from 2. 6. 1887, p. 4.
Pavol Mudroň (1835–1914) was a prominent Slovak lawyer and nationalist. He was born on December 7 or 9, 1835, in Čabradský Vrbovok. After studying law in Vienna and Budapest, he worked in Martin, where he established a law practice in 1862. He represented Slovak municipalities, the poor, widows, and orphans, and worked to build national consciousness – he was a member and secretary of Matica Slovenská, a founding figure of the Slovak National Party, and a leading figure in the Slovak national movement. He died on March 9, 1914, and his funeral became a manifestation of national sentiment.

[40] *Dennica. Obrázkový časopis ženský a rodinný s prílohou Rodina venovanou slovenskej domácnosti*, vol. 15, 1913, no. 6, p. 147.

[41] *Dennica. Ilustrovaný časopis ženský a rodinný pre literatúru a otázky spoločenské*, vol. 11, 1908, no. 10, p. 245.

[42] See more: VLČKOVÁ, Lucie (ed.). *Reč plakátu 1890-1938,* 256 s.; VLČKOVÁ, Lucie – ŠTEMBERA, Petr. *Lexikon českých afišistů*. Praha: Uměleckoprůmyslové museum v Praze, 2021, 300 pp.; VLČKOVÁ, Lucie – VONDRÁČEK, Radim (ed.). *Secese. Vitální umění 1900*. Praha: Uměleckoprůmyslové museum v Praze, 2013, 304 pp.

[43] Alfons Mucha (1860–1939) was a prominent Czech painter, graphic artist, and designer, and one of the leading figures of the Art Nouveau movement. He was born on July 24, 1860, in Ivančice, Moravia. After studying in Vienna and Munich, he moved to Paris, where he became famous primarily for his posters for the actress Sarah Bernhardt and developed a distinctive style featuring decorative lines and idealized female figures. In addition to poster design, he also worked in illustration, applied arts, and monumental painting. The pinnacle of his work is the Slav Epic series, in which he depicted the history of the Slavic nations and expressed strong patriotic sentiment. After the establishment of Czechoslovakia, he also contributed to the design of the first banknotes and stamps. He died on July 14, 1939, in Prague.

the poster itself was perceived as a work of art, yet its creation and existence were conditioned by a utilitarian commercial purpose. It is never created without a commission, and its form is influenced by a whole range of non-artistic factors. These include the client's specific requirements and taste, the advertising strategy, and the target audience. Today, posters are an important part of cultural heritage and, at the same time, a very valuable historical source. The very development of posters also tells us about the transformations of society, its hierarchies and differentiations (social, cultural, ethnic, religious, and gender-based), about everyday life and the transformations of material cultural heritage at the time of each poster's creation, as well as about the contemporary ideological and political factors that shaped its creation. The "language of posters" represents an integral connection between image and text. Posters served to convey information of short-term significance, which is why their language is contextually relevant and understandable to a broad social spectrum of the population. The semantics of posters often utilize structured information and schematic images through which they speak to the target audience. Posters also employ different types of language for various purposes.[44]

The greatest boom in posters can be considered the period at the end of the 1890s,[45] which coincided with the establishment of Art Nouveau and the advertising strategies of the bryndza cheese factory. In Liptov, where the "Peter Makovický" company was based, Art Nouveau trends arrived with a certain time lag. It should also be noted that, compared to European metropolises, Art Nouveau trends in Liptov had a provincial character.

Although there were several printing houses in the Liptov region during the period in question (the Karol Salva, Ján Párička, Lev, Klimeš and Pivko printing houses, among others), their output consisted primarily of books; they also printed commercial graphics, but few posters were produced before 1918. Far more recent posters – those created after 1919 – have survived. These were predominantly text-based posters, often with a political message, but also those promoting cultural or sporting events.[46]

Advertising posters promoting bryndza cheese

Unlike a work of art, an advertising poster was not created to last "forever," but with a clear intention and purpose: to be displayed in

[44] VLČKOVÁ, Lucie (ed.). Reč plakátu 1890–1938. Uměleckoprůmyslové museum v Praze, 2022, pp. 19-20.
[45] VLČKOVÁ, Reč plakátu 1890–1938, p. 7.
[46] View the digitized posters on the slovakiana.sk website.

a public space for a specific period of time to promote the information or products depicted on it, until it was covered by another poster or ended up in the trash.[47] Of course, the poster designers were also aware of their aesthetic function, given that they were placed in public spaces.[48] The Makovicki brothers, as the clients commissioning this type of advertising, were likely also aware of this aspect.

At the time the Makovickis had the posters produced, this form of advertising was an integral part of a modernizing urban society. The poster served as the most important medium for information and advertising. It was able to fundamentally influence not only social events and everyday life in political, cultural, commercial, and aesthetic aspects, but also cultivated the urban public space itself.[49]

As I mentioned earlier, the posters promoting bryndza cheese are based on paintings by Jaroslav Věšín and are nearly identical to the original paintings – they differ only in the text at the bottom. I was able to identify three language variants of the posters: Slovak, German, and Italian: "*Liptauer Schafkäse. Peter Makovicky. Lipto-Rosenberg*", "*Formaggio di Liptau. Pietro Makovický. Favriche di formaggio in Liptó-Rosenberg. Ungaria*" and "*Liptovská bryndza. Peter Makovický. Bryndziareň v Liptovskom Ružomberku*".[50] The various language variations of the posters point to different markets for bryndza cheese. Thus, the market was not limited to Slovakia but also included Austrian and German regions, and the poster with the Italian inscription indicates that the city of Trieste and other Italian-speaking areas of the Austro-Hungarian Empire were also markets for Liptov bryndza cheese. Whether a Hungarian-language version of the poster existed has not yet been confirmed, but it is highly likely.

[47] ŠTEMBERA, Petr: Profesionalizace reklamy. Bez reklamy nejsou koláče. In: VLČKOVÁ, Lucie (ed.). Řeč plakátu. 1890–1938. Praha: Uměleckoprůmyslové museum v Praze 2022, p. 87.
[48] ŠÁMAL, Petr. Plakát v dobové diskuzi. In: VLČKOVÁ, Lucie (ed.). Řeč plakátu. 1890–1938. Praha: Uměleckoprůmyslové museum v Praze 2022, p. 37.
[49] ŠÁMAL, Petr. Plakát v dobové diskuzi, p. 23.
[50] A German-language poster featuring a shepherdess is part of the Liptov Museum's collection (Liptov Museum, History Collection, Ev. No.: čoi 73520), I have the Italian-language version featuring a shepherd in my own digital archive (I would like to thank Mgr. Tomáš Pastucha, PhD., for bringing this poster to my attention and sending me a digital copy). The 1903 Slovak Home Calendar also featured a poster with a shepherd motif in the Slovak-language version. I have the Italian-language version with the shepherd motif in my own digital archive (I would like to thank Mgr. Tomáš Pastucha, PhD., for bringing this poster to my attention and sending me a digital copy). In the *Slovenský domový kalendár* from 1903 was also featured a poster with a shepherd motif in the Slovak language version.



Fig. 2. German-language poster featuring a shepherdess, based on a painting by Jaroslav Věšín. Source: Liptov Museum, History Collection, Inv. No.: čoi 73520.



Fig. 3. Italian-language poster featuring a shepherd motif based on a painting by Jaroslav Věšín. Source: Author's digital archive.

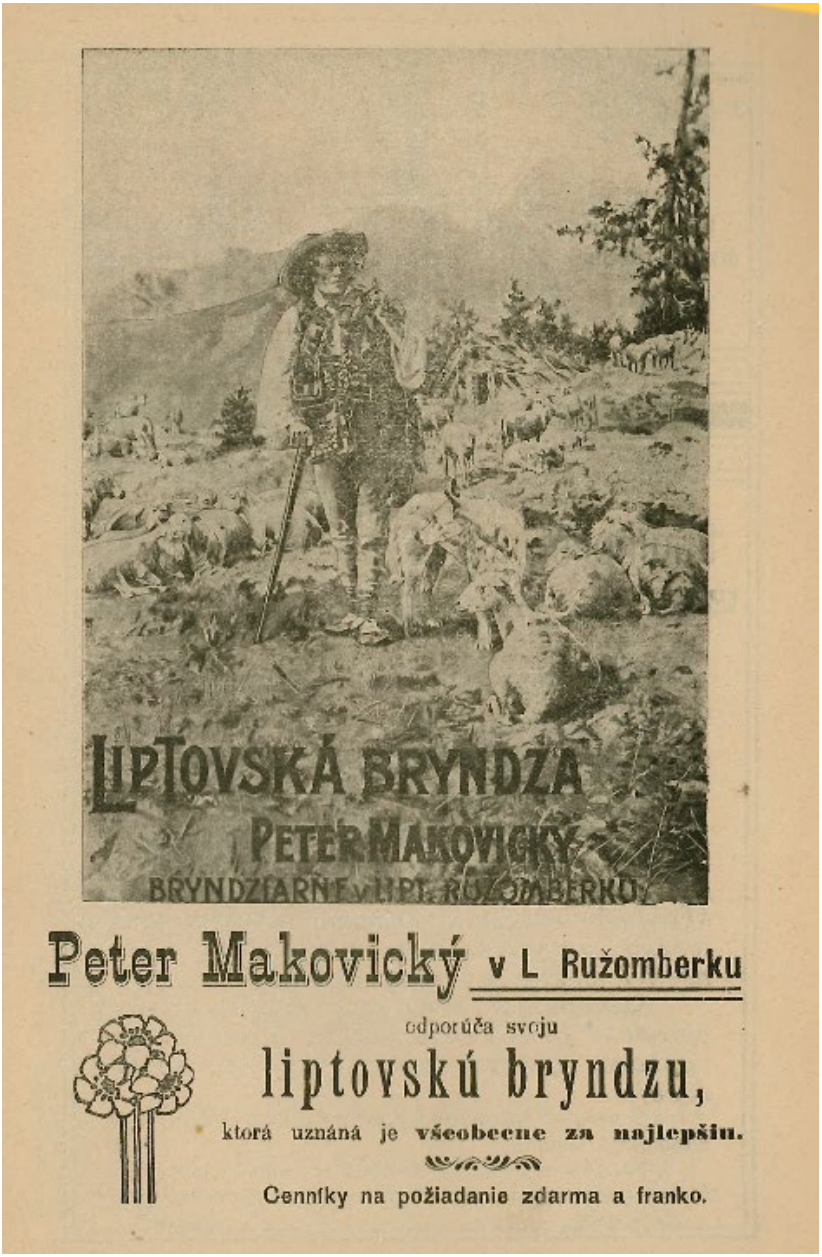


Fig. 4. Advertisement featuring a shepherd motif in the Slovak Home Calendar based on Věšín's painting. Source: *Slovenský domový kalendár*, 1903.

Based on a preserved copy[51] in the collections of the Liptov Museum, we know that the company had the poster printed using the chromolithography technique at the firm Wilhelm Pick und Söhne, located in Prague's Smíchov district. This was an exclusive and financially demanding printing process, typically involving a small print run. Given the complexity of the process, not every printing house was capable of producing it in full color; there were approximately ten such printers in the Czech lands.[52] In visual advertising, the technique of chromolithography, with its possibilities for color expression, represented a fundamental impetus and a developmental shift. However, this was not limited to poster advertising but encompassed a wide spectrum of visual advertising. The turn of the 19th and 20th centuries marked the period of chromolithography's greatest flourishing.[53] It was not only a technologically more demanding form of printing but also a financially costly one, yet at the same time a prestigious form of print. This fact also confirms the company's ambition to present its product as high-quality and exceptional. The coloration of the posters is natural and realistic, emphasizing an impression of authenticity rather than decorative stylization. It is precisely this aspect that distinguishes them from Art Nouveau posters focused on visual experimentation, while at the same time firmly anchoring them in the tastes of the turn-of-the-century era.

The preference for a more realistic visual approach, rather than a highly stylized Art Nouveau idiom, may be explained by the specific function of the posters and the expectations of their intended audience. In a commercial context, the emphasis on recognizability, authenticity, and the association with real landscapes and traditional production may have been perceived as more persuasive than experimental artistic stylization.

Posters and Their Evolution into Stickers/Promotional Graphics with Art Nouveau Designs

Two advertising posters promoting bryndza cheese from the "Peter Makovický" company from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries represent significant evidence of the penetration of modern advertising

[51] Liptov Museum, History Collection, Ev. No.: čoi 73520.

[52] VLČKOVÁ, Lucie, Chromolitografie v tiskárenském provozu v Čechách. In: VLČKOVÁ, Lucie (ed.). *Mezi kýčem a akademií. Chromolitografie ve službách reklamy a umění*. Praha: Uměleckoprůmyslové museum v Praze 2020, p. 26.

[53] ŠÁMAL, Petr. K počátkům obrazové reklamy In: VLČKOVÁ, Lucie (ed.). *Mezi kýčem a akademií. Chromolitografie ve službách reklamy a umění*. Praha: Uměleckoprůmyslové museum v Praze 2020, pp. 103–104.

strategies and contemporary artistic trends into the emerging Slovak industrial environment, geographically situated outside major urban centers. The graphic design of the posters, based on reproductions of Jaroslav Věšín's paintings, allows for an analysis of the extent and specific nature of Art Nouveau's influence on commercial graphics and advertising during this period.

The basic composition of the posters is identical to Věšín's original paintings, and the advertising nature is manifested only by a minimal intervention in the form of textual information placed at the bottom of the image area. This approach corresponds to the early stage of poster advertising, when the image was not yet created primarily as a graphic design but was borrowed from the field of painting. Here, the poster does not function as a synthesis of image, typography, and ornament in the spirit of the pinnacle of Art Nouveau poster art, but rather as a medium for reproducing an artistic motif with a clear product identification function and a clear message to the potential customer – we offer you bryndza cheese made from the milk of sheep grazing in the heart of Tatra/Hungarian nature.

The Art Nouveau influence on these posters cannot be interpreted in terms of formal stylization typical of Western European Art Nouveau posters, such as bold lines, flat coloration, decorative typography, or the integration of text into the composition. On the contrary, its presence is conveyed indirectly – through the thematic focus, the idealization of nature and folk figures, as well as through a sentimental, harmonious depiction of the rural world. Both the shepherdess and the shepherd are depicted as bearers of purity, naturalness, and tradition, which corresponds to the Art Nouveau-era turn toward nature, rurality, and authentic "national" motifs, as well as the stereotypical perception of Slovaks as the peasant classes.[54]

From an art-historical perspective, it can be stated that the bryndza cheese advertising posters from the "Peter Makovický" company are not Art Nouveau in the narrow formal sense of the word, yet they bear distinct hallmarks of the Art Nouveau mentality. This is evident in the choice of themes, the idealization of folk culture, and the belief that the aesthetic value of the image enhances the product's appeal and credibility. The posters thus straddle the line between fine art and modern advertising and represent a specific form of adaptation of Art Nouveau ideas within the Slovak economic and cultural context.

[54] For more on the topic of plebeianism, see: MOLDA, Rastislav. *Ideálny obraz národa. Stereotypizácia uhorských etník v slovenskej cestopisnej a národopisnej literatúre 19. storočia*. Martin: Matica slovenská, 2016, pp. 98-110.

Art Nouveau stylization of a shepherdess

The motif of the shepherdess became a consistent identifying feature of the bryndza cheese produced by the "Peter Makovický" company and was systematically used across various types of print advertising – from posters and vignettes to letterhead. In this sense, one can speak of a deliberate effort to build a unified visual brand style, which was exceptionally modern for its time. The posters thus did not function in isolation but were part of a comprehensive advertising campaign.

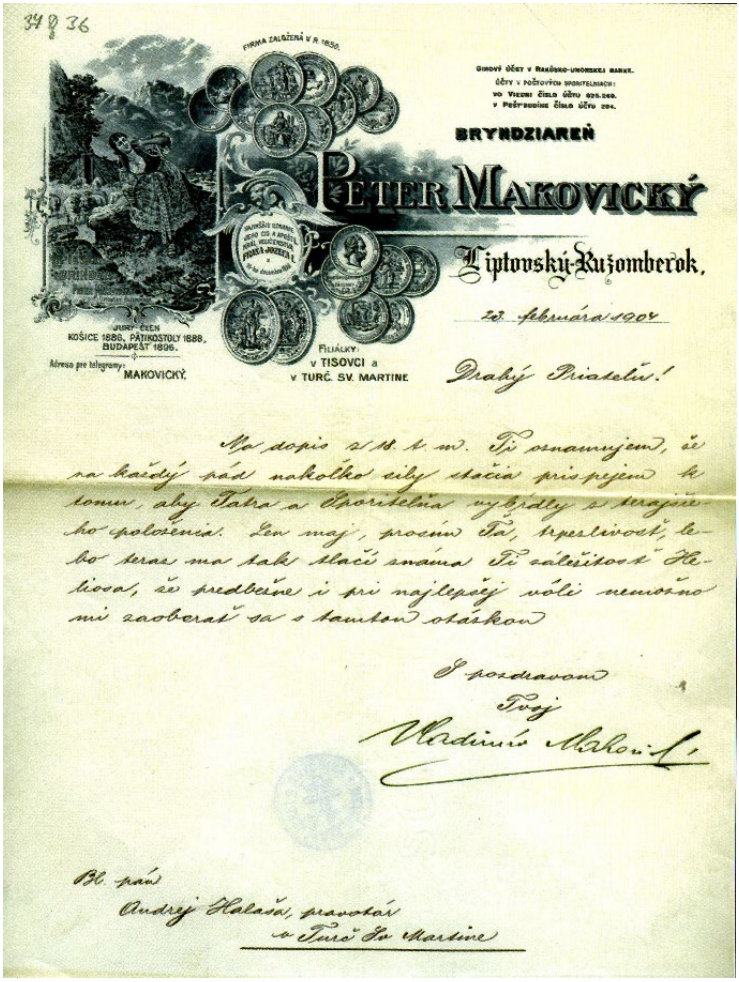


Fig. 5. Letterhead of the Peter Makovický company featuring the motif of a shepherdess. Source: Literary Archive of the Slovak National Library, Halašovsko-

Mudroňovská Estate Collection, sign. 37 G 36.



Fig. 6. Rectangular vignette featuring a shepherdess motif. Source: Liptov Museum, History Collection, inv. no.: čoi 73520.

The company also used the motif of the young shepherdess on promotional graphics/stickers, in which, however, Art Nouveau stylization and distinctive Art Nouveau ornaments now dominate. The graphics thus represent a further, significantly more sophisticated stage of visual advertising. Unlike the posters, which reproduce Jaroslav Věšín’s painting almost unchanged, the stickers and promotional graphics treat the image as a flexible visual element, subordinate to graphic composition, decorativeness, and the function of a product identifier.

The central motif of all surviving stickers/promotional graphics is the female figure of a shepherdess, iconographically derived from Věšín’s painting. However, the figure is significantly simplified, graphically outlined, and enclosed within an ornamental frame. It loses its painterly spatiality and becomes an emblem – an attribute of the brand. This shift from realistic depiction to a stylized graphic form is one of the fundamental manifestations of Art Nouveau aesthetics in commercial graphic design.

The most distinctive Art Nouveau element of the labels/promotional graphics is the ornamental frame surrounding the central motif. The frames are composed of flowing, soft lines, often evoking plant stems,

leaves, and buds, or of symmetrical, slightly geometrized shapes. The ornament does not merely serve a decorative function but organizes the entire composition – it determines its vertical rhythm, highlights the central motif, and naturally integrates textual information. It is precisely this integration of image, ornament, and type into a unified whole that is one of the key characteristics of Art Nouveau graphics.

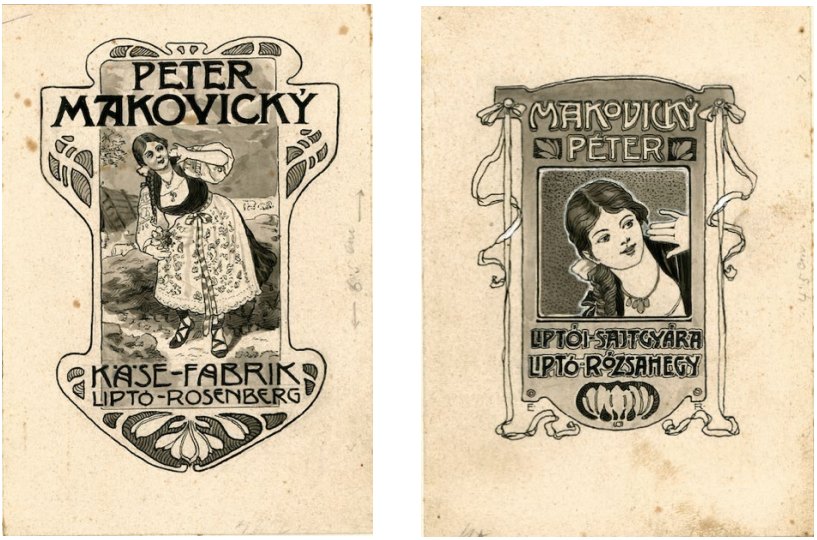


Fig. 7-8. Stickers/promotional graphics with distinctive Art Nouveau ornaments promoting bryndza cheese from the Peter Makovický company, based on a painting by Jaroslav Věšín. Source: Liptov Museum, History Collection, inv. no.: čoi 73523.

The typography used on the stickers and promotional graphics clearly reflects the Art Nouveau style of the period. The typeface is highly stylized, with irregular strokes, extended ascenders and descenders, and decorative terminals. The text is not merely attached to the image but is an integral part of it – it often adapts to the shape of the frame or is composed on ribbons and cartouches that themselves bear an Art Nouveau form. This approach contrasts with posters, where text functions primarily as an additional informational element.

In terms of color (or rather its absence in black-and-white versions), the stickers/promotional graphics appear more subdued than posters, yet they work all the more effectively with the contrast between surface and line. The black-and-white graphics emphasize ornamentation, the rhythm of the lines, and the decorative stylization of the figure. The shepherdess is stripped of any specific landscape context and functions as a universal

symbol of origin, purity, and tradition, which aligns with the company's advertising strategy emphasizing the authenticity and quality of bryndza cheese.

Unlike the posters, these stickers/promotional graphics can be considered a fully-fledged expression of Art Nouveau commercial art. It is no longer merely a matter of conveying an artistic motif, but of its active transformation in the spirit of modern design at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Conclusion

The motif of the shepherdess from Věšín's painting, used on multiple occasions, shows us that the "Peter Makovický" company consciously employed a consistent visual style across the various promotional avenues available to it at the time for bryndza cheese, with the aim of boosting sales. The motif, familiar from posters, appeared in a smaller format on labels intended for the customer's direct contact with the product itself. In this context, it becomes even more compelling, as the consumer encounters the visual directly while consuming the product. The stylized motif of a shepherdess with Art Nouveau ornaments on the labels/promotional graphics signified not only a significant shift toward Art Nouveau design in the context of contemporary trends, but the labels/promotional graphics also served an emotional and aesthetic function in line with the advertising trends of the time. Art Nouveau labels/promotional graphics, in conjunction with posters, vignettes, and other printed materials, create a cohesive visual system that can be evaluated in the Slovak context as exceptionally well-conceived, aesthetically refined, and fully compatible with contemporary European trends.

Since the company's business records have not been preserved, it is not possible to determine how effective these promotional strategies were or how well they met the objectives for which the company's management implemented them. However, the analyzed promotional strategies of the "Peter Makovický" company, at the time they were implemented, were in step with contemporary developments and represented relatively advanced advertising strategies within the Slovak context, although similar approaches were already commonly used in more developed commercial environments, such as the Czech lands.

The analyzed promotion of bryndza cheese by the "Peter Makovický" company is evidence of the mentality, taste, preferences, and technical possibilities of the era. It also reflects the social relationships between the company's management and the artists whose works were purchased. It is further evidence of the influence of the artistic movement of the time on advertising. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, Art

Nouveau was in vogue – it set trends in architecture, art, and everyday life. Art Nouveau also influenced the labels and packaging in which bryndza cheese was sold, as well as advertisements in the period press. Art Nouveau elements were also present in promotional materials (stickers) based on a painting by Jaroslav Věšín featuring a shepherdess. The motif of the shepherdess was utilized to the fullest extent; the company unified the visual identity of its products, and bryndza cheese was packaged beneath images of the Tatra landscape, where flocks of sheep grazed peacefully in harmony with nature. This was a practical and sophisticated execution of advertising. A similar assessment can be made of the simple trick involving an inexpensive yet practical and effective cookbook, which demonstrated how bryndza cheese could be used in the kitchen; its multilingual editions appealed to customers not only within the multiethnic Habsburg Monarchy.

The entrepreneurs succeeded in creating advertising that worked on multiple levels, and they effectively promoted bryndza cheese within the constraints of the time (periodicals, calendars, letterhead, vignettes, a cookbook, multilingualism), thereby reaching a broader audience. Through the innovative advertising strategies analyzed in this study, the management of the "Peter Makovicky" company succeeded in transforming a simple sheep's milk product into a highly successful and acclaimed one, establishing Liptov bryndza cheese in the socially and nationally diverse environment of the Habsburg Monarchy as well as abroad.

Zhrnutie

Inovatívne reklamné stratégie bryndziarne „Peter Makovický" na prelome 19. a 20. storočia a vplyv secesie na ich vizuálnu podobu

Štúdia sa zaoberá reklamnými stratégiami bryndziarskeho podniku „Peter Makovický" v Ružomberku na prelome 19. a 20. storočia a analyzuje ich v kontexte dobového vývoja reklamy, grafického dizajnu a vizuálnej kultúry v Hornom Uhorsku. Cieľom práce je identifikovať hlavné formy propagácie, ktoré podnik využíval, a zároveň analyzovať mieru a charakter vplyvu secesie na ich vizuálne spracovanie. Autor vychádza z analýzy dobovej tlače, kalendárov a predovšetkým vizuálnych prameňov (plagáty, vinety, etikety, nálepky), uložených najmä v zbierkach Liptovského múzea. Na tomto základe ukazuje, že podnik „Peter Makovický" využíval široké spektrum reklamných nástrojov, pričom postupne dochádzalo k prechodu od prevažne textovej, informatívnej reklamy k vizuálne atraktívnejším a esteticky prepracovanejším formám. Tento vývoj súvisel nielen s tech-

nologickými možnosťami a rozvojom tlače, ale aj s rastúcou konkurenciou na trhu a so zmenami v spôsobe komunikácie s publikom. Osobitnú pozornosť venuje štúdia motívu bačovky, vychádzajúceho z maliarskeho diela Jaroslava Věšína, ktorý sa stal kľúčovým identifikačným prvkom značky. Tento motív bol systematicky využívaný v rôznych typoch reklamných nosičov, čo umožňuje hovoriť o vedomej snahe o vizuálnu jednotu a budovanie značky. Zároveň však autor poukazuje na to, že jednotlivé médiá sa líšili formálnymi prostriedkami a stupňom štylizácie, a preto nemožno hovoriť o plne jednotnom vizuálnom systéme, ale skôr o koncepčne previazanom používaní dominantného motívu. Analýza ukazuje rozdiely medzi jednotlivými typmi reklamy. Zatiaľ čo plagáty si zachovávali výrazne obrazový charakter a vychádzali z realistických maliarskych predlôh, nálepky a drobná propagačná grafika predstavujú pokročilejšiu formu komerčného grafického dizajnu, v ktorej dochádza k integrácii obrazu, ornamentu a typografie v duchu secesných princípov. V tomto kontexte sa secesia neprejavuje vždy ako striktne formálny štýl, ale skôr ako širší estetický a ideový rámec (dôraz na prírodu, vidiecke prostredie a autenticitu). Štúdia zároveň poukazuje na význam jazykového, národného a konfesionálneho kontextu reklamy. Výber médií, v ktorých podnik inzeroval, ako aj vizuálne motívy možno interpretovať aj ako prejav kultúrneho a ideologického ukotvenia v prostredí slovenského národného hnutia. Zistenia naznačujú, že reklamné aktivity podniku „Peter Makovický" boli v slovenskom prostredí relatívne pokročilé a reflektovali dobové trendy stredoeurópskej komerčnej praxe, hoci v širšom európskom kontexte išlo skôr o adaptáciu impulzov prichádzajúcich z rozvinutejších centier. Štúdia tak prispieva k výskumu dejín reklamy a grafického dizajnu na Slovensku a zároveň otvára ďalšie otázky týkajúce sa vzťahu medzi ekonomikou, kultúrou a vizuálnymi formami komunikácie na prelome storočí.