

Letters from a Bygone World
Documenting everyday life in twentieth-century paper-based culture

Resume

Cultural researchers are always interested in old and forgotten documents that are found in attics, about which no one knows what they contain and how they got there, but it is clear that these documents bear the imprint of the past worlds. For ethnographers and anthropologists, these dusty documents found in old attics are also a field of research like any other site. Usually, these objects and documents found in bridges talk about worlds that exist at most in memories. This paper undertakes to present such a set of documents. The collector and protagonist of these documents was born in 1916, died in 1997, meaning he lived almost throughout the twentieth century. During this time he set aside over 2400 paper-based documents, including letters, records, sketches, journals, official documents, etc. In this book the author presents a description of these documents, providing an anthropological answer to the following question: how did the twentieth century look from the point of view of a Hungarian Catholic pastor of Swabian origin in Transylvania, descended from a family of farmers. Here, the anthropological description of documents is a narrative form similar to the anthropological journal: the researcher delves into documents, addresses her questions to the documents, and with the help of answers obtained from them builds an image of how was the world from the perspective of the main character. The information collected is presented according to a linear chronology, and the result of document processing corresponds to the anthropological field journal. By presenting the documents in this way, we have the opportunity to open the book in any decade and take a look at what happened in those days.