

**THE SZEGED SCHOOL OF ETHNOLOGY:
TRADITIONS, EFFORTS AND CHALLENGES.
APPROACHES TO TEACHING ETHNOLOGY
IN THE BOLOGNA PROCESS**

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Before and after the Second World War ethnography, ethnology and folklore were taught in Hungary within largely similar frames. Education and research attached importance to the study of Hungarian peasant culture from a retrospective historical viewpoint. From the 1970s until 1980s, demands led to changes in both research and teaching. The teaching of Hungarian ethnology was re-organised at Szeged University, Pécs University and in Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca, Transylvania, Romania). From the 1970s a paradigm shift occurred in ethnology. The most important indication of this is that, in place of peasant society, ethnology now studies the entire society and all cultural phenomena, including many current social problems.

Within the framework of the Bologna Agreement, students at the BA level at Szeged learn specific introductory subjects and general and specific methodology. Studies in only one specialist field begin at this level: studies in folklore and the anthropology of dance. The anthropology of dance continues at the MA level; which is also planned in English, in international co-operation. Studies in ethnology and anthropology of religion also appear at the MA level, as well as studies in cultural heritage. The content of both the BA and MA stages and of doctoral studies is largely determined by

the fact that ethnology has come under strong influence of cultural and social anthropology.

Key words: *teaching ethnography, folklore, cultural anthropology at Hungarian universities, Szeged school of ethnology, ethnology of religion, anthropology of dance, cultural heritage*

I would like to give a brief outline of the institutional background and antecedents. In Hungary, in the decades following the Second World War, ethnography, ethnology and folkloristics were taught at two universities, in Budapest and Debrecen, within largely similar frameworks. Education and research attached importance to the study of Hungarian peasant culture from a retrospective historical viewpoint, aiming at reconstruction in a functionalist or, rarely, comparative approach with an evolutionist attitude. At the same time, the Hungarian society and economy were subject to a forced, so-called socialist transformation, but no research was conducted on that process. Even if they analysed processes, researchers reached only the threshold of the socialist period: they did not deal with the present. However, as a consequence of international disciplinary and interdisciplinary research, from the 1970s until 1980s, demands led to changes in both research and teaching. The most important visible sign of this was that in place of peasant society, ethnology began to study the whole society, all its cultural phenomena and many current problems. (It was the ethnology of religion and Sándor Bálint who first widened the frames of the concept of folk in Hungary. In the 1950-s and 1960s, the change of paradigm was related mostly to the work of Edit Fél and Tamás Hofer.) At the institutional level, the study of ethnology was re-organised from 1989, with the re-establishment of ethnology as a taught subject at Szeged University, the establishment of a new department at Pécs University and the revival of the school of Hungarian ethnology in Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca, Transylvania, Romania).¹

¹ In Hungary, in addition to Szeged (1929) there are departments of ethnology in Budapest (from 1934), Debrecen (from 1949) and Pécs (from 1989). The Miskolc University set up a Department of Cultural and Visual Anthropology in 1994 and there is a cultural anthropology working group within the Faculty of Social Sciences of Budapest University. Cf. Voigt 2004.

Changes occurred at the department in Szeged also. The transformation took place gradually. At first we widened the traditional thematic canon of ethnology by teaching and researching new themes. Then there was also a big change in attitude. Beside and in place of the retrospective and quantitative comparative approach, we place greater emphasis on qualitative methods. One of the factors inspiring the changes in Szeged was and remains our extensive system of relations with foreign universities, the Erasmus and CEEPUS connections. Starting in 1992, we launched a series of international conferences, mainly in the field of ethnology of religion, that were regularly attended by our colleagues from many European countries. We did joint field research with Finnish universities. We are continuing with our international student seminars (*Seminarium Ethnologicum Szegediense*=*SemEthnoSz*), bilingual publications and series of conferences. At Szeged, studies in folkloristics, material culture and cultural anthropology are offered within one branch of studies and department. These changes also appeared in the name of our department in 2002: since then we have been known as the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology. At present there are 15-44 students enrolled in different years, a total of 130 students in all five years. However, we do not know what changes the coming years will bring (cf. Barna-Juhász-Pusztai 2004; Barna 2004).

In the pre-Bologna form of studies, ethnology students took introductory courses in ethnology, folkloristics and anthropology in the first two academic years (4 semesters). Thematically deeper, more theoretical and specialised studies followed in 3rd and 4th years (4 semesters). Specialised studies in dance folkloristics and ethnology of religion were also included at Szeged. In the 5th year (2 semesters), students attended a thesis seminar and wrote their final thesis. The teaching was and is strongly fieldwork oriented.

In the course of the transition to the Bologna structure, cultural policy-makers in Hungary wanted to terminate the teaching of ethnology and anthropology at the BA (bachelor) level, and wanted to authorise it only at the MA level. This was successfully prevented only through strong combined efforts by the experts in the discipline. However, ethnology lost its disciplinary independence at the BA level, and now appears in the subject structure as part of history, while Cultural and social anthropology became part of social sciences. However, ethnology and anthropology appear together in the list

of disciplines. Experts in the field generally agreed that it was not wise to separate these two disciplines, if for no other reason than that each of the departments of ethnology listed teaches both ethnology and anthropology. Many questions are still arising in connection with the introduction of the new teaching structure; they will be answered in the coming years and time will also tell whether this cultural policy decision was correct or not.

Using the example of Szeged, I shall discuss mainly practical questions. There were no probing theoretical debates in Hungary or in Szeged in the course of elaborating the new teaching programme. Our aim was to give our students a diploma of practical value. We therefore made a preliminary analysis of: 1. the areas of the labour market where our former students had found employment; 2. what expectations students had when they came to us and what they wanted to do after graduation; 3. there is also a correspondence course at Szeged and we knew what employment backgrounds our former students come from; 4. we attempted to analyse the processes of social transition and trends occurring in Hungary today and forecast what knowledge society and our students would require in the future; 5. finally, our department wanted to preserve its teaching profile among Hungarian departments of ethnology and cultural anthropology that gave it its distinctive character. We then made an assessment of our staff and the technical background we had available, that is, how and where we would be able to put our plans into practice. And, lastly, we also attempted to clarify the position of the university administration and cultural authorities regarding the future of our discipline and department.

Within the framework of the Bologna Agreement, students learn specific introductory subjects and general and specific methodology at the BA level. We begin only one specialist course at this level: studies in folkloristics and anthropology of dance, teaching theoretical background knowledge of folk dance, cynetics. Students show great interest for this course. The BA level ends with a final examination and dissertation. Dance anthropology continues at the MA level. We are also planning to teach this course in English in international co-operation. Studies in ethnology and anthropology of religion also appear at the MA level, as well as studies in cultural heritage. The latter correspond in part to the material that was covered under museology in the earlier teaching system. Studies in cultural heritage are also a special feature of the studies at Szeged. We have great expectations for the response to this

programme. We see big opportunities on the labour market for the people who have acquired familiarity with this area, especially with local authorities. This area, in particular, offers the possibility of preserving many conclusions of traditional ethnography, folkloristics, local and regional research and approaches. There is a big demand for the training of ethnology teachers in Hungary. Although the subject of “the knowledge of the homeland and people” is taught only in the 5th and 6th grades of primary school, everyday life, culture and human geography play a role in many secondary school subjects (history, geography, etc.). Ethnology is a separate subject in the so-called art schools and the main demand is for the study of our own folk/peasant culture. We would like to have the teacher training programme accredited at the master’s level. We are now developing our ethnology teacher training programme. The pedagogy and methodology of teaching ethnology are also taught at the MA level. This also indicates to us that we cannot and do not want to entirely give up the teaching and research of traditional folk poetry, folk music, folk dance and folk art, etc.

European ethnology, folkloristics and cultural anthropology form the basis of study at both bachelor and masters levels. However, three specialised lines of study dominate at the MA level. Introductory, general and specialised training prepare the students for the cultivation of many areas of research, education, adult education, public collections such as museums, archives, tourism, telecommunications, and work in numerous areas of the public administration and local government spheres. We wish to continue our correspondence courses and we are planning to introduce distance learning.²

In Hungary, a special form of scientific forum has been formed to provide professional support for the most talented students, the so-called Scientific Students’ Circle. Within its scope, students can carry out independent research under the professional guidance of their teachers and take part in professional competitions with completed research. Hungarian students from all neighbouring countries where there is tertiary education in Hungarian (Slovakia, Romania, Ukraine, Serbia) can also take part in this competition. It is hoped that Croatia will soon join this program, as well, as Hungarian

² Visit the homepage of our department: www.etnologiaszeged.hu

language and literature studies are to be launched at the Teacher Training College in Osijek (Eszék). This greatly helps in the training and guidance of the new generation of scholars and researchers. Students from Szeged won first prize in the competition this year and two years ago. We consider it important to involve students in research work teams and in this way develop teacher-student workshops, also within an international framework. We ensure that our talented students participate in conferences and seminars in Hungary and abroad; and that they publish their first scholarly results in department, national and foreign journals and periodicals. Extensive international exchange relations within the Erasmus/Socrates and CEEPUS programmes are available to our students, as is the Szeged International Student Seminar (Seminarium Ethnologicum Szegediense = SemEthnoSz), to which we were able to admit, in earlier years, students and professors from the department at the University of Zagreb. We would also like to preserve and maintain these functioning frameworks within the Bologna Process.

In keeping with the new teaching framework, we are planning to launch our PhD programme next year. In line with the Bologna Process, within the new framework, this multidisciplinary PhD programme will be formed together with the PhD programme in history. PhD programmes in Hungary are regulated by a different law from the one in Croatia. However, at Szeged, in view of our extensive international network of contacts, we would definitely like to make this PhD programme international, enabling participants to earn a PhD for research in any area of ethnography, folkloristics or anthropology. In particular, in our two above-mentioned special areas of study, anthropology of religion and folkloristics/anthropology of dance, we are counting on close international co-operation and on launching studies in English. In our third area of study, the exploration and preservation of cultural heritage, one of the keywords of European cultural policy today, we would like, first of all, to gain theoretical and methodological experience through international co-operation. We hope, with the support of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the participation of the University of Szeged and the municipality of Szeged, to set up a workshop on ethnology of religion and religious studies, attached to the department. The task of the workshop would be to study historical changes and contemporary processes in the culture of religion and society in Central Europe, within the scope of international projects.

The content of both the BA and MA stages and of the PhD programme is largely determined by the fact that ethnology has come under strong influence of cultural and social anthropology. This can also be seen in our department, in the choice of teaching and research themes, in the refinement and reflexive nature of research methods and in research of problems appearing in border-line areas between disciplines. The new approach of historical anthropology, visual anthropology and historical ecology appears in teaching and research. An important characteristic of all of these is that, beyond analysis and interpretation of characteristics of the traditional peasant culture, they seek an answer to current questions in the context of globalisation and its problems. They can help in attaining sustainable development and shaping local identity, and in structuring a new kind of identity. And through international relations it is hoped that they will help in re-interpreting such matters as historical and cultural connections among the peoples of Central Europe, including Croatia and Hungary; which will almost certainly help improve mutual understanding and acceptance. In Hungary, as well as in other post-socialist countries of the region, it is an important task to study global and self-organising processes and those directed from above, and their influence on mentality and culture; the global and the local, which are two opposites, or, rather, mutually complementary concepts and processes.

For all this, at present, we have five teachers, a suitable library, technical instruments and equipment, but rather cramped space. We want to continue our series of publications on the ethnology of religion and our folkloristics lecture notes; and to establish a new periodical covering mixed themes in ethnology and anthropology. We have plans, wishes and dreams – and also many questions and expectations regarding the new structure. The coming years will show whether we have the necessary social and financial support. We, ourselves, have sufficient energy and pull to achieve all this. The present situation in Hungary does not allow us to be too optimistic. But international exchanges of experience, such as this one, can give us professional help and support.

In 2004 we celebrated the 75th anniversary of the establishment of our department at Szeged, as well as the centenary of the birth of its former outstanding professor Sándor Bálint. This year also marks a double anniversary here in Zagreb: the 80th anniversary of the department and the 70th birthday of Professor Vitomir Belaj. We are looking back to the past

and extending greetings in the midst of big structural changes: the launch of the Bologna Process and of the new PhD programme. Hopefully, the past 80 years and the work of an eminent, internationally recognised professor have laid sound foundations for the development of the Zagreb Workshop of Ethnology. Personally and on behalf of my colleagues and students, as well as the Hungarian Ethnographical Society, I wish you circumspect planning, patience and much energy in the realization of all your plans.

APPENDIX

1. Ethnology/Anthropology of Religion

The course teaches students about the history of research, specific sources and methods used in ethnology and anthropology of religion, the sacralization of space, time, and society, religious mentality, interference of religions. It especially focuses on popular Christian devotion in Europe, the process of strong individualization of religion in contemporary society, religious movements in East-Central-Europe, the influence of eastern religions, esoteric thoughts, religious syncretism. It is characterized by the anthropological study of religions. The course teaches the necessary interdisciplinarity, research methods, schools and trends in research.

Name of Subject	Number of Lessons per Semester				Type of Evaluation	Credits
	1	2	3	4		
History of Ethnology/ Anthropology of Religion	2	2			Oral examination, term work grade	8
Sources	2				Term work grade	3
Sacralization of Space	2	2			Oral examination, term work grade	8
Sacralization of Time		2	2		Oral examination, term work grade	8
Social Aspects of Religions		2	2	2	Oral examination, term work grade	15

World View, Mentality			2	2	Oral examination, term work grade	8
Total						50

2. Dance Folkloristics - Dance Anthropology

This special course offers specialist knowledge of theories and methods of traditional and contemporary dance cultures. It deals with dance as a cultural phenomenon and heritage, describing and interpreting social and economic processes beyond dance culture. It deepens the methods of evaluation of historical sources and recent folklore. It gives further information about the dances of the Hungarians and other ethnic groups living in the Carpathian Basin, Europe and outside of Europe. This special training is unique in Central-Europe.

Name of Subject	Semester and Number of Hours per Week				Type of Evaluation	Credits
	1	2	3	4		
Dance Folkloristics	2	2	2		oral examination, term work grade	12
Dance Anthropology	2	2	2		oral examination, term work grade	12
Dance History		2		2	oral examination, term work grade	8
Human Cynetics		2	2		oral examination, term work grade	8
Practical Dance Studies			2	2	oral examination, term work grade	10
Total						50

3. Cultural Heritage

Students receive theoretical knowledge about the operational laws of culture, questions of cultural politics and possibilities of the documentation of culture. The course gives an introduction to documentation and to different levels of usage (exhibition, film, book etc.). It offers help to villages and small regions to reconstruct their local cultures and establish tourism.

Name of Subject	Semester and Number of Hours per Week				Type of Evaluation	Credits
	1	2	3	4		
Exploration and Protection of Cultural Heritage	2	2			oral examination, term work grade	10
The Role of Local and Regional Cultures in the Construction of Cultural Heritage	2	2			oral examination, term work grade	10
Cultural Heritage and Tourism		2		2	oral examination, term work grade	10
Cultural Heritage, Marketing, Management		2	2		oral examination, term work grade	10
Practical Problems of Visual Representation of Culture			2	2	oral examination, term work grade	10
Total						50

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SEGEDSKA ŠKOLA ETNOLOGIJE: TRADICIJE, NAPORI I IZAZOVI. PRISTUPI PODUČAVANJU ETNOLOGIJE U SKLOPU BOLONJSKOG PROCESA

Sažetak

U desetljećima nakon Drugoga svjetskog rata etnografija, etnologija i folkloristika predavale su se u Mađarskoj na dva sveučilišta – Sveučilištu u Budimpešti i Sveučilištu u Debrecenu, unutar sličnih disciplinarnih okvira. U podučavanju i istraživanju važnost se pridavala proučavanju mađarske seljačke kulture iz povijesne retrospektive, u cilju njezine rekonstrukcije. Međutim, kao posljedica disciplinarnog, međunarodnog i interdisciplinarnog utjecaja, tijekom 1970-ih i 1980-ih stvorili su se uvjeti za velike paradigmatičke promjene kako u istraživanju, tako i u predavanjima. Najvažniji pokazatelj te promjene bila je činjenica da je etnologija umjesto seljačkog društva počela istraživati društvo u cjelini, sve kulturne fenomene i mnoge suvremene probleme. Na institucionalnoj razini podučavanje etnologije je reorganizirano s ponovnom uspostavom predavanja iz etnologije na Sveučilištu u Szegedu, osnivanjem novog odsjeka na Sveučilištu u Pečuhu i ponovnim uvođenjem predavanja na temu mađarske etnologije u Koložsváru (Cluj-Napoca, Transilvanija, Rumunjska).

Slične promjene provedene su i na Odsjeku za etnologiju u Szegedu. Prvo smo proširili tradicionalne etnološke teme na podučavanje i istraživanje novih tema. Od 1998. godine uveli smo predavanja iz etnologije religije unutar

područja specijalističkih znanja. U segedskoj školi etnologije folkloristika, materijalna kultura i kulturna antropologija podučavaju se unutar jednog područja i unutar istog odsjeka.

U skladu s odredbama Bolonjskog sporazuma, na dodiplomskom studiju studenti slušaju temeljne/uvodne kolegije i dobivaju uvid u opću i specifičnu metodologiju. Na toj razini započinjemo samo jedan specijalistički program – folkloristiku i antropologiju plesa – u kojem studenti stječu osnovna teoretska znanja o narodnim plesovima. Antropologija plesa predaje se i na diplomskome studiju gdje postoje i kolegiji iz etnologije i antropologije religije, zajedno s onima koji se bave kulturnom baštinom. U Mađarskoj postoji velika potreba za predavačima etnologije. Pedagogija i metodologija predavanja etnologije također se predaju na diplomskoj razini. No, općenito, diplomski je studij podijeljen na tri dominantna specijalistička modula. Opći i specijalistički programi pripremaju studente za razna područja istraživanja, za područje obrazovanja, obrazovanja odraslih, javnih muzejskih zbirki, turizma, telekomunikacija te za rad u mnogim segmentima državne administracije i lokalnih vlasti.

Studentima je na raspolaganju ekstenzivna međunarodna razmjena putem programa *Erasmus/Socrates* i CEEPUS, kao i studentski međunarodni ljetni seminar u Szegedu (*Seminarium Ethnologicum Szegediense*). Sadržaj preddiplomskoga, diplomskoga i poslijediplomskog studija uvelike je određen činjenicom da je etnologija sada pod snažnim utjecajem kulturne i socijalne antropologije.

Ključne riječi: predavanje etnologije, folklor, kulturna antropologija na mađarskim sveučilištima, segedska škola etnologije, etnologija religije, antropologija plesa, kulturna baština