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# Hungarian Ethnographers in Non-European Territories – a Revival after 1990

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**Abstract:** Research in non-European territories became an essential component of scientific life in Hungary before the First World War. A search for relatives by language and culture was the main motivating force that led Hungarian ethnographers to the East to accumulate knowledge about cultures of Ob-Ugrians and peoples in Central Asia. Others travelled to the Far East, to South Asia or other continents with different goals, but also contributed to knowledge about distant lands and cultures. These efforts resulted in a great tradition of interest in cultures of the world, which survived eras when Hungarian ethnographers had a very limited chance to do fieldwork outside Hungary, and its revival is demonstrated by a large number of fieldwork after 1990, when Hungarians had once again more freedom and means to travel and formerly closed regions became accessible. This revival involved a shift from an ethnology focused on the past and ethnic traditions to a sociocultural anthropology focused on the present and current problems.

**Keywords:** political context, ethnography, sociocultural anthropology, fieldwork, Ob-Ugrians, Altaic peoples.

The authors of works covering the history of Hungarian ethnography devoted relatively little space to the collecting and fieldwork carried out in non-European territories (SOZAN 1977; KÓSA 1989), although as a result of that activity the Museum of Ethnography acquired non-European collections of outstanding significance in East-Central Europe; a thorough survey has been made of them (GYARMATI 2008b), moreover as we have seen for ourselves when compiling the selected bibliography of ethnology in Hungary with Gábor Vargyas (KOVÁCS et al. 1991),<sup>1</sup> the research directed at non-European territories has led to the impressive accumulation of knowledge in a few areas. It cannot be the aim of my short paper to present a comprehensive history of research in this direction, but it is worth pointing out how the sociocultural anthropological investigations carried out in recent decades on other continents by Hungarian scholars – some of the results of which

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<sup>1</sup> Tibor Bodrogi raised the idea and started to collect data for this bibliography. As he died unexpectedly in 1986 Mihály Sárkány and Gábor Vargyas continued the work with the help of Zoltán Kovács, who was librarian in the Museum of Ethnography, Budapest in the 1960s.

can be found in this volume – are linked to the work of predecessors, and the intellectual tradition in which they are embedded.

It is often said in connection with the origins of sociocultural anthropology that it is the child of the Enlightenment and colonialism (FIRTH 1975:44; GOODY 1969:2; LEWIS 2013:105),<sup>2</sup> or is a bastard of the latter (ASAD 1973:16), but there are countries where the study of societies and cultures differing from their own was inspired by other considerations, even if the emergence of such interest cannot be separated from the general circumstances and course of the development of ethnography, ethnology and anthropology. This is especially true for Hungarian ethnography: one of its main driving forces was the study of the culture of peoples most closely related linguistically in the search for the origins of the Hungarian folk culture, even if the extra-European investigations were not limited to the regions inhabited by those peoples. But the chances of fieldwork both among peoples speaking Ural-Altaic languages and in other regions were dependent to a great extent on the place of the country in the world politically and as regards its economic possibilities.

Taking into account the main lines of enquiry, the following periods can be distinguished.

1. The period before the introduction of the ethno-sciences that in Hungary lasted up to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.
2. Ethnological research from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the First World War, the establishment of the great tradition.
3. The decline in ethnological research between the two world wars.
4. Ethnology and sociocultural anthropology after the Second World War and in the period of socialism – controlled possibilities.
5. After 1990 – a revival.

*1. The period before the introduction of the ethno-sciences that in Hungary lasted up to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.*

In the first period a few individuals from the territory of Hungary, as from other European countries, reached distant lands and served with ethnographic details in their descriptions. Their numbers included diplomats, prisoners and churchmen (KÓSA 1988:30–32). Especially rich in this respect are the 18<sup>th</sup> century communications of Jesuit missionaries setting out from the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary, no longer independently of European expansion in the world. One example is the letters from the Malabar Coast in Southern India written in Latin by Joseph Hausegger; extracts in German were published in the Jesuit series *Der neue Welt Bott* in issues 636 (1755) and 724–736 (1758); they became known in Hungarian in 1931 (PINZGER 1931). Even more important are the writings of men trained at the University of Nagyszombat (Tyrnava in Latin, Trnava in Slovak) and sent to South America as missionaries, among them, Xavér Ferenc Éder, whose activity was studied by Lajos Boglár (BOGLÁR 1955); Ildikó SZ. KRISTÓF (2014) threw light on the background of their work in Nagyszombat. Although the content of these writings did not become generally known in Hungary, the desire for knowledge that lay behind them must also have played a part in the fact that the astronomer János Sajnovics, who was also

<sup>2</sup> Surprisingly, the expression “child of colonialism” is attributed to Kathleen Gough (for example LLOBERA 2003:169), although she wrote of “child of Western imperialism” (GOUGH 1968:12).

educated by the Jesuits, in 1770 became the first to demonstrate the relationship between the Hungarian and Lapp languages and he also reported on Lapp customs (HÁM 1889:5–6). The 18<sup>th</sup> century adventurer Móric Benyovszky was a different case: his autobiographic writing on his travels (BENYOVSZKY 1790) was reworked by one of the greatest Hungarian writers (JÓKAI 1888), he is remembered and still inspires today as the “king of Madagascar”, but a researcher writing the history of Madagascar has also begun work on the source critical evaluation of his data (LUGOSI 1984; Benyovszky conference 1987).

## *2. Ethnological research from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the First World War, the establishment of the great tradition.*

The ethno-sciences acquired an independent character in the last third of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Göttingen, an important centre of the German Enlightenment, building on the achievements of the scholarly enquiry that accompanied Russian empire-building and similar aspirations in Vienna, but breaking away from their practical incentives. The more abstract scholarly attitude developed here pointed in two directions: one towards ethnic history that was linked and similar to language history in a paradigm elaborated by August Ludwig Schlözer, the other towards examination of the connection between geographical endowments, human races and types of ways of life, the general outline of which can be attributed to Johann Christoph Gatterer. Both of these trends adopted a world historical perspective. Ideas spread throughout Europe, but they did not all use the same name for the discipline (VERMEULEN 2008:199–270).

The demand for separate ethnographic investigation was expressed in Hungary in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the Kingdom of Hungary was still under direct Habsburg rule, then following the Compromise of 1867 it became part of the empire on an equal standing with Austria, in theory part of a great power but in practice of only a middle power that was of great significance from the viewpoint of field research.

The dates are important because by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century ethnographic enquiry was imbued with the ideas of Herder, who thought that a nation's gist is best preserved and expressed by the *Volk* in language, in folksongs and folk narratives, which are values, consequently collecting folk traditions served nation-building, especially in societies where the aristocratic elite and the townsfolk were in part ethnically distinct from the rural population, which did not exclude scientific accuracy (BARNARD 2003:30–31, 38; BAYCROFT 2012:8). Most of the European peoples sought their traditions in earlier periods of European history; the work of the Grimm brothers provided an excellent example for this (COCCHIARA 1962:236). But the Hungarians looked towards the East in search of their past.

The mediaeval chronicles discovered and printed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (MACARTNEY 1953) pointed in this direction, as did the discovery of linguistic affinities that also found speakers of Finno-Ugric languages beyond Europe, in the territory of Russia. Other kinship possibilities also arose, the Turkish-Ugric battle broke out and although it brought victory for Finno-Ugric linguistic kinship by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (SOZAN 1977:98–113), it also had the effect of encouraging extensive collection of ethnographic material besides the description of languages in various parts of Asia, and a study published in 1823 (TÁLASI 1949:77–78) postulating Asian connections of certain Hungarian popular cultural features provided a similar stimulus.

Within Finno-Ugric ethnographic investigations, special mention must be made of the exceptionally outstanding fieldwork carried out among the Hungarian people's

closest linguistic kin, the Ob-Ugrians (the Vogul or Mansi and the Ostyak or Khanty),<sup>3</sup> and the results obtained.

The foundations of this line of enquiry were laid by Antal Reguly (1819–1858), who travelled to Finland in 1839, then after collecting among the Finns and the Lapps, from 1841 he lived in Russia. From 1843 to 1846 he stayed mainly among Mansi and Khanty, but for a short while he also collected material among other Finno-Ugric peoples, the Udmurt, the Mordvin, the Cheremis, and the Turkic Bashkir and Chuvash. In 1847 he worked on mapping the northern part of the Urals, then returned to Hungary. His travels were made possible mainly by the support of Russian private individuals and modest financial support from the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The first ethnographic exhibition in Pest was organised from the materials he collected, and these objects became the first collection of the Museum of Ethnography established in 1872 (GYARMATI 2008a:1–2). However, his declining health prevented him from publishing the greater part of the material he collected. It was with editing assistance from Pál Hunfalvy that his Mansi monograph (REGULY 1864) was published posthumously. His material has been studied by a number of researchers but some of his manuscripts remain unpublished. Some of those who worked on Reguly's material also did fieldwork in his footsteps, mainly among the Ob-Ugrians at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, supplementing and enriching the information and also observing other phenomena. The fruit of this work includes the impressive Mansi folklore collection made by Bernát Munkácsy (MUNKÁCSI 1892–1921; MUNKÁCSI – KÁLMÁN 1952–1963; HOPPÁL 2000; KOZMÁCS 2010), and the Khanty folklore collection made by József Pápay (PÁPAY 1905); the authors noted in their subtitles that they had made use of Reguly's legacy. The results of their fieldwork subsequently appeared in the studies made by the next generations. Their travels, as well as the trips made by Károly Pápai and János Jankó that also produced significant results (KODOLÁNYI 1963), were made with support from Hungary specifically for the purpose. The Hungarian Academy of Sciences set up a Reguly Fund to support such research, and after 1867 the Hungarian Ministry of Religious Affairs and Education awarded a grant, the Geographical Society assisted travellers (PÁPAI 1890:119), and wealthy aristocrats organised expeditions inviting researchers with specialised knowledge to participate; János Jankó and József Pápay for example were members of Jenő Zichy's third major expedition.

Researches in other regions of Asia also increased during the time of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, but these were more scattered regionally and in their focus than the Ob-Ugrian investigations. They eventually led to the emergence of a many-coloured Oriental studies in Hungarian scholarly life in which studies on the history of the Altaic languages and their speakers became an especially strong component.

It was to clarify the origin of the Hungarians that Sándor Kőrösi Csoma set out on his journey in 1819 (TERJÉK 1976:16); its unexpected result was the Tibetan-English dictionary and the foundation of Tibetan studies with the publication of his works in 1834 (TERJÉK 1984). Ármin Vámbéry too declared in the foreword to his account rich in ethnographic experiences of his travels in Central Asia, Persia and Afghanistan from 1863 that discovering the languages to which Hungarian was related “was the moving cause

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<sup>3</sup> The Vogul call themselves Mansi, the Ostyak call themselves Khanty. Sociocultural anthropologists prefer to use self-denominations, therefore I apply the latter ethnic names in this paper irrespective of the usage of the authors in their publications.

of my journey to the East” (VÁMBÉRY 1964:viii). This was followed by further travels as a result of which he also undertook to trace the ethnological-ethnographic picture of the Turkic peoples (VÁMBÉRY 1883; 1885). Considerations of prehistory also played a role in the choice of destinations for Count Jenő Zichy’s three big interdisciplinary expeditions (1895–1898), the first of which was to the Caucasus, the second to Central Asia, and the third across the Gobi Desert to China, that is, towards the speakers of Altaic languages, until on the third expedition, as already mentioned, the count also supported Finno-Ugric research. Benedek Barátosi-Balogh too was inspired by the challenge of Hungarian prehistory to set out on his travels, and although the answers he gave proved untenable, the three journeys he made to the Far East between 1903 and 1914 produced much valuable information on the Ainu, the peoples along the Amur River and Manchu-Tungus shamanism (HOPPÁL 2007:48–59).

Naturally, individuals who gathered information on non-Eurasian continents were also moved by other reasons; their desire to share their discoveries and knowledge contributed to the progress of scholarship in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They included Sándor Bölöni Farkas and Ágoston Haraszty who wrote about the conditions and institutions of the United States of America (BÖLÖNI FARKAS 1834; HARASZTHY 1844). Another especially outstanding example was László Magyar who gathered information on the peoples of Angola and the lower reaches of the Congo River; he lived in the region from 1848 until his death in 1864, his descriptions mainly of the Mbundu society, way of life and customs were especially detailed and at times amazing due to his close coexistence with them, and considerably enriched knowledge of Africa (MAGYAR 1859; SEBESTYÉN 2008).

However the question of the origin of the Hungarian people no longer played a role in all Asian travels during the period of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, including among the problems examined by the first major expedition to the Far East backed up by a warship; it brought back more than 2000 objects enabling János Xántus, who had travelled in the United States in the 1850s, to establish the Museum of Ethnography as a department of the National Museum in Pest in 1872; he also published numerous studies on regions and peoples of Southeast Asia and the Far East as far as the Philippines (SÁNDOR 1953).

The same can be said of the important expeditions of the period driven mainly by geographical, geological and other natural scientific enquiry that also enriched Hungarian science with valuable ethnographic knowledge, such as Count Béla Széchenyi’s big expedition that set out in 1877; its members reached India, Thailand, Western China, Indonesia and Japan and although Gábor Bálint famous for his earlier communications on Mongolian language and folklore joined them for a short while, it was not his writings but the reports of Lajos Lóczy that contained many ethnographic observations in the Chinese empire (LÓCZY 1886), and even more the studies written by his student Jenő Cholnoky who spent close to two years in China from 1896 (CHOLNOKY 1900). The expedition led by Sámuel Teleki also set out to explore unknown regions in East Africa in 1887, and besides discovering Lake Turkana (Rudolf) and Lake Chew Bahir (Stephanie), also gave accounts of the unknown peoples encountered on the journey (HÖHNEL 1990; BORSOS 1998:185). The expeditions of György Almásy into Central Asia as far as the Tien Shan Mountains collected a great deal of material of interest to the disciplines of geography and ethnography, which was analysed systematically; this was especially true of his second expedition in which Gyula Prinz participated (ALMÁSY 1903; PRINZ 1911), and while these significantly enriched knowledge of the Altaic peoples they were

also indicators of the departure from ethnic preference. Typical of this attitude was the conclusion drawn by György Almásy that he saw a greater similarity between the behaviour and mentality of Hungarian and Russian peasants than between Hungarians and the representatives of the Turkic peoples he had observed (ALMÁSY 1903:18).

The Museum of Ethnography owes its deservedly famous North-East New Guinea collection to natural scientists, the taxidermist Sámuel Fenichel and the naturalist, ornithologist and entomologist Lajos Bíró, who did their collecting in far more modest circumstances than those of the expeditions already mentioned, Fenichel in 1891–1893 and Bíró between 1896 and 1902. In addition to descriptive notes on the objects, Bíró also left very evocative pictures of life with his Papuan wives (BÍRÓ 1899; 1901; 1987). Writing about their activity, Gábor Vargyas rightfully observed that “the history of ethnography in Hungary cannot be distinguished from that of the museum collections” (VARGYAS 2008:207), and for some the objects they collected may have been more valuable than their travel reports based on fleeting impressions.

Naturally, the latter also contained information from distant regions even if we are unable to include them in this brief overview; the same applies to the translation of many works presenting remote worlds, such as the three-volume *The Earth and its Peoples* (HELLWALD 1879–1881) that was followed by a strongly reworked version in five volumes edited by Aladár György (GYÖRGY 1894–1905).

The result of all these efforts was the emergence of a broad public interest in distant peoples and cultures that became an essential component of Hungarian intellectual life, inspiring many young people who set out and became influential figures in the scientific community of other countries, such as Charles Eugen Ujfalvy in France (LE CALLOC’H 1986), who carried out research in Central Asia and the Hindu Kush and Emil Torday in the United Kingdom who after his travels in the Congo sent an important assemblage of objects to the Museum of Ethnography (FÖLDESSY 2015). And most importantly, the attitude briefly outlined here survived the First World War in Hungary and can be said to be still alive today.

### 3. *The decline in ethnological research between the two world wars.*

With the end of the First World War, from 1918 Hungary became de facto and from 1920 de jure an independent state, but it lost two-thirds of its previous territory, was economically weakened. The peoples of Western Siberia and Central Asia that were the focus of Hungarian ethnological interest lived in regions which became part of the Soviet Union and these regions became largely inaccessible for foreign fieldworkers, especially Hungarians in view of the sharply opposed political ideologies.

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century ethnography had become a professional activity in Hungary. From 1870 there was an appointed professor of ethnology at the Pest university, the geographer János Hunfalvy. It is clear from the notes made by students attending the lectures he gave from 1873 that he transmitted the contemporary version of *Völkerkunde* that combined ethnography, geography, anthropology and regional linguistics (SÁRKÁNY – VARGYAS 1995:VIII–IX), and encouraged work on comparative ethnology. However, what we would today call the social anthropological enquiry examining general questions of the formation and functioning of human society that also appeared in Hungary in that period showed scant interest in the achievements of Hungarian ethnography and had little influence on them (ZSIGMOND 1974:154–155).

It is the irony of fate that opportunities for anthropological interest and fieldwork producing excellent ethnographical results arose precisely in the interwar years when the possibilities for research outside Europe were greatly reduced.

We owe this change of intellectual direction to one person, Géza Róheim, who as far as we know never did ethnographic fieldwork in Hungary, but armed with extensive folkloristic knowledge and psychoanalytical experience, set out in 1928 with the aim of gathering material in the field to refute the claim made by Bronislaw Malinowski on the basis of information obtained among Trobriand Islanders that the existence of Oedipus complex depended on the type of the family and it was not a characteristic of a matrilineal society (MALINOWSKI 1924:55–57). After a brief stay in French Somalia he spent an extended period on field research in Central Australia, and then on the Melanesian Normanby Island and on the way home among the Yuma Indians. He arrived back in 1931 and published his Central Australian research findings in Hungarian (RÓHEIM 1932). However, his other fieldwork reports were not published in Hungarian until 1984 compiled by Kincső Verebélyi who also wrote the foreword (RÓHEIM 1984). In keeping with the direction of his interest, he produced highly detailed analyses of the social structure, communication and exchange of gifts, concepts and myths, making him one of the founders of psychoanalytical anthropology (RÓHEIM 1950) even if his conclusions in support of Freudian theory are debatable. He emigrated to the United States in 1938 and died there in 1953. He is the only Hungarian sociocultural anthropologist mentioned in big research history overviews (e.g. HARRIS 1968:427–430; PALUCH 1990:214).

Apart from Róheim no other Hungarian researcher of note did long-standing fieldwork on other continents than Europe in that period although the Museum of Ethnography was enriched with material collected by Horst Bandat who worked on oil exploration in Celebes between 1933 and 1935 and from there also reached today's Irian Jaya (HÁLA – VARGYAS 1992), and by Rudolf Fuszek, who was minister of health in Liberia (BORSÁNYI 1986). Interest in distant cultures was kept up by Orientalist travellers such as Lajos Ligeti (1938, 1940), Gyula Germanus (WOJTILLA 1981), Ervin Baktay (1938), or the writings of Pál Kelemen (1937) who travelled to Mexico to study the high cultures of Central America, but while they provided ethnographic details, their investigations were in the areas of linguistics, cultural history and art history and therefore fall outside the scope of our topic.

#### *4. Ethnology and sociocultural anthropology after the Second World War and in the period of socialism – controlled possibilities.*

After the Second World War Hungary remained a country almost unchanged in size and economic strength, and from 1949 was one of the socialist countries in a politically divided world. But this did not mean freedom of movement or greater opportunities for field research in the regions of the Soviet Union of special interest for Hungarian ethnology, especially not in Siberia, even though the struggle against colonialism and for recognition of the right to self-determination of the peoples was part of the declared socialist policy and ideology, and Hungarian students were able to study at universities in the Soviet Union.

One result of this was a situation where László Vajda, the powerful inspiration behind Hungarian ethnological education, who emigrated to the Federal Republic of Germany in 1957 and later became professor of Völkerkunde at Munich university, never did any fieldwork. And Tibor Bodrogi, who did a great deal to disseminate contemporary British and American anthropological thinking (SÁRKÁNY 2005:96–98), who gained wide

international recognition right at the beginning of his career with his study on the cargo cult (BODROGI 1951), with his publications of the Oceanic artefacts preserved in the Museum of Ethnography (VARGYAS 2008:242–243), and in general became a recognised expert in tribal art (BODROGI 1981), and as director of the Museum of Ethnography (1961–1968) travelled many times abroad, in fact was only able to produce an analytical study based on his own detailed fieldwork among the Sadang-Toraja in 1964. He visited them on a study tour to Indonesia and described their burial customs (BODROGI 1970).

Tibor Bodrogi's Indonesian study trip was an exceptional opportunity supported by a UNESCO grant. Otherwise during the period of socialism travel abroad on ethnographic study tours was possible only within the frame of intergovernmental cultural agreements and arrangements between academies of sciences, and few people were given the chance.

One of those few was Vilmos Diószegi, who on several occasions in 1957, 1958 and 1964 spent a few months in Siberia, and studied the shamanism of various peoples (DIÓSZEGI 1998; SÁNTHA 2003:313–314) that he hypothesised was the pre-Christian belief system of the Hungarians. It is an indication of the international recognition of his investigations that he wrote the entry on shamanism in the 1974 edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Just as his investigation was rooted in Hungarian research tradition both in choice of theme and in the approach to the examination of individual elements of the culture, the same can be said of András Róna-Tas who had a sound grounding in ethnology and Altaic studies; he visited Mongolia in 1957–58, and besides presenting his results in studies he also published travel writing that showed the changing way of life in Mongolia in the context of the socialist transformation of society (RÓNA-TAS 1961).

The case of Lajos Boglár was somewhat different: he arrived among the Nambikuara Indians for research on a UNESCO grant in 1959 with the intention of applying the 'Franglus' (VERDERY 2007) approach to anthropology in which he was partially successful. In addition he gave an answer to the question of their place in cultural history (BOGLÁR 1969; 1971). Later he was able to bring the same approach to fieldwork among the Piaroa of Venezuela in 1968–69 and in 1974, thanks to support from the Wenner-Gren Foundation (BOGLÁR 1982). I make special mention of the grants that made these investigations possible because they were a rare exception at that time. Between 1979 and the year of his death (2004) Lajos Boglár made several more journeys in Brazil and French Guiana at his own expense. The result was an analysis of the difference between day and night culture among the Guarani (BOGLÁR 1996), a study of Brazilian Indian feather art (BOGLÁR 1998), and finally a study of the Hungarians who emigrated to Brazil in the 1890s, beginning with publication of the material his father collected in 1939–1943 on the Hungarian emigrants, that also provided the occasion for investigation among the neighbouring Botocudo Indians (BOGLÁR id. 1966; BOGLÁR 2000:154–171).

On his trip to Venezuela in 1968 Boglár was accompanied by ethnomusicologist István Halmos, who besides making a thorough study of the music also provided important information on the circumstances of the two men's research (HALMOS 2012).

Through an intergovernmental exchange agreement the dance researcher Martin György and ethnomusicologist Sárosi Bálint spent two months travelling extensively in Ethiopia. The result was a typology of Ethiopian dances (MARTIN 1966) and a survey of the music of the peoples of Ethiopia (SÁROSI 1967).

It was also thanks to intergovernmental agreements that Csaba Ecsedy carried out fieldwork based on principles of British social anthropology in Sudan among the Maiak



of the Hill Burun tribe in 1972 (ECSEDY 1973) and Gábor Vargyas spent a year on a grant in Australia in 1981–1982, and during that time with the support of Australian institutions and private persons he was able to visit the area of New Guinea from where the Museum of Ethnography's big collection came and to gather supplementary data throwing light on the social background of the objects (VARGYAS 1987).

Later, in the frame of cooperation between academies of sciences Gábor Vargyas was able to do fieldwork in Vietnam among the Bru. In both duration (18 months between 1985 and 1989, with interruptions), and the results obtained this fieldwork was the most significant that a Hungarian researcher has been able to carry out among a single ethnic group. Like Boglár, Vargyas follows the 'Franglus' approach and although the main focus of his attention was religion and rites, in order to understand them he examined all aspects of Bru life in the first comprehensive description of Bru culture (VARGYAS 2000; 2008a).

Towards the end of the period the opportunity arose through Soviet scientific institutions for brief ethnographic fieldwork and was seized by Mihály Hoppál who visited the Kyrgyz (1975), and the Buryat (1986), thereby beginning his on-the-spot study of shamanism that subsequently developed into a research stream.

In 1986 two researchers travelled to different African countries as educators and were able to collect ethnological material during their stay: Géza Füssi Nagy among the Bondei in Tanzania, Éva Sebestyén in Angola where she found a written source of internal origin, documents of village chiefs that threw light on the organisation of society and land rights during the Portuguese colonial period (FÜSSI NAGY 1998; SEBESTYÉN 2006).

A new feature of life during this period was that university students were able to carry out fieldwork in distant regions. Cuban religious communities organised around rites were studied by Mária Dornbach (1977) as a student of Spanish on language practice in Cuba, and by Irma Agüero (1983) who came to Hungary from Cuba as a wife and completed her studies at the ELTE Department of Ethnology. At the initiative of university students and with the help of grants, a three-month expedition to Mexico was organised in 1985–1986 for an interdisciplinary study of the Totonac culture. However, the anthropological analysis was carried out by Annamária Lammel who accompanied them and who had already spent time among the Totonac in 1982 (LAMMEL – NEMES 1988; LAMMEL 1991, 2001).

It was a sign of changing times that in 1987–88 the Hungarian Scientific Africa Expedition, a private initiative supported by sponsors, spent six months in East Africa; its members included Géza Füssi Nagy, and the present writer (SÁRKÁNY 2000, 2001).

Besides those already mentioned, there are many proofs of interest in non-European territories in this period not based on ethnographic fieldwork, as well as theoretical work on ethnography and ethnology, but they fall outside the scope of this survey. Nevertheless it is important to stress that general anthropological interest and the aim of the fieldwork coincided in the work of many researchers.

##### *5. After 1990 – a revival*

Like the third and fourth periods, the fifth can be distinguished in connection with world history. The "short twentieth century" (HOBSBAWM 1994) came to an end with the disappearance of the European socialist states. In Hungary the transition was completed by 1990, a market economy and plural democratic political system replaced the socialist regime and extended individual freedoms. From the viewpoint of scholarship this meant that ties with the former socialist countries weakened while the possibilities of

maintaining contacts with academic centres in other parts of the world expanded, and in Hungary the range and total amount of available state and other supports increased. Not incidentally, the way was opened for freer movement in the world, including also in changing Russia and China.

In this situation it was of significance for ethnographic-anthropological training that departments of cultural anthropology separate from ethnology and folklore departments were set up in Budapest (1990) and Miskolc (1993), and for a time were headed by researchers of non-European territories. In Budapest Lajos Boglár (1990–1995), who until his death (2004) was a figure who had a decisive influence on his students' field of interest, and Mihály Sárkány (1999–2000), in Miskolc László Borsányi (1995–2002). The department of ethnology and cultural anthropology at the University of Pécs was headed by Gábor Vargyas (2001–2006), who then directed the doctoral programme where a number of students earned their PhD with dissertations on non-European topics. His successor is Zoltán Nagy who has done fieldwork on numerous occasions among the Vasyugan Khanty and is also present with a study in this volume. The return of several Hungarian researchers also had an inspiring influence: András Zempléni, who did fieldwork as a CNRS researcher in Senegal, Chad and Ivory Coast and published in Hungarian his analytical study of the consequences of the Senufó visiting marriage (ZEMPLÉNI 2004); Bea Vidacs, who began her career in Hungary, but examined the relationship between football and public thinking in Cameroon as part of her studies in the United States (VIDACS 2010); both researchers lectured in the frame of training in cultural anthropology in Budapest and Pécs; and Veronika Görög-Karády who collected material among the Bambara as a CNRS researcher in Mali and Senegal in the 1970s, from 1980 she was in regular contact with the MTA Institute of Ethnology, and with the ELTE Department of Folklore where she also gave lectures; she published her folkloristic analyses on social inequalities also in Hungarian (GÖRÖG-KARÁDY 2006); Anna Losonczy, a professor at the University Libre of Bruxelles and director of research at l'École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris, who did fieldwork in Columbia (LOSONCZY 2001), also lectured at the University of Pécs.

One of the positive effects of the new situation was that Hungarian researchers visited the Khanty again. In 1991 Éva Schmidt organized the Northern Khanty Folklore Archive and managed it until her death. The possibility was created on the Hungarian side at government level and on the Russian side through negotiations between the leaders of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Region and the leaders of the Society for the Rescue of Yugria. The aim was to rescue the Khanty cultural heritage. The result was a vast body of material but under the conditions of Éva Schmidt's will it cannot be published until 2022. However the reports drawn up annually by the MTA Institute of Ethnology provide information on the collecting sites and the work done (SCHMIDT 2005). It is regrettable that it has not been worked up by Éva Schmidt because she was an excellent researcher as can be seen from her comprehensive study on the bear feasts written on the basis of communications from others (SCHMIDT 1989), moreover she was the person who spoke all five Khanty dialects.

As a result of the negotiations that led to the establishment of the Archive, Márta Csepregi, Ágnes Kerezsi and Katalin Lázár were also able to do research in the 1990s in the territory of the Surgut Khanty and published their findings in a special issue of the *Acta Ethnographica Hungarica* (CSEPREGI 1997a; 1997b; KEREZSI 1997; LÁZÁR 1997).

As in the case of Ob-Ugrian research, a major breakthrough linked to the forerunners was also achieved in Mongolian studies. Ágnes Birtalan, who had already visited Inner

Mongolia and Chinese Turkestan as a student, organised expeditions to Mongolia and Southern Siberia in 1991–1998, to collect material on languages and folk beliefs. The authors published these in the series titled *Őseink Nyomában Belső Ázsiában* [In the Footsteps of our Ancestors in Inner Asia]. They were followed by further expeditions; as the title indicates they are investigations directed towards the past and traditions (BIRTALAN 1996; 1998).

As already noted, after 1990 the brief but diverse researches on shamanism – among the Yakuts, the Tuva, the Ainu in Japan, in China (Manchuria, Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, Yunnan) – by Mihály Hoppál became a stream recording the traditional features of shamanism and the forms of its contemporary presence (HOPPÁL 2002; 2007; 2015). Thanks to his organising energy, research on shamanism became the area that was greatly enriched in Hungary after 1990 as a result of fieldwork by many researchers. The diversity of Hungarian research is reflected in the volume *Sámánok és kultúrák* [Shamans and Cultures] (HOPPÁL et al. 2008) he edited containing studies from different parts of the world. Hoppál worked together with János Sipos on the analysis of shaman songs (HOPPÁL – SIPOS 2010). János Sipos, the musicologist collected the folk music of Turkic peoples, starting in Anatolia in 1987 and continuing in Central Asia after 1990. He published the results in several volumes (e.g. SIPOS 2014). The international journal *Shaman* is also published in Hungary and often includes studies by Hungarian researchers (e.g. CSEPREGI 2007; SOMFAI KARA 2006; 2007).

My intention with these few lines has simply been to indicate the direction of research; the investigations and publications are far too numerous to be included here.

Together with the research linked to already mentioned earlier initiatives, this period has been marked by a change of attitude regarding the Ob-Ugrians, the Altaic and other Siberian peoples. In place of research focused on the archaic, traditional and what is disappearing, efforts are now being made to place the phenomena in a social historical context, to examine them in the process of change, or to approach them with questions framed in sociocultural and anthropological terms.

Eszter Ruttkay-Miklián, a student of Éva Schmidt has drawn on close to twenty years of intimate local experience to analyse the system of family-kinship relations and behaviour norms of the Khanty (RUTTKAY-MIKLIÁN 2012, 2014). Zoltán Nagy, already mentioned, showed how the religious concepts of the Vasyugan Khanty are changing (NAGY 2007). After several long periods of fieldwork since 1989 in Southern Siberia, mainly among the Buryat and Evenki, István Sántha in collaboration with his wife Tatiana Safonova has analysed such phenomena as pretence in behaviour, personal autonomy and the differentiation of genders, or the differing world-views of the Evenki and the Buryat in their book on social contacts among peoples in the region of Lake Baikal (SAFONOVA – SÁNTHA 2013). Csaba Mészáros has shown historical change in two Yakut village communities, analysing the differing outcomes and impacts of attempts made at social transformation in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the two cases, and among others the way they are related to social capital and social relations (MÉSZÁROS 2013).

Opportunities have also been opened for other fieldwork.

Gábor Vargyas was able to continue his research among the Bru in 1996 in Laos, in 2007 in Vietnam, as well as other travels.

I myself was able to carry out economic anthropological analysis based on fieldwork in Kenya in 1993 and 1995 among Kikuyu coffee-growers (SÁRKÁNY 2002; 2015).

The ethnographic fieldwork carried out in many places has enabled researchers of the HAS Research Centre for the Humanities, Institute of Ethnology to present answers given to the big challenges of our time, examining the ingrained cultural reflexes that the process of modernisation comes up against or the changes taking place in different societies in the world (SÁRKÁNY 2012).

It will already be clear from the above that not only did new opportunities open after 1990 for research in non-European territories, many researchers also took advantage of them immediately. However, the revival nature of the phenomenon is further supported by the figures in the accompanying table that do not even contain all the fieldwork done by university students.

	Africa	America	Australia and Oceania	Asia	Total
Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Department of Cultural Anthropology	9	19	2	35	65
University of Miskolc, Department of Cultural and Visual Anthropology	4	9		3	16
University of Pécs, Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology		2		5	7
Total	13	30	2	43	88

*Figure 1.* Dissertations based on fieldwork carried out by Hungarian students in non-European territories at a few Hungarian universities, 1995–2016<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The Asia column also includes dissertations based on research carried out among Finno-Ugrians living in the European part of Russia, but it does not include the results of fieldwork among non-Europeans carried out within Europe. The data does not contain the data of all departments at all Hungarian universities. A small number of dissertations that could be included were produced in Department of Ethnology and Folklore at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, in Department of Ethnology at University of Debrecen, in Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology at University of Szeged. I wish to thank Veronika Murányi (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest), József Kotics (University of Miskolc) Zoltán Nagy and Gábor Vargyas (University of Pécs), and András Simon (University of Szeged) for their assistance in compiling the data.

A further regional breakdown of the dissertations that can be classified under Asia gives surprising results. Only four were from the territory of Siberia, one from Central Asia, in contrast seven were from India, six from Indonesia and four from Israel of which one was a study on a Palestinian community.

If we look at the topics, the difference in turning away from the past oriented research is even more striking. The majority of the dissertations examined current social problems or living cultural phenomena, reflecting the sociocultural anthropological training of their authors. The revival is thus accompanied by a paradigm shift in the study of Non-European territories. This is evidenced by the studies in this volume, most of whose authors were among the student authors of the 88 dissertations listed in the table. Of those who were not, Zsolt Szilágyi was trained in fieldwork on Ágnes Birtalan's Mongolian expeditions, but as a historian he was easily able to place the local experiences in a wider frame. The other is Gábor Vargyas, who contributes to an international debate as a result of his research on the Bru.

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