

# Paládi-Kovács, Attila: Studies in Hungarian Ethnography for a European Ethnology.

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## BOOK REVIEW

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This volume contains twenty-four essays by Attila Paládi-Kovács, twenty-three in English and one in French, grouped into thematic units rather than divided into chapters. Attila Paládi-Kovács has authored hundreds of publications to date, including complete volumes, book reviews, and articles. Although a presentation of his extensive academic and scholarly activities goes beyond the scope of the present review, it is important to mention some of the characteristic features and key subjects previously addressed, since to some extent these also provide the basis for this foreign-language selection. In an earlier book (*Ethnic Tradition, Classes and Communities in Hungary*, Budapest, 1996), he dealt mainly with the characterization of the culture of different social classes (e.g., the lesser nobility and the working class), the social role of ethnic traditions and the elderly, the institution of language exchanges for children, and certain methodological issues (e.g., migration and ethnographic mapping).

Paládi-Kovács has always thought in international terms, and this is also one of the key messages of the present volume: the need to disseminate the results of Hungarian ethnography as widely as possible, and to raise awareness among international specialists of Hungarian professional events or of events taking place in Hungary. In this context, Attila Paládi-Kovács regularly writes conference reports — helping to preserve information, data, scholarly observations, conversations, and even debates that would otherwise be relegated to obscurity. This includes both Hungarian conferences, which are thus made accessible to a wider professional audience in either Hungarian or English; or international conferences, thus contributing to the wider recognition of the respective outcomes. The same idea is reflected in this volume, which includes a conference report and a keynote address. One of these two papers is the *Welcoming Address at the 8th Finnish–Hungarian Ethnological Symposium*, which was held in Lakitelek in

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2003 with the support of the Hungarian Ethnographic Society. These triennial, bilateral Finnish-Hungarian conferences launched by Ilmar Talve from Finland and János Kodolányi, originally organized in partnership with Ethnos, the Association of Finnish Ethnologists, subsequently expanded into Finnish-Hungarian-Estonian trilateral conferences in 2013, all have a long history. Attila Paládi-Kovács has been a driving force and an integral part of this history from its very beginnings at the first event in Turku in 1984. Building professional relationships, learning about others' research, gaining experience, inspiring ethnological research, promoting the professional development of younger generations, and publishing outcomes are among the goals of these symposiums, which are likewise excellent examples of international outreach and broad cooperation.

Another highlight in this volume is the account of the *7th International Congress of the Société Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore* (SIEF), held in 2001 in Budapest, Hungary. The multidisciplinary SIEF (International Society for Ethnology and Folklore) organizes both major conferences and smaller workshops and is divided into fourteen working groups. Its principal mission is to explore European cultural parallels using comparative methods: to identify elements of the shared European heritage; to preserve common values by adopting an international perspective that transcends the national dimension and involves the disciplines of anthropology and cultural history; to promote networking and scholarly exchange among researchers; to foster debate; and, among other things, to encourage intellectual collaboration in the spirit of critical thinking (<https://www.siefhome.org/about.shtml>). Last accessed: 15th January, 2024.) This complex approach is precisely aligned with the concept according to which the author has arranged the various essays in the present volume. After all, what is our basis for comparison if we do not have descriptions and analyses available in foreign languages? The author provides ample data to this end, in essays such as *Water-Carrying Yokes in the Carpathian Basin; Hungarian Hay Wagons in the 1700s and 1800s; Transport in Hungary by Canvas Sheets on the Human Back; Some Remarks on Historical and Modern Types of Wheeled Vehicles in Hungarian Territory; and On the Mapping of Carts and Wagons*.

At this point, it is appropriate to mention cartographic efforts to depict groups of cultural phenomena on maps, demonstrating the regional fragmentation of Hungarian folk culture that is also reflected in *A Proposal for the Mapping of Threshing Equipment*. Although preliminary work on the *Hungarian Ethnographic Atlas* had begun before World War II, and research on certain subthemes had already been started in the early 1940s, the work came to a standstill during the war and was given fresh impetus only with the formation of an editorial committee and the launch of extensive collection work at representative research sites throughout the Hungarian language area. The final questionnaire was preceded by extensive professional discussion, and there was also international demand for the compilation of a European ethnographic Atlas. Although efforts to realize this latter publication have ceased with the termination of the international working group, work on national ethnographic atlases has not been entirely abandoned, and respective volumes were published in several countries in the 2000s. As many as 126 of the maps in the *Hungarian Ethnographic Atlas* were produced by Attila Paládi-Kovács (see Borsos, Balázs: A kérdőívtől a klaszteranalízisig. A második olvasat [From questionnaire to cluster analysis. Second reading], representing the biggest individual contribution. In: *Ethnographia* 124, 2013, 3, 364–376). Ethno-cartographic work is indispensable for comparative studies, and its importance is reflected in the author's activities, since it was during his tenure as director of the Institute of Ethnography that the results of this huge undertaking were



published, between 1987 and 1992, in the form of the nine-volume *Hungarian Ethnographic Atlas*, edited by Jenő Barabás, which contains a total of 634 maps.

His essays on agricultural subjects also provide opportunities for comparative studies based on a variety of data, including data on animal husbandry (*Stages of Evolution in the Early History of Livestock Breeding; The Use of Leaf-Fodder in Traditional Hungarian Stock-Breeding; Hungarian Horse-Keeping in the 9th–10th Centuries; and The Development of Swine-Keeping in Hungary During the 18th Century*). Written in French, the essay *Élevage Dans Les Hautes Montagnes En Tant Que Type Du Système Hongrois d'Élevage* takes a multiperspective look at the high mountain shepherding being an integral part of the system of Hungarian animal husbandry.

A miscellaneous group of essays on various subjects includes the analysis *Material Culture in Time*, while the study of the Vojvodina settlement of Udvarszállás (now Dobričevo, Serbia) is an example of how the spread of folklore traditions in a community can be examined by exploring the origins of the population (*Settlement History and Folklore*). The essay *Stereotype, Community, Mother Tongue* investigates stereotypes in relation to various ethnic groups, contributing to an understanding of community mentality and identity that leads us back again to the principal concept, being key to the way in which different communities relate to one another. The essay with the title *Particular Time-Systems of Traditional Communities in Hungary* examines time conceptions. This group also includes other essays which take a historical approach, e.g. the essay *Guild Tradition in Hungary. The Routes of Old Journeymen in the 18th–19th centuries; or Churches, Classes, and Ethnicity in Hungary (1541–1918)* and *Natural Regions and Language Boundaries*, which deals with the issue of language borders in Northern Hungary.

Last but not least, the opening group of essays deserves attention. The work of ethnographer Antal Herrmann is introduced in the essay *Efforts by Antal Herrmann to Institutionalize Hungarian Ethnography*. Among Herrmann's wide-ranging activities, his series *Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia írásban és képen* (The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in Writing and Images) merits particular attention, since its express aim was to disseminate knowledge to the educated classes and to deepen awareness about the constituent peoples of the Monarchy. The subject of the other biographical essay is Károly Viski, and it is probably no coincidence that this is the opening essay in the volume and makes reference to the volume title: *A European Ethnologist from Transylvania, Károly Viski*. Viski's work can be characterized as "European" in many ways: his rich body of work includes, among other things, a translated proposal for the establishment of an international folk art research center, which was preserved in his manuscript bequest; he was also the director of the Hungarian branch of the *Commission Internationale des Arts Populaires* (CIAP), and his study *Az erdélyi magyarság – Népművészet* (Transylvanian Hungarians – Folk Art) was published in French, English, Dutch, and eventually Finnish, thus contributing to the promotion of the scholarly representation of Transylvanian culture at European level. He also argued that the biggest question when evaluating nations is the extent of their contribution to the shared heritage. His three-volume *Magyarok a kultúráért* (Hungarians for Culture) was published in parallel in French in the interests of promoting Hungarian culture, although he also published several of his works, including a color album, in English and German, with the express aim of informing European readers about Hungary's values and projecting a positive image of the country in response to its loss of prestige following the Trianon Peace Treaty in 1920. Another milestone in his oeuvre is *A magyarság néprajza* (The Ethnography of the Hungarians), to which he contributed as both researcher and editor, which placed the material culture and folklore of Hungary in a European context.



I believe that the work of Károly Viski is itself a symbol of the key message of this volume: the emphatic importance of the international context and of international comparative research, conferences, exchanges, and contacts, which should be not only the goal of all researchers but also a professional requirement. The present volume creates an opportunity for just this by providing data and offering inspiration to foreign researchers to carry out similar studies and publish similar summaries.

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