



János Bali – Richárd Papp – István Povedák – Antónia Szász –
Ibolya Tomory (eds.):

Antropológia – Gondolkodás – Alkotás.

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Reflection on the Celebratory Volume ***Anthropology – Thinking – Creating***

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The celebratory volume, prepared for the 70th birthday of András A. Gergely (AGA),¹ was published in December 2022 in the MAKAT² Books series edited by János Bali, Richárd Papp, István Povedák, Antónia Szász, and Ibolya Tomory and published by the Hungarian Society for Cultural Anthropology. In terms of its formal characteristics, the volume belongs to the Festschrift genre and bears its classical features. This is proven, among other things, by the fact that the celebratory volume includes studies reflecting the diverse research fields of AGA, as well as empirical experiences, past quotations, and eulogies. The large format, the 595-page volume features a portrait of András A. Gergely on the cover. The work of graphic artist Adrienn Umlauf shows the kind face of the Celebrated, his legendary beard, his lively gaze, the “stirring” of his being, the outwardly perceptible ripples of the ever-analysing polymath’s powerful soul. The review is sadly topical because the former President of the Hungarian Cultural Anthropological Society (2006–2019), who had been greeted with great affection by the profession, friends, acquaintances and admirers, just a few months earlier, passed away on 1 April 2023.

1 András A. Gergely (AGA) (1952–2023) was an acclaimed Hungarian polymath, cultural anthropologist, academic, university professor, editor, film director, and radio producer (editors’ note).

2 MAKAT (Magyar Kulturális Antropológiai Társaság) – Hungarian Society for Cultural Anthropology (editors’ note).

The eclectic nature of the internal structure of the eight-chapter volume reflects the diversity of the disciplines and disciplinary “adventures” of the celebrated scholar. The specific coherence of the chapters is given by the fact that the reflections are all addressed and related to AGA. Through their writings, the authors link their research attitudes and interests to the professional activities of the doctor of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, with a deep verticality and a broad horizon, including urban anthropology, political anthropology, symbolic use of space, integration, minority studies, ethnicity and identity, and popular culture in the Maghreb region, among others.

The first unit is entitled *Greetings, Portraits*. It contains salutes, friendly writings, reminiscences, photo essays, and a tabula gratulatoria. An interesting opening is provided by László Letenyey's self-reflexive essay, which summarizes quantitative and qualitative observations collected in a specific field, and which proves his Central Europeanism, supported by WHO data. The title of the author's work reflects the reminiscence of the Átány monograph by Edit Fél and Tamás Hofer (Fél–Hofer 1967). His birthday glass toast brings to life the Platonic notion of symposium, a ritual after-meal drinking party where the communal feast is accompanied by music, dance, and conversation. Éva Melles and Antónia Szász choose a unique way of welcoming the guests, presenting a photo essay documenting AGA's multifaceted personality. In a series of photographs that bring to life a decade of shared memories, they tell of the close relationship and the productive presence of the African drumming master at the Symbiosis Days. By capturing a memorable moment, they illustrate how the former scientific director of the Centre for Ethno-regional and Anthropological Studies of the Institute of Political Science of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences was a key figure in these cultural events for many years.

Among the four papers in the *Interdisciplinary Perspectives* chapter, Gábor Biczó, using Vincent Crapanzano's anthropological theory of understanding, focuses on the issue of imagination as interpretation, which he explores in terms of the Hermes dilemma. He emphasizes the methodology of the logical-linguistic-formal translation task, the function of constructed meaning, and the necessity of representation. György Csepeli reflects on the interface of value and culture in the context of a validation-valorization process, along axiological problematics. Andrea Düll seeks intersections between environmental psychology, ecological psychology, and ecological anthropology. András Máté-Tóth examines changes in manners and protocol in the duality of religious law and popular morality. He examines how Western youth in 1968, during the Vietnam War and the Prague Spring, related to existential canons. Then, interpreting the metaphorical images of Sándor Weöres's poem *Freskó* [Fresco] of the 20th century and placing them in a broader context, he draws the conclusion: while in the previous century the certainty of material well-being was lost, in the 21st century the knowledge of

knowledge has also disappeared. He concludes that in the recent political space, the universality of knowledge of decency has been broken down, so it is only possible to find one's way around certain enclaves of validity. He points out that in pluralistic societies, communities of all sizes are held together by a fine-woven web of unwritten rules of decorum, but where these rules are constantly being challenged.

The third part brings together studies on the transmission, communication, and translation of culture. Tünde Fatima Ács raises questions of fate related to teaching and education in schools. In the context of socialization and status management, she focuses on the success of the Education of the Disadvantaged Project and the Hejőkeresztúr Model, their methodological potential and the benefits they offer. Her study traces the process of complex pedagogical culture change in a primary school in the capital city and summarizes the results of its fieldwork. Katalin Tóth Balogné discusses the challenges of cultural translation in detail, using the examples of the Orthodox carpenter's synagogue in the Újlipótváros district of Budapest, the *stíbl*³ and the neologue prayer house in Páva Street, while raising the dilemma of insider and outsider researcher behaviour. Drawing on the methodology of the translation turn in cultural studies, she points out the overlaps and boundaries between the concepts of translating culture and cultural translation. Her work contributes greatly to our understanding of the transmission of knowledge and may serve as an effective tool for clarifying and reflecting on Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* (1921) – "Limits of my language are limits of my world" – from a social science perspective. Péter Szuhay presented the Gypsy exhibitions of the Museum of Ethnography from 1989 to 2018. Among the ten thematic exhibitions, *The Margins of Society* can be highlighted, which focuses on the occupations of Gypsies in the fifty years before the extensive socialist industrialization and highlights the increasing unemployment in the last decade of the Kádár era due to the rationalization of heavy industry. One of the special features of *Images, Gypsies, Gypsy Images, from Exotic Savage to Conscious Citizen* is that it had been first shown at Museu Valencia d'Etnologia in 2011 and came to Budapest only two years later. It deals with topics such as the exotic savage's genre images, the ethnographic, sociological, and anthropological perception of the Gypsy, self-representation in the studio, the success story of political propaganda on minorities, and the socio-photographic confrontation with official ideology. Exhibitions closely linked are *Ferenc Liszt and Gypsy Music* (2011) and *Pull it, Gypsy! Gypsy Music from Liszt to Hungaricum* (2016). The former, in connection with the bicentenary of the composer's birth, deals with his book on Gypsy music, while the latter – continuing the theme already begun – presents the portrayal of Gypsy musicians from the 18th to the early 20th century. It uses the tools of representation to illustrate the closed way of life and

3 *stíbl* (or *stiebel*): Orthodox Jewish prayer house.

the institutionalization of music by the Gypsy musicians and traces the process of declaring the artistic and traditional achievements of the 100-member Gypsy Orchestra, which was awarded the Hungarian Heritage Prize. Ibolya Tomory takes stock of the challenges of 21st-century education systems for technical teacher education in East Africa, with a special focus on Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda.

The studies in the fourth block are grouped around the theme of *Image and Mediation*. András Bán examines the canons, categories, and values of Hungarian photographic art in the half century after 1945 from a photographic history perspective. From the golden age of Hungarian photography, he points out the genre-creating role of the Talking Houses, the scientific usability of literary topography and analyses in detail the photographic material that marks the rejection of conventions and the crossing of borders. Ádám Paár and János Bali also reflect on András A. Gergely's filmic connections. The political scientist and historian Paár looks at the process of the construction of external enemy images in Hungarian costume and historical films between 1943 and 2021. His main questions are as follows: what hetero stereotypes are conveyed by representations on the imagological plane and how they are manifested on the film screen? His primary focus is on the image of Turks, Germans, Austrians, and Russians/Soviets. In the case of cinematographic representations, instead of a "black-and-white perspective", he stresses the need for knowledge of the historical source material, which is being explored and becoming richer, and for multiple perspectives, i.e. the parallel illumination of facts from socio-cultural, social-historical, and psychological aspects. János Bali presents the workflow and partial results of a sociological survey conducted in 2021 on the basis of the films considered most characteristic of the Hungarian nation.

The fifth chapter is on *Sound, Dance, and Mediation*. Szilárd Biernaczky describes the use of the *sanza*, an instrument known as the African piano, which is widespread in much of the black continent, and shares his empirical experiences of the *viszángysi*⁴ musical instrument. Based on the book by László Magyar, he traces the origins of the *sanza* from an instrumental history perspective and outlines the path of its spread. Kinga Povedák and István Povedák discuss the "Gabi Tóth media war" from a religious studies and music anthropological perspective respectively. Agreeing with AGA's statement that the music industry is never apolitical, just as the world of politics is never music-free, the authors analyse the multifaceted relationship between Hungarian pop music and political power by analysing the musical career of a media personality who as a teenager was once in the spotlight in a talent show. In her study, Nóra Kovács presents one of the most popular ballroom dances, the Argentine tango. Through the life story

4 *viszángysi*: a plucked string instrument used mainly in southern and central Africa, played by the musician with two thumbs.

of Ricardo Vidort (1929–2006), she explores the inner and outer connections between movement, dance, and improvisation.

In the sixth unit, the concepts of family, ethnicity, denomination, locality, and nation are also under the spotlight. Péter Bálint examines the phenomenology of the surrendered child in folk tales from the perspective of the history of fairy tales and beliefs. In his study, he analyses the syncretic schema that emerged from Indo-European and Semitic myths and refers in this context to the first book of Samuel (cf. 1 Sam 16:12–22; 1 Sam 17:33–42). In her article, Gabriella Judit Tóth explores the individual and communal forms of memory and its motivational role in the definition of identity and group cohesion in small villages in the Bükk Mountains, such as Répáshuta, Bükkszentkereszt, and Nyésta. She discusses the coherences in which individuals rewrite their stories depending on their social context and social relations and then shows – on the basis of Halbwachs – the cognitive and emotional schemata of memory as a framework of social interactions that take on their final form after multiple repetitions. Richárd Papp looks at the freedom of humour and the humour of freedom in Jewish culture. Through jokes, he gives a sociological reading of self-stereotypes. He points out that self-irony enables a more oily cooperation with the majority society in the framework of a specific adaptation strategy. István Povedák emphasizes the ethno-religious and ethnic aspects of the Csátka pilgrimage site and highlights the bipolar structure of the pilgrimage. Márta Korpics and István Béres discuss the symbolic significance and communication-theoretical dimension of ecumenical pilgrimages, which are rare in Hungary. László Koppány Csáji examines the relationship between ethnicity and nationalism from a theoretical point of view and their conceptual demarcation. In the context of the Macedonian–Bulgarian identity war, Péter Krasztev discusses the issues of uncompetitive identities and national branding.

The seventh topic is organized around urban anthropology. Ágnes Kapitány and Gábor Kapitány discuss the symbolism of urbanization and re-ruralization in the relationship between town and village. They discuss the complex relationship between town and country in the cross-section of centre-periphery. They point out the differences in lifestyles and attitudes, the mutual stereotypes that affect each other, and identify the phenomena that can be seen as symbols of urbanization in 21st-century villages, and, finally, they explore the symbols of the village in the urban world. In Miskolc, Judit Dobák uses the example of the Vasgyári housing estate to outline the various ways in which the mental map is used and its function in identifying identity. She explains that before the settlement of the Gypsies in the 1950s, there was a marked dividing line between the indigenous people of the ironworks and the “interlopers”, a process that ran parallel to the disappearance of the workers’ aristocracy and the ghettoization of a peripheral area of the city, the Lyukóbánya, locally known as Kis-Lyukó.

The final chapter of the volume is entitled *In Distant Lands, in Distant Times*. Henriett Kovács's *Ecce Homo Sapiens!* contains multiple cultural references. On the one hand, she refers to Pontius Pilate, who, according to the Gospel of John, used these words to present the scourged Jesus to the people (cf. John 19:4–15). On the other hand, she can recall art historical references to this passage of scripture, such as the Lüneburg gold plate in the *Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum* in Hanover and the painting by Mihály Munkácsy in Déri Museum in Debrecen. In the subchapter entitled *The Continuation of the Human Play*, the author evokes Dante Alighieri's *Divina Commedia*, consistently embedding it in a biological-evolutionary framework, with the “wise man” at its centre. Mihály Sárkány illustrates the economic-anthropological link between self-sufficiency and commodity production through an example from Kenya. The author visited Kenya several times between 1988 and 1995 and chose the concept of “exchange” as one of his interpretative categories. In his study, he points out that the monotheistic Kikuyu villagers, who make up about a quarter of the country's population, are observed to be self-sufficient and market-sensitive. Examining the exchange relations in Kenya in the light of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of capital, he also discusses rural forms of socio-economic transformation in the context of the late 20th century and the present. He concludes from recent GDP data that the commodification of agricultural products is becoming increasingly prevalent, providing the opportunity for the rural population of a black African country to move from peasant status to becoming farmers. Zsófia Drjenovszky and Katalin Schiller present practices in cultural tourism and tourism strategies in the Americas. Drjenovszky uses the example of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico to show how indigenous people are trying to change their living museum image and preserve their traditions despite the challenges of the 21st century. Katalin Schiller analyses the town of Papantla in the north of the state of Veracruz, founded by the Totonac in the 13th century and part of the *Pueblo Magico Programme*, from an anthropological perspective on tourism. It highlights the importance of proxemics and the dangers of overtourism. In her article, Schiller attempts to reinterpret and revalue the Totonac culture in the context of tourism and points to the ambivalence of Papantla, which, although it identifies itself with the Totonac culture and treats it as a heritage to be preserved, does not include the bearers of the culture, the natives, in the process of valorization.

The celebratory volume ends in an unusual way, as at the end of the Festschrift there is a lengthy interview on the history of the profession, conducted by Tímea Tibori. The series of interviews, which took place in several phases in early 2019, was commissioned by the 20th-Century Voice of the 20th-Century Archive and Research Workshop of the Centre for Social Research of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The publication contains excerpts from the self-reflexive, self-critical stream of talks, which is organized around a few questions and interspersed

with personal testimonies. The celebratory volume, which was produced for the round anniversary, is inspired by the thought of the historian of philosophy and art Raymond Klibansky that “But books, although important ... – do not speak for themselves.” Thus, it is the readers who will be able to make this Festschrift speak, which is not primarily about the authors and editors but about András A. Gergely, a tribute to his life’s work. All this makes it safe to say that the anthropologist’s thoughts will remain alive as long as his works are in the hands of those who will read them.

References

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