

Protecting Folk Culture in a Workers' Society: Hungarian Vernacular Heritage Protection under State Socialism

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SUMMARY

Even though vernacular culture of Hungary through its authentic rural settlements, their inhabitants and lifestyle, were dramatically transformed during the Cold War period, their representation and memories were highly valued. During the socialist period (between World War II and 1989) vernacular heritage, including applied art and intangible heritage elements, was a significant part of state propaganda and a useful tool for universalizing minority policy. This paper explores the diverse effects and actors influencing the formation and role of the heritagization process of Hungarian vernacular culture between 1960 and 1989. The research period is discussed from different perspectives including historically, sociologically, from a cultural heritage point of view, as well as in international relations and with regard to the ideological context of the subject and its location, Hungary. Such plurality also alludes to the numerous circumstances that influenced the researched process. The paper investigates how the Hungarian understanding of vernacular culture was transformed by various actors under state socialism in order for it to be ideologically acceptable for the ruling power and to protect it at a time when attempts were being made to eliminate it.

KEYWORDS: vernacular heritage, socialist period, Hungary, ethnography, monument protection

* This article is dedicated to the memory of Eszter B. Gantner (1971–2019), whose research and attitude towards academic work have inspired me deeply (M. H.-Cs.).

“The cultural policy of our Soviet democracy pays special attention to protecting the historical and artistic reminiscences of the Hungarian past. By doing so, it also eliminates the distractive legacy of fascism that was against people and only seemingly protected the memories of the past.”¹

1 Introduction

There are numerous terms in different disciplines and even languages to name certain aspects of rural culture. Folk, traditional, popular and vernacular are a few of the most frequently mentioned.² The prefix *nép* is used in the Hungarian ethnographical discourse to denote the concept of “folk” in terms such as folk culture, folk architecture or folk tradition and costume. It is differentiated from *népi*, meaning “folkish,” which refers to aspects, events or artefacts of culture that just imitate the above-mentioned ones. The term “popular architecture” is defined as “structures that are built with the help of empirical knowledge and the adaptation of local resources,”³ while “vernacular architecture” is defined as “dwellings or other buildings” that are “customarily owned or community-built.”⁴ This alludes to the fact that the planner, the creator and the user of the heritage object are from the same social unit, different to, for instance, castles that are traditionally built and experienced by different social units.⁵ Vernacular architecture as a monument protection category was defined in Hungary in the early 1950s. The term alluded to those buildings that were built within a defined historical era and functioned

¹ Typescript of the message to the regional management of the country about the thirteenth decree law in 1949 by the National Center of Museums and Monuments, 1950-04-11, in: Magyar Országos Levéltár (MOL) [National Archives of Hungary], Budapest, box XIX-I-19-a 25.

² Hungarian examples in the researched period are, for instance, ÉVA PÓCS: A népi gyógyászat és a néphit kutatásának határterületei [Borderlands in the Research of Folk Medicine and Popular Belief], in: Népi gyógyítás Magyarországon (1979), 11–12, pp. 61–77, and after the period under research here JUDIT IMRŐ: Húsvéti népszokások és hímes tojások Somogyban [Easter Folk Customs and Painted Easter Eggs in Somogy], in: Somogyi Múzeumok Közleményei. C: Társadalomtudományok 17 (2006), pp. 39–55. For the international “heritage” term see JOHN M. COGGESHALL, JO A. NAST: Vernacular Architecture in Southern Illinois: The Ethnic Heritage, Carbondale 1988, for the researched period, and: International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS): Charter on the Built Vernacular Heritage (1999), URL: https://www.icomos.org/images/DOCUMENTS/Charters/vernacular_e.pdf (2018-12-22), for the period afterwards.

³ CARLOS L. FLORES: Arquitectura Popular Española [Vernacular Architecture in Spain], vol. II, Madrid 1973.

⁴ PAUL OLIVER (ed.): Encyclopedia of Vernacular Architecture of the World, Cambridge 1997.

⁵ ANDRÁS ROMÁN: 487 bekezdés és 617 kép a műemlékvédelemről [487 Paragraphs and 617 Images about Monument Protection], Budapest 2004, pp. 76–77.

as the home of the owner and/or his or her family members and accommodated their property (such as animals and equipment). The owners were members of the local society who lived in villages or market towns and worked in food processing and manufacturing. The architecture of these dwellings reflected the technological level of the time period, the tastes and practices of the community as well as the building forms and structures that characterized the given region. Accordingly, the term “vernacular architecture” incorporated historical, ethnographical, technical and architectural meanings.⁶

The fact that vernacular culture became a heritage term points to its transformation and its threatened state, as both its tangible and the intangible aspects (such as skills and traditions) were losing their former status. The risk associated with vernacular heritage, along with the possible loss of cultural identity⁷, is based on the disadvantageous connotations of vernacular architecture and lifestyle due to material and aesthetic changes and constant modernizing efforts.⁸ Vernacular culture as heritage has assigned values as well, such as “skill transfer, apprenticeship, community participation and improved sustainability.” However one should not see vernacular heritage as a threatened set of values, but rather as “a continuous and dialectic interplay of status and change, precedent and creativity, stability and innovation.”⁹ This understanding points to the flexibility of vernacular heritage, which is its capability to adapt to contemporary needs and circumstances while keeping its historical, cultural and social embeddedness.

Vernacular culture has been the subject of numerous research projects for decades. There are studies that explore the topic with a sense of nostalgia, seeing, for instance, vernacular architecture as a “more innocent, natural or spontaneous, and therefore truer” realization of housing than its later counterparts.¹⁰ Other publications and research projects look at the cultural context of specific examples of vernacular architecture and analyze how its sustainable

⁶ LÁSZLÓ VARGHA: A népi építészet fogalomköre, a néprajzi jellegű építészeti alkotások meghatározása és értékelése [Definition, Evaluation and Description of Vernacular Architectures and Built Examples], in: *Ház és ember* 1 (1980), pp. 153–156, here p. 154.

⁷ FRANCO FRESCURA: Rural Shelter in Southern Africa, Johannesburg 1981, and JOYCE LEWINGER MOOCK: Introduction, in: EADEM, ROBERT E. RHOADES (eds.): *Diversity, Farmer Knowledge, and Sustainability*, Ithaca—London 1992, pp. 1–10, here p. 5.

⁸ ROBERT MAXWELL: *Polemics: The Two Way Stretch: Modernism, Tradition and Innovation*, London 1996.

⁹ COLLEEN A. STEENKAMP, KYLE WHITFIELD: Community Participation to Lead Social Upliftment as a Solution to South African Low-Cost Housing Developments, in: 12th International Housing and Home Warranty Conference, Cape Town 2011, pp. 72–76, here p. 74.

¹⁰ DELL UPTON: Outside the Academy: A Century of Vernacular Architecture Studies, 1890–1990, in: ELISABETH B. MACDOUGALL (ed.): *The Architectural Historian in America*, Washington, DC 1990, pp. 199–213, here p. 200.

features can be adapted to present-day circumstances.¹¹ Meanwhile, the environmental consciousness and energy efficiency of vernacular culture have become more and more acknowledged and valued across a range of disciplines and by a number of policy makers too.¹² Today, architects are even investigating the methods and technologies of vernacular architecture, for example by looking at climate, physical circumstances, adapted materials, created forms and planned orientation.¹³ However, there has never been a clear copy-and-paste approach, as the new social, economic and cultural circumstances and possibilities require new arrangements and features to be developed into a modified version of the learnt examples.

There are researchers who look at vernacular examples as cultural expressions¹⁴, sources to aid in understanding the cultural identity of a specific segment of society. Accordingly, traditions and skills as well as the ways in which they are taught have become subjects of research too.¹⁵ For instance, in Hungary researchers (ethnographers and sociologists as well) have looked at home industry and handicraft activities that were based on traditionally acquired knowledge and practices and continued to be applied even in the collectivized structures. Work has also been done to find, document and adapt the “original source,” which tends to ensure authenticity.¹⁶ This paper investigates how the Hungarian understanding of vernacular culture was transformed by diverse actors under state socialism in order for it to be ideologically acceptable for the ruling power and to protect it at a time when efforts were being made to eliminate it. Such analysis can be seen not only as a historical investigation or an interdisciplinary approach to a particular historical phenomenon, but it could also be an example for future investigations into the adaptation of other concepts by multiple actors and under different or similar circumstances.

Accordingly, I discuss the heritagization process of vernacular culture in Hungary between 1960 and 1989, taking into consideration the historical, social and political preconditions and background. I chose this time period as

¹¹ LINDSAY ASQUITH, MARCEL VELLINGA (eds.): *Vernacular Architecture in the Twenty-First Century: Theory, Education and Practice*, Milton Park 2006.

¹² PAUL OLIVER: *Dwellings—The Vernacular House Worldwide*, New York 2003.

¹³ For instance, ANDRÁS KRIZSÁN: *A Balaton-felvidék tájba simuló népi építészet [Vernacular Architecture Fitting in the Landscape of the Balaton Highlands]*, Budapest 2010.

¹⁴ AMOS RAPOPORT: *Cross-Cultural Studies and Urban Form*, College Park 1993.

¹⁵ PAUL FREY: *Learning from the Vernacular: Towards a New Vernacular Architecture*, Lausanne 2010, and BERNARD RUDOFISKY: *Architecture without Architects: A Short Introduction to Non-Pedigreed Architecture: Exhibition Catalogue*, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), Albuquerque 1990.

¹⁶ MIKLÓS SZILÁGYI: *A népi iparművészet és a néprajzi muzeológia [The Vernacular Applied Art and its Museology]*, in: *Ház és ember* 15 (2002), pp. 291–300, here p. 291.

there was a statewide specialized institutional system¹⁷ in place and most of the steps and policies relating to their protection were able to be realized. I analyze in particular those academic fields and their activities that focused on the disappearing vernacular culture. The paper pays attention both to the tangible and intangible heritagization aspects of the topic. With this aim, I take a closer look at the role of the two major academic fields: ethnography (including the connecting sociological research) and monument protection. Special attention is paid to the investigation of international relations and ideological influences that may have affected the Hungarian vernacular heritage management.¹⁸

For such an interdisciplinary investigation diverse sources have to be used. The realized top-down decisions and management processes within the given legal and institutional framework were investigated as well as some specific case studies. Information about the history of the relevant institutions and contemporary publications were also both the subject of this research. Some of the conservation approaches and professional forums are still operating, and have provided relevant data for the study. After analyzing the chosen period through the publications, research and social impact, as well as political relations, the paper concludes that vernacular heritage management was able to be realized within a political ideological framework that was aligned with a gradually more flexible but still undemocratic political system.

2 Vernacular Culture in Hungary after World War II

After World War II, the vernacular culture of Hungary became a scarce resource mainly due to the systematic measures of the Hungarian Workers' Party. The top-down and extensively realized transformation of the country's employment character (from agricultural to heavy industrial¹⁹) as well as the "financial unification" of the society²⁰ defined the role of vernacular culture. Among others, three major approaches were taken to reach this transforma-

¹⁷ FERENC MERÉNYI: A magyar műemlékvédelem száz esztendeje [100 Years of Hungarian Monument Protection], in: *Építés-Építészettudomány* (1972), 1–2, pp. 3–49.

¹⁸ Providing an entire overview of international relations in the researched period (1960–1989) would have been impossible given the length of this publication and its deliberate focus on one country and not on a subnational perspective. Therefore, only some of the most relevant international connections between academics and practitioners in the given fields are discussed in this paper.

¹⁹ TAMÁS VALUCH: *A hagyományos világ alkonya* [The Twilight of Traditional Life], Budapest 1988.

²⁰ PÉTER SZUHAY: *Az életmód változása a magyarországi falvakban* [Transformation of Lifestyle in Hungarian Villages], in: ISTVÁN OROSZ, LAJOS FÜR et al. (eds.): *Magyarország agrártörténete*, Budapest 1996, pp. 705–723.

tion: the rearrangement of landownership; the collectivization of agricultural work; and “modernization of methods and equipment.”²¹

The growing number of small landowners unquestionably led to a sudden and rapid increase of construction, because many of the new landowners had no buildings on their newly defined small-sized properties. New settlements were also created out of farmsteads or built next to the new industrial plants.²² The former vernacular architecture was seen as a remnant of the overthrown systems, such as feudalism and capitalism, and for many it was not seen as ideal even to protect. New types of houses were introduced that were supposed to ensure a better and modern lifestyle.²³ This process also became centrally governed as bank loans were offered to those who chose to build from one of sixteen building plans.²⁴ The nation-wide spread of this new architecture, which did not have any historical or regional character, did not just outshine traditional styles, but ruined the settlement structures as well.²⁵

In these new socialist villages residential, industrial and agricultural areas were kept separate. While the old manors were built in a much more spacious style, blending into the landscape with yards that were either half or completely open in layout, the farmyards of modern agriculture were much more crowded.²⁶ The lack of both central support and roles in local or regional infrastructure pushed local leaders to attempt to get their settlements raised to the status of cities regardless of the actual size, lifestyle or infrastructural circumstances.²⁷ For this reason, extensive agricultural activities were carried

²¹ IMRE KOVÁCH: A Magyar társadalom “parasztalanítása”—európai összehasonlításban [The “De-Peasantization” of Hungarian Society in a European Context], in: Századvég (2003), 2 (28), pp. 41–67.

²² JENŐ RADOS: A magyar műemlékvédelem néhány tudományos, művészeti és gazdasági kérdése [Some Scientific, Artistic and Economic Questions Relating to Hungarian Monument Protection], in: ANTAL REISCHL, MIHÁLY GYALAI (eds.): Az Építőipari és Közlekedési Műszaki Egyetem tudományos ülészakának előadásai 11–12.11.1955, Budapest 1957, pp. 385–393.

²³ ENDRE PRAKFAI: Az építészet sajátosságai Magyarországon 1945–1959 között [The Peculiarities of Architecture in Hungary between 1945 and 1959], in: Műemlékvédelem 43 (1999), pp. 272–277, here p. 273.

²⁴ IDEM: Háztűznéző: Epizódok a házhomlokzat díszítés XX. századi történetéből, különös tekintettel az úgynevezett kockaházakra [Visitation: Periods in the History of Facade Decoration of the Twentieth Century, Especially in the Case of Rectangular Houses in the Countryside], in: Műemlékvédelem 5 (2015), pp. 285–301.

²⁵ MÁTÉ MAJOR: Az építészet új világa [The New World of Architecture], Budapest 1969, pp. 134–139.

²⁶ ENDRE KOTSIS: Mezőgazdasági építészet [Agricultural Architecture], Budapest 1954, p. 252.

²⁷ GÁBOR VÁGI: Versengés a fejlesztési forrásokért [The Race for Development Funds], Budapest 1982, pp. 20–25.

out in the new cities and even in the suburbs of the traditional ones.²⁸ As a result, the strong and complex traditional network system of the vernacular communities was rearranged. Individuals as well as communities and their lifestyles and traditions were threatened. Often, the introduction of the new system was carried out using threat and humiliation, which made not just the result but also the process radical.²⁹ As a consequence, the independence of the whole segment of the society was minimized, and even the vernacular value system started to become disorganized and disappear.³⁰

The changes and transformations of the above-mentioned processes happened due to certain political and economic contexts³¹, such as the changing balance between the state and the private sphere in the provision system.³² For instance, in the last quarter of the twentieth century, the Hungarian leadership allowed collective farmers to take on extra economic activities for personal aims, and the social-support system was partly modified as well.³³ These private household economies, which put extra workload on the people, were often tools for survival, as the collectivized farms could not provide the basic necessities.³⁴ Accordingly, living standards in many rural areas improved considerably at that time, which led to extensive differentiation between local communities. By the 1970s, this system of state and household economies had been legally ratified (with the “New Economic Mechanism” of 1968). Moreover, huge segments of the population, who were already working in the industrial sector, returned partially (in their free time) to certain agricultural

²⁸ GYÖRGY KONRÁD, IVÁN SZELÉNYI: A késleltetett városfejlesztés társadalmi konfliktusai [Social Conflicts Due to Belated Urban Development], in: *Valóság* 14 (1971), 12, pp. 19–35.

²⁹ The effect of aggressive collectivization was even defined as a specific type of mental illness that can be translated as “kolkhoz neurosis.” PÁL JUHÁSZ: A falusi betegek neurosisának kórokai [Reasons Behind the Neurological Illnesses of the Peasants], in: *Ideggyógyászati Szemle* 2 (1964), pp. 37–44.

³⁰ BERNADETT CSURGÓ: Vidékképek a politikában a parlamenti beszédek tükrében [Images of the Countryside in Politics through Parliamentary Speeches], in: ZSOLT BODA, IMRE KOVÁCH et al. (eds.): *Fiatal kutatók elitekről, kampányokról, vidék imázsokról: Mikroelemzések politikai jelenségekről*, Budapest 2007, pp. 90–103.

³¹ DAVID CLAPHAM: Privatization and the East European Housing Model, in: *Urban Studies* 32 (1995), 4–5, pp. 679–694, here pp. 680–681.

³² JÓZSEF HEGEDŰS, IVÁN TOSICS: Housing in Transition, in: PAUL BALCHIN (ed.): *Housing Policy in Europe*, London 1996, pp. 244–272.

³³ JÓZSEF Ö. KOVÁCS: The Forced Collectivization of Agriculture in Hungary 1948–1961, in: CONSTANTIN IORDACHI, ARND BAUERKÄMPER (eds.): *The Collectivization of Agriculture in Communist Eastern Europe: Comparison and Entanglements*, Budapest 2014, pp. 211–248, here pp. 236–238.

³⁴ TIBOR VALUCH: *Hétköznapi élet Kádár János korában* [Everyday Life in the Era of János Kádár], Budapest 2006, p. 118.

activities in order to earn the allowed extra personal income.³⁵ As a consequence, lifestyles and living standards became more homogenized in Hungary and the traditional rural social communities and activities began to disappear.³⁶ In the 1970s there was a huge economic crisis. Financial shortages blocked major protection projects as well as ongoing construction. This posed a particular threat in the case of vernacular heritage elements. The tangible elements of vernacular culture are more fragile due to their materials and neglect. Thus, it was not just the related lifestyle (of the owners and users) that faded away, but also the technical, material and structural deterioration of the vernacular culture was faster.³⁷

A new political approach towards culture and academia, which can be simplified in the famous quote “those who are not against us are with us,”³⁸ influenced the possibilities and options of those scholars and practitioners who focused on vernacular heritage as well. Moreover, the new approach from the early 1970s saw national tradition as a “fundamental building block of socialist patriotism”³⁹ and accepted the country’s national minorities by allowing their rights to practice their language and culture.⁴⁰ Accordingly, it became much easier to hold discussions about settlements and the tangible heritage of non-worker social units or about the traditions of minorities. Moreover, monument protection and ethnographic research became a tool in the eyes of the political leadership to increase its international status.⁴¹ That led to the ratification of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention in 1985—Hungary was among the first European countries of the Eastern Bloc⁴² to do this—and

³⁵ GYÖRGY ENYEDI: Az urbanizációs ciklus és a magyar településhálózat átalakulása [The Urbanization Cycle and the Transformation of the Hungarian Urban Network], Budapest 1984, pp. 20–22.

³⁶ PÉTER SZUHAY: A magyarországi parasztság életmódjának változása 1945-től napjainkig [Lifestyle Transformation of the Hungarian Peasantry from 1945 until Today], in: LÁSZLÓ VERES, GYULA VIGA (eds.): Herman Ottó Múzeum Évkönyve XXXII, Miskolc 1994, pp. 345–371.

³⁷ JÁNOS SZÁSZ, JÁNOS SZIGETVÁRI: Népi építészetünk nyomában [The Pursuit of Our Vernacular Architecture], Budapest 1976.

³⁸ GÁBOR GARAI (ed.): A Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt IX. kongresszusa [9th Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party], Budapest 1966, pp. 121–150.

³⁹ MSZMP Kultúrpolitikai Munkaközösség: A szocialista hazafiság és a proletár internacionalizmus időszerű kérdései [Foreign Policy Working Group of Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party: Contemporary Questions of Socialist Patriotism and Proletarian Internationalism], in: Társadalmi Szemle 10 (1974), pp. 32–47, here p. 40.

⁴⁰ 1972. évi I. tv. az 1949. évi XX. törvény módosításáról és a Magyar Népköztársaság Alkotmányának egységes szövegéről szóló 1972. évi I. törvény [Law I from 1972 Regarding the Modification of the Law XX from 1949 and Other Regulations Regarding the Constitution], in: Magyar Közlöny 150 (2009), pp. 38676–38685.

⁴¹ JÁNOS RAINER M.: Magyarország és a világ [Hungary and the World], in: IDEM: A Kádár-korszak 1956–1989, Budapest 2010, pp. 68–74.

⁴² After Bulgaria, Poland and Finland, see on the UNESCO website: States Parties Ratification Status, URL: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/> (2019-03-05).

numerous prestigious international meetings and cooperation could take place there (such as the 3rd general assembly of ICOMOS, one of the Advisory Bodies of UNESCO World Heritage Committee, which was held in 1972 with approximately 400 participants).⁴³ Similarly, this move ensured more intensive international relations between professionals and researchers with Western and Eastern parts of Europe.

At the same time, flourishing national and international tourism also guided attention to the heritage values of the countryside.⁴⁴ Similar to those of other Eastern European countries, Hungary's "back-to-the-roots" initiatives proposed a rediscovery of the history and culture of the countryside. Authentic folk culture was very popular, especially among university students and young adults.⁴⁵ During the 1960s and 1970s, within the framework of inland tourism, paid rural tourism and hospitality were arranged by tourist offices without civil or community background.⁴⁶ During these initial decades, infrastructural investments generally did not keep up with or pay attention to the expansion of holiday camps and the increase of tourist traffic, which could cause harm as well.⁴⁷

3 Research and Protection of the Hungarian Vernacular Culture between 1960 and 1989

Vernacular heritage did not disappear completely due to the extensive (within the limitations of an ideologically driven country) protection of the remaining buildings with their modified functions, documentation of the associated social group's lifestyle and the popularization of the original practices and traditions. The 13th decree-law in 1949 established a legal basis for defining examples of vernacular architecture as monuments.⁴⁸ Before the formation of a nation-wide institutional system, local preservation tasks were carried out as

⁴³ ANDRÁS ROMÁN: Az ICOMOS III. közgyűlése és kollokviuma [The 3rd General Assembly of ICOMOS], in: Magyar Műemlékvédelem (1971–1972), pp. 385–401.

⁴⁴ See for instance KRISZTINA SLACHTA: Két világ határán: A Magyar idegenforgalom az 1970-es években [At the Border of Two Worlds: The Hungarian Tourism Industry in the 1970s], in: Múltunk—Politikatörténeti Folyóirat 4 (2016), pp. 85–112.

⁴⁵ PHILIPP HERZOG: "National in Form and Socialist in Content" or Rather "Socialist in Form and National in Content"? The Amateur Art System and the Cultivation of Folk Art in Soviet Estonia, in: Narodna umjetnost: Hrvatski časopis za etnologiju i folkloristiku 47 (2010), 1, pp. 115–140.

⁴⁶ DEZSŐ KOVÁCS: Falusi turizmus Magyarországon—kérdések és dilemmák [Vernacular Tourism in Hungary—Questions and Dilemmas], in: Területi statisztika 55 (2015), 6, pp. 592–613.

⁴⁷ KATALIN MARTON-ERDŐS, ZSUZSANNA SZILÁGYI: Landscape and Settlement Forming Impacts of Tourism, in: PÉTER CSORBA (ed.): Landscapes under the European Transformation: Materials of an Intensive Seminar Project, Debrecen 2003, pp. 145–190.

⁴⁸ ROMÁN, 487 bekezdés (as in footnote 5), p. 29.

public works.⁴⁹ In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the situation was optimized, and monument protection became the work of an independent institutional unit—not of a department of existing ministries or offices (for instance together with museums). The head of the state wide monument protection inspectorate, Ferenc Merényi, said in his ceremonial speech: “The assurance of legal, institutional, financial, human and tangible possibilities led to the result that today the Hungarian institute for monument protection is (in terms of its status and structure) capable of realizing complex and challenging projects that promote socialism within the economic and social environment. The inspectorate form [of the institute] provides a basis for uniting and controlling the entire monument collection [of the country].”⁵⁰ Unlike in other neighboring countries, in Hungary the new institution came under the Ministry of Construction, hence professionals were able to see projects through from realizing the need to the accomplishment of the building process. The first comprehensive vernacular architecture protection project was completed in 1962 in Nagyvázsony.⁵¹

In contrast, ethnography experienced harmful influences in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War due to the political and ideological change. Earlier, nationalistic ideology had been expected from academia and its representatives. There had been many overarching notions that led vernacular culture to become a part of national identity and pride. For instance, Hungarian folk culture was defined differently, hence it was seen as both unique—compared to the surrounding (Slavic) cultures—and very rich, especially if one takes into account the size of the country and its population.⁵² These general ideas show that the idealistic notion that had existed (before the war) was connected to and emphasized by scholars and practitioners in almost all fields of vernacular heritage.

After the Second World War, the transformation of the museum and research institute system as well as the expected ideological turn almost froze the field.⁵³ Top-down and immediate change was promoted through publica-

⁴⁹ LÁSZLÓ GERŐ: Építészeti felfogásunk alakulása tíz év műemléki gyakorlatában [Our Architectural Thinking throughout a Decade of Monument Protection Practice], in: *Műemlékvédelem* 3 (1959), 1, pp. 1–11, here p. 2.

⁵⁰ GÉZA BARCZA: Az intézményes magyar műemlékvédelem [Institutionalized Hungarian Monument Protection], in: IDEM (ed.): *Az Egri Nyári Egyetem előadásai*, Eger 1973, pp. 7–23, here p. 22.

⁵¹ DEZSŐ DERCSÉNYI: Tíz év magyar műemlékvédelme [Ten Years of Hungarian Monument Protection], in: IDEM, GÉZA ENTZ et al. (eds.): *Magyar Műemlékvédelem 1949–1959*, Budapest 1960 (*Országos Műemléki Felügyelőség Kiadványai*, 1), pp. 9–38, here p. 10.

⁵² JÓZSEF BAKOS, GYULA KERÉNYI: *Útmutató a népi énekes-táncos gyermekjátékok gyűjtéséhez* [A Guide to Collecting Children’s Folksong and Folkdance Plays], Budapest 1953, p. 5.

⁵³ GYULA ORTUTAY: A magyar néprajztudomány elvi kérdései [Theoretical Questions Relating to Hungarian Ethnography], in: *Ethnographia* 60 (1949), pp. 1–24.

tions (such as the *Soviet Ethnography* series), defined research topics (socialist transformation of agricultural work; the changing peasant life due to the increased industrialization as well as urban ethnography and the research of the workers' lifestyle⁵⁴) and even determined results. Only one-sided documentation about the positive outcomes of the recent changes got to be published.⁵⁵ A kind of less direct political influence was able to be arranged through the establishment of the independent Ethnography Institute from the Ethnographical Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1967. Despite the politically and ideologically defined climate, the Ethnography Institute was able to provide a safe working environment and protection for the "not-preferred" or even "denied" researchers, who could continue the work and approaches of the previous outstanding experts such as Zoltán Kodály and István Györffy. Györffy is named as one of the founding members of Hungarian Ethnography by being not just an ethnographer but also the first professor of that discipline. Kodály was an outstanding composer and ethnomusicologist as well and served as the director of the Ethnographical Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences between 1953 and 1967. One of the most outstanding collective works, the *Ethnography Encyclopedia*, which was begun in 1969, and the establishment of the national open air museum in Szentendre⁵⁶ were two initiatives that had resulted from the improved conditions.

The first nation-wide vernacular architecture protection program was initiated in 1974, mainly targeting homes (not industrial or agricultural buildings) that represented regional architectural characteristics and were in good condition. The national program incorporated 170 buildings, increasing the list of comprehensively protected vernacular monuments to 200.⁵⁷ On a national level, this number showed clearly how little of Hungary's vernacular architecture remained in good shape and could be protected. This was a race against time, as János Tóth stressed out in 1964: "The constantly accelerating industrial and agricultural improvement makes it necessary to also accelerate

⁵⁴ LINDA DÉGH: A munkásság néprajzi kutatása [Ethnographical Research of the Workers], in: A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Társadalmi-Történeti Tudományok Osztályának Közleményei II., Budapest 1952, pp. 283–323.

⁵⁵ KLÁRA CSILLÉRY K.: A népművészet változása a XIX. században és a XX. században [The Change in Ethnography in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries], in: *Ethnographia* 88 (1977), pp. 14–30.

⁵⁶ EADEM: A Szabadtéri Néprajzi Múzeum kialakulásának előtörténete [Prehistory of the Establishment of the Open-Air Ethnographic Museum], in: *Ház és Ember* 1 (1980), pp. 9–33.

⁵⁷ JUDIT TAMÁS (ed.): Műemlékvédelem törvényi keretek között (törvénytől törvényig): Történetek az intézményes műemlékvédelem 120 évéből [Monument Protection in the Legal System (from Act to Act): Stories from 120 Years of Institutionalized Monument Protection], Budapest 2001, p. 113.

research and increase the management of human resources.”⁵⁸ Ethnographers experienced a similar urge as well: “Without bias I can say that it is the ethnographer who is concerned about the scarcity of the old village. This is the profession that documents the constant disappearance of (even) the resources and of the knowledge for its sustainability.”⁵⁹

Research and protection of vernacular heritage examples was and is an interdisciplinary and cooperative task. In the case of fieldwork in a village or other small settlement, a team comprising an ethnographer, art historian, architect, archeologist and others was (and still is) required to understand, document, preserve and protect the given example. Similarly, in scientific discourse, an interdisciplinary approach was (and is) crucial. For example, at a conference in 1983, Tamás Hofer emphasized the interconnectedness of ethnography, historiography and cultural anthropology.⁶⁰ Professionals conducted serious archival research and thorough analysis of the available cartography materials and maps too in order to see their subject in a wider historical context.⁶¹ Moreover, this was the time (between 1954 and 1989) when Hungarian ethnographers completed the “Atlas of the Hungarian Ethnography,” one of the major works in the field.⁶² Hungarian professionals did not want to complement or rebuild archaic monuments; instead they intended to sustain their contemporary status (formulated throughout the history). Similarly, traditions and intangible heritage elements were documented in their current state including any possible influences and diversity. For instance, László Lajtha’s folk music collection⁶³ present insights into the private lives and practices of the inhabitants of villages and smaller settlements. His documents represent the pre-communist cultural heritage, which could be seen as a kind of critical perspective on the contemporary leading top-down ideology

⁵⁸ JÁNOS TÓTH: Népi műemlékek vizsgálata [Research of Vernacular Monuments], in: DESZÓ DERCSÉNYI, GÉZA ENTZ et al. (eds.): Magyar Műemlékvédelem 1959–1960, Budapest 1964 (Országos Műemléki Felügyelőség Kiadványai, 2), pp. 207–214, here p. 214.

⁵⁹ TAMÁS HOFFMANN: A tudomány forrásai-e a múzeumok néprajzi gyűjteményei [Are the Ethnography Collections of the Museums Sources of Science?], in: Néprajzi Értesítő 51 (1968), pp. 5–14, here p. 7.

⁶⁰ TAMÁS HOFER (ed.): Történeti antropológia: Az 1983. április 18–19-én tartott tudományos ülészek előadásai [Historical Anthropology: Presentations of the Scientific Meeting on 18–19 April 1983], Budapest 1984.

⁶¹ TÓTH (as in footnote 58), p. 214.

⁶² JENŐ BARABÁS: A Magyar Néprajzi Atlasz helye és jelentősége az európai etnológiai vizsgálatokban [The Position and Relevance of the Hungarian Ethnographic Atlas in European Ethnography Research], in: Az MTA Nyelv- és Irodalomtudományi Osztályának Közleményei 24 (1967), pp. 117–133.

⁶³ His collection is available and researchable at the Hungarian Heritage House in Budapest, URL: <http://lajtha.hagyományokhaza.hu/index.php?menu=796> (2020-05-16).

by showing its non-state-supported values.⁶⁴ Documenting traditions and community activities, his work shows that the vernacular society was not homogenous, but was made up of different groups based on, among other factors, financial status and personal capabilities.

Protection of vernacular heritage increased workload and the need for financial support⁶⁵ “as the owners cannot be forced to maintain the old buildings or architectural features”⁶⁶ or the traditional equipment and costumes. Accordingly, employee numbers were increased, especially at the institutions outside the capital.⁶⁷ Due to the political and policy circumstances of that period, the State first had to buy the tangible vernacular cultural heritage elements in order to be able to protect them by evaluating them as monuments or incorporating them into museum collections. Besides purchase, another method was to provide extensive financial support and instructions for the owners. The support varied from a yearly maintenance fee to a one-off payment for reconstruction that was a significantly higher amount.⁶⁸ Accordingly, sustainable maintenance was often not supported.⁶⁹ In many cases, this led to inappropriate, belated or partial protection work, as there was also a lack of human resources and finance to compensate the necessary, highly-skilled specialists.⁷⁰ Such circumstances led to a kind of selectivity, which did not support the ideological aim of striving for holistic social change or focus on settlement structure protection, but was instead centered around certain creative individuals.⁷¹

⁶⁴ BALÁZS BALOGH, ÁGNES FÜLEMILE: Cultural Alternatives, Youth and Grassroots Resistance in Socialist Hungary—The Folk Dance and Music Revival, in: *Hungarian Studies* 22 (2008), 1–2, pp. 43–62, here p. 44.

⁶⁵ ISTVÁN TILINGER: A magyar műemlékvédelem jellegzetességei [Features of Hungarian Monument Protection], in: GÉZA BARCZA (ed.): *Az Egri Nyári Egyetem előadásai*, Budapest 1978, pp. 19–26.

⁶⁶ Attachment entitled “A népi műemlékvédelem elvi és gyakorlati kérdései” [Theoretical and Practical Questions regarding Vernacular Monument Protection] to the typescript of the management meeting of the National Center of Museums and Monuments that took place on 1952-05-30, in: MOL, box XIX-I-19-b 2/a.

⁶⁷ ATTILA SELMECZI KOVÁCS, LÁSZLÓ SZABÓ (eds.): *Néprajz a Magyar múzeumokban* [Ethnography in Hungarian Museums], Budapest 1989.

⁶⁸ GÉZA BARCZA: *Műemlékeink hatósági felügyelete* [Official Supervision of Our Monuments], in: IDEM (ed.): *Az Egri Nyári Egyetem előadásai*, Budapest 1977, pp. 25–35.

⁶⁹ This opposition is expressed with the same interpretation of monuments as valuable parts of the state economy in: Proposal by the Construction Committee to the Cabinet about monument protection, 1953-06-26, in: MOL, box XIX-I-3-j 6.

⁷⁰ LÁSZLÓ GERŐ, ISTVÁN KISLÉGHY: *Műemlékeink helyzete* [The State of Our Monuments], in: *Magyar építőművészet* 5 (1956), 9, pp. 288–289, here p. 289.

⁷¹ ANDRÁS ROMÁN: *A műemlék-lakóházak problémái* [Problems Regarding Apartment Houses that are also Considered as Monuments], in: DEZSŐ DERCSÉNYI, GÉZA ENTZ et al. (eds.): *Magyar műemlékvédelem 1969–1970*, Budapest 1972 (Országos Műemléki Felügyelőség Kiadványai, 6), pp. 315–329.

Another typical method of protecting vernacular culture in the researched period was functional change, whereby vernacular monuments were turned into museums of the particular settlement or the region. There were two major types: regional houses and skanzens (open air museums). Similarly, moveable tangible elements that were objects of ethnographical research were also culturalized by means of extensive documentation and museumization.⁷² Regional houses served as local museums and cultural centers for both local and visiting communities. These buildings, themselves examples of vernacular monuments, remained on their original sites and housed exclusively local design and interior elements, everyday life objects and costumes.⁷³ On the other hand, most open air museums had a wider territory to cover with their collections, namely, entire regions or, in case of Szentendre Skanzen, the whole country.⁷⁴ Improvements could be implemented both in the documentation and display of the newly museumized objects as well. Due to the advanced financial and human resources at these rural cultural institutions, networks of local and regional research communities were able to form.⁷⁵

Though there is evidence that Hungarian vernacular culture underwent functional change during the socialist period, both built and intangible aspects of this culture were destroyed so systematically that it was not possible to successfully or exclusively instrumentalize the remaining examples. The survival of vernacular culture was ensured by a public movement, as well, that emphasized yet another aspect of it⁷⁶, namely, that not just research, but any kind of folk art activities could be seen as heritage management and as intercultural manifestations too. This civic initiative provided alternative forms of cultural life and youth culture as well as channels for expressing critical opinions.⁷⁷ Moreover, there were (and still are) literary personalities (such as poets and authors) who turned to vernacular culture for inspiration (regarding

⁷² ALBERT KURUCZ, IVÁN BALASSA M. et al. (eds.): Szabadtéri néprajzi múzeumok Magyarországon [Open Air Museums in Hungary], Budapest 1987.

⁷³ BÉLA SISA: Népi műemlékvédelem 1980–1990 [Vernacular Monument Protection between 1980 and 1990], in: MIKLÓS HORLER, CSABA LÁSZLÓ (eds.): Magyar Műemlékvédelem: Az Országos Műemlékvédelmi Hivatal Hivatalos Évkönyve (1980–1990) X, Budapest 1996, pp. 279–291.

⁷⁴ The nation-wide open-air museum, which has collected, preserved, researched and promoted Hungarian vernacular culture in Szentendre, near to the capital, was established during the 1960s.

⁷⁵ KLÁRA GAZDA: Gyermekvilág Esztelneken (néprajzi tanulmány) [Children's World in Esztelnek (Folklore Research)], Bukarest 1980.

⁷⁶ BENJAMIN FOREST, JULIET JOHNSON: Monumental Politics: Regime Type and Public Memory in Post-Communist States, in: *Post-Soviet Affairs* 27 (2011), 3, pp. 269–288.

⁷⁷ JÓZSEF ZELNIK: Nomád nemzedék negyven év után [Nomadic Generation after 40 Years], in: *Ökotáj* 43 (2012), URL: <http://www.okotaj.hu/szamok/43/ot43-02.htm> (2019-03-05). See also BARBARA VINCZE: A táncoló ellenállás világgá megy [The Dancing Opposition Goes Abroad], in: *Origo* from 2011-12-08, URL: www.origo.hu/kultura/20111207-a-magyar-tanchaz-az-unescoelismere-utan.html (2019-03-05).

subject matter, genre, style etc.).⁷⁸ Many of their works expressed views on contemporary social transformations (regarding the country's employment character (from agricultural to heavy industrial) that might have been problematic to address directly or from an academic analytical perspective.⁷⁹ By positioning vernacular culture and its related human aspects within the literary agenda, these became part of the readers' awareness as well. Even though, in most cases, there was no conscious resistance or offensive intention behind either these activities or the ethnographic research, the topics, interests and values they explored or promoted often had an aim that ran in opposition to that of the leadership of the country.⁸⁰

4 Ideological Support of Vernacular Architecture and International Influences between 1960 and 1989

Through vernacular heritage, politically approved values such as community and simplicity, which were initiated and promoted by the government with a top-down approach, could be experienced and practiced. Clichés about the rural lifestyle such as being healthy and strong or working hard were well-suited to the contemporary political propaganda. That is the reason why, with certain limitations, it was possible to academically and professionally protect the disappearing social unit and its lifestyle. However, reminders of the past were also allusions to previous ideological or social systems (like feudalism) and promoting them might have led to contradiction. József Révai⁸¹, Minister of Public Education at the beginning of the 1950s, solved this possible paradox by emphasizing the fact that every monument symbolizes the creativity of the public. This notion spread in many forums such as in the *Múzeumi Híradó* (Museum News): "The artistic and historical memories were realized by

⁷⁸ For instance, ISTVÁN FRIED: A délszláv népköltészet recepciója a magyar irodalomban Kazinczytól Jókaiig [Reception of South Slavic Folk Poetry in Hungarian Literature from Kazinczy to Jókai], Budapest 1979.

⁷⁹ PÁL JUHÁSZ: Korrajz vagy ítélet? Esszé Zsille Zoltán: Egy önhit életrajza (1956–1980) című művéről [Is it a Description about the Period or a Judgement? Essay about Zoltan Zsille's Work Entitled "Biography of a Self-believer" (1956–1980)], in: Szivárvány 6 (1986), 18, pp. 103–105.

⁸⁰ On the debate as to whether vernacular culture was a counter or subculture see GÁBOR KLANICZAY: Gondolatok a népi kultúra, a szubkultúra és az ellenkultúra viszonyáról [Thoughts about the Relationship between Vernacular Culture, Sub-Culture and Counter-Culture], in: ÉVA FEKETE (ed.): Múltunk jövője: Szabadelvűek a népi kultúráról, Budapest 1993, pp. 113–121.

⁸¹ He openly and uncritically introduced the Soviet cultural model during his short, but influential ministership until 1953. At the Second Congress of the Hungarian Workers' Party in 1951 he said: "[T]he school master of our new socialist culture [is]: Soviet culture." JÓZSEF RÉVAI: Révai Elvtárs Fölszólalása a Magyar Dolgozók Pártja II. Kongresszusán 1951. Február 26-án [Remarks of Comrade Révai at the 2nd Congress of the Hungarian Workers' Party on 1951-02-26], Budapest 1951, p. 32.

the extensive effort and artistic talent of the working class. Monuments are [...] effective educational tools of the new type of patriotism and the enforcement of the socialist-type national pride.”⁸²

Not just the reinterpreted values of vernacular culture (such as hard work and community) but even (monument) protection began to be advocated as tools to follow the disciplines of the USSR. Many official proposals and contemporary exhibition opening speeches⁸³ claimed it was an explicit aim of the Soviet Union—after the October Revolution and the defeat of fascist Germany—to ensure the protection of past by means of special regulations and decrees. Dezső Dercsényi, an outstanding monument protection specialist and art historian, who held numerous leading positions at various central monument protection institutions during the researched period (1960–1989), referred to this notion in a letter to a mayor, persuading him to support a monument protection project: “The Soviet Union provides example for monument protection, but this is required by socialism, which has a central aim to uphold humanistic and authentic values.”⁸⁴ But the question remained: what could be defined as an authentic value in the case of a highly politicized area of monument protection?⁸⁵ Similarly, it was claimed that the USSR with its Marxist ideology was turning its attention to prehistoric cultures and those communities who still lived according to ancient social codes and relationships in comparison to contemporary societies.⁸⁶

Besides the direct political guidance and as a consequence of the limited possibilities of the researchers and practitioners under socialism, it is important to look at the possible international professional influences as well. Unquestionably, the most influential monument protection achievement of the given period was the Venice Charter (1964), which, immediately after being introduced, was disseminated among Hungarian experts via publications⁸⁷ and at conferences, such as the ones organized by the Architecture History and Theory Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The Charter be-

⁸² LÁSZLÓ GERŐ: Műemlékvédelem társadalmi munkában [Monument Protection Realized Voluntarily], in: Múzeumi Híradó 2 (1951), pp. 37–39, here p. 39.

⁸³ Such as: Műemlék kiállítás tervezett tartalma [Planned Content of the Monument Exhibition], 1951-01-27, in: MOL, box. XIX-I-19-b 2.

⁸⁴ Typescript of Dezső Dercsényi’s letter to Kálmán Pongrácz on 1950-03-06, *ibidem*, box XIX-I-19-a 25.

⁸⁵ GÁBOR PREISICH, ALADÁR SÓS et al. (eds.): Budapest városépítészeti kérdései: Az 1953. november hó 20–21-én tartott ankét anyaga [Questions about the Urban Architecture of Budapest: Materials from the Conference on 20–21 November 1953], Budapest 1954, pp. 93–97.

⁸⁶ FERENC FÜLEP: A Nemzeti Múzeum és a Néprajzi Múzeum tudományos kapcsolatai [Scientific Relations between the National Museum and the Ethnography Museum], in: Néprajzi Értesítő (1973), pp. 24–34, here p. 25.

⁸⁷ For instance, DEZSŐ DERCSÉNYI, MIKLÓS HORLER: Beszámoló az 1964. évi velencei II. Nemzetközi Műemlékvédelmi Kongresszusról [Report about the 2nd Monument Protection Congress in Venice in 1964], in: Műemlékvédelem 4 (1964), pp. 193–217.

came the benchmark for architects working in monument protection (for instance by ensuring that listed/protected architectures continued to be accessible to and used by contemporary society, for example by repurposing vernacular architecture to serve new functions). Hungarian research methodologies and directions reacted belatedly to the folklorist movement of the 1970s.⁸⁸ In the 1980s, the journal *Ethnographia*, edited by Tamás Hofer, began to regularly publish translations of contemporary Western European ethnographic and anthropological research. Only then was the notion imported that the revival of the folk culture in an urban setting can be understood as a conscious mass cultural need⁸⁹ (based on Western European examples such as the research on religious folk traditions that had been done by German-speaking scholars).⁹⁰

It is also important to mention that, after the revitalization of international relations, the connection and the comparison between foreign standards and Hungary's own were not one sided. This can be seen, for instance, in a quote from Mohammed El Fazi, the president of the Executive Board at the 72nd UNESCO meeting in 1966: "Appreciating the outstanding work done by the government of Hungary for the preservation, presentation and continued use of monuments and cultural property."⁹¹ Also, exhibitions about Hungary and curated by Hungarian ethnographers in Paris and other locations can be seen as another sign of this mutuality.⁹² As the political situation eased between Eastern and Western Europe, more and more personal connections and visits could take place. For example, from 1970s, connections with Austrian monument protection experts became regular and intensive (Austrian colleagues were invited to present at Hungarian events⁹³), in part due to common geo-

⁸⁸ ATTILA PALÁDI-KOVÁCS: *Néprajzi kutatás Magyarországon az 1970–1980-as években: Felmérések, dokumentumok, vélemények* [Ethnographical Research in Hungary during the 1970s and 1980s: Surveys, Documents, Analysis], Budapest 1990.

⁸⁹ For instance, ZOLTÁN FEJŐS, PÉTER NIEDERMÜLLER (eds.): *Tájékoztató bibliográfia a városok néprajzi-antropológiai kutatásához* [Informative Bibliography for Ethnographical and Anthropological Research of Cities], Budapest 1982.

⁹⁰ For instance, the following publications were introduced and adapted: MANFRED BRAUNECK: *Religiöse Volkskunst: Votivgaben, Andachtsbilder, Hinterglas, Rosenkranz, Amulette*, Köln 1978, and KLAUS BEITL: *Volks Glaube: Zeugnisse religiöser Volkskunst*, Salzburg 1978.

⁹¹ Resolutions and Decisions Adopted by the Executive Board at its 72nd session, in: UNESCO (1966), URL: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001132/113211E.pdf> (2019-03-05).

⁹² For example, the exhibition entitled "Peasants and Shepherds" could be visited at the Musée de l'Homme, Paris, in 1968. A report about it was published in *Néprajzi Értésítő* in 1970.

⁹³ HEINO WIDTMANN: *A magyar műemlékvédelem, osztrák szemmel* [Hungarian Monument Protection from an Austrian Perspective], in: ANDRÁS ROMÁN (ed.): *Az Egri Nyári Egyetem előadásai*, Eger 1980, pp. 83–85.

graphical interests (to protect the Fertő region).⁹⁴ Similarly, institutional connections made it possible for Hungarian ethnographers to conduct research abroad, even on other continents.⁹⁵ Lajos Boglár, for instance, researched a migrating indigenous community of Western Brazil and was able to collect examples of their tangible cultural heritage that became part of the collections of the Hungarian Ethnographical Museum.⁹⁶

Besides the connection to Western professional trends and participation at international meetings, experts in Hungary had to follow the ruling ideology of socialism. Accordingly, the management of vernacular architecture had to fulfill the aim to “mirror the new lifestyle, the socialist message.”⁹⁷ Similarly, ethnographers followed the example of the USSR,⁹⁸ promoting the value of the village and the culture of peasants, which stood in contradiction to the extensive employment transformation trends of the 1950s. Similar discrepancies can be found in other Eastern European countries, where political influence on scientific research became disproportionate. For example, in Romania ethnography became an official and scientific tool to justify and verify politically endorsed ideas around historic rights and prehistorical concepts.⁹⁹ Many experts published writings about socialist monument protection that discussed, for example, “professional activities carried out for the greater public in order to generate the required emotional, ethical and ideological effect.”¹⁰⁰ Similarly, it was a requirement until the 1980s for all ethnographic

⁹⁴ LÁSZLÓ KÁRPÁTI: A Magyar Fertő madárvilága és ornitológiai kutatásának soproni vonatkozásai [Birds at the Hungarian Part of Fertő and Those Aspects of Their Ornithological Research That Is Connected to the City of Sopron], in: Soproni Szemle 33 (1979), pp. 341–345.

⁹⁵ Similarly, scholars from Western Europe came to visit Hungary: TÁZLÁR HANN: A Village in Hungary, Cambridge 1980, or PETER BELL: Peasants in Socialist Transition: Life in a Collectivized Hungarian Village, Berkeley 1984.

⁹⁶ LAJOS BOGLÁR: A nyugat-brazíliai nambikuara-indiánok néprajza [Ethnography of the Nambikuara Indigenous Society in Western Brazil], in: Néprajzi Értesítő 42 (1960), pp. 29–49.

⁹⁷ The quote is from the workplan of the Folklore Institute for the year 1953. The institute was established by the Communist Party in 1952 and existed until 1956. FERENC SEBŐ: A Népművészeti Intézetből a Hagyományok Házáig [From the Folklore Institute to the House of Traditions], in: Szín 12 (2007), 6, pp. 19–21, here p. 19.

⁹⁸ For instance, GYULA ORTUTAY: Sztálin nyelvtudományi munkásságának jelentősége a folklór számára [The Significance of Stalin’s Grammatical Works in Ethnography], in: Előadások Sztálin nyelvtudományi munkái megjelenésének második évfordulóján, Budapest 1953, pp. 179–193.

⁹⁹ LÁSZLÓ KÓSA: A Magyar néprajz tudománytörténete [History of Hungarian Ethnography], Budapest 2001, p. 206.

¹⁰⁰ LÁSZLÓ CSÁSZÁR: A szocialista műemlékvédelem elvi kérdései [Theoretical Questions Relating to Socialist Monument Protection], in: DERCSÉNYI/ENTZ, 1969–1970 (as in footnote 71), pp. 77–82, here p. 80.

research documentation that was intended to have academic evaluation, to incorporate Marxist ideology.¹⁰¹

The only exceptions were smaller projects that were focused on smaller communities or settlements and involved a group of researchers and local sources (such as museums or archives). In these cases, new directions and methods could be explored and more complex investigations carried out.¹⁰² One unique form this kind of regional project took was the collection and publication of songs and tales of a given settlement or region. These publications were based on recently collected resources that emphasized the significance of the contemporary ethnographic research subject. Moreover, often these documents were published in neighboring countries, and reached not just a scientific audience, but the wider public as well.¹⁰³ Similarly, research about Hungarian vernacular culture was conducted at a number of foreign institutions where significant Hungarian minorities lived (such as at the Hungarian Studies Institute in Novi Sad, today's Serbia, or at the Ethnological Center in Komarno, today's Slovakia).¹⁰⁴ As Hungarian minority policy in the researched period was also centrally organized and implemented with a top-down approach, ethnic characteristics were only allowed to be discussed in educational areas, solely in language and cultural terms.¹⁰⁵ Accordingly, even though vernacular architecture had defined styles (in terms of structure, form and decoration) based on the nationality of the creator and owner, its social (class) belonging had to be emphasized instead of its ethnic or national affiliations in the publications or documentations. In this way, Serbian archi-

¹⁰¹ ENDRE FÜZES: Tendenciák a magyar falu építésze és lakáskultúrája alakulásában a második világháború után [Tendencies in the Transformation of Hungarian Vernacular Architecture and Home Culture after the Second World War], in: *Agria* 23 (1987), pp. 139–144.

¹⁰² For example, research combined sociographical features with descriptions of applied art examples by focusing on the community of a given profession within a minority (such as KAMILL ERDŐS: *Fémműves cigányok* [Roma Metalworkers], in: *Néprajzi Értésítő* 42 (1962), pp. 291–308) or the protection of a manor house in the countryside by transforming it into the Open Air Museum Szentendre. Such projects involved monument protection specialists, ethnographers, research of the related local and national policy as well as an education program for high school students (for example IMRE GRÁFIK: *A makói paraszt-polgárház* [A Peasant-Noble House in Makó], in: *Ház és ember* 1 (1980), pp. 157–174).

¹⁰³ For instance, ZOLTÁN KALLÓS: *Balladák könyve* [Book of Ballads], Bukarest 1970; ZSUZSANNA ERDÉLYI: *Hegyet hágek, lőtőt lépék ...* [I Climb Mountains, and Make Big Steps ...], Kaposvár 1974.

¹⁰⁴ MÁRIA RÓZSA MÁTÉNÉ SZABÓ (ed.): *A határainkon kívüli magyar néprajzi kutatások: Az 1982. november 19–20-án Debrecenben a Déri Múzeumban tartott országos konferencia anyaga* [Hungarian Ethnographical Research Projects outside the Country: Presentations at the National Conference that took place in Déri Museum, Debrecen on 19–20 November 1982], Budapest 1984.

¹⁰⁵ RAPHAEL VAGO: *The Grandchildren of Trianon: Hungary and the Hungarian Minority in the Communist States*, Boulder—New York 1989.

tectural heritage in Szentendre, Palócz heritage in Hollókő and the former German-speaking communities' vernacular heritage of Fertőtáj (the region of Neusiedlersee) were some of the first examples of Hungarian vernacular heritage.¹⁰⁶ This interpretation also made it possible to incorporate a significant amount of vernacular architecture into the protected monuments.¹⁰⁷ Ethnographical institutions and individual researchers also acknowledged and protected minority vernacular culture. For example, a meeting of scholars in 1961 in Gyula was dedicated to the vernacular culture of the minorities in Hungary.¹⁰⁸ Later, a series of international conferences and publications started in 1975 also served this aim and regular meetings of experts from diverse countries have taken place until today in Békés.¹⁰⁹

Intensive and mutual connections were made with other countries of the Eastern Bloc both at personal¹¹⁰ and institutional levels. Tangible collections and published research from other countries were also available and Hungarian experts were encouraged to work with them.¹¹¹ Institutional cooperation between university departments, museums and research institutes was ensured through bilateral cultural agreements. Hungarian experts also initiated or co-organized conferences and workshops with colleagues from other COMECON countries.¹¹² At these events, participants were often able to compare their different experiences.¹¹³ Their analytical reports commented on common features (for example by demonstrating how vernacular architecture was

¹⁰⁶ TAMÁS FEJÉRDY: A nemzetiségi kultúrák építészetének védelme Magyarországon [Protecting Architectural Examples of Minority Cultures in Hungary], in: ANDRÁS ROMÁN (ed.): *Az Egri Nyári Egyetem előadásai*, Eger 1988, pp. 12–14.

¹⁰⁷ ZOLTÁN TÓTH: A vidék épített környezeti fejlődése: A kistelepülésektől a vidéki urbánus központig [Development of the Architecture in the Countryside: From Small Settlements to Regional Urban Centers], in: JÁNOS CSONTOS, TAMÁS LUKOVICH (eds.): *Urbanisztika 2000*, Budapest 1999, pp. 153–174.

¹⁰⁸ LÁSZLÓ KÓSA: A magyarországi nemzetiségek néprajzi kutatása 1945–1974 [Ethnographical Research about the Minorities in Hungary between 1945 and 1974], in: *Ethnographia* 86 (1975), pp. 422–436.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 430.

¹¹⁰ For example, Tatic Vukoseva was invited to the Egri Summer School in 1974 to speak about Yugoslavian monument protection. See TATIC VUKOSEVA: *A jugoszláviai műemlékvédelem és tartományi restaurátori szervezete és gyakorlata* [Yugoslavian Monument Protection and the Provincial Institutional Structure and Practice of Restoration], in: GÉZA BARCZA (ed.): *Az Egri Nyári Egyetem előadásai*, Eger 1974, pp. 59–69.

¹¹¹ For example, an extensive report on the role of leather in the male costumes of the Obi-Ugor community involved collections from three countries and numerous foreign publications and research about the topic. JÁNOS IFJ. KODOLÁNYI: *A bőr az obi-ugor férfi viseletben* [The Leather at the Male Obi-Ugor Costume], in: *Néprajzi Értesítő* (1966), pp. 49–88.

¹¹² For instance, the international Finno-Ugric Congress, the Ethnographical Section of the Hungarian-Soviet History Committee or the Carpathian-Balkan congress.

¹¹³ MÁRIA DOMOKOS: *Népzene és a szomszéd népek népzeneje* [Our Folk Music and Folk Music of the Neighboring Nations], in: *Magyar Zene* 2 (1983), pp. 188–193.

examined in every country)¹¹⁴, named methods that should be or already had been imported from other countries (such as the publications produced for the wider public in Czechoslovakia).¹¹⁵ Similarly, critiques of other countries (for instance about ethnographical research in the GDR at the end of the 1960s)¹¹⁶ and acknowledgement of the outstanding Hungarian achievements (recognizing that the most thorough topographical documentation had been realized in Hungary)¹¹⁷ were also frequent elements of these reports.

These comparative studies also looked at the wider international context. For example, Dezső Dercsényi wrote at the end of his report about a 20-day-long trip in the USSR that “Besides the tasks and solutions that connect us due to our common ideological basis and socio-historical situations, we got to know some methods in certain sub-fields that are worth pursuing and are comparable, even to the most advanced Western examples of monument protection.”¹¹⁸ The two ideologies that were said to define the departed world appeared in the evaluation of research projects and even researchers: “Precisely, many anthropologists ended up in double role: as science and ideology makers they stood on the side of the exploiters, whereas in their research process they were with the exploited communities.”¹¹⁹ In these reports, the general ideological superiority of the Eastern Bloc was expressed, including the emphasis on community and the lack of individual ownership, which, in the case of monument protection, were claimed to be advantageous and, moreover, formed the basis of a new era in the history and practice of that field.¹²⁰ Similarly, the researchers’ ideological stance was seen as a guarantee of their professional excellence: “[...] the fact that the team of researchers has become intellectual followers of Marxism ensures their capability of raising the quality of their profession to the very highest level.”¹²¹ All in all, it can be stated that, in the researched period, vernacular heritage and its management

¹¹⁴ HRISZTO VAKARELSZKI: Magyar tudósok és a bolgár etnográfia [Hungarian Researchers and the Bulgarian Ethnography], in: CSAVDOR DOBREV, JUHÁSZ PÉTER et al. (eds.): *Tanulmányok a bolgár-magyar kapcsolatok köréből*, Budapest 1981, pp. 377–391.

¹¹⁵ ANDRÁS ROMÁN: Peculiar Characteristics of Rural Monuments, in: *Acta Technica. Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 88 (1979), 1–4, pp. 275–301.

¹¹⁶ HOFFMANN, A tudomány forrásai-e (as in footnote 59), pp. 6–7.

¹¹⁷ GÉZA ENTZ, LÁSZLÓ GERŐ: Műemlékvédelmi tapasztalatok szocialista országokban [Experiences of Monument Protection in Socialist Countries], in: *DERCSÉNYI/ENTZ, 1959–1960* (as in footnote 58), pp. 13–18, here p. 14.

¹¹⁸ DEZSŐ DERCSÉNYI: Műemlékvédelem a Szovjetúnióban [Monument Protection in the USSR], *ibidem*, pp. 9–12, here p. 12.

¹¹⁹ ÉVA B. MEDGYES: Alkalmazott antropológia [Applied Anthropology], in: *Néprajzi Értesítő* (1979), pp. 5–29, here p. 6.

¹²⁰ GÉZA BARCZA: Szocialista országok műemléki törvényei [Monument Protection Laws in Socialist Countries], in: *DERCSÉNYI/ENTZ, 1959–1960* (as in footnote 58), pp. 19–29.

¹²¹ TAMÁS HOFFMANN: A Néprajzi Múzeum 100 éve [100 Years of the Ethnography Museum], in: *Néprajzi Értesítő* (1973), p. 19.

served ideological as well as cultural and scientific aims.¹²² Through this combination of diverse factors, vernacular culture became valued and was able to be protected to some degree, while rural areas went through a fundamental change and the segment of the society that lived in rural areas in vernacular architecture disappeared.

5 Conclusion

This paper explores how vernacular heritage was able to be successfully protected in an undemocratic state, which had the aim of dissolving the social units that owned the tangible and practiced the intangible aspects of that very heritage. Vernacular culture was acknowledged, researched and protected by scholars and practitioners from a range of disciplines who adapted different methods, had diverse focuses and operated within separate institutional and management (ministerial) systems. Experts were influenced by the political and ideological circumstances of their times. Often, fieldwork research or protection projects would be accepted not due to professional or scholarly decisions, but based on political factors such as the propaganda potential of the given task.¹²³

State representatives intended to protect specifically those reminders and remnants of the past that served their ideological aims and helped to control the society. In Hungary, the socialist interpretations of vernacular culture led to the acceptance of heritagization.¹²⁴ The general public could also nurture vernacular heritage by visiting culturalized sites or performances or by practicing intangible cultural elements such as folk dance. These social movements were either promoted by state propaganda or closely monitored, which again showed that any initiative was possible only within the limits of the state system.

All in all, analysis has shown that, throughout the researched period, there was a very lively and often ambivalent relationship between the ideological direction of the country and the numerous goals to protect the disappearing vernacular culture. It was a multi-faceted transformation process, through which vernacular culture almost totally disappeared from Hungary while the remaining examples became subjects of research and positive evaluation.¹²⁵ Further studies could focus on the protection of vernacular culture in a spe-

¹²² BARCZA, Műemlékeink hatósági felügyelete (as in footnote 68), p. 34.

¹²³ A critical approach was not acceptable, especially before the researched period, but the fear of negative consequences prevented this kind of research from being published even after the 1960s.

¹²⁴ PÉTER KECSKÉS: A népi műemléki kutatás és felmérés [Research and Documentation of Vernacular Monuments], in: GÉZA BARCZA (ed.): *Az Egri Nyári Egyetem előadásai*, Eger 1979, pp. 67–70.

¹²⁵ MERÉNYI (as in footnote 17), p. 35.

cific region, for instance on the protection of Hungarian vernacular culture in Transylvania, which became part of Romania after the Second World War. Another interesting perspective would be to conduct comparative studies of the same phenomenon in Hungary and other Central or Eastern European countries.

