

in rural areas and the various processes taking place there, this collection of studies will also be edifying for non-professional readers.

Kiss, Gábor (editor in chief): *Nagy magyar tájszótár. 55 000 népies, tájnyelvi és archaikus szó magyarázata* [Comprehensive Dictionary of Regional Hungarian. Definitions of 55 000 Folk, Regional, and Archaic Words]. 2019, Budapest: Tinta Könyvkiadó. 1008. ISBN 978-9-6340-9191-2

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On April 13, 2018, in the library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, we presented the three-volume Dictionary of the Moldavian Hungarian Dialect, edited by János Péntek and published by the Transylvanian Museum Association. Less than a year later, we welcomed the appearance of the Comprehensive Dictionary of Regional Hungarian, edited by Gábor Kiss and published by Tinta Kiadó. As its title claims, the dictionary is indeed comprehensive in terms of its scope and the richness of its contents. According to the foreword, the data for the 1008-page volume were taken from two general Hungarian dialect dictionaries, 20 regional dialect dictionaries, one dialect map, and two Hungarian monolingual dictionaries. From these dictionaries, over 70,000 definitions of a total of 55,000 authentic denotational and modal dialect words have been compiled.

But what do these numbers really say about the size of the dictionary, you may ask. The question remains a difficult one, even when we attempt to compare them with statistical data from other large-scale projects. Published between 1979 and 2010, the five-volume New Hungarian Regional Dictionary presents over half a million definitions in around 120,000 entries. This comes to approximately 24,000 entries in each volume. By comparison, the lexical section of the latest volume of the Unabridged Dictionary of Hungarian, volume VII, contains a total of 1,771 independent entry words and 568 subentries. The definitions are, it is true, illustrated with 35,536 example sentences. The digital corpus for the 20-plus planned volumes of the Unabridged Dictionary of Hungarian contains approximately 110,000 entries. According to the figures presented above, the 120,000 entries in the five-volume New Hungarian Regional Dictionary exceed the forthcoming 20 to 25 volumes of the Unabridged Hungarian Dictionary and their 110,000 entry words. Measured against these figures, we can fully appreciate the richness of the content and the true magnitude of the 55,000 entries in Tinta Kiadó's newly published Comprehensive Dictionary of Regional Hungarian. It also becomes clear that the statistics do not present an accurate picture of the entirety of the Hungarian lexis, since the number of entry words and entries is largely determined by the organizational principle selected for dictionary compilation, and the editorial methodology adopted for each individual dictionary. It is only with this in mind that the number of entries in the New Hungarian Regional Dictionary can be understood to significantly exceed, by 10,000, the number of entry words in the Unabridged Hungarian Dictionary currently under publication. Approached from another angle, it is also important to take into

account the processes of the accelerated change in the vocabulary. The gradual erosion of words from earlier generations exists simultaneously with the appearance of new words, including numerous loan words borrowed from other languages. In the preceding centuries of the Modern Age, the Historical Dictionary of the Transylvanian Hungarian language contains fewer changes to the lexicon than those that took place in the Hungarian language in Transylvania (and Hungary) in the 20th century.

The goal of the Comprehensive Dictionary of Regional Hungarian was to present words that describe the peasant world that has almost entirely disappeared since the 1960s, including work processes, objects, and activities characteristic of traditional agriculture. Through the related vocabulary, it presents the everyday peasant life of the past, village activities, and occupations, and the technical terms and dialect words associated with them. The lexicon of dialect words and technical expressions that differ from everyday language is particularly rich, as already suggested by the 1912 Dictionary of Occupations by János Freckay. First in the 1970s and 80s, in the series on onomastics by Mihály Hajdú, and then programmatically, descriptions of occupations and activities and collections of technical expressions have been published on a regular basis. After the 1930s, the disciples and followers of Bálint Csűry undertook very extensive fieldwork also in connection with the exploration of folk occupations and their lexicon. A very close connection emerged between research on vernacular language and research on folk life, which was given expression not only in the titles of the respective journals — *Nép és Nyelv* [People and Language], *Népünk és Nyelvünk* [Our People and our Language], and *Néprajz és Nyelvtudomány* [Ethnography and Linguistics]. Sándor Bálint, Iván Balassa, Samu Imre, József Végh, and many others combined the two fields and jointly supported the movement for “ethnographical and dialect fieldwork grants,” annually announced under the aegis of the Hungarian Ethnographical Society for volunteer ethnographical and dialect researchers. Thanks to this close cooperation, the manuscript archive of the Museum of Ethnography in Budapest is also an indispensable and inexhaustible goldmine for dialect researchers. This was well known to the editors and writers of the New Hungarian Regional Dictionary, who included in their work dialect words contained in manuscripts archived up until 1960. (This can be verified by browsing the list of references included at the end of volume I.)

Authors of dialect dictionaries have long included representatives of ethnography: one need look no further than Sándor Bálint’s *Szegedi szótár* [Szeged Dictionary], and, among more recent authors, István Silling’s work *A kupuszinai nyelvjárás szótára* [A Dictionary of the Dialect of Kupusztina], or Ernő Eperjessy’s *Zselici tájszótár* [Zselic Dialect dictionary]. I should mention here that the best ethnographical reference monographs also contain an index of words, which facilitates the review of the Hungarian lexicon for the respective domain. (Mention should be made here of works by István Tálasi, Iván Balassa, Lajos Takács, Klára Csilléry, Imre Hegyi, Attila Paládi-Kovács, László Kósa, and others, in the fields of animal husbandry, forestry, meadow management, tobacco cultivation, corn and potato cultivation, pest control, and furniture and interior decoration.) Zsigmond Bátky, the Hungarian past master of object ethnography and former director of the Museum of Ethnography, wrote the following lines to Béla Gunda in 1938: “I spent the whole of yesterday and today reading – maybe for the fourth time – Szinnyei’s dialect dictionary. It only goes up to 1901. And after that!!!! We need a Hungarian dialect dictionary!!!!” Then, in 1935, Bálint Csűry’s

Szamoshát dictionary was published, which Bátky also read, although plans for a new, comprehensive dialect dictionary were not even considered at that time. The foreword by Gábor Kiss rightfully makes reference to this lack. He points out that “Zsigmond Móricz’s novel *Sándor Rózsa*, in which the characters speak with the distinctive vowels of the Szeged dialect, is a distillation of the age and of the turning towards the people and vernacular speech. Legend has it that the ethnologist Sándor Bálint checked the dialogues in Móricz’s manuscript.” (p. 7) As it happens, in this case we do not need to rely on hearsay, since Sándor Bálint recorded the official version of this cooperation in his recollection published under the title *Zsigmond Móricz’s writing of ‘Sándor Rózsa’* (*Kortárs*, 1967, 1398–1401. Subsequently published in: Sándor Bálint: *A hagyomány szolgálatában. Összegyűjtött dolgozatok* [In the Service of tradition. Collected essays]. Budapest: Móra Kiadó, 1981, pp. 191–201.) In this essay, he describes his meeting with Móricz in 1940 and presents the official history of Móricz’s visits to Szeged, his field trips, and his data collection. The essay describes the great writer’s visits to Szeged-Alsóváros under the guidance of Sándor Bálint, his note taking, and their agreement that the parts of the novel containing dialogue spoken by people from Szeged, and especially Rózsa, should be rewritten in the Szeged dialect. “Zsiga [Móricz] thought it a great idea.” In 1940, Sándor Bálint received the proofs of the forthcoming book, corrected them, and chiefly rewrote the dialog “in Szöged [i.e. Szeged] style.” As time was short, the printer implemented the corrections “on some pages only. This explains why the book is indeed inconsistent in terms of the use of the Szeged dialect,” Sándor Bálint insisted. The sequel, *Rózsa Sándor összevonja szemöldökét* (Sándor Rózsa raises his brows) is far superior in terms of dialect use, as it was improved by Sándor Bálint, in consultation with his wife, according to the rules of Szeged dialect. It is well known that the young Zsigmond Móricz was himself an outstanding collector of ethnographical materials. Commissioned by the Kisfaludy Society, he compiled his collection of popular poetry from Szatmár based on diligent fieldwork, while the ethnographical chapter of the Szatmár County monograph for the Borovszky series was also his work. (The encounter between Móricz and Sándor Bálint may even have inspired the creation of the *Szeged Dictionary* to some extent.)

The preface to the Comprehensive Dictionary of Regional Hungarian makes reference to its sources, besides including a small sketch map of regional and locality-related dictionaries, although the map omits Imre Tóth’s *Palóc tájszótár* [Dictionary of the Palóc dialect], which is referred to in the text “in passing” two pages earlier. However, the volume presenting the dialect of the village of Bernecebaráti does not merit the title *dictionary of the Palóc dialect*. Unfortunately, no genuine dictionary of the Palóc dialect has been written to date, although there would be a great need for such a work. Samu Imre drew attention to this lack, and the related task for researchers, as early as 1967, at the conference that initiated so-called Palóc research. He warned that the designation of the borders of the “Palóc dialect” is based on just two phonemes: the illabial *ã* and the labial, long *ã* vowel sounds. He brought up the idea of compiling a dictionary of the “central Palóc” dialect, although no one has undertaken the creation of such a dictionary to date. (On the other hand, in the 1980s Olga Penavin completed and published a three-volume dictionary of the Slavonian [Kórógy] dialect, which I would be delighted to see among the sources of the Comprehensive Dictionary of Regional Hungarian.) The publisher draws particular attention to the inclusion of words related to former beliefs

and superstitions. Mythical creatures and demons with supernatural powers, and the humans, animals, and beliefs related to them, are unknown to people today, although at best they may have heard of the Luca chair, incubi, witches, or the thirsty mine dwarves (*Bergmandli*).

The dictionary includes an extensive entry on the *táltos*, a figure frequently mentioned in popular Hungarian beliefs from the Great Hungarian Plain and in the oldest stratum of Hungarian folk tales: the dictionary lists the four relevant meanings of the word (a man with magical powers, a wandering magician, a child born with teeth, or a miraculous steed). There is a brief discussion of the *lidérc* (incubus), although with no mention of how to banish it, which is nevertheless an important aspect of the topic. Only a brief mention is made of the *priculics*, known in Transylvanian popular belief as a maleficent spirit. Understandably, in the absence of a dictionary of the central Palóc dialect, or dictionaries of the Abaúj and Zemplén dialects as sources, there is no mention of the figures of the *barboncás* and the *nora*, while only a broad definition of *markoláb* is provided. In Palóc–Barkó popular belief, the *markoláb* is not simply an “imaginary evil creature,” but is in fact responsible for the changing shape of the Moon (it eats the Moon in the form of a dog or wolf). The *barboncás* is the *garabonciás* of the Palóc, who walks the Earth in the form of a scholar, asks for milk, and “reads the storm from his book,” summoning the dragon from its lair and riding the storm on its back. The *nora* is a milder version of the bloodsucking vampire in Abaúj and Zemplén Hungarian folk belief. In fact, it is a night demon that sucks the breasts not only of women but also of men in their sleep, as witnessed by their swollen nipples. The definition of *permónyik* as “small-sized people” also requires minor additions. The figures are mostly known by this name in the Gömör mining region, the source being the *Bergmandl*, the name of which has been Hungarianized. The archaic Hungarian word *monyók*, meaning “imp” (*manó*) is also recognizable; the *monyók* is a frequent figure in fairy tales. The tiny *permónyiks* emit a faint light at night, leading those who have lost their way into rivers and waters. The “fiery man” is not simply a “personified *lidérc*,” as stated in the dictionary, drawing on the Hungarian Dialect Dictionary and the Ormányság Dictionary, but is the cursed soul or ghost of an unjust land surveyor in the world of Palóc and Barkó beliefs.

We could go on to analyze at length the entries for specific expressions belonging to peasant life. However, I hope that the examples above reflect the wealth of knowledge encompassed by the Comprehensive Dictionary of Regional Hungarian. I am confident that it will inspire in many an interest in the richness of Hungarian folk traditions, as well as the unique richness of the Hungarian language. To close, I will reiterate what I said in 2010, at the presentation of the fifth volume of the New Hungarian Regional Dictionary: “There is an urgent need to begin work on an updated dictionary of regional Hungarian. In the half-century between 1960 and 2010, materials were collected in greater amounts and of greater value than ever before, both publications and archives, from throughout the country and beyond its borders. Merely the evaluation and appropriate assessment of this amount of data requires enormous care. ... I am expressing the wishes of many when I request that dialectologists and lexicographers do not rest too long on their well-deserved laurels.”