

Life-work and inheritance of Sándor Bálint

(1904-1980) ethnographer

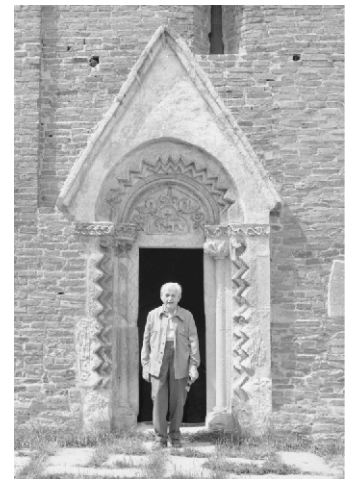
cultural heritage

Motto: *"God's servant, Sándor Bálint"*

Sándor Bálint, native of Szeged, ethnographer was an important person of the Hungarian ethnography in the 20th century. He is called as '*A legszögedibb szögedi*'. He was one of the greatest scientists in the fields of Hungarian ethnography and folklore in the 20th century. His main fields of research are the ethnography and religious folk traditions of the Great Hungarian Plain and Szeged.

Did you know?

1. During World War I, he wrote letters instead of many wives for their husbands who served as a soldier in the front.
2. He formed the Hungarian religious ethnography as an independent sector and research field in the ethnography.
3. His inheritance is preserved by the Móra Ferenc Museum and an exhibitory house.
4. He was nominated for beatification (people who are beatified are in the list of saints but they haven't got any relics and churches, yet).
5. He was also a member of the National Assembly.
6. The judge sentenced him to suspended imprisonment with the accusation of incitement against the regime for a short time in 1965.
7. A bell was also named after him in Szeged.
8. His scientific work is preserved in his about 500 notices, studies and books.



His life

Sándor Bálint ethnographer was born in Szeged in 1904, in a paprika growing family of Alsóváros. He was a teacher in the Catholic Teacher Training Institute from 1931 to 1944 and in the Teacher Training College from 1938 to 1946; from 1947, he was an official professor of the ethnography department of the University of Szeged and taught different generations how to respect the traditions.

The concepts of the region of Szeged, and the “nation of Szöged” were outlined in his research program and in the series of his studies and individual books from the 1940s (Szeged városa; Szegedi Szótár I-II; Szeged reneszánsz kori műveltsége; A szegedi paprika; Szeged-Alsóváros). He summarized his research concerning ethnographic and cultural historical memories of his native town in his books, „A szögedi nemzet. A szegedi nagytáj népelete I-III”, which are rich in data and prove that the writer was open-minded.

He was engaged in politics for a short time, then he retired and continued his ethnographical work. Until his death in 1980, more than 500 studies and books written by him were published.

His work

Owing to Sándor Bálint, the old crafts of Szeged, works of craftsmen, e.g.: the Szeged slippers, the craft of button-making are preserved. Searching the history of the different districts of the town, effects of celestial bodies and phenomena of nature, collecting folk beliefs connected to death, funeral, birth, wedding habits are also linked with his name. Thanks to him, poems by people, scriptures and books of churches were preserved for next generations.

His research of religious ethnography

Another significant element of his work is the research of home religion and the liturgical traditions connected to it. He was the first researcher of pilgrimage, devotion to Virgin Mary and the saints. His religious ethnographic research was published in the following books, „*Karácsony, húsvét, pünkösd*” and the „*Ünnepi kalendárium I-II.*”.

Researcher of the “Nation of Szöged”

Sándor Bálint - native of Szeged, ethnographer - researched the cultural history and the peasant's traditions of his native town. The memories and traditions of Szeged's cultural history would have been lost for the 21st century without the untiring and purposeful work of Sándor Bálint. He preserved the cultural historical and architectural memories of Szeged in his book about Szeged (Szeged városa).

<http://epa.oszk.hu/01600/01609/00019/pdf/>

'Szegedi szótár' - Szeged dictionary

His work called 'Szegedi szótár', which was published in two volumes is the result of a thirty years long collection. Its aim was to collect the linguistic traditions, dialects, the 'ö-zés' (the pronunciation of “ö” instead of “e” in certain Hungarian dialects) and the folk-speech of Szeged. It is also called as the bible of “folk-speech of Szöged”

Memories of him

The unique inheritance of Sándor Bálint, his manuscripts, letters, collection of religious canvas sacred images, ethnographic object collection, some pieces of his furniture and his library are preserved by the Móra Ferenc Museum. The digitalization of his inheritance started, a memory room was furnished in honour of the ethnographer.

The Catholic Church initiated his beatification, the process is still in progress. The bell of the Franciscan church in Szeged - which was dedicated in 2005 – was named after him. Two statues were set up for him in the town: in the Pantheon of Szeged and in the square beside the church in Alsóváros. The community centre in Újszeged is named after him. The Bálint Sándor Valláskutató Intézet (Bálint Sándor Religion Researcher Institute) which is the first research institute of researching religion in Hungary was established in 2009 and it is operated by the Gál Ferenc Theological College and the Faculty of Arts of the University of Szeged.

His main writings (selection)

Népünk ünnepei. Az egyházi év néprajza (Bp., 1938)
Egy magyar szent ember, Orosz István önéletrajza (kiadta, Bp., 1942)
Az esztendő néprajza (Bp., 1942)
Sacra Hungaria (Kassa, 1943)
Boldogasszony vendégségében (Bp., 1944)
Szegedi szótár (I-II., Bp., 1957)
Szeged városa (Bp., 1959)
A szegedi paprika (Bp., 1962)
A szegedi nép (Bp., 1968)
Szegedi példabeszédek és jeles mondások (Bp., 1972)
Karácsony, húsvét, pünkösd (Bp., 1973)
Tombácz János meséi (gyűjt. és bev., Bp., 1975)
Szeged reneszánsz kori műveltsége (Bp., 1975)
A szögedi nemzet (I-III., Szeged, 1976, 1977, 1980)
Ünnepi kalendárium (I-II., Bp., 1977)
A hagyomány szolgálatában. Összegyűjtött dolgozatok (Bp., 1981)
Szeged-Alsóváros. Templom és társadalom (Bp., 1983).

His memberships:

Hungarian Ethnographical Society (Magyar Néprajzi Társaság) (1925–)
Hungarian Linguistic Society (Magyar Nyelvtudományi Társaság) (1926–)
Dugonics Society (Dugonics Társaság)
Research Committee of the Great Hungarian Plain, Szeged (Szegei Alföldkutató Bizottság)

Awards

In 1981, Ortutay Gyula – medal
In 1998, Hungarian Heritage Prize, posthumous

Links

Péter László – Gyuris György – N. Szabó Magdolna: Bálint Sándor munkássága és róla szóló írások. Összevont bibliográfia 2004-ig. In: „A legszögedibb szögedi” Emlékkiállítás Bálint Sándor születésének 100. évfordulóján. Móra Ferenc Múzeum, Szeged, 2004. 101-125.

„...szolgálatra ítéltél...” Bálint Sándor emlékkönyv. Szerk. Barna Gábor. Lazi Könyvkiadó, Szeged, 2004. 404 p.

„A legszögedibb szögedi” Emlékkiállítás Bálint Sándor születésének 100. évfordulóján. Szerk. N. Szabó Magdolna. Móra Ferenc Múzeum, Szeged, 2004. 141 p.

Csapody Miklós: „Nehéz útra keltem...” Beszélgetések Bálint Sándorral. Bába Kiadó, Szeged, 2004. 216.

Vallásos ponyvanyomtatványok Bálint Sándor hagyatékában. Szerk: N. Szabó Magdolna – Zombori István. Móra Ferenc Múzeum, Szeged, 2010. 569 p.

„a legszögedibb Szögedi”. Bálint Sándor portré. A MTV Szegedi Körzeti Stúdió felvétele, 1979. Beszélgetőtárs: Trogmayer Ottó múzeumigazgató. 53 s.

Official website of the national value:

<http://www.mfm.u-szeged.hu>

<http://www.szegedvaros.hu/ertektar/7661-balint-sandor-neprajzkutato-eletmve-es-hagyateka.html>

http://www.szeged-csanad.egyhazmegye.hu/balintsandor/Balint_jav_vegleges_honlapra-1.pdf

