

# New Europe College Yearbook 2001-2002



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ISSN 1584-0298

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# THE MAKING OF THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY HUNGARIAN HISTORICAL CANON

## 1. On methodologies

Recent scientific work in the fields of ethnicity, anthropological historiography and narratology has enabled recognition of the basic constructed nature of national communities (as in the case of Hungary in this paper) and its homogenizing character; that is to say, the identification of the characteristics of nation-building (community-mythologies, invented traditions, etc.) and the core function of the historically-perceived national literatures.<sup>1</sup>

A system cannot be understood purely in terms of its inherent qualities. It must always be related to something, position itself in relation to something else. Thus, in my opinion, the questions that should be asked in connection with the making of the nineteenth-century Hungarian historical canon should include not only those that interpret 'the content' of the canon, but also those that analyze the different types of embeddings (cultural, disciplinary, poetical, pragmatic, etc.) of the historical constructions. Not doing this might lead us to establish completely ahistorical conditions: for example, in the 1830's, the epic poem represents a canonic form of 'accurate' representation of national history in Hungarian culture, though few historians employ this circumstance due to false loyalty to the synchronic view of history. Though we can never disregard our synchronic preferences (we can never 'be completely others than we are'), we can use our premises in a productive way and construct a history that attempts to regain the past through its historical notions and concepts, selected, organized, and narrated on the basis of our contemporary preferences. This is a two-fold method of viewing the past: on the one hand, it admits of our multiple embeddings (cultural, ethnical, historical, social, etc.); while on the other hand it controls them through the correct

and plausible use of the texts that mediate the original occurrences for us.<sup>2</sup>

This methodology, which is supported by many constructivist ideas in historiography in general, and in nation-formation and the construction of ethnicity in particular, must take account of the fact that the disciplinary borders of nineteenth-century Hungarian culture were in part different. From this point of view, the corpus that we traditionally associate with Hungarian history and history-making appears much broader and is normally considered subject matter for disciplines such as literary history or sociology. This circumstance places this paper in the wholly new and complex position, where it must construct a corpus that is unique from a disciplinary point of view and analyze it using methods from different disciplines.

## **2. Constructing a national language – constructing a national history**

The idea of Hungarian national language transcending different dialects and idiosyncrasies, and as such being of greater value than any of its variants, comes from the fact that its alleged invariancy has been imagined, not only as the central factor of the Hungarian national community, but also as a *historical* component and argument of its (historical) identity. Analysis of its canonization process may shed light not only on the artefactual character of this conception, but also on the agents of the process, the values implied and the strategies that make it work.

By way of example, we may consider the early years (1830's) of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. We can view this institution as a complex, semantic structure having different and at times rival and incompatible values and voices, which, however, has a certain canonizing force that derives from the way the institution defines itself and forces others to define it.

The Hungarian Academy of Sciences was founded after a long struggle with Vienna. The model finally accepted by the court was that of a society propagator of good usage, with the court hoping that by concentrating on language the society of Hungarian scholars would refrain from political issues. Meanwhile, however, the role of language had changed such that society was acting in the spirit of and becoming the

promoter of a particular view on the role of language in the constitution of the national community.

The Hungarian Academy of Sciences defined itself from the very beginning as the synchronic and diachronic promoter of a value presented as central: the Hungarian language.<sup>3</sup> Another component of its self-definition was a value based on the analogous roles of Western academies: being at the center of Hungarian culture, having a decision-making role in matters of culture. Archival and published materials<sup>4</sup> emphasized that the self-definition of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in the manner mentioned above had been widely accepted, proof of which was provided by the different requests from both individuals and institutions that conformed with the self-definition proposed by the academy. For example, different counties had made appeals to the Academy:

On January 9, 1832. The president answered the county of Esztergom on their request that the Society should fill the void in respect of technical terms in Hungarian. They have also asked us to make [!] folk songs and to publish the speeches uttered at Hungarian weddings and national ceremonies – all these in order to promote a faster Magyarization.<sup>5</sup>

The decision of the Academy, as well as the request of the county, are the result of a *language-based* vision of national culture as a system that can and should be guided in a certain direction. The individuals and institutions that addressed the Academy (such as when the society was asked to take over the awarding of the famous Marczibányi prize) define it as the institution that is able and perfectly competent to decide in such cases, perpetuating and strengthening the self-definition of the society in respect of the nature of the community implied, the nature of the culture implied, the possible changes that could be made in the national cultural system, and the identity of the competent agent to deal with such alterations. According to these roles, the Academy occupied an omniscient and omnipotent position over culture, founding not only the hierarchy of decision-making factors and canonic opinions in national matters, but was also able to assign persistent viewpoints and roles for the Hungarian literati of the century.

The history of the early years of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences is also the history of canonization of the Hungarian language as a decisive factor of national identity.<sup>6</sup> This new model of identity challenges the

*Hungarus* type of identity based on territoriality and the social constituents of the aristocratic identity.<sup>7</sup> Construction of a new identity takes place simultaneously with the exclusion of other identities. Its canonization is enforced not only synchronically, but also diachronically, in which the historical legitimation creates a history whose core consists of the events that lead to the formation and development of the language-based national identity.

All these factors draw our attention not only to those aspects of Hungarian history-making that are intimately linked with views on national language, but also to the fact that the national identities of mid-nineteenth-century Hungarian culture were not fixed. However, the preferred identity of later histories of the century was certainly that of identity based on language and canonized by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

### **3. “Pure and immaculate”. Disciplines and cultural constructions in nineteenth-century Hungary. A disciplinary pragmatics of historiography**

The authoritative knowledge produced by the disciplines within which we work represents a paramount force for the articulation of self-definition using the disciplines at hand. In this chapter we will look at the disciplinary subject of different disciplines (ethnography, dialectology, historiography and their relationship to literature) and we will examine how they were historically constituted in nineteenth-century Hungarian culture.

In *Folklore and materiality*, Erdélyi János argues for a joint understanding of folklore and other poetic texts, causing, in practice, the cultural borders that separated nineteenth-century folkloric texts and elite cultural texts to disappear:

I believe that if something is poetry, it shall necessarily be treated as such, even if descending from the folk, folklore should be withdrawn from the general principle of poetry. Indeed one can perceive folklore as poetry that - though originating from an uneducated crowd - is good enough in terms of aesthetics. In my opinion the only difference between so-called high poetry and folklore is that the latter has the fragrance of a beginner, a timid frankness that resembles nature, while the former bears the marks of distinction and of more polished language; the latter is simple, the former foregrounds more signs of maturity and cultivation.<sup>8</sup>



Folklore is measured on a different cultural scale than its own cultural framework: the distinction hints at a culture highly concerned with its genealogy and at the longevity and purity of this genealogy, thereby revealing one more link between consciousness and the mechanisms of self-legitimation of nineteenth-century Hungarian elite culture and its use of the symbolism of an aristocratic type of class-representation.<sup>9</sup>

The act of mentioning a polished language, tradition and cultivation as characteristics of an aesthetics-based poetry makes exclusive use of the constituents of a culture defined by written tradition.

A good example of this is given by the fact that folklore collections - as *books* - are considered to be the best place to find a perfect folkloric text that has undergone a process of refinement. I quote from Gábor Kazinczy's and Ferenc Toldy's introduction to a re-edition of a collection of folklore texts:

The tales show us what a master Gaal was in composing a round whole by means of leaving out and supplementing so as to fit the demands of the aesthetic idea. That is because the folk are unassuming and imperfect in terms of composition: the folk narrators always forget something, or their products lack the antecedents or the consequences. Thus the composition hardly ever denotes that wholeness and roundness the high poetry consciously aspires to.<sup>10</sup>

It is not only the necessary imperfection of the folkloric texts outside the collection that is touched upon in the paragraph quoted above, but the tangible presence of the same texts in book form as the simulacrum for the whole that makes the field study of the individual less relevant, if not completely irrelevant. The focus on the *written* word almost exclusively functioning as an aesthetic entity (and leaving out the possibilities of several other functions) in order to characterize a mainly oral type of culture with mainly non-aesthetic functions is also revealed by the ceaseless focus on the invariancy and textuality of the folklore culture at issue. Lecturing at one of the first scientific sessions of the Transylvanian Museum Society, Pál Gyulai drew attention to some values present in folklore poetry. Closer inspection of the arguments made in his *Contributions to Our Folklore* reveals even more about the values and meanings attributed to folklore in the mid-nineteenth century. The ballad entitled *Márton Ajgó had set out...* "excels in originality": according to Gyulai, it can not be mistaken for a domestic or foreign ballad, being a

work *sui generis*. And in a wider sense all ballads are similar to the one brought into discussion, for “real originality both in high and in folk poetry is not so much in the object, the basic idea, but in the inventive and creative power of the spirit”.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, the value first used to measure the folkloric texts is that of the individual creativity of the romantic high culture foregrounding the ideal of a text that is unique, never to be repeated, thus a closed text and in this sense wholly invariant.

Some parts of the ballad quoted by Gyulai seem to be imperfect:

A thorough charge would be that Márton Ajgó’s climbing up the tree is not sufficiently motivated. [...] These kinds of defects are not rare, even in the most enthralling legends [...] for the fate of legends is peculiar, too: in fact, their passing from mouth to mouth is the mechanism that arranges them, brings them together. Some of these come to be whole, others remain at a certain stage of their formation, certain parts fade out from many a text and not a few of them are lengthened only to interfere with the process of their taking shape.<sup>12</sup>

In this way the most sensitive side of folkloric texts, which is at the origin of their imperfection and can hardly be eliminated in their original context, is precisely the medium in which they are handed down and the mechanisms that operate in this medium. The handing down of the texts in written form - though suggested implicitly in the above excerpt - is considered much more valuable than the oral process for - in Gyulai’s view - it protects texts against any kind of alteration.<sup>13</sup>

The unaltered text and the written medium that is suited for producing and handing down such texts are both products of an elite literary method of imagining a culture that needs continuous preservation and an unaltered record of its values.

However, before drawing any interim conclusions in respect of the disciplinary embeddings of these ideas, we may consider one more example of the values which provide orientation for the system in question. In the 1862 volume of the *Szépirodalmi Figyelő*, Pál Gyulai published a treatise on several aspects of the Hungarian folk tale. Touching upon János Arany’s critique of Merényi’s folk-collection, the *Contributions to Our Folk Tales* sketches the process the writer of the treatise himself started in order to find an even “more complete, more beautiful and more poetic”<sup>14</sup> variant of the folk-tale mentioned by Arany in comparison with that offered in Merényi’s collection: “I did everything to obtain this

tale in its entirety. I asked children, aged women, maidens, nurses, coachmen, briefly all I had ever heard a tale from. In vain. Anyone who remembered it, recalled only faded fragments of it."<sup>15</sup> The variant regarded as a fragment sheds light on the nature of the logic that determines the relationship between the variant and the invariant.

The category of the fragment already functions as a (negatively) value-loaded category with regard to the Hungarian literary texts of the period (unlike most Western European Romantic texts). For instance, Toldy's edition of Csokonai, Gyulai's edition of Vörösmarty, Madách or Petőfi (either the early edition of Petőfi's prose works or the 1874 edition attributable to both Gyulai and Greguss) position the fragments (together with the so-called 'immature works') mainly towards the end of the edition, or even omit them altogether as is the case in editing Madách (in 1882) or the 1874 edition *de luxe* by Petőfi. Thus fragments of a poetic work are placed close or in similar position to those of uncertain authorship, in effect constituting the periphery of a particular oeuvre. They seem to be considered less important and to need less interpretative attention than the non-fragmental parts of the corpus, i.e., those components that from a certain point of view become regarded as 'wholes'.

The previous example draws attention to a whole discipline that seems to enforce a certain type of text: the product of a unique creative process, with aesthetic qualities, ethically unobjectionable, structurally whole. The nineteenth-century Hungarian diachronic philology's notion of text was also paired with several strategies devised for obtaining and dealing with both suitable and unacceptable texts – among these we might mention the relative power of the editor to position, value and even alter the text according to his aesthetic and ethical standards.

Viewed from this point of view, the necessary imperfectness of folkloric texts as perceived in the middle of the nineteenth century, together with the special status of the folklore collector as the person who regains the perfect state of the folkloric texts, draws attention to philology, a discipline that itself transcends several other disciplines (belles-lettres, different types of historiography), carries and enforces an elite culture. Thus philology stands not only for a set of poetic (or as has sometimes been claimed since then, mechanic) rules, but for a discipline embedded in a whole system of intimately related interpretative power frameworks, through which a community of literati views and enforces itself the values of his [sic] own culture, though at the same time claiming to have been confronted with the horizons and values of other cultures.

Before proceeding to show how other disciplines of the time were connected with this philology-based cultural construct, I would like to emphasize the extraordinary power and firmness of this cultural framework by means a series of interrelated examples. Let me foreground the case of János Kriza, a folk-collector highly praised for his classic collection entitled *Vadrózsák* ('Wild Roses'). The story of this collection, partially reconstructed from archive materials, sheds light upon the resolute and systematic character of the epistemology behind and the great folklore collections of the nineteenth century.

Kriza's correspondence with Gyulai<sup>16</sup> on the then forthcoming collection of *Vadrózsák*, dating from the end of the 1850's and beginning of the 1860's, brings to light many of Gyulai's worries and actions concerning Kriza's methods and, of course, highlights his own method. In a letter dated August 12, 1862, Kriza gave account of the texts he had prepared for this edition:

I send my greetings to Arany - I really enjoy the tales of his Laci.<sup>17</sup> Compared to his, my tales will be slightly rustic, but in literary life, just like in the social one, there should be some entities belonging to such a class. This is how the peasants can easily become educated gentlemanlike people.<sup>18</sup>

The ideal scale, by which he measures the tales he has prepared himself, ranges from peasantry to gentlemanliness, in which the social order is also transformed into a literary order. It is no wonder that Kriza's aim of regaining the voice of the peasant informant was not achieved. But what exactly did this aim imply?

I have got into the dialect so much that sometimes I catch myself uttering *hezzá, szüvet, vadnak* [i.e. dialectic forms] whilst I speak. Fortunately I am not a preaching clergyman because I might blend it with the sermon [...] Nobody has ever prepared to edit so many literary things in such a dialectical form. I made meticulous inquiries so that even the last sound should be characteristically *székely* [Seklar]. [...] I took troubles over the texts - sometimes I had even to write two or three letters to Háromszék county for the right syllable or letter. [...] I believe I am ensured against falsehoods and 'literary winkings'.<sup>19</sup>

Kriza's method represents a large step in the direction of regaining the voice of the informant: for the most part he still had no direct contact with his informants, but he is aware that the literary language employed

by folklore-collectors actually changes the cultural framework of the informants' texts.

A letter dated November 19, 1862, reveals Gyulai's resistance and Kriza's retreating in a way that would lead to a major change for the epistemological conditions under which his folklore collection would be elaborated: "There is no more misunderstanding the question [...] I think I can already give you some pieces from *Vadrózsák*, as you suggested 'keeping the *székely* taste, but not the exact dialect'."<sup>20</sup>

The offspring of dialectology within the literary system faced similar consequences as the ethnographic aspirations that were first articulated within the same literary system: in the former case, constructs of the dialects occurred and dialects were reshaped according to the tastes and values of a high culture, mainly disregarding the idiosyncratic elements that weren't consonant with the system or those components that weren't compatible with the cultural ideas of the elite of what sounded beautiful and acceptable.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the aesthetic conception of literature emerging from the cultural struggles between the 1820's and 1840's imposed itself not only upon literary texts and phenomena, but also on the disciplines that, in their turn, emerged from a broader notion of literature and which attempted to define themselves as autonomous entities. They took over from values, even up to the canonic notion of the text of the aesthetic type of literary system.

It is enthralling to see how the notion of a literature governed by the value of the *beautiful* was so strong that it even refunctionalized the notion of *ars historica* in the historiography of the age. "Historiography operates on the fields of science and art and wishes not only to search for, but also to write about the events and relations of bygone times, therefore it belongs to the realm of *ars historica*"<sup>21</sup>- argued Gusztáv Wenzel in a 1856 paper on the possibilities of Hungarian historiography. Gyulai Pál, reflecting on an early monograph of Kálmán Thaly on János Bottyán, also touched upon the necessity of a certain poetics of historiography that clearly derives from literary rules:

A work of real historiography belongs not only to science, but to a literature perceived in a narrower sense of the word. It requires a certain artistic inner form constituted by the power of composition, the lively fluidity of the narrator, the proportionate grouping of the events and the expressive drawing of the main actors.<sup>22</sup>

The idea of a beautiful history modeled on the beautiful forms as exemplified by literature shows historiography also to be in close connection with the literary ideals of the age. Events and their textual representations were functioning within a belles-letres type of aesthetics of beautiful forms and texts refunctionalizing the ancient notion of *ars historiographica*.<sup>23</sup>

During the first half of the nineteenth century, Hungarian literature was thought to represent a whole nation. This representational function was the outcome of a struggle over how to show the nation's values to those foreign critics who had claimed that Hungary had scarcely created cultural values. Imagining literature (and its different genres, like the epic poem, the novel or the tragedy) as the appropriate medium by which to represent the nation brought about not only a special status for the literati engaged in literary affairs, but also a special politics of literature, including its genres, its communicational methods, poetic strategies, accepted and refused interpretational strategies, etc. The individualization of several new disciplines that emerged out of the process of narrowing the notion of literature and their attempt to define themselves as viable sciences (alongside the rising status of science in the mid-nineteenth century) still meant that their relationship with literature was an important aspect of their self-assertion and to their imposing themselves as important disciplines.

They took over not only its poetics, but also a politics engaged in a representative process of nation-construction.

## **4. Forgeries and forgers: conceptions of history and their consequences in the belles-letres**

### ***4.1. Preliminary methodological considerations***

The standard historical approach to historical forging and historical forgeries is an orthodox Aristotelian one: be it historical or synchronic discourse, it usually aims to identify and clearly separate what is "false" from what is "true". The stigmatization of the former brings with itself the "eradication" of all those ever likely to have committed such an act.

I do not deny the productive possibilities of this perception of historical forging. However, this chapter will develop a somewhat different understanding of the phenomenon (as present in nineteenth-century Hungarian culture), with all the consequences that flow from it.

In a view that foregrounds the pragmatics of forging – since this would be the basis of the proposed conception of historical forging – historical forgery also depends on the interpretative community that makes use of it: for instance, other types of values are normally assigned to its character, and attitudes towards it may show its nature in a wholly different way after being identified as forgery. But the recognition of the forged character of a certain historical document (and of the event / the characteristics textualized in the document) may change not just its ontology, but also the customary and prevailing epistemology employed by a certain interpretative community in order to position itself regarding the text / event / circumstance at hand. In this sense the ontology of the community itself is also transfigured by the altered epistemology towards the event / text, etc. that turned out to be false.

Given this starting point, let us comprehend the phenomenon (as a diachronic phenomenon occurring in nineteenth-century Hungarian culture) not as something illegitimate that should be overcome and eradicated from the point of view of the historical research, but as an occurrence foregrounding a specific history of mentalities. Perceived as such, historical forgery comes to the forefront as a phenomenon that could characterize the complexity of motivations, relationships that link a certain interpretive community<sup>24</sup> to the past and the nature and consequences of these links.<sup>25</sup>

This chapter will have two orientations: on the one hand, it will articulate the possible reasons that produced the mainstream of the Hungarian historical forgeries in nineteenth-century Hungarian culture (while also outlining a probable value-system that accomplished, supported, and accepted and then kept a part of the community in the dark about the forgeries) and the consequences of the master narratives that the historical forgeries helped to establish; while, on the other hand, it will deal with the pragmatics of type of these narratives, namely those that might be called genetic.

#### ***4.2. "The power of their vein is unforeseeable". Forging history – ways of perceiving the past***

The so-called Seklar chronicle from Csík / Ciuc that proved to be a forgery after a century of unremitting debate<sup>26</sup> contains a series of traces of allegedly old Seklar culture. The chronicle was mainly interpreted in the Hungarian historiographic tradition as a device for some eighteenth

century families and Seklar communities to emphasize, prove and overstate their personal and communal genealogies. The Seklar chronicle has also been the focus of historiographers highlighting the roots of late eighteenth century tendencies to embellish the national historiographic tradition. Alongside this, though in no way irrespective of the former, stands the struggle by regional cultures to become part of national representation. This effort is unusual as nation-construction normally values homogeneity: common traditions of the community at hand, values made central within the construction (that weld it together) and suppression of all elements that could split the construction. In this context, at the beginning of the nineteenth-century, several trends can be observed that undervalue Hungarian regional cultures. For example, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the *palóc* regional culture became the target of a handful of texts denigrating the community, making a laughing-stock of the dialect and ridiculing those who spoke it.<sup>27</sup>

On the other hand, the self-representation of regional cultures went even more on the offensive as a result of this homogenizing tendency of the national culture, attempting to make use of their specific values (be it synchronic or diachronic). Keeping with the earlier example, we can refer to those attempts to counteract the undervaluing of the *palóc* community. According to one of these attempts, the fact that the dialect diverged from the normative national dialect actually proves its archaic character, thus making the community perfect for the study of pre-historical Hungarian culture.<sup>28</sup> This is a strong argument in favor of the endeavor to reposition and even canonize values that seemed peripheral to the point of view of a normative national culture; the strength of the argument lays in its favorable reception of the Herderian ideas on the nature of living communities and folk culture in order to faithfully preserve and embody historical experiences.<sup>29</sup> This implicit criticism of the written historiographic tradition that appraised not only the role of folk traditions, but also reinterpreted the capacity of contemporary knowledge to contribute to historical knowledge, becomes obvious, as in the following passage:

The moment that causes historiography to stop speaking and – so to speak – make dusk fall to antiquarian investigations, doesn't mean the end of all our guidelines. There still exists a torch to shed light on life and the spirit of time. It is not historiography that speaks here, but the serious muse of histories; it is not the data that certify, but life itself steps forward in form of [folk] poetry. This also mirrors life when it had long passed.



All people possess poetry before history, or better said, poetry is history that passes from father to son as a sacred heritage.<sup>30</sup>

Hence local knowledge, for instance dialectal lore, might be of even higher value than so-called national knowledge owing to its direct contact with archaic experiences.

From this peculiar point of view Hungarian nation-building can also be viewed as the terrain of rival regional cultures that tend to over-represent themselves or represent themselves positively so as to acquire a central role in the nation-building process and thus gain prestige and, consequently, decision-making power. Nation-building appears thus not an impersonal and automatic macroprocess, but as a system imbued with complex individual and microgroup interests. These interests often have a historical background, like those deeply rooted in medieval prerogatives in the case of the forged *Seklar* chronicle. The narratives of privilege of the *Seklars* returned in an age when precisely those privileges had been weakened, making clear the process by means of which earlier canonic structures were refunctionalized to become fit and central to a new, ascendant model of the nation.

Another famous case of historical forgery worth studying concerns that of *Literáti Nemes Sámuel*. The antiquarian that was in the services of *Jankovich* family in the 1830's and 1840's, brought *Jankovich* many allegedly ancient texts and objects – some of them curios that aroused wide public interest. The alleged prayer of *Andrew I* was written with characters considered "Hunnish–*Seklar*".<sup>31</sup> Fostered in part by the untraceable origin of many of his acquisitions, the mistrust surrounding his figure and antiquarian oeuvre led to a gradual revision of the texts and objects bought and copied by him. Here we are interested 'only' in the possible reasons for his forgeries and will use his travel diary that was passed down in manuscript form (and is almost an unknown source to Hungarian historiography)<sup>32</sup>. Certainly, aspirations to personal fame and financial fulfilment were among his motivations, but that is not the whole story. There is also a tendency to exaggerate the national past, an attempt to endow it with senses, values and characteristics not to found elsewhere, making the nation itself stand out characteristically among other nations. A section of *Literáti's* diary<sup>33</sup> detailing his journey to *Zagreb* illustrates this attitude:

On the 11<sup>th</sup>, just before lunch, when I wanted to enter the library of the Academy and was looking for Mr. Gregoric, I found myself in a room with all the professors of the Academy assembled. [...] [Y]ou can publish it in any newspaper that on the 11<sup>th</sup> of October when Your admirer walked in on the scholars of the Croatian capital, they were conducting a meeting in the Hungarian language, hardly uttering a word in any other language. Shouldn't we be delighted that not only in Pest and Kolozsvár [Cluj], but also in Zagreb, the scholarly world so truly respects our language (a language so despised by the Árpád kings and given a bad reputation). Amen.<sup>34</sup>

National language, along with its inherent qualities and usages, came to be seen as the bearer of the possible standards for measuring the accomplishments (and thus the viable or unviable character) of Hungarian culture. Thus, within this framework, every sign of propagation and/or dissemination of the national language was interpreted as both a vindicative<sup>35</sup> and culture-building deed. These alleged virtues also helped frame the strength of the historical forgeries (like those of Literáti) making source criticism less susceptible to such possibilities. Similar results were produced by the biased orientation of the very same of source criticism owing to the possible consequences that might follow public recognition of the forged nature of these texts as regards a whole culture.

We can take another example from a later period of nineteenth century Hungarian culture in order to shed light upon another type of system that fostered exaggerated traditions, often supported by historical proof of a more than ambiguous nature. The construction of the millenary tradition also – despite of the excellent professional arrangements and control – produced cases qualified as forgeries by many historians of the time. An inherent quality of any such event that mobilizes an enormous amount of symbolic capital<sup>36</sup> is the shaping of the individual parts of the system such that they fit into the master narrative of progress the best possible. The master narrative of the whole also prescribes a *telos* for the individual components. The more the *telos* of an individual component resembles those of the master narrative it inscribes itself in, the more central the role it plays within the representations of the events at issue. Hence the efforts of all those with a stake in the representation to conform to the master narrative, indeed to acquire a special role within it. This process also favors the appearance of forgeries comparable to that of count Zichy Jenő. The count set out to find his forefathers, and implicitly the remains of the Hungarians in the Caucasus, only to find that not only were the archaic kinships still in existence and still visible, but also that they

were directly linked to his family. Despite criticism from experts, the constant and unquestioning trust placed by the public in the authenticity of the objects brought by Zichy from the Caucasus in part decided their inclusion in the millennial Hungarian exhibition. We may now focus on the scientific reception of this collection as it may signal a paradigmatic change with regard to matters of both alleged and proved forgery:

The news came in quick succession. The Avars have been found! The Huns have been found! The authentic Hungarian sword has also been found with the inscription ‘Patrona Hungariae virgo Maria etc.’ on it! As if Álmos himself would have worshipped this. The descendants of the archaic Hungarians have been located, including those of the Csáky, Bottlik, Bitto, Dargó, Szombathy families. The Zichy princely family has also been found together with the country, and this illustrious family adopted him as relative. [...] The leader returned, the syntagm ‘they have been found’ was uttered once again. But there was no mention of any reporting lecture or communiqué, not even in the club. [...] At last we have the work [reporting on the research expedition] dedicated to czar Nicholas II and entitled *The Voyages of Jenő Zichy in the Caucas and Central Asia – Conte Eugene de Zichy voyages au Caucase et en Asie Centrale*. [...] For instance, the Mingrel woman – pictured on table no. XVI. – is an imported ‘item’ despite the divan and the can of the background. It is likely that she has an upper set of false teeth, being otherwise in the sharpest contradiction with everything the text says about the beauty of the Mingrel women. [...] [W]hen dealing with the Georgians, he isn’t even put off his stride by the fact that the section is illustrated with the portrait of a Zichianoff prince. [...] The count competed with István Horvát in his enthusiasm-produced chauvinism and caught up successfully with those who make Hungarian language agree even with Chinese.<sup>37</sup>

The critical tone of Hermann’s text already hints at the paradigm shift that occurred in the 1890’s regarding alleged and proved, synchronic and diachronic historical forgeries. Though the 1830’s brought with them a certain dissociation from the historiography of István Horvát (undervaluing tacitly and slowly also those parts of his historical oeuvre which were of high professional value)<sup>38</sup> and the 1860’s a certain regard for Literáti’s legacy, paradigmatic and global reflection on the historical forgery as a phenomenon was missing. A private letter of the famous literary historian Toldy is symptomatic of this, not only in respect of his personal attitude towards the issue, but also concerning a whole discipline as such:

Be glad that our good and my dear Somogyi has remained silent. [...] My dear Gábor, it is a white lie to conceal such cases. Macpherson forged not only an English, but also a Gaelic Ossian: it took the Irish Academy and the highly advanced Gaelic linguistics eighty years till they disclosed the fraudulent secret. Wagenfeld forged a German, then a Greek Sanchuniaton; criticism excelled in exposing the forgery in both cases. Our good friend hasn't succeeded in [making a good forgery and] deceiving specialists: while some laugh at or are annoyed at his fabrication, Hungarian historical criticism has had the easy job of demonstrating the obvious fabrication. And let's be glad that they have been quiet till now! [...] But Macpherson, Wagenfeld and Somogyi are fine fellows, even if they have been the fanatics of an ingrained idea or of an ill ambition; even if we smile at the vulnerability of our scholar, he still deserves appreciation. But – heaven forbid – don't ever mention it to him: everything is said *sub rosa* and I would have withheld it from you, hadn't you provoked me.<sup>39</sup>

Or, to quote Károly Tagányi's retrospective view on the very subtle forgeries of József Kemény written on the occasion of the issuing of the Transylvanian "Saxon" collection of documents entitled *Urkunderbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen*<sup>40</sup>:

[Kemény]'s forgeries reach considerable figures even if we take into account only those charters with which the 'grateful' publishers hurried to 'enrich' their collection. Let us hasten to enjoy the forgeries of our collection, so that once and for all we would put an end publicly (for the specialist it wasn't quite a secret) to this disgraceful pretence that has already costed many deceptions and mistakes.<sup>41</sup>

Such observations, according to which many scholars of the time were aware of the historical forgeries, support my hypothesis which claims that the Hungarian historiography of the nineteenth century regarded a possible public confrontation with the phenomenon of historical forgery as a procedure that might undermine the claims of the same historiography to be the *par excellence* discipline of Hungarian collective memory-making,<sup>42</sup> able to mimetically reconstruct an unaltered ancient Hungarian past.

Discourse of the disciplinary criticism following the paradigmatic shift of the 1890's on past and present historical forgeries also carries a view of the discipline within the framework of which it defines itself. The polarizing hypercritical position of the texts suggests a clear-cut distinction between a true and a false historiography, arguing that, in spite of the

century of historical forgeries, historiography can still make a clear difference between the fictional and factual (of course, for the benefit of the latter).

To start with, we can take a metaphor that recurs obsessively– the trope of the poison:

The major matter is not that the present volume comprises nine forged charters, [...] but the fact that the power of their poison is unforeseeable. Just as the potential of that small, insignificant contagious substance that – once having intruded into the blood –makes the whole rising generation stunted.<sup>43</sup>

This comparison with the danger of a possible degeneration of the genealogy and the community clearly suggests an intimate link between Hungarian national historiography and the vision of the genealogy, and implicitly of the alleged sound character of the nation. In this context, historical forgery is considered an impediment to the unfolding of national history within which the nation manifests itself as a sound body, or – better put – as the rippling of good health in a historical row of closely interconnected bodies. Thus, the sound history becomes also the sound, paradisiacal and immemorial diachronic narrative of the nation. According to the logic of this system, historical forgery – by impeding a faithful representation of the national past – actually questions the desired rejuvenation of a whole national community.

According to another occurrence: “in a certain sense of the word, a real scholar of history is able to use forgeries, the way a physician employs poison”.<sup>44</sup> The attempt to dissociate the discipline from the historical forgeries that had sprung from within it inevitably leads to the development of strategies which are seen to reposition the discipline itself. One of these strategies, as alluded to in the text quoted, is a negative inclusion of forgery into historiography by presenting it in a pedagogical way, as a phenomenon that is not worthy of imitation. But, this inclusive exclusion (as we might call it) implies also a framing of the non-referential or semi-referential entities within the historiographical system perceived as a highly referential framework, framing the poison into the sound body – if we toy with the metaphors suggested by historical criticism itself. At any rate, we need to stress the subtle contact between the historical referential and the historical non-referential / semi-referential by means of the phenomenon of historical forgery. This connection – among others

– makes it plausible to interpret the questioning of the objectivistic historical discourse in certain media in Hungarian culture of the time. This problem will be addressed subsequently.

However, before doing so, let us study an example of how historical forgery is perceived as a phenomenon that breaks up a homogenous, converging history and its representation. The discipline itself is shown as a unity, more as a single, almost *telos*-centered narrative, than the space of the divergent and diverse (hi)stories:

If we compare history to a building, then historical, chronological order is the plaster holding the stones of the building together. Thus a wrongly dated charter is like a wrongly fitted stone. It disrupts the unity of the others, weakening, disfiguring the whole wall. [...] Furthermore, the undated charters are like those carved stones that are impossible to place. Those of the kind remain either unused or – if put in the wrong place – uglify the wall.<sup>45</sup>

The idea of a beautiful history that encompasses the roots of the aesthetic strikes again. Norms, such as those of proportionality and unity, founded on the basis of this aesthetic effect, suggest an inherent beauty (and consequently, ethical character) of the historical occurrences and a certain poetic rendering of the very same occurrences. This view of the beautiful history (both as inherent in the events and constructed through certain poetic norms of historiography) is indirectly indebted to an already fading eschatological view of the past (that is beautiful and moral precisely because of its being led by an omnipotent and omniscient divine force). Moreover, the same vision is intimately linked with the norm of the beautiful past expected from and realized by the epic poem, indeed it is intensified by the canonization of a new type of literature and literary *text* from the 1830's onwards: the literary text and literature based on the value of the aesthetic. From this point of view, the fact that – until the mid-nineteenth century – Hungarian literature was also comprised of historiography seems a highly relevant circumstance in establishing the historical grounds for this common conception of the beautiful past shared by disciplines that would diverge after the aforementioned period.

Reception of the Hungarian historical forgeries in the nineteenth century brings to the forefront a ascendant historiography that defined itself strictly along the lines of mimetic representation even when facing cases of non-mimetical representation. Possible events, and those that

never occurred, are fully and overtly excluded from this system. This epistemological feature of the self-definition of the historiographic discipline is also stable for the major cases of historical forgery of the period. On the other hand, however, segments of culture, other than the historiographic discipline, that were also closely interested in the discourse of the past, seem to have reflected on the cases of forgery in a wholly different way.

The concealing attitude of the historiographic discipline seems also to have been established by the gradual changes in the structure of the historical notion of literature. This is not only a narrowing process through which the historical notion of literature becomes segmented into different disciplines, but also a reevaluation of its pragmatics and the semantics of those composing it. The process of reevaluation is – among other directions / orientations – directed towards a new ideal of scholarliness set by the epistemology of the sciences, with a view to conveying their object in an ‘exact’ way. When historiography defines itself as the discipline *and science* of national memory, able to regain the past in an extremely accurate way, it also declines all the representational methods that would point to a possible, fragmented and partial representation of the past.

The belles-lettres also underwent the same process in the mid-nineteenth century: in the 1850’s criticism and literary history tried to define themselves as scientific methods of representing the world<sup>46</sup> and Arany’s epic poetry of this period can be viewed as a struggle in this sense.<sup>47</sup> The gradual specialization of historiography in the task of revealing ‘the accurate national past’ implied the articulation of the discipline as a specific discipline (not interchangeable with other disciplines), with specific values and truths (not substitutable with the values and truths of other disciplines), with specialists, specific institutions authorized to utter the truths specific to the discipline. This process of specialization brought about a reevaluation of the media and of the genres that can make statements on the past and stated the value of the different types of statements.

The change in the system of discourse about the past meant that another genre became quite unstable, was looking for new definitions. The historical novel, after a process of canonization several decades long (since the novel itself was hardly accepted as a genre of the Hungarian literary system, low down the poetical hierarchies of the first part of the century until the resounding success of Abafi published by Miklós Jósika

in 1836), lost its strategic position as mimetic representative of the national past after the novelistic achievements of Zsigmond Kemény in the 1840's–1860's.

In my opinion, the debate concerning the accurate reconstruction of the past within this genre and the possibilities and potentialities of this type of novel had, in fact, existed from the very beginning and throughout the career of the mimetic historical representations in the genre. Let me exemplify this statement with an excerpt from a letter by Zsigmond Kemény addressed to Miklós Jósika on December 15, 1845:

Another question: have you ever ignored the personal relationships of your heroes the way Goethe did in count Egmond's case? I found a manuscript in the manuscript archives of the Unitarians according to which Gyulai Pál's wife was a woman from the Füzy family and Jósika (about whom your novel will be written) ruined him because he was in love with his wife. I want to ignore both Gyulai's marriage and Jósika's wiles, indeed I have made my hero younger so as to have an adventure with a younger woman *cum honore*. The question is: is this allowed?<sup>48</sup>

This special state of affairs apropos the historical novel that caused it to vacillate from a complete refusal of its representations to high appreciation along the functions of another medium, that of historiography, from a contested epistemology within the framework of the novel itself to the necessity to redefine itself amid an altered literary and representational system. To my mind, this semi-stable, changing situation leads to the apparition of a paradigm of the Hungarian historical novel that – rather than trying to mimetically and accurately reconstruct a more or less remote past – reflects on the problems that arise from any discourse on the past.

The corpus is local since it is limited to several novels of Kálmán Mikszáth (and several novels of Mór Jókai that could be considered preliminaries of this subgenre of the historical novel), but it is paradigmatic in its considerable force that made the reception consider some of the questions raised by the texts.

*The New Story about Zrínyi*, which already from its title alludes to the epic tradition of the historical representation in general, and to the canonic epic poem written on the issue in particular, is the story of the sixteenth century patriot rising again from the dead together with his soldiers defeated in a decisive battle fought against Turkish forces. The act of



raising the heroes from the dead proves hasty and a mistake of the divine forces, signaling a rupture from the divine, centralized, teleological idea of history and the existence of an omniscient and omnipotent *first mover* and Providence-based character of the human occurrences from the very beginning of the story. At the same time the circumstance critically reflects on the genetic master narrative of the Western culture provided by the Bible. From the point of view of this master narrative, the story told by Mikszáth's novel is an illegitimate and non-canonic one and so are the main figures of the text from the point of view of canonic historical representation.

However, the ceaseless reflections on the canonic and traditional ways to represent the past often posed the questions of legitimacy / illegitimacy throughout the story. For instance, on seeing Jókai's mid-century successful play about him, a work also used as a major historical representation throughout the millennium, Zrínyi considers it to be mendacious. But neither is the narrator of the novel the omniscient story-teller one might have been used to: he often mentions that his knowledge is mediated by other texts, be it synchronic or diachronic, and that he got his news second-hand. The end of the novel employs an excerpt of the intertext it had already alluded to in its title: the canonic epic poem written by the poet-hero descendant of Zrínyi, reworking its semantics by qualifying the reality represented by the quoted verses as a 'dream'. Thus it brings to the forefront not only the importance of the medium of representation (the past represented in an epic poem has a wholly different ontology and epistemology from that represented in a historical novel), but also the historical character of the different representations: their intimate links with different traditions of historical representations in different periods.

And, last but not least, the novel under discussion foregrounds the issue of the authentic and the replica. According to the answer given in the text, no perfect replica is possible: for instance, not only the Bible is reworked when used, but when quoting a passage from Horatius' *Ars poetica* urging an *identical* death of the heroes with the original one, the figure of Patacsics changes the original *Haec decies repetita placebit* on the beauty of the identical occurrences into a vulgar Latin *Bis repetita placent*. Thus not even the canonic poetic discourse on the possibility of identical representation remains identical. Representation has always a novel ontology as compared to the original, being something new, itself an original, a re-presentation. And the central figure through which the

issue of the nature of historical knowledge (together with the agents and texts that produce and construct this knowledge) is brought up, is a semi-referential historical figure, existing in this form only through its representation within the novel. Such a non-canonic, semi-referential hero reminiscent of the figures, events and circumstances created by the Hungarian historical forgeries of the same century, is the focus of another unconventional historical novel by the same author, entitled *The speaking cloak*. The Turkish-Hungarian battles come to an abrupt end when the Hungarians of this latter novel receive from a Turkish leader the extraordinary present of a cloak that makes every Turk listen to whoever puts the cloak on. The Hungarians of Lőcse (to whom the cloak was given) are not able to discern the sign that makes the enemy yield to them every time it encounters the wearer of the cloak; they simply take the signifier of the sign for the invisible signified. Thus the attempt by an influential community member to sew an identical cloak inevitably ends in failure because he constructs the original sign in a completely different way than did those who created it. The concluding part of the text shows the famous nineteenth century Hungarian forger, Sámuel Nemes Literáti settling for the sake of posterity what had been a thorny question, even for those in Lőcse: the state of the original, 'speaking' cloak. Here, in this text, the presence of the forger itself poses questions on the nature of historical reconstruction, the epistemology of traditions belonging to different cultural communities, and questions regarding the problematic figure of the historian that decides in matters of the past.

The experience of the artefactual character of the re-constructed and re-presented national past, and the past in general, is much indebted to historical forgery as a phenomenon of nineteenth-century European culture. Viewed from this point it is not accidental that Mikszáth's reflexive historical novels are published in exactly the same period historiography finally decides to face the problem of a whole century of historical forgeries. The answer of disciplinary historiography and the type of novel with a wholly different epistemological tradition falls apart. The latter uses the experience of the historical forgeries to reflect on the epistemological nature of its own foundations and the foundations of the discourse on the past in general.

The experiences that shake historiography and its rankian epistemology and struggle to become a representative discipline are productive in another segment of Hungarian culture that had problems with the objectivistic project from its very beginning and had experienced a

changing status before the end of the 1890's. A paradigm of the historical novel becomes playful and ironic by integrating the value of the *possible* present in the phenomenon of historical forgeries, thus becoming a historical metafiction<sup>49</sup> reflecting on a wide range of possibilities of speaking about the past.

## 5. Imagining the past: geographies of bygone Hungarian times

The visual representation of the archaic times is not just another type of historical representation of nineteenth century Hungarian discourse on the past, but a strategy of legitimation in the era of pragmatic cultural discoveries in which becoming acquainted with things other than things known (either it parts of another or the same culture) became an aim in itself.<sup>50</sup>

Science has its poetics (a historical poetics, of course, changing from one historical epoch to another) and the imaginary geographies constructed on the archaic history of Hungary and Transylvania can be interpreted as an essential and organic part of this kind of poetical tradition of nineteenth century Hungarian culture. From this point of view, the conflicting imaginary geographies allude both to the different ways of conceptualizing the Hungarian past and to the different (some now canonized, some now prohibited) ways of conducting scientific investigation.

In this sense, a place to start with is the case of Magyarvár (The Hungarian Castle), an imagined, but symbolic place for all those in the nineteenth century who believed in the Caucasus-based origin of the Hungarians.

In the list of hypotheses on the origin of Magyarvár special status is accorded to travel diaries and their accounts of travelers since their 'direct experiences'. This type of verosimilic argument has led to the travel notes of Sándor Csoma Kőrösi begin quoted often by those who argue for the existence of Magyarvár throughout the nineteenth century. He himself is looking for the primeval Hungarian places more eastward, in the region of Bokhara (approximately in today's Uzbekistan). As regards their migratory route, he accepts without reserve the idea that they had also passed through Persia en route to Europe, as can be seen in the following quotation from his last will and testament formulated March 1, 1821, in

Teheran and published four years later in the periodical *Tudományos Gyűjtemény*:

From the foregoing it is clear that our ancestors started off from here as cultivated people centuries before Christ, and from here onwards they were headed for Arabia, maybe for Abyssinia, then Syria, Assyria, Armenia, Georgia, Russia, and Europe.<sup>51</sup>

In 1824, Gergely Jaksics returns to Asia, surprising a great many people when he is said to have reached the Caucasus, “the ancient Hungarian land”, having discovered also more than seven million people “mixed with Mohammedans, Persans and Mongols” and speaking Hungarian. If after forty years Ferenc Toldy rejects the ideas and experiences of Gergely Jaksics or Nazár Szabó, he nonetheless considers the ruins of Magyarvár a geographical reality beyond dispute.

A rival geography has its source in the Finno-Ugrian theory on the history of the Hungarians. In 1770, a Hungarian priest took sides regarding the alleged Finno-Ugric origin of the Magyars. János Sajnovics was, in fact, only one of a considerable number of scholars as, in general, literati like Strahlenberg, Pallas or Schlözer had been documenting with an increasing amount of linguistic material the alleged analogies between Hungarian and the different Finno-Ugrian languages. Western Siberia, or a region called Jugria (or Juhria) located in the northern part of Russia, began to be referred to ever more frequently. The main question that then arose was: how did the ancient Hungarians get to Scythia and where did they go to from there? From the south to Jugria or to the south from there? One thing was sure: the Finno-Ugrian conception (now canonized) brought about a theory that stirred many passions during the nineteenth century but also gave rise to a characteristic imaginary geography permeated with images used in utterly different ways by the adherents of the theory and its opponents.

Geographical images are sometimes highly historical. An imaginary homeland that still had adherents in the first three decades of the nineteenth century is related to the concept of the biblical origin of the Hungarian nation that goes back much further than the century in question. The original framework it fitted into before the nineteenth century was that of the divine origin and chosen nature of the Hungarians, making them similar to the biblical Jews. This narrative of similarity and chosenness produced both a positive self-view and an eschatological explanation for

the problematic and negative issues of the present and the past, having a teleological future of the promised divine care. The images associated with the biblical theory of the origins of the Magyars go hand in hand with the images of the Bible employing Egypt, Palestine, etc. It is worth dwelling on some excerpts from the works of a most zealous devotee of the concept, the historian István Horvát. In his courses delivered at the University of Pest, he sketched a universal, rather than a local history of his nation:

In the first instance it should be known that – according to Moses – the history of mankind begins with the history of the Hungarian nation. Moses was born in Egypt, he was educated there and his aim was not [from the beginning] to strongly encourage the knowledge of the Lord. That is why he could only write of the genesis which he had heard in Egypt. But the inhabitants of Egypt of that time were the Hungarians. In the Holy Scriptures no Egypt can be found, only *Maszar*. The word Egypt appears only later and means nothing more than Germany. So the Germans came to Egypt just after the Hungarians. They were called ‘those having a plait’ (*cofos*) or mutes, because they were forbidden to speak with other nations. [...] All the ancient writers agree on Egypt being the cradle of humankind, the land where those gigantic pyramids can be found that are called the columns of the Scythians, i.e. *Columnae filiorum Sethi*. The Holy Bible comprises many Hungarian words and the Arabic writers say that the first human was called Adam since God created him from earth. But his real name was Gyula. The ancient scholars often mention Vulcanus and ‘vulcanus’ means ‘to catch fire’. But ‘gyul’ means the very same.<sup>52</sup>

The enormous differences between the different conceptions are obvious. The theory of the biblical origin of the Hungarians can accept neither Jugria nor the assumption that the Hungarians originated from Central Asia. Adherents of the Finno-Ugric theory could hardly imagine strong links with the Caucasus or Persia, thus they were forced to deny any connection with the Huns, the Avars, the *Jász* and the *Párthus* people.

Thus we can see that the genetic master narratives all have their corresponding imaginary geographies. The rivalry between the ‘real’ homelands is also the rivalry of the imagined homelands, of their rival images.

An attempt to reconcile the diverging genetic master narratives was initiated at the end of the eighteenth century. However, the Pan-Hungarian idea – being the concept in question – met with failure owing to resistance

from Schlözer and his fellow-scholars. In fact, this failure of the Pan-Hungarian idea, together with the pragmatics of the afore-mentioned concepts of the genesis of the Hungarian nation, can be regarded as textbook examples of the cultural embeddedness and politics of every scientific idea and argumentation. For Schlözer,<sup>53</sup> and indeed for most Hungarians, having Finno-Ugric historical relationships implied a humiliating ancestry in an age when grand genetic links accorded the right to a glorious present. The struggle to assign the most ancient genesis possible to one's own community at times meant not only positioning oneself but positioning the other community, too – as is clearly shown by the allusion in Horvát's text to the genetic struggle between the Hungarians and the Germanic people.

The vindicative answer, much indebted to the role played previously by the *theodicaea*, has the form of a direct response on the level of diachrony to the alleged cultural backwardness, an argument advanced by many German scholars. In this context, when vindication is the *telos* of paramount force, the poetics of the sciences and of the theories associated with the discourse on the past are clearly defined by their power to argue for a diachronic viability of the nation. Thus the value of those theories and the imaginary geographies associated with them that appear to endanger the success of the vindicative process – such as the theory of the Finno-Ugric descent – is depreciated. For example, the density of discourse opposed to the theory of Finno-Ugric descent from this specific point of view can easily be discerned from the fact that the most influential periodical of the 1820's abounds with materials of this nature: taking, for example, the 1822 and 1822 volumes of *Tudománytár*, we find at least seven studies of considerable proportions that refute the Finno-Ugric theory in a vindicative way.<sup>54</sup>

The imaginary geographies of the Hungarian past in the nineteenth century are essentially images of imagined homelands.<sup>55</sup> The imaginary homelands of most importance for the genesis of the Hungarian nation can be regarded as refunctionalized components of national identity since the model of the pre-eighteenth/nineteenth century conception of the Hungarian nation has a structure based on the Hungarian (in the sense of *Hungarus*) aristocracy as the community legally representing the nation. On the other hand, the structuring privilege of the aristocracy is nothing but the value of personal genealogy.

Consequently, the aristocratic concept of self-definition and representative value also becomes a representative value within the new

structure and notion of the nation, despite the fact that the aristocracy was gradually losing its position, becoming the only community that can legally represent the whole national community.

Genesis and genealogy as concepts and as image-generating concepts dominate all the genres of nineteenth century Hungarian culture that attempted to represent the past of the nation. From the epic poems of Mihály Vörösmarty, Márton Debreczeni and Endre Horvát Pázmándi in the 1830's, to Ferenc Toldy's literary histories in the 1850's–1860's and the imaginary of the Kazinczy commemoration festivals of the same period,<sup>56</sup> all were structured on the model of the nineteenth century idea of the Hungarian nation (itself in turn partly structured on the aristocratic idea of self-representation) that was based in part on the idea of a glorious genesis and genealogy that could be retraced for the purposes of founding the present.

### ***5.1. The Hungarian millennium: discourses on the national past and communities of interpretation***

The construction of the Hungarian millennium as an event is a textbook example of the way the poetics and politics of history-making converge. In this sense the past is modeled not only according to an event that has taken place, but also by the passing on of the representation of the event and by the ideas of representation, values, and interests of the present in general, and of different communities of interpretation in particular.

By way of example, we may refer briefly to the premises and the first arrangements of the millennial celebrations, such as the decision for the correct date of the Hungarian conquest, and consequently the exact time for the celebrations. On October 17, 1892, the Hungarian government turned to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in order that the date of the conquest be decided. The board assigned this task would not take a common decision and three of the historians accepted to share their opinion with the assignor and the public. According to Gyula Pauler, it was only the time of the occupation of the lands beyond the Danube that could be considered the end of the conquest; he thus placed the event in the year 900. Ferenc Salamon held a similar opinion to Pauler but decided on the year 898. Károly Szabó declared that an accurate answer could not be given but was certain that by 898 the whole territory had already been conquered. The Hungarian academy of Sciences did not mediate between the three opinions and passed them on to parliament. Parliament,

after considering economic and political factors, decided in favor of the commemorative year 1895 (and implicitly for 895 as the year of Hungarian conquest), though in 1893 – reckoning there to be insufficient time for completion of the constructions – it modified the Act, codifying the year 1896 as the year of the millennial celebrations (and similarly the year 896 as the date to be celebrated).

Thus the final decision on the event to follow, and consequently on the nation-founding event that occurred in the past, was a political one that transcended the complex constructs and arguments of historians (who used it at the same time), illustrating well both the poetics and the use of the poetics, i.e., politics of the remembrance of the event<sup>57</sup> and the hierarchy of the decision-making factors of the framework and the space of power the remembered, re-constructed event is inscribed into. Given the relationship of the decision-making factors, the specialization of the politic subsystem of the Hungarian culture can be underlined; the increased decision-making power of the former allows often it to prevail over other subsystems (for instance, that of historiography) and take over their functions (for example, modeling of events, historical or not). However, the political subsystem of Hungarian culture was not the only medium to acquire new functions at the time of the millennial celebrations. The use of public space evidenced major differences as compared to the politics of remembering of the mid-century commemorations. The erection of statues and commemorative pulchres within the public space in honor of the literati and of major figures of Hungarian canonic history, the cult-like use in public of portraits and personal belongings of the same, and the rise of the humanist museums signal a paradigmatically changed attitude towards the literati and the humanist type of national culture and the idea of need for macrocommunal remembering in nineteenth century Hungarian culture from the 1830's onwards.<sup>58</sup> The millennial celebrations, and particularly the millennial exhibition as focus point of the celebrations can be considered a reconsideration of the literary cults, of their remembering techniques, and the historical culture in general, mainly owing to the latest technological achievements, both in the realization of the objects exhibited at the millennial exhibition and in foregrounding of technology as a phenomenon to be contemplated and remembered.

As part of the millennial exhibition, a whole village – the so-called millennial village – was built and presented as an accurate and successful reconstruction of the historical past: it had buildings and memorials that



evoked and allegedly represented the events considered of major importance in the Hungarian past. For example, a whole Turkish community was reconstructed from the time of the Ottoman occupation, including Turks, while even a fakir was brought from the Middle East. On the other hand, not only was historical past presented as something worth valuing, but the present was also accorded values that made it appear to rival the achievements of the historical past. The latter phenomenon similarly employed architectural entities: the building of many exhibition pavilions (considered works of art), new bridges over the Danube (presented as symbols of unity between the historical Buda and the new Pest), the erection of different but related monuments on various symbolically interpreted sites in Hungary and Transylvania, etc. This highlighted the new values attached to technical progress, but also that this technical progress was as a foremost value of the present, the achievements of the present being described with the representations and techniques formerly employed to represent the canonic events and realizations of the past. The greatness of the present is described in terms of representing the historical past since the representations of nineteenth century history mainly converged on the representations of achievements. The rising status of the present, of the synchronic events of Hungarian national community, also has its roots in nineteenth century Hungarian culture: from the issuing of Szilágyi's *Klió*, a historical journal dedicated to matters of the synchronic times, to the representations of the 1848 revolution in diaries and memoirs, and the assertions of the mid-century commemorations according to which the nation would celebrate itself by the remembering of its past glory and major figures.

On the other hand, however, the celebrated space of the present is not also a virtual space of the nation: the use and symbolic structuring of the public space of the whole Hungary and Transylvania (through the erection of memorials at interconnected locations) and the construction of a homogeneous national space by transforming the geographic spaces of the national community into cultural spaces – a fine example of the latter is given by the employing of pictures of 'representative' 'national' spaces in the official four-language millennial album entitled *The Millennium of Hungary and the National Exhibition*.<sup>59</sup> These procedures of constructing the national cultural space were based on former representations of the national space on the occasion of the mid-century commemorations of the literati. For instance the 1859–1860 commemorations in honor of Kazinczy took place in more than 120 places

around the country, affording participants a sense of relatedness and homogeneity. The major difference between the said procedures and millennial way of constructing common national space resides in the fact that the latter pushes to the margins the controlled and centralized character of the construction of the communal space in question.

By means of the special status and persuasive force of the politics of commemoration of the millennial exhibition, the latest technological achievements were often used to represent issues of the canonic past: technology thus becomes a canonic way of representing the past worthy of re-construction. For example, the influential daily paper *Fővárosi Lapok* informs us that

James Pale, the English pyrotechnist, famous for the fireworks at the Chicago exhibition and the organizer of the firework celebrations on the occasion of the coronation of the Tsar in Russia will stay in Budapest in the coming days. Throughout the whole exhibition he will present his splendid show every evening. The program will take place at the side of the exhibition called Constantinople. The illustrious pyrotechnist will display famous scenes of Hungarian history in images of fire: the christening of Vajk, Árpád lifted on the shield, the coronation of St. Stephen, King Matthias entering Vienna, Maria Theresa in the well-known scene of [the aristocrats uttering] ‘Vitam et sanguinem’, the coronation of our king etc.<sup>60</sup>

Pale’s case is not singular: from the balloon that could be hired to view the panorama of the exhibition, the main space of millennial representation, to the latest technological inventions exhibited in the different exhibition pavilions or the four mile ride across Budapest to the main gate of the exhibition with Europe’s first metro – all suggest use of the latest technology as an *independent representational object* (and not only as representational method, as in Pale’s case) of national representation. In fact, the phenomenon can be considered the outcome of a whole process already touched upon in former chapters: the increasing reputation of the sciences in Hungarian culture in the second half of nineteenth century and the subsequent change of the canonic representational methods and media this paradigmatic shift brought about. It has already been pointed out that nineteenth century Hungarian philology, interpreting its object in the framework of the representational process of the nation, had not only poetics, but also politics. Let us now pinpoint the same issue in the use of technology in the millennial celebrations. From the very moment of its canonization, science not

only changed the structure of the accepted and rejected ways of representing the nation, but was also changed through its being used to represent the national community: throughout the millennial celebrations the politics of its use is as evident as the poetics.

### **5. 2. All (?) in a book: the millennial album**

The official<sup>61</sup> commemorative album was another medium of canonic representation of the state of affairs of the millennial times that is worth discussing. The core of this chapter will focus on the way the album pictured some the allogens, contrasting it with the self-representation of the respective ethnic communities and with other representations of them respectively.

Ethnic communities were usually referred to once and pictured as coherent groups, thus making understanding them appear unproblematic. Indeed, this epistemology suggests the necessity of a 'simple' viewer and of a 'simple' view since the alleged plain character of the respective ethnic group (as opposed to that of the Hungarians who are presented from several perspectives and thus appear more complex) establishes a hierarchy of the Hungarians and the allogens in the album.

On the other hand, the album often positions the different ethnic communities by establishing a link between the Hungarian community and an allogen group and introducing subtle, value-loaded labels regarding the cultures in question. For instance, the Romanians are represented as fellows:<sup>62</sup>

Among the different races of Hungary, the Ruman (Walach) population, occupies, with regard to numbers, an important position. The [R]umanians came to Hungary, and Transylvania, in the fifteenth century, filling the gaps in the population, caused by the [T]urkish wars, and replacing the waning [H]ungarian population. Now they are steadily advancing in culture under the brotherly protection of the [H]ungarians. They are still shepherds and agriculturists, but are quickwitted, their customs are modest and their wants easily satisfied. Our picture represents the dwelling-place of a well-to-do [R]omanian peasant.<sup>63</sup>

The text not only describes, but also offers evaluations when presenting the Romanians: their advancement in matters of learning<sup>64</sup> is possible only due to the Hungarians, thus implying a collective civilizational gap

between the two groups.<sup>65</sup> The passage touching on the alleged needs of the Romanians is also heavily value-loaded: in a culture where the notion of the *specialist* is intimately linked to the notion of *refinement* (refined taste and refined knowledge)<sup>66</sup>, the lack of refinement regarding the needs, preferences and values of a community alludes to a rudimentary character of the very same group.

### 5. 3. 'Our paradise' vs. 'their decadence'

The homogeneity that is often underlined in the discourse of the millennium regarding the participation of the 'whole' nation in the millennial celebrations which also proves to be a recurrent idea in the album, covers up criticism of the ethnic groups, signaling both the contested nature of the idea of a homogenous unity and another interpretation of the notion of the nation. If the prevailing image of the official commemorations is that of a (re)new(ed) conquest based on the diachronic and synchronic achievements of the Magyar nation<sup>67</sup> (thus a reworking of the idea of power according to the new, canonic norms of knowledge, work and technological achievements), the rivaling image as put forward by the Romanian newspaper entitled *Tribuna* is that of a brute and pre-Christian force. In fact, the image and the attitude are the natural products of the process of *othering*: the Romanians were excluded from the canonic narrative of the original conquest (and thus from any possible new conquest) and take on the role attributed to them by the canonic Hungarian narrative, that of the defeated people seeing the conquerors in a wholly different way from the way the conquerors themselves see themselves:

It seems as if the pagan hordes were coming... The same invasion as a thousand years ago, but in another shape. They don't come on the backs of horses without saddle any more, but invade unscrupulously; they don't hit with their swords, but with the swords of *the power of the state*, with ministerial decrees and by taking legal action. The shapes have changed, but the essence has remained and it is observable at these millennial celebrations. It is their pagan character, a paganism that is intolerant and inimical towards anything that is Christian.<sup>68</sup>

In this context, when the excluded rival the ideas of those who have excluded them, all the qualities of the canonic thinking are critically

reworked: for example, the image of the official receptions is transformed into the image of orgies involving not only those considered to belong to the *other* community, but also those who are seen to have gone over to the *other* side by some deed of theirs:

In Făgăraș the first act of the millennial orgy took place in a way worthy of the equestrian people and to the historical significance of the doubtful and tragic event: the invasion of the hordes of Árpád of the beautiful hills and the enthralling valleys of Dacia in 896 (sic). All the characteristics of the Jewish-Hungarian nation have become clear: terrorism, gendarmes, trumpet-calls, binges, speculative transactions and the most clear evidence of Hungarian civilization of the thousand year-long Hungarian culture – the smashing of windowpanes.<sup>69</sup>

Or:

Do you know the identity of *Szerb*, the executive officer of the Act on the millennium? – He is *Gyuri Szerb*, one of those ‘Romanian’ deputies who argue that they represent the ‘people’ in the Hungarian Parliament. Gyuri Szerb is that *George Szerb*, who – though an ethnic Romanian and member of all the synods and congresses of the Romanian Orthodox Church – voted for all the so-called ‘church’ Bills; he is that *George Szerb* who is still member of the board of the *Gozsdu* foundation. He presented the Bill on the millennium. He played the role of the ‘civilian priest’ of the deathly solemn ceremony that took place yesterday. [...] only his – the ‘Romanian’s’ – lips were moving so as to utter the millennial prayer-law in the name of the Hungarian nation.

What an irony! [...] In the schools and churches the celebrations are ordered by the Romanian bishops, they themselves singing hymns for God and for the Hungarian race in the Romanian language. What an irony!<sup>70</sup>

The process of *othering* functions here according to a less discussed logic of the symmetric oppositions:<sup>71</sup> the way a community defines itself in such a relationship leads not only to a certain type of the definition of the *other*, but also to a certain way he is perceived by the *other* community. Thus this latter perspective is very much the product of the roles attached to the group in question by the perceiving community.

The images of the ethnic communities that contest the official millennial conceptions draw our attention to another aspect of the canon that they are repudiating: all the canonic texts and the rites of the

millennial celebrations have a norm-making role. They domesticate models of behavior, prescribe the accepted, the tolerated and the rejected attitudes towards the different narratives, events, deeds and communities and suggest the consequences of accepting or rejecting the models respectively. We can exemplify the statement as follows:

Young and old alike are in a fever of excitement because of the preparations for the millennium. The painter has taken out his brush, the writer his pencil, the blacksmith his hammer and the peasant his plough in order to create their most beautiful work in honor of the millennium. One hand was shaken by another so as to make this event the most monumental of all of events; to live to see it has become the wish of the wishes in all Hungarian hearts.<sup>72</sup>

At first sight the text seems generalizing, but harmless. However, if we follow the way it constructs entities, gives them identity, prescribes communities and the criteria that decide on membership in them or exclusion from them, we gain an understanding of the exemplifying and evaluative functions of the canonic millennial discourse. As for the text, the basic criterion for belonging to the Hungarian nation is that of intense participation in the millennial celebration: he who doesn't (want to) participate is positioned outside the community. The text thus establishes the borders of the Hungarian community and offers a possibility to those who wish to be a part of the nation. The excerpt also suggests models of participation at the celebrations, exemplifying the way the 'real' community members should behave throughout the commemorial event: according to the passage, participation should be active and unconditional.

As most of the images of the official celebrations are paradisiacal and allude to the possible rejuvenation of the Hungarian nation, and since every system is a relational one, in that every component defines how the other component will appear, it follows that the logic of contestation in a system that self-defines as paradisiacal will naturally be that of decadence. Thus, the image of eternal rejuvenation will normally be presented in a rival version as the beginning of the end:

The engine of this powerful tendency – writes somebody in *Tribuna* – is neither a sincere enthusiasm, nor a real patriotism, not in the least! In moments of lucidity all Hungarians and all their newspapers confess it. We have already quoted many voices that share this opinion. 'The nation' is

tired and enervated because of excesses and corruption, *it has grown old*. It is written all over its face and eyes how much it regrets buckling down to such a huge work.<sup>73</sup>

While the thousand years denote nothing other than the viability and an eternal rejuvenation of the Hungarian nation in ceremonial narratives, the same period of time is a decisive sign of old age and of the incapacity of the nation to carry out glorious deeds.<sup>74</sup> The formal and symbolical border of the thousandth year is obvious, but the values attached to it lead to completely different narratives on the past, present and future of the Hungarian nation.

#### **5. 4. ‘Our most beloved king’ or ‘our most beloved emperor’?**

The gestures of representation of the canonic celebrations can be viewed also in light of their rivalry with other conceptions of the Hungarian nation, the ethnic communities and the whole of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy respectively. Examples of this are given by another album, the first photo of which belongs to Francis Joseph I. He is labeled not as *emperor*, but as *king*:

A few decades of political liberty were sufficient to alter all of this [i.e., the backwardness of the country]. *Under the mild and glorious rule of our beloved King Francis Joseph I*, this country has been, so to speak, born again, and by its resources and natural elasticity it has attained in an incredibly short space of time, in leaps, all that other nations had to fight for over centuries, and every half decade now marks other bold advance in its progress.<sup>75</sup>

The labels are not neutral and insignificant since they denote different legal realities and different conceptual representations of community in post 1867 Hungarian culture. Much of the controversy preceding the Ausgleich of 1867 that led to the Dual Monarchy rested on a Hungarian argument that maintained that the notion of the emperor had no meaning in the Hungarian historical tradition. In the end Francis Joseph I was crowned *king* of the Hungarians a month prior to the Ausgleich.<sup>76</sup> Within this framework of cultural tradition, the millennial Hungarian practice<sup>77</sup> of calling Francis Joseph I king marks the way in which the millennial celebrations expropriated the figure of the leader of the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy.

The idea underlying the complex corpus of belles lettres, published by the daily *Fővárosi Lapok*, suggestively entitled *A Thousand Years in Verses* and written by twenty-seven poets, is a diachronic core and the history of the Magyars is presented as a history of those who had led the community in critical situations. The texts that might be of particular interest to this paper are those written on Maria Theresa and Franz Joseph I, being not only king / queen, but also emperor / empress. The text entitled *The tears of the queen* foregrounds the helping hand lent by the Hungarian Diet to Maria Theresa and does mention the fact that the heroine of the text is also the empress. Francis Joseph I, the protagonist of the last text in the telic narrative of the corpus in question is not only king of the Hungarians, but also a divinely elected leader sharing the qualities of the chosen nation. These strategies of representation aim to produce a historical narrative in which the possibility of any communion with any other community is out of the question: according to the logic of this strategy the genealogy of the community should be 'pure' in order that the community may have pretensions to a characteristic and unique past, present and future of its own.

Representations of this kind may be taken as counter narratives of concepts, such as those developed by the large enterprise entitled *The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in Texts and in Illustrations*. The twenty-one enormous volumes, edited by Archduke Rudolf, construct an empire that transcends national differences. Rudolf's preface, published widely in 1885, sketched also the idea behind the work:

In spite of some good preparatory works, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy still lacks an enterprise that would present its people, being the result of both the latest scientific research and the latest artistic means of reproduction. A work is missing that would produce an enthralling and didactic image of our homeland [!] and of its people.

The study dedicated to the people of the Monarchy presented huge opportunities to the scholars, and increased the patriotic love in a manner that cannot be neglected. The more we study the virtues of the people and their mutual interdependence, the more the feeling of solidarity and affinity that should unite the people of our country strengthen.

People that have been separated from other communities by their language, traditions and divergent development, will be pleasantly surprised to notice the scholarly interest in national character, and it will be this feeling that will push them to search for their spiritual center in the Monarchy.<sup>78</sup>



This vision of the Monarchy, and implicitly of Hungary as well, is totally different from that which comes to the foreground throughout the millennial celebrations. It is a vision that enfolds the Hungarian community (and also the Romanians from Hungary) in a structure that is not on the same level with the people that constitute it. The characteristics of the structure transcend the particular qualities (such as language, traditions, a unique and specific history) that constitute the different nations of the Monarchy, underlining constituents as a common sense based on a mutual, diachronic and synchronic interdependence both in “a spiritual and a material sense”.<sup>79</sup> The millennial celebrations outline that the idea of a macroregion, a *Mitteleuropa* was widely contested by the state-nation logic of the millennial Hungarian national community that celebrated its thousand-year existence.<sup>80</sup>

In conclusion: the millennium as an event was not only a celebration of the Hungarian community, but also a complex system of rival values on the self-perception and identification of several communities, the framework that gave rise to analogous and conflicting representations of the role and fate of different communities (be they national, social or ethnic), of their position in respect of different *types of communities*. The millennium thus became the phenomenon through which, in contrast with which, and along which, individuals and communities of interpretation with different values could define their significances and roles.

## **6. In lieu of conclusion**

But we cannot avoid remaking our heritage, for every act of recognition alters what survives. We can use the past fruitfully when we realize that to inherit is also to transform.<sup>81</sup>

## NOTES

- 1 Illuminating on this matter are: VEYNE, Paul, *Comment on écrit l'histoire*, Éditions du Seuil, 1971; WHITE, Hayden, *Metahistory. The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, The Johns Hopkins U. P., Baltimore, 1973; idem, *Tropics of Discourse. Essays in Cultural Criticism*, The Johns Hopkins U. P., 1978.; idem, *The Content of the Form. Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*, The Johns Hopkins U. P., Baltimore, 1987.; HOBBSBAWM, Eric – RANGER, Terence, ed., *The Invention of Tradition*, New York, 1983.; LA CAPRA, Dominick, *Rethinking Intellectual History. Texts, Contexts, Language*, Cornell U. P. 1985 (1983); SMITH, Anthony D., *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Oxford, 1986; Anderson, Benedict: *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London, 1989.
- 2 The view is indebted to Gadamer's hermeneutic conception on the possibility of interpreting the past, but is skeptical regarding the possibility of a perfect dialogue between the past and the present: GADAMER, Hans-Georg, *Wahrheit und Methode*, J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), Tübingen, 1975, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.
- 3 The policy statement of the Academy published in the first volume of its yearbooks states – among other things – that the Society should polish and protect the language since by means of national language “the nation is not just a group of people, but a respected national body that rules over others, as did Greece over Rome”. *A Magyar Tudós Társaság Évkönyvei*, I.(1831–1832.), Trattner-Károlyi, Pest, 1833, 3.
- 4 See the materials published in PACH, Zsigmond Pál, chief ed., *A magyar Tudományos Akadémia másfél évszázada*, Akadémiai Publishing House, Budapest, 1975.
- 5 *A Magyar Tudós Társaság Évkönyvei*.
- 6 For previous, post-Enlightenment views on the Hungarian language see CSETRI, Lajos, *Egység vagy különbözőség? Nyelv- és irodalomszemlélet a magyar irodalmi nyelvújítás korszakában*, Akadémiai Publishing House, Budapest, 1990, 11–103.
- 7 Some excellent general studies of the issue: SZÜCS, Jenő, *A magyar nemzeti tudat kialakulása*, Balassi Publishing House – JATE – Osiris Publishing House, Budapest, 1997.; with particular focus on literary aspects: TARNAI, Andor, *Extra Hungariam non est vita...(Egy szállóige történetéhez)*, Akadémiai Publishing House, Budapest, 1969.
- 8 ERDÉLYI, János, “Népköltészet és kelmeiség”, in *Nyelvészeti és népköltészeti, népzenei írások*, Akadémiai Publishing House, Budapest, 1991, 194.
- 9 Closer inspection shows that many links can be established between the representations of an aristocratic tradition perceived for several centuries as truly and exclusively representing the nation and the nineteenth-century

- Hungarian literature that attempted to define itself as the *par excellence* medium for representing that same Hungarian nation. Here I will only mention the exclusive character of belonging to the representational groups in question, the symbolism of dueling in the literary criticism of the 1850's alluding to the canonic form of protection in all matters of honor in the aristocratic circles of the period, and the fact that the vast majority of writers to establish a canonic institution, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, were also noblemen.
- <sup>10</sup> GAAL, György, *Magyar népmesegyűjtemény*, ed. Gábor Kazinczy and Ferenc Toldy, Pest, 1857-1859, III., IV-VII.
- <sup>11</sup> GYULAI, Pál, "Adalék népköltészetünkhöz", in *Kritikai dolgozatok 1854-1861*, edition of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, 1908, 308.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, 318-319.
- <sup>13</sup> For a critical insight into the overvaluing of textuality and the historical consequences of this phenomenon see the writings of the famous collection of papers: CLIFFORD, James – MARCUS, E. George, *Writing Culture. The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, University of California Press, 1986.
- <sup>14</sup> GYULAI, Pál, "Adalék népmeséinkhez" in *Kritikai dolgozatainak újabb gyűjteménye 1850-1904*, edition of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, 1927, 50.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, 51.
- <sup>16</sup> The correspondence between Kriza János and Gyulai Pál is a fragmented, as is all of Kriza's correspondence. Most of Kriza's letters have been preserved in the archives of the Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, Budapest. For their incomplete publication see: KRIZA, János, ed., *Vadrózsák. Székely Népköltészeti Gyűjtemény*, Athenaeum Publishing House, Budapest, 1911, 378-416.
- <sup>17</sup> The son of Arany János. The edition referred to: ARANY, László, *Eredeti népmesék*, Pest, 1862.
- <sup>18</sup> Kriza János to Gyulai Pál: Kolozsvár, August 12, 1862, National Széchényi Library, Correspondence Archives.
- <sup>19</sup> Kriza János to Gyulai Pál: Kolozsvár, 29. October 1862, National Széchényi Library, Correspondence Archives.
- <sup>20</sup> Kriza János to Gyulai Pál: Kolozsvár, November 19, 1862, National Széchényi Library, Correspondence Archives.
- <sup>21</sup> Gusztáv Wenzel, "Magyar történelem vagyis történetkutatás, történettudás és történetírás Magyarországon" (Hungarian History Namely Historic Research, Historic Knowledge and Historiography in Hungary), *Kelet Népe* 1856: 1, p. 139.
- <sup>22</sup> Pál Gyulai, "Thaly Kálmán Bottyán Jánosról" (Kálmán Thaly on János Bottyán), *Budapesti Szemle* 1867: 8, p. 369.
- <sup>23</sup> For an other types of interpretation on the issue of beautiful history see: RICOEUR, Paul, "Expliquer et comprendre. Sur quelques connxions remarquables entre théorie du texte, la théorie de l'action et la théorie de

- l'histoire", in *Du texte á l'action. Essais d'hermeneutique*, II. Coll. Esprit, Éd. du Seuil, Paris, 1986, 161-183.; RÜSEN, Jörn, *Lebendige Geschichte: Grunzüge einer Historik III. Formen und Funktionen des historischen Wissens*, Göttingen, 1989.
- 24 My usage of the term follows that of Fish: FISH, Stanley E., *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1980. For a Hungarian critical debate on the issue of interpretive communities see: KÁLMÁN, György C., ed., *Az értelmező közösségek elmélete*, Balassi Publishing House, Budapest, 2001.
- 25 Different but nonetheless interesting and challenging interpretations on the issue of forgery that influenced my argument, are: Corino, Karl, hrgs., *Gefälscht! Betrug in Literatur, Kunst, Musik, Wissenschaft und Politik*, Greno, Nördlingen, 1988.; STAFFORD, Fiona J., *The Sublime Savage. A Study of James Macpherson and the Poems of Ossian*, Edinburgh University Press, 1988.; GRAFTON, Anthony, *Forgers and Critics. Creativity and Duplicity in Western Scholarship*, Princeton University Press, 1990; JONES, Mark, ed., *Why Fakes Matter. Essay on Problems of Authenticity*, British Museum Press, London, 1992.; RADNÓTI, Sándor, *Hamisítás*, Magvető Publishing House, Budapest, 1995.
- 26 The essence of this partly ethnic debate is based on the fact that a family answering to the name of Sándor sent the chronicle to the Transylvanian Society for the Cultivation of the Hungarian Language. It contained an allegedly authentic copy of text from 1533, authenticated in 1695 and appearing suddenly in 1796.
- 27 See for instance GAÁL, György – SZEMETHY Imre – BANGA Ferenc, *A' tudós palótz, avagy Furkáts Tamásnak Mónosbélbe lakó sógor-urához irtt levelei*, I-II., Budapest, 1999. [originally published in 1803–1804.]. For an overall survey of the image of the regional culture at issue in this period see: KERÉNYI, Ferenc, "Lisznyai Kálmán és a palóc „kelmeiség” in Nógrád megyei múzeumok évkönyve, 1976, 281–297.; KÓSA, László, "A palócok néprajzi kutatása a kezdetektől az 1960-as évekig", in *Palócok. I. Kutatástörténet, föld és nép*, ed. BAKÓ, Ferenc, Eger, 1989, 9-28.; SZILÁGYI, Márton, "Lisznyai Kálmán és a palócok regionális műveltségének romantikus képe", in HOFER, Tamás, ed., *Népi kultúra és nemzettudat*, Budapest, 1991, 61-69.
- 28 For an interesting sample of this type of argument see: HORVÁT, István, *Rajzolatok a magyar nemzet legrégebb történeteiből*, Pest, 1825, 45-46.
- 29 For Herder's influence on the anthropological thinking of the first half of the nineteenth century: S. VARGA, Pál, „... az ember véges állat...” (A kultúrantropológia irányváltása a felvilágosodás után – Herder és Kölcsey), Kölcsey Society, Fehérgyarmat, 1998. Other, partial accounts on the same topic: SZEGEDY–MASZÁK, Mihály, "Fejlődési szakaszok Kölcsey világszemléletében és költészetfelfogásában", in *Világkép és stílus*, Gondolat Publishing House, Budapest, 1980. ; FENYŐ, István, *Az irodalom*

- respublikájáért. Irodalomkritikai gondolkodásunk fejlődése 1817–1830*, Budapest, 1876, 77, 163–165, 231. For a general overview on the heritage of Herderian anthropology see: GRAWE, Christian, *Herders Kulturanthropologie*, Bonn, 1967.
- 30 ERDÉLYI, János, “Népköltészetéről”, in *Nyelvészeti és népköltészeti, népzenei írások*, ed. T. ERDÉLYI, Ilona, Akadémiai Publishing House, Budapest, 1991, 101.
- 31 The philological arguments regarding its forged character are largely dealt with in: TOMPA, József, *A művészi archaizálás és a régi magyar nyelv*, Akadémiai Publishing House, Budapest, 1972, 289.
- 32 One of the paradoxes of his figure and attitude is that he still acted obviously like an orthodox Hungarian in questions of forced Magyarization of the allogens, his level of knowledge of the Hungarian language is much lower than the general *literati* knowledge of Hungarian of the 1830s-1840s – as appears from his travel diary: „Azt kérdé töllem egy fő ember nagy reményű fia, ’s következendőképp Hazánk is készülődő Oszlopa mosolyogva. Ha van é tudtomra, hogy Pirkér Pátriárcha esmét német Odákkal szaporította az Univeransom könyvtömegét. Nints mondám, ’s mintha nem is hinném, vagy tánn nem hallotta a Pátriárcha, midön Bajza menydörgő hangal így szollott. Nem lehet jo Hazafi kit a haza minden javaival halmozván ’s még is idegen nyelvenm ir. Én jámbor utazo philosoph esmerve szinte mindaz n[agy]s[ágo]d magyar gondolkodása formáját, tudám, hogy ezen hirt tudni vagy nem tudni kevesen méltányolyák, hanem én is mint Hazafi ohajtom, hogy légyen ez legesleg utolso ilyesmi írása a’ jo Patriárchának Skofiummal vart ezüst sujtásos életébe.” National Széchényi Library, Manuscript Archives Fol. Hung. 3006, II, 31-33 folio. The solecisms and misspellings of the diary can not be translated, thus the purpose of the following translation is to give an idea of Literáti’s orthodox ideas regarding Hungarian language and its spread: “A leader’s son – therefore a future pillar of our homeland – asked me smiling whether I had already learned that patriarch Pyrker had increased the amount of books of the universe with German odes again. No – replied I – and I didn’t even believe it, or hadn’t he heard Bajza’s stentorian voice uttering that no one can be a good patriot who – in spite of being heaped with all the kindness by his /her homeland – writes in a foreign language. I for one, the simple traveler, knowing Your Highness’ views on Hungarian matters, I realized that few will appreciate knowing or not knowing the news. But as a patriot I, too, wish for this writing to be the very last of the good patriarch in his life.”
- 33 The travel diary was written for his assignor, so it is might be considered at least as relevant for the values of his assignor as for the attitudes of Literáti himself.
- 34 National Széchényi Library, Manuscript Archives Fol. Hung. 3006/II, 79 folio, recto and verso.

- 35 For the definition of vindication in the context of Hungarian literary system and an excellent example of its use, see: DÁVIDHÁZI, Péter, “Az Úrnak útait az emberek előtt igazgatni”. *A Bessenyei fivérek és a vindicatio szerephagyománya*, in *Per passivam resistentiam. Változatok hatalom és írás témájára*, Argumentum Publishing House, Budapest, 85–101.
- 36 BOURDIEU, Pierre, “Espace social et pouvoir symbolique”, in *Choses dites*, les Éditions de Minuit, 1987, 147–167.
- 37 HERMANN, Ottó, “Gróf Zichy Jenő utazása Kaukázusban”, in *Budapesti Szemle* 253, 1898, 252, 127, 129, 132, 137. For similar opinions on the issue see: MIKSZÁTH, Kálmán, “Hermann Ottó és Zichy Jenő”, in *Országos Hirlap*, January 5, 1898, 7.
- 38 For a reevaluation of these aspects see: SOÓS, István, *Horvát István és a történeti segéd tudományok*, candidate’s thesis, Budapest, 1994, in The Manuscript Archives of The Hungarian Academy of Sciences, D 17.533.
- 39 The letter addressed to Fábíán Gábor by Toldy Ferenc on September 15, 1873 was published by Kara Győző: “Fábíán Gábor levelezése”, in *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények*, 1893, 238.
- 40 *Urkunderbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen*, von Frank ZIMMERMANN und Karl WERMER, Ier Band: 1191 bis 1342, Hermannstadt, 1892.
- 41 TAGÁNYI, Károly, “Történeti irodalom”, in *Századok* 1893, 52.
- 42 For the definition of the concept followed see: HALBWACHS, Maurice, *On Collective Memory*, Chicago U. P., 1992; CONNERTON, Paul, *How societies remember*, Cambridge University Press, 1989; OLICK, Jeffrey K. – ROBBINS, Joyce, “A társadalmi emlékezet tanulmányozása: a ‘kollektív emlékezettől’ a mnemonikus gyakorlat történeti szociológiai vizsgálatáig, *Replika*, September 1999, 19–44.
- 43 TAGÁNYI, Károly, “Történeti irodalom”, in *Századok* 1893, 56.
- 44 KARÁCSONYI, János, *A hamis, hibáskeltő és keltezetlen oklevelek jegyzéke 1400-ig. [A Történelmi Tár 1908. évi számában megjelent pótlásokkal kiegészítve ...]*, ed. and preface by KOSZTA, László, Szeged, 1988, XVI (originally published in 1902).
- 45 *Ibidem*, XI–XII.
- 46 See the polemics of the 1850s on the functions and forms of criticisms: for instance GYULAI Pál, “Vita és felhívás (Egressy Gábornak)”, *Pesti Napló*, February 7, 1856; SÜKEI Károly, “Kritika és művészet I – II”, *Szépirodalmi Lapok*, 15–16., 1853.
- 47 See for instance his minute historical research for a scientifically correct narrative and his use of footnotes in *Buda halála*.
- 48 JÓSIKA, Miklós, *Idégen, de szabad hazában*, Szépirodalmi Publishing House, Budapest, 1988, 435.
- 49 The notion is investigated thoroughly in HUTCHEON, Linda, *A Poetics of Postmodernism. History, Theory, Fiction*, Routledge, London, 1992<sup>2</sup>. According to her definition the heroes of historical metafiction “are anything

but proper types: they are the marginalized, the peripheral figures of fictional history; even the historical personages take on different, particularized, and ultimately eccentric status". *Ibidem* 113.

50 For theoretical and practical perspectives on the issue see: BARTHES, Roland, *Image, Music, Text*, ed. HEATH, Stephen, New York, 1977; BIRMINGHAM, Ann, *Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition, 1740–1860*, London, 1986.; GASKELL, Ivan, "Visual History" in BURKE, Peter, ed., *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, Cambridge, 2000, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 187–217. HASKELL, Francis, *History and its Images*, New Haven, 1993.

51 "Hiteles tudósításokból merített tudósítás Kőrösi Csoma Sándor iránt", in *Tudományos Gyűjtemény*, 1825.

52 HORVÁT, István, *Magyar irodalom. Horvát István pesti egyetemi előadásai után*, 1832.

53 Schlozer, *Abkunft von Magyaren*, Presburg, 1827.

54 KOVÁCS, Sámuel, "A magyarokról és a törökökről", *Tudományos Gyűjtemény*, VI., 1822.. HORVÁT Endre, "A magyar nemzet nem finnugor eredetű", *Tudományos Gyűjtemény* II, 1823.; RUMY, Károly, "Madzsar, azaz a magyarok bölcsője", *Tudományos Gyűjtemény*, IX, 1825; DERECSEKEI FODOR, Gábor, "A magyarok ősi eredete", *Tudományos Gyűjtemény*, IX, 1825; SZABÓ György, "megjegyzések a magyarok eredetéről", *Tudományos Gyűjtemény*, IV, X, 1825; Y [FEJÉR, György], "Az ősi magyar telepekről", *Tudományos Gyűjtemény*, IX, 1825.

55 For an overview of similar relationships in another case see: WHITE, Richard, *Inventing Australia. Images and Identity 1688–1980*, George Allen–Unwin, Sydney–London–Boston, 1981.

56 In this sense the literati are imagined as the founders of a certain period of national and/or literary history. Many other links can also be identified between the models of representation and self-definition of the Hungarian aristocracy and the way nineteenth-century Hungarian literati define themselves, the discipline they work within, the cultural subsystem they belong to and the relationship of this subsystem to the culture as a system. The literati trying to define themselves as a community that represents the whole nation reach for values like those of the triumphant and combative character of the epic poem derived from an aristocratic tradition of self-representation. For instance, the commemorations dedicated to the figure of Ferenc Kazinczy insist on the metaphor of his reconquering the language lot by Attila, the chieftain in ancient times. Indeed, in this case the image of the triumphant literati is combined with the characteristics of the chosen representative of the nation, a recurrent idea in historically earlier models of the nation (embodied in its historical form of the chosen biblical Hungarian nation chiefly by the already treated István Horvát): "Kazinczy was a divine gift of God, otherwise he couldn't have sacrificed himself at the proper time and in the right place. Kazinczy's genius realized the importance of the language at the proper time and he was given the necessary courage to

- found a wholly new way, to conquer all the impediments, and to take heart to endure all the sufferings. That's why the nation can pray: 'Lord, You haven't left us alone.' " (DESSEWFY, Emil, "Zárszó", in *Akadémiai emlékkönyv a Kazinczy Ferenc születése évszázados ünnepéről*, Pest, 1859). Thus, the image of Moses associated with Kazinczy throughout the commemorations can also be seen a refunctionalized image of this older model of the history and present of the Hungarian nation as the chosen nation of the Holy Bible. In this sense, though refuted in the 1820's-1830's, the conceptions represented by Horvát as disciplinary historical views indirectly recur in the 1850's–1860's as images of *commemorative representation* of the past.
- 57 The argumentation of the chapter regarding commemorative remembering relies implicitly on: LOWENTHAL, David, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, Cambridge U. P., 1985.; ASSMANN, Jan und Aleida, hrsg., *Kanon und Zensur. Archäologie der literarischen Kommunikation II.*, Wilhelm Fink Verlag, München, 1987.; ASSMANN, Aleida, hrsg., *Zeit und Tradition. Kulturelle Stratiefien der Dauer*, Böhlau Verlag, Köln–Weimar–Wien, 1999.; HUTTON, Patrick H., *History as Art of Memory*, University of Vermont, Hannover–London, 1993.
- 58 For a general factual overview of the commemorations of the late literati throughout the nineteenth century see PRAZNOVSZKY, Mihály, "A szellemdialom ünnepei". *A magyar irodalom kultikus szokásrendje a XIX. század közepén*, Mikszáth Publishing House, Budapest, 1998. For an excellent conceptual interpretation and the starting point of the Hungarian literary cult interpretations, see DÁVIDHÁZI, Péter, "Isten másodszültje". *A Shakespeare-kultusz természetrajza*, Gondolat Publishing House, Budapest, 1989.
- 59 *The millennium of Hungary and the national exhibition. A collection of photographic views of the most interesting parts of the country, of town and art-treasures of Hungary, as also of the most noteworthy objects in the exhibition*, published by LAURENCIC, Julius, Budapest, 1896.
- 60 *Fővárosi Lapok*, April 5., 1896, 23.
- 61 According to one of its explanatory subtitles the album was "published under the Patronage of the R. H. Ministry of Commerce, by order and with the cooperation of the Board of directors of the R. H. State-railways [!] and the Millenary Exhibition"
- 62 When quoting from the album, I always use the English version, signaling segments that differ.
- 63 *Az ezeréves Magyarország és a milléniumi kiállítás. Magyarország legszebb tájainak, városainak és műkincseinek valamint a kiállítás nevezetességeinek fényképgyűjteménye*, ed. PIVÁNYI Ernő et al., 1896.
- 64 Due to different uses of the term *culture* in this paper, I have used the term *learning* to indicate the meaning of the term used in the album.



- <sup>65</sup> For a theoretical note on the phenomenon see LEERSEN, Joep, "The Allochronic Periphery. Towards a Grammar of Cross-Cultural Representation", in BARFOOT, C. C., ed., *Beyond Pug's Tour. National and Ethnic Stereotyping in Theory and Literary Practice*, Rodopi, Amsterdam, 1997, 285.
- <sup>66</sup> The professionalizing process of the Hungarian society commences chiefly at the beginning of the 1840's, a first sign of this process in the subsystem of belles lettres of the cultural system being the appearance of the professional writer who lives solely on the economic equivalent of his texts. While in the 1840's the attitude towards Sándor Petőfi, the first Hungarian literati to live on the economic equivalent of his texts, led to a bitter controversy, the 1850's brought an *éclat* for the concept. The debates show how not only that the notion of the *wages* as the equivalent of the work done, but also how the notions of the place of work and of the working hours as values and norms had a changing and ambiguous status. In the 1880's–1890's we are already at the end of this process of professionalization in which the bourgeois attitude towards work that redefined the value of work became a canonic attitude. These changes produce also the notion of the specialist (as opposed to the dilettant – a concept with no negative aspect till the 1830's), he who extends his knowledge in a realm needing particular training, having special skills in a restricted area, understanding the complexity of the state of affairs by means of his / her refined deep and refined preparations. (For some brief remarks on the appearance of the economic equivalent of text-production as the basis for living see MARGÓCSY, István, *Petőfi Sándor. Kísérlet*, Korona Publishing House, Budapest, 1999, 51–52; a theoretic survey is given on the process of professionalization in literature and the arts in general in BOURDIEAU, Pierre, *The Rules of Art. Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, trans. EMANUEL, Susan, Polity Press, 1996).
- <sup>67</sup> For instance: "The first millennium of the conquest of the homeland has come to an end. And it ended in a very honorable way. The Hungarian nation has found itself. Its heart is in a perfect harmony with its reason. Though it has preserved its fighting spirit, it can be considered as the guardian of peace. It doesn't fight with other nations, but competes with them: it surrounds oneself with friends, not with enemies. But the new millennium would like to be the epoch of the new conquest of the homeland. The territory conquered a thousand years ago and preserved by so much shedding of blood, the new Hungary is waiting for a new conquest by means of the spirit, the reason and work." JÓKAI Mór, *Utószó*, in *A magyar nemzet története*, ed. SZILÁGYI, Sándor, vol. X, Budapest, 1898, 837.
- <sup>68</sup> "Mileniul – păgân", *Tribuna*, April 10/22, 1896, 2.
- <sup>69</sup> "Tămbălăul millenar [!] la Făgăraș", *Tribuna*, May 2/14, 1896, 386.
- <sup>70</sup> "Ironia momentului", *Tribuna*, April 11/23, 1896.

- 71 KOSELECK, Reinhart, “Zur historisch–politischen Semantik asymmetrischer Gegenbegriffe”, in *Vergangene Zukunft: Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten*, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1979.
- 72 SZMOLLÉNY, Nándor – LIPTAI, Károly, *Magyarország ezredik éve*, Szeged, 1896, 35.
- 73 *Tribuna*, April 11/23, 1896, 1.
- 74 For the general treatise and the philosophical background of these motifs at the turn of the century in British culture see: DOWLING, Linda, *Language and Decadence in the Victorian Fin de Siècle*, Princeton U. P., 1986.
- 75 LAURENCIC, Julius, *A Thousand Years!* = Szmollény Nándor – Liptai Károly, *Magyarország ezredik éve (Mileniul maghiar)*, Szeged, 1896, 3.
- 76 On June 8, 1867 Franz Joseph I signed the Act that decreed the Ausgleich on July 28, 1867.
- 77 The exceptions are rare in comparison with the cases that conform to the rule.
- 78 RUDOLF, the crown prince, *Az osztrák–magyar monarchia írásban és képbén. Bevezetés, Vasárnapi Újság* 1885, no. 48, 774.
- 79 *Ibidem*.
- 80 It is worth noting that in their official protest the ethnic communities contesting the celebrations repeat almost identically Rudolf’s ideas of a microregion and the role of the different people that live in it: see *The Protest of the Romanians, the Serbs and of the Slovaks against the Millennial Celebrations*.
- 81 LOWENTHAL, David, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, Cambridge U. P., 1985, 412.