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Special Volume:

Thousand Years of Hungarian Thought

Compiled and edited by

George Bisztray

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special volume:

Thousand Years of Hungarian Thought

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George Bisztray

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Preface

When the Hungarian Chair was established at the University of Toronto in 1978, I was encouraged to introduce a course on Hungarian civilization. After short-lived success, the course had to be cancelled because there were no primary texts available in English to represent Hungarian culture in a challenging and interesting way. This was a painful recognition which I intended to remedy somehow. Two of my language courses gave me an opportunity to introduce practical translation into the curriculum. The students received excerpts from writings of outstanding Hungarians. The length of the selections was not demanding, yet the qualitative criteria were rigorous. While working on these interesting texts, the students gradually developed the first reader of Hungarian culture in English. The names of the students, and the year in which they attended the Hungarian language courses, are listed with appreciation on the next page (p. iv). They have performed a service of which Hungarians should be proud. Since our world is a colourful mosaic of cultures, among which the Hungarian one is little known, interested English speakers to whom this culture has now been made accessible will appreciate the achievement of these young men and women.

Hungary has many people, past and present, whose ideas should interest the world. Some of them are featured in this volume. Many others would also deserve to be included. The purpose of this collection is not to overwhelm the reader, nor to catch up in one leap with long decades of missed opportunities to represent Hungarian culture. One can but hope that this first attempt will not be the last one.

George Bisztray
Toronto, 2000

Students who have helped to develop this reader:

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Introduction: Decoding Anonymous

In one of the parks of Budapest one can see a sculpture featuring a sitting figure in a monk's garb, with the hood pulled down over the face. While the statue is relatively recent (sculpted by Miklós Ligeti in 1903), the model is centuries old. It represents the medieval King Béla III's court notary whose name is still unknown. He is therefore customarily called Anonymous, and celebrated as the first chronicler of the Hungarians. Closer inspection reveals that the sitting figure has no face. That is, he has cheeks, a nose, and eyes, but no individual features. As such, he is indeed a puzzling epitome of a historical mystery.

So are Hungarians. Their language has been identified, but their ethnic prehistory has not been. Their obsession with their origins is similar to that of an orphan without a clue about his parentage. More self-assured nations may not understand such a fixation. Yet, a culture represented by some 15 million speakers of the same language (of whom 10,200,000 form Europe's ninth most populous nation) is more than an anthropological rarity, such as a vanishing group of a few hundred speakers. In spite of all their proverbial pessimism and self-pity, Hungarians don't appear to be perishing. For a small nation that has endured severe setbacks in modern times, Hungarians play a larger role than their numbers and the size of their economy warrant in the affairs of a turbulent region of Europe.

Unfortunately, whoever takes an interest in their culture is still faced with a difficult dilemma: either to learn their language or to rely on less-than-adequate secondary information on Hungarian history and culture. Hungarians have been unable to bring their achievements to the attention of the world. Their outstanding thinkers, scholars, educators, and writers are virtually unknown abroad, due to a near-complete lack of translations.

This reader constitutes an attempt to fill this hiatus, presenting in the English language a representative selection of discursive prose by twenty-four eminent Hungarians of the past one thousand years. Besides allowing insight into the tenuous phenomenon called "national character," some of the published reflections will probably strike the reader as quite original, even pioneering, ideas. This selection of documents did not aim to gain the approval of one or another group of Hungarians or to illustrate an all too familiar phenomenon — consequently, neither the list of names nor the issues were intended to be definitive.

An introduction to different thematic units, notes explaining different references in the text, a short biography of the authors and information about the translated texts, and a chronological summary of historical events mentioned in the volume, are meant to facilitate the construction of a historical and logical context. While the method of compilation may not meet general approval, those who are able to compare the translations with the unabridged Hungarian text will find that the selection was kept as balanced as possible.

All the chosen texts appear here in new translation, but some are already available in English, in old publications which can be found only in a handful of large research libraries of the North American continent. Such are Széchenyi's works, *Hitel* (On Credit) and *Világ* (Light), published in translation in 1900; Kossuth's "Danubian Confederation" (1942); and Bartók's two essays published in our collection, which appeared in English in a collective volume in 1976. None of these works were excerpted and/or published with the editorial intent of this volume.

Cultural studies have taken an upswing in recent years. Under the fashionable banner of political correctness, it has been assumed that European cultures were sufficiently mapped up by now, and only the vast third world needed attention. The present volume will try to prove otherwise, making the reader more familiar with a culture at the very heart of Europe — a culture less accessible so far than many others on the globe.

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I. Myth: The Foundation of Historical Consciousness

Myth has several definitions — partly because there are several kinds of myth. Generally, it can be defined as an independent story, or a set of interrelated ones, which explains humanity's place in the universe and society. Each myth is the product of a certain culture; therefore, it reflects the values and the frame of reference of a specific society. While classical myths transfer the familiar human world onto a magical and allegorical plane, in their more recent forms myths can narrate seemingly quite authentic events in a realistic manner. This definition is suited to the readings pertinent to our studies.

There are two major mythological themes. One deals with the origins and order of the world, and introduces divine characters. Hungarians did not have such myths, nor an explanation for the creation of mankind. Little is known about the Magyars' ancient religion — it is assumed that, unlike other ancient peoples, they worshipped a single God. Their rich mythological tradition relies on the other major theme: the deeds of human heroes who represent a cultural consciousness and ethos. Perhaps it is their vivid, realistic narrative that has made these mythical stories dear to Hungarians.

At the threshold of general literacy, historians often lacked earlier models to follow, and had to rely on tales or — if available — accounts from foreign sources. Such was the dilemma that Anonymous, already mentioned in the introduction, faced. As an early historian, he claimed credit not only for recording the naive tales of country people but also for being the first one to turn to written sources. Yet, his Latin chronicle actually made lavish use of the oral tradition still flourishing in his time — that is, in the very first years of the thirteenth century.

If the excerpts from Anonymous's *Gesta Hungarorum* are confusing, it is because they contain many elements of the typical, "classical" mythological narrative. Such are the references to his nation's origins, which he traced back to Scythia (described as a fairy tale land), and to the mighty pagan family of Magog, also mentioned in the Old Testament. Supernatural elements are introduced, such as conception by an animal or a vision (both familiar from many other myths around the world). Besides biblical and mythical names or places, names of real historical figures also appear (such as Alexander the Great) to provide the illusion of authenticity. Albeit naively narrated, rather true to historical evidence is the description of tribal democracy and the legislation by consensus that the paragraphs on the pact struck by the warrior chiefs describe. Last but not least, there is pride shining through Anonymous's lines over the revealed descent of a new Christian country of Europe from noble, if distant, ancestors. A justified national pride it was: in the early 13th century Hungary was one of Europe's most prosperous countries, and one whose influence was decisive in the central part of the continent. As the early chronicles suggest Hungary was also a culturally developed country by European standards. As elsewhere during the Middle Ages, the language of almost any kind of writing was Latin, although religious texts were written in the Hungarian vernacular already in the 12th century. Also, similarly to other European literatures, Hungarians produced not only chronicles (that aspired to historical accuracy) but also *gestes* (*gestas*), i.e., colourful, partly fantastical, historical tales. Typically, references to Hungarian prehistory have been left to us in this genre.

Document 1. ANONYMOUS

> [....] It would not be appropriate for the noble Hungarian nation to learn about its origins and heroic deeds from the untrue tales of the peasants or the naive songs of the bards. Therefore, from now on, it can learn the truth in a worthy way, from reliable documents, and from clearly interpreted historical works. Hungary is fortunate because her scholar recorded the origins of her kings and noblemen from the beginning. For those kings praise and respect should be paid to the Eternal King and His mother, the Virgin Mary, by whose mercy Hungary's kings and noblemen govern this country in happiness, now and forever. Amen.

Scythia

> Scythia,[1] which is called Hungary upon the [river] Don, is quite a vast land. Its eastern border stretches from the northern region to the Black Sea. Behind it runs the Don river with its enormous marshlands, where there are enough martens not just to lavishly clothe the noblemen and the lower ranking people, but also the herdsmen, swineherdsmen, and shepherds. The land is rich in gold and silver, and its rivers offer pearls and semi-precious stones. Scythia's eastern neighbours were the nations of Gog and Magog, who were cut off from the world by Alexander the Great.[2] The dimensions of the Scythian land are extremely large. The people inhabiting it are still customarily called Don-Hungarians; they have never been under the yoke of any ruler. The Scythians are, namely, an ancient nation which has power over the east. Scythia's first king was Magog, son of Japheth, and the nation obtained its name "Magyar" from him.[3]

Before continuing Anonymous's fantastic narrative of Hungarian prehistory, let us consider the first account of the myth of Hunnish-Hungarian relations. Anonymous was the first chronicler of the Hungarians, but he was not the only one. Before the introduction of the printing press, a series of similar works was compiled by ecclesiastic authors who held high positions in the courts of various kings. While including newer and newer events of history, they also added to earlier chronicles. Among these authors was Simon of Kéza (Kézai Simon) who wrote his geste titled, like Anonymous's, *Gesta Hungarorum* around 1283.

Simon regarded Hungarians as descendants of a rejected and punished biblical figure: Noah's second son, Ham. This view made them distant offspring of the Old Testament's Jews. Simon was also the first author to write down the tale of the miraculous hind that lured the hunter King Nimrod's two sons, Hunor and Magor, away from their Asian homeland, into a long journey that eventually ended in the establishment of the Hunnish empire first, and Hungary centuries later. This attractive tale shows traces of a totemic culture, especially since the two princes' mother was called Enech, or *ünő* in Hungarian, meaning a young female deer. The belief in the deer being a magical animal is not specifically Hungarian: it has traces in several Eastern cultures, and in the Saint Hubert legend of medieval Catholicism. Yet, as has been mentioned, naive myths are strong cohesive elements of national identity — even if they are composed of not entirely unique motifs.

Document 2. SIMON OF KÉZA

The Origin of the Hungarians

The perilous flood destroyed every man except Noah and his three sons. From Shem, Ham and Japheth, however, seventy-two clans descended. [...] These clans, as Josephus mentions, started to build a tower together with their relatives, so that if by chance the flood should recur, by fleeing into the tower they could escape God's avenging judgment. But God's decision, against which human intellect has no power, was a resolved and provident one. He confused their language so much that one relative was not able to understand another, and in the end they scattered all over the world. [...]

Let us return to Menrot[4] and leave matters of minor importance behind, since they only serve to brighten the narrative. After the confusion, the giant moved to Evilath's land, which was called Persia in those days. There, he and his wife, Enech, had two sons, Hunor and Magyar, from whom the Huns and Magyars descended. [...]

And so, it happened one day that they went hunting. In the wilderness, a doe leapt up in front of them. As they began to pursue her, she fled into the Maeotis swamp,[5] where she then disappeared from their sight. They searched for her for a long time, but there was no trace of her anywhere. After they walked through the aforementioned swamp from one end to the other, they found it to be very suitable for cattlegrazing. They then went back to their father, and as soon as they received his approval, they moved into the Maeotis swamp with their possessions, so they could settle down in there. The Maeotis region borders Persia. Apart from a very narrow ford, the sea encircles it from every direction. It does not have rivers at all, but it has plenty of grass, trees, fish, fowl, and game. Entering and leaving this region is difficult. Consequently, after having settled down in the Maeotis swamp, they did not leave it for five years.

During the sixth year, they wandered out and accidentally came upon the wives and children of Belar's sons, who had been left alone in a deserted place. They snatched these people away, along with their wealth, at full gallop, into the Maeotis swamp. It so happened that the two daughters of Dulan, the Alan ruler, were among the captured children. Hunor married one, Magyar married the other. All the Huns are therefore descendants of these women.[6] And it happened that, after having lived in the Maeotis swamp for a longer time, they grew into a gigantic clan. The land could thus neither accommodate nor nourish them. Therefore, they sent explorers to Scythia. After

having explored this land, they moved to their new home along with their children and possessions, and there they settled down.

Let us return to Anonymous. It is interesting to observe how much less explicit he still is about the Hunnish-Hungarian relations. On the other hand, he provides the first description of the migration of the Hungarians to their future country, as well as their social structure and hierarchy.

Document 3. ANONYMOUS

[...] From [Magog's] descendants originated the renowned and exceedingly powerful king Attila.[7] In 451 A.D., he came from Scythia to Pannonia with an enormous army, driving out the Romans and conquering the land. Later he set up his royal court along the Danube, above the hot springs. He rebuilt all the old buildings that he found there,[8] and built a strong protective wall around them. Nowadays, it is called Fort Buda in Hungarian, and the Germans call it Etsilburg. But enough of this! Let us follow the path of history. After a long time, from the same king Magog's descendants came Ügyek, father of the chieftain Álmos, whose offspring would become Hungary's leaders and kings, as it will be demonstrated in the following.

The above-mentioned people of Scythia were hardy in their battles and quick on their horses. They wore helmets and were superior to all the other nations in handling their bows and arrows - that this was really the case can be iudged from the skills of their progeny. Since the Scythian land was situated far from the tropics, it was particularly favourable for the growth of the population. Even though the land was excessively immense, it was not able to either nourish or accommodate its ever-increasing population. Therefore, the seven ruling chiefs thought of a solution in order to resolve the problems of overcrowding. After a meeting, they decided to leave their motherland and conquer a country where the living conditions were more favourable.

Álmos, the First Chieftain

In the year 819 A.D. Ügyek, the aforementioned commander of Scythia and distant descendant of King Magog, decided to marry Emesh,[9] daughter of Önedbelia, chieftain of the Don-Hungarians. They had a son whose name was Álmos. He received his name due to a miracle: while his mother was expecting him, she saw a supernatural vision in her dream, in the shape of a *turul*, bird, which landed on her

body and made her pregnant.[10] It also seemed to her as if from her womb sprang a stream which was the life-source of future kings who, however, would form a dynasty in another land. Since a dream in Hungarian is called "*álom*," and since her son's birth was preceded by such dream, the boy was named Álmos. It is also possible that his name, which in Latin means "saint," was indicative of his descendants who were to be holy kings and leaders.[11] But enough of this! [...]

When the seven chiefs could no longer tolerate their confined environment, they held a meeting. Here, they decided to leave their homeland, and conquer with force a new land where they would live comfortably. For this new location they chose the land of Pannonia.[12] From old rumors they gathered that this land had belonged to King Attila, ancestor of Álmos, Árpád's father.[13] Before embarking on their journey, the seven chiefs agreed that they needed a leader for such a long quest. Their unanimous choice was Álmos, son of Ügyek, whom they elected as their hereditary commander, since Álmos and his descendants were considered to be superior in both virtue and military skill. [...] They collectively told Álmos: "From this day on, you are our commander, and where you go, we shall follow." After having said this, according to pagan custom each and every nobleman let some of his blood run into a cup, thereby endorsing his oath. Even though these people were pagans, they kept their oath until their very death.

The Oath

The first clause of the oath was as follows: Until the end of their lives and the lives of their descendants, they will always choose new leaders from among the descendants of Álmos.

The second clause was this: Everything they obtained together was to be shared by all equally.

The third clause endorsed that those chiefs who voluntarily elected Álmos for their ruler, and even their descendants, should always remain among the counselors of the rulers and leaders of the nation.

The fourth clause said this: Should any of their descendants betray his ruler, or incite feud between the ruler and his relatives, his blood should be let in the manner in which the seven chiefs' blood was let in taking their oath.

The fifth clause stipulated that, if anyone among the descendants of Álmos or the other leaders should break his oath, he shall be cursed forever.

Centuries pass, and we are in the mid-nineteenth century. Romanticism, this dominating artistic and intellectual movement of the early part of the century, renewed the quest for national identity and pride. Hungary needed both: during the previous centuries her power had vanished, her territory had been divided and became governed by various rulers, and her language and identity had eroded under the influx of millions of foreign settlers. In 1791 Johann Gottfried Herder, an early Romantic thinker and no friend of Hungary, predicted that the nation (ruled at the time by the unpopular Austrian Habsburgs) will disappear within about a century.

Herder's often-cited prophecy did not come true, mainly due to an impressive national awakening in the nineteenth century which will be referred to again and again on these pages. Writers of the period, among them the great poet János Arany, recognized the importance of myth for Hungarian survival. Arany regarded the tradition of heroic epics as the transmitter of myths, and an initially oral conveyance as a means of perpetuating these epics.

Thus, early history and narrative tradition were synthesized as message and medium, respectively, and continued to affect one another. It should be noted that Arany was unhappy about Anonymous's condescending view on folk tales — he wished these had been faithfully recorded and cherished.

Arany's interest in the Middle Ages, myth, paganism, folk literature and national icons coincided with the Romantic obsession of most European countries with the same themes. Already in the 18th century Macpherson "discovered" oral relics of the poems of the Celtic bard, Ossian. In the early nineteenth century the Northern and German-speaking countries raised old Icelandic mythology (their heritage) to a status that equalled that of Greek and Roman mythology. If the literary relics were not coherent or impressive enough, their collectors (patriotic poets) pitched in a bit, here and there. Hungarians had a problem, however: there were no genuine medieval fragments available for them.

Arany's hypothesis was that all great civilizations had produced their heroic epics. The Hungarian civilization was a great one; consequently, it must have had a similar tradition which apparently was later lost or somehow became suppressed. Arany's arguments for the existence of such tradition are numerous and convincing. Unfortunately, they are also flawed. Epic expression is no criterion of civilization, although the existence of myths is an attribute (but no prerequisite) of national and social coherence. Even so, Arany's essay demonstrates the perceived

importance of myth for the modern mind. The nineteenth century epics that the great poet created to fill the gap left by history are gems of Hungarian romantic poetry. Aside from some minor epics and fragments, Arany's poetic recreation of Hungarian mythology is the most memorable in *Death of Buda* (1863). This long poem presents the formidable Hun king Attila at the zenith of his power which he attained at the price of slaying his own brother Buda. The same foreboding of fate that characterizes the great epics of world literature is also obvious here. In another poetic trilogy set in the Middle Ages, Arany created the most popular folk epic of his nation through the figure of Miklós Toldi, a historical character known for his enormous strength, whom the poet guided through many marvellous adventures. Nowadays, modern Hungarians read Arany's epic poems as products of literary fantasy, forgetting about their intended role. But, is this not the fate of all great classics that also had a spiritual function in their own time?

Document 4. JÁNOS ARANY:

Our Naïve Folk Epic

Every time I encounter an old fragment of foreign folk poetry, I sadly ask myself: Did we ever have any genuine ancient epic? Have the people who had the creativity to produce poetry and can even display a few precious romances, whose fairy tales can contend in composition with any other peoples' similar stories, always felt so reluctant toward mythical and historical poetry as they do today? [...]

Travel the country, visit the people at their bonfires or in their shacks, at work or at their feasts, in the hours of rest in workshops and barracks, that is, everywhere where the fatigue of life is soothed by poetry. [...] You shall hear folksongs, sweet and charming ones, sad and cheerful ones, lamenting and merry ones, you shall hear graceful fairy tales, but hardly any song that would recount our nation's past. As if the Calliope of our lowlands had a short memory and would not recall anything older than some outlaw who was oh-so-popular not long ago. As if our people had not been interested in the fate of the nation which regarded them for centuries as nothing more than a labour force.

The situation is the same with the written fragments of our poetic heritage. How many chronicles, from Priscus[14] to Galeotti,[15] mention the bards who immortalized in their songs the deeds of our

heroes and ancestors, from Attila to King Matthias.[16] If we believe these historical references — and we have to believe them — it appears that such bards were not isolated occurrences in one or another ruler's court, nor passing phenomena noticed by chance. In fact, there existed a whole stratum of poets who composed and performed songs as if they were craftsmen. A charter by the last of our numerous king Andrews[17] designated certain estates to support the subsistence of the bards. Also, we cannot doubt the testimony of Galeotti about those performers whom King Matthias heard in his father's and in his own court. Where are these songs, where are these poets? The song has gone silent, the name of the poet has been forgotten. [...]

The great national catastrophe starting with the defeat at Mohács[18] is customarily regarded as the reason why our earlier relics were destroyed. Indeed, it is possible that many written records perished in the long-raging destruction of the nation's largest part[19] with the purest majority of the Hungarian population. Yet, this destruction initially was not so widespread that Tinódi[20] and his contemporaries could not have inherited their fathers' written songs. The devastation spread slowly, and one could still hear a whole camp of epic poets singing all over the land before the better part of the country was ravaged. And what do these heirs of the epic which flourished during King Matthias sing about? Contemporary matters, in a dry reporting manner; also themes from national history, but based on Latin chronicles and not Hungarian epic songs. They sing about biblical themes for the sake of meagre moral lesson, and chivalric themes borrowed from foreign literatures. Where is the trace of the glorious epic of the preceding century? Where the famed richness of the national myth? Was absolutely everything lost during the few years between the end of a century and the beginning of the next one? And, if not everything was lost, if a good part of the tales still existed, how can it be that the poets of the sixteenth century utilized nothing of these, but instead turned to insubstantial chronicles and foreign fables? Apart from the exceptional myth of Toldi,[21] there is no echo of the supposedly lavish tradition of Hungarian sagas. [...]

Let us suppose, however, that very few or perhaps none of those songs which toward the end of the fifteenth century had been still performed so splendidly was recorded in writing. This is all the more probable if we believe in the existence of a class of bards who composed and performed poetry almost as if belonging to a crafts guild. The songs were possibly passed on from father to son, from master to disciple. Oral transmission, more than the treacherous written

word, could guarantee the right of the initiated ones to poetry. Even so, the big question remains: was this whole production doomed to perish when the bards were silenced with the decline of the glorious kings? [...]

But, supposing that all that the poets of that age sung was buried with them, that no *complete*, poem reached the next generation — even then, should the *craftsmanship* itself, the inclination to the genre, vanish from the taste of poets and their audience in such a short time? Is it not reasonable to assume that an audience used to these bards would not tolerate the flimsy stories half a century later? That the Hungarian epic shaped by centuries into perfection would not sink into complete shapelessness so suddenly? [...]

The traditional oral folk narratives always and everywhere show some prowess and polish of an individual creation. Let us leaf through any collection of Hungarian folktales, and we find that the story is always well proportioned and complete in these simple narratives, unless it has been mangled for some reason. The fight of the leading character, the Prince, against his antagonists is described by the typical narrative devices of the epic genre. A fable in which the events are related incoherently, in a loose sequence, could neither win the audience nor be retained verbally. The constantly occurring numbers of three and nine — besides their symbolic meaning — lend proportion to the narrative: the three perils that the hero usually has to overcome make the form well-rounded. This poem in prose that we call folktale is not the romance of the people, but is indeed its epic. We can recognize in this genre the working elements (machinery) of the epic in the form of the mythical powers helping or hindering the hero. [...]

This instinctive good taste, this sense of poetry, is not just a contemporary characteristic of country people: they always possessed such talent. In fact, it was even more evident at the time when the terms *people* and *nation* were identical, when the elite of the nation — although more impressive, more stalwart and exquisite by appearance — lived in just as naive a state intellectually as the people.[22] In such an age the limits of naive narration extended beyond unsophisticated tales and stories of the adventures of robbers. Bards and their audience were identical with the active, battling and conquering nation. They created ample themes and elements for a folk epic. Even if our chronicles would not mention it, we could take it for granted that this folk tradition of poetry and recital had flourished under our late tribal leaders and national kings. [...] We have to give all the more credit to these records. And if, by following these chronicles up to King

> Matthias, we may doubtingly ponder whether folk epic was sung at the table of the "scholar" king, or the simple recital of the events that became fashionable in the sixteenth century, the Italian Galeotti clears our doubts: "There are," he writes, "musicians and fiddlers who sing in their domestic language the deeds of knights at the tables and accompany themselves by lute. Always some noble deed is sung of which there is no shortage... Because all Hungarians, noblemen as well as ploughmen, use almost the same words, the same diction, accent, and pronunciation. This is why the song created in Hungarian is understood by peasants and townspeople, by the middle and lower classes all the same." Galeotti says this with reference to language, but why here of all places? Does he not suggest by this that king Matthias was listening to folk songs and understood them although he was a king, and that the songs recited in the royal palace were popular in village shacks as well? Not some dull enumeration of events but the living folk poetry, the naive epic was what Galeotti referred to. It lies in the nature of the matter that this type of epic was shaped over the centuries, from the tribal leaders to Matthias, on a high level, treated, filtered, and perfected by craftsmen, by a class of bards. [...]

Myth is naive belief: one that has always impressed and influenced people. It is the first stage in the pursuit of knowledge, and a long persisting one if knowledge is not forthcoming or is found unsatisfactory. As soon as one day in the future more objective and rational explanations of the world and human existence will become widely accepted, myth will still live on in one form or another, coexisting with what we call rational thinking and knowledge. In the following chapters, our readings will approach Hungarian culture from the point of view of disciplines that are more familiar to the modern mind and modern scholarship, such as history, ethnology, economics and education.

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II. Roots, or the Never-Ending Polemics about Origins

What naivete, that story of Álmos's mother! Of course, a *bird* cannot make a woman pregnant who is already pregnant. In other words, one may argue that myths are pointless fantasies. On the other hand, what can we call such colourful yet realistic tales as the one of the seven chieftains' blood treaty: myths or historical accounts? In the case of such mythological traditions as the Hungarian one, the dividing line between fantasy and fact is narrow indeed. Those interpreters of myths who state that there is historical veracity at the core of every supernatural tale could have drawn many references from the Hungarian tradition to corroborate their thesis.

While myths are useful tools to complement other evidence, they have to face explanations proposed by the social sciences, among them empirical ones, such as anthropology and archeology. It is amazing how different the conclusions of various social science disciplines are regarding the origins of the Hungarians. It is equally amazing how doggedly scores of scholars in different fields set out to satisfy the search for roots, this seemingly never-subsiding preoccupation of Hungarians. In the excerpts below, we will find the following approaches and methods put into the service of this quest: travelogue, linguistics, archeology, and ethnology. To these we may add, as one of the excerpts reminds us, biology, and the history of technology and of economics, as three auxiliaries.

In 1235, the Dominican friar Julian and two fellow brothers ventured far beyond the borders of their 250-year-old Christian country on a unusual royal mission. They headed east in order to find the cradle of the Hungarian nation. To their joy, they met various Hungarian-speaking groups along the trail of Árpád's ancestors. They got as far as the Caspian Sea. Eventually, they hurried back to Hungary with ominous news about the violent westbound thrust of the ferocious Khan Batu's Mongolian hordes. Before the country could get ready for their invasion, in 1241 the

Asian marauders swamped and burnt it to the ground. While Hungary was rebuilt and re-populated, the Eastern Hungarians beyond the Carpathian borders were never heard of again — assumedly, they fell victim to the Mongolian invasion. But the dream of finding relatives, and with it clues to the origins of the Hungarians, survived.

Almost six hundred years later, a young Transylvanian scholar called Sándor Kőrösi Csoma set out to find these clues. While clinging to the well-entrenched thesis of Romanticism that the history of a nation and the history of its language were identical, Csoma was dissatisfied with previous explanations of the Hungarians' origins. All he knew was that he had to take the same direction as Brother Julian. Where would he come upon the great discovery? Perhaps in Asia Minor, the Russian prairies, or somewhere in the mountains between China and India? He could not tell. Yet, his "letter of intent," reproduced below, sums up the doubts of a scholar who had arrived at the conclusion that he could not rely on previous speculations — he had to do his own research. For him, personal experience gained by travel was the only answer to the dilemma.

Document 1. SÁNDOR KŐRÖSI CSOMA:

Letter to his sponsors in Nagyenyed

After I had completed my studies in my homeland's principal college at Nagyenyed, in order to acquire experience and broader knowledge, as was customary among the youths of noble origin, a few years ago I went to Germany too, and studied for more than two years at the university of Göttingen. Since my favourite preoccupation was the study of foreign languages and the history of various nations, I concentrated especially on these fields. It would be impossible to describe the pleasure I felt upon uncovering the ancient secrets of the aforementioned fields. Through this newly acquired knowledge I became completely convinced that I may be able to prove, God willing, what scholars of our nation have tried to demonstrate in order to fulfil the wish of the patrons of our culture. This is the demonstration of the exceptional uniqueness of our nation in terms of language, character, and clothing. In the scholarly world, a great deal of insecurity prevails about our ancient place of origin, about our migrations, myths, and the relationship of our language with other languages. Those foreigners who knew neither our language nor our characteristics and customs

> sufficiently tried to derive our national origins and myths exclusively on the basis of certain proper names. Our learned compatriots who, although pointing out correctly our linguistic relations, followed the foreign authors in their search of our origins, were also mistaken. Wishing to clear up this confusion, satisfy my ambitions, and demonstrate my gratitude and love towards my nation, I followed the light that my studies in Germany kindled and, defying fatigue and possible dangers, set out to find the origins of the Hungarians.[...]

Frustrated with his formidable task, fifteen years later Kőrösi Csoma wrote the following letter to Gábor Döbrentey, secretary of the Hungarian Academy:

> As greatly as I was honoured by the generous financial support of the Hungarians.[1] I was just as sorrowful to admit that so far I have not been able to gather any evidence to prove the ancient Asian origin of the Hungarians. Although I am happy that I was able to contribute to European scholarship during my long absence, I am especially sorry that I did nothing so far regarding our homeland. In order not to seem as if your expectation towards me was in vain, I find it best to reimburse you in the amount of two hundred gold pieces, because I am convinced that the Hungarian Scientific Society[2] can put this money to better use, since I believe it is not necessary for me to obtain any more Sanskrit books. [...]

As it happened, Kőrösi Csoma got mired in Ladakh, a province of British-controlled India, west of Tibet, where he pursued language studies for decades. He contributed extensively to our knowledge to Tibet, but next to nothing to that of Hungarian prehistory. Yet, his example, to take risks and advance new explanations, was neither unprecedented nor futile. The cradle of Hungarian culture was obviously outside the newly settled Carpathian Basin — only travellers could tackle the puzzle of its exact location.

In earlier centuries, the Hungarian language was compared to various others. Both the chroniclers and a popular view based on the proximity of the names "Hunnish" and "Hungarian" supported a spontaneous assumption that the two peoples were related. The Huns were a nomadic Central Asian multi-ethnic conglomerate that spoke either a Turkish or Mongolian language. Both of these belong to the Altaic language family. The relationship between the Uralic family (to which Finno-Ugric languages

belong) and the Altaic family has been long professed, and the hypothesis is not yet fully discredited, although the majority of linguists doubt it.

Another relative that eager scholars found for the Hungarian language before the 18th century was Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament, which was especially revered by Protestants. A distinguished ancestry it was, first proclaimed by the Protestant bishop István Geleji Katona in his Hungarian grammar of 1645, later also adopted by other scholars.

Finally, there were early suggestions that Hungarian was related to the languages of the peoples of the North. In the late 18th century, a Jesuit friar named János Sajnovics was sent on an astronomical expedition to Europe's far north to observe a rare celestial occurrence. While in Lapland, Sajnovics was surprised by similarities between the language of the nomadic Lapps and that of the Hungarians. As it happened, he was wrong in most comparisons that he made between the vocabulary of the two languages, yet he was right assuming an essential relationship. As modern comparative linguistics states, in terms of number of speakers, Hungarian is the largest member of the so-called Finno-Ugric language family to which the Lappish language also belongs.

You can find a sketch of various languages of this family in the notes to the following text. It is not the purpose of this reader to enter into the enumeration of the complicated linguistic criteria that make various languages related to one another. Comparative linguistics is the field that answers such questions. The accepted linguistic explanation for their origins did not satisfy many Hungarians. Why was Finnish so unfamiliar to the Hungarian ear, they wondered. How is it possible that the trappers and fishers of the vast Russian forests were relatives while the nomadic warriors of the east were not? It would take many pages to answer these and many other questions.

Yet, even science can assume mythological dimensions. Consider the irritated reaction of Darwinist scientists whenever the evolutionary theory is challenged, however cautiously. Hungarian linguists have developed a similar intolerance towards the many challenges that anthropology and archeology have posed about the Finno-Ugric theory. For the past century, a Hungarian version of comparative Finno-Ugric linguistics has maintained that it had developed a foolproof timetable of the wanderings of the Hungarians over thousands of years. It is doubtful that linguists of other cultures would have ventured to reach such conclusion.

Mythologizing Hungarian prehistory took other, popularizing dimensions as well. Gyula Illyés, himself a late romantic believer in some undefinable collective soul of peoples, described his encounter with Hungary's linguistic relatives in a colourful, yet exalted piece, titled no less than *Who is a Hungarian*? However, the sense of isolation is real: the feeling that Hungarians have had about their existence in an ocean of hundreds of millions of Europeans all belonging to the vast Indo-European language family. While historians try to be impartial, the blatantly subjective Illyés, himself a man of imagination, conveys more of a typical Hungarian state of mind and attitude to existential questions than history, linguistics, or the social sciences can.

Document 2. GYULA ILLYÉS: *Who is a Hungarian*?

A good many years ago, one December night, pacing the platform of Berlin's Friedrichstrasse Station, I was arguing loudly with a Hungarian friend of mine. It was close to midnight and dreadfully cold; around us the people waiting for the train looked as if they stood on burning coals, that's how they stamped their feet. The chill covered the eyebrows and beards with frost. [...] Suddenly, two strange young men stepped up to us.

"Excuse me, are you Hungarians?" asked one of them in German, with a hesitating, apologetic smile on his face. He was a well-built, blond young man. I was just in the middle of the sentence, I didn't really want to answer; besides, my German was atrocious.

"We are," said my friend after a little while and a bit defiantly.

The stranger then put down his travel bag; on his face a happy grin replaced the hesitant smile. He held out his hand to us, then sometimes stalling, sometimes with the speed of a fast train, he began saying something. He said it in German: I didn't understand a word. The next second he embraced me, I think he also kissed me. In any case, his eyes battled with tears. In his embrace, I threw a surprised, questioning glance towards my friend.

"He says that they are Finnish," explained my friend.

At this, I too was overcome with emotion. I also embraced the young man, my Finnish brother. Actually, the same sort of feeling swelled in me as once before when, after four years of absence, I was reunited with my only elder brother. I knew that quite a few thousand years ago we separated from our Finnish brothers, somewhere between

the Ural mountains and the Volga River. Thus, it is understandable that we remained embraced like this, all the while patting each other's back.

Unfortunately, we couldn't communicate; over the thousands of years we had both forgotten much of our shared mother tongue of yore. But this was not such a great obstacle. Immediately we left the platform, postponed our travel, and sat down in a restaurant. As I said, I scarcely understood their German, therefore my friend had to interpret.

The Finns spoke enthusiastically about Hungary, the sunlit southern plains where, by the way, they had never been. And they spoke even more enthusiastically about the glorious Hungarian people, their mighty brothers of whom we were the first they had ever met. With glowing cheeks, they mentioned the names of Árpád, Hunyadi,[3] and Petőfi.[4] My chest began to swell; I felt a sort of bond with these remarkable men; it was the first time that I felt like a son of a powerful nation. The Finns were overwhelmed in their praise of our heroism, our love of freedom, our culture that we developed so soon after we had dismounted from our small Asiatic horses.[5] I nodded in approval. Why should I deny it, I felt brave, freedom loving, and, conveniently forgetting that I didn't know German, I even felt terribly learned. The Finns looked up to us. They were both students, linguists. I also studied linguistics. Thus, we understood many words of each other's language, those too which donned a disguise over the past few thousand years. We sought out these as well.

For a joke, in the restaurant we ordered only those foods whose names existed in both our languages, which therefore even our common ancestors may have consumed in their Asiatic feasts. We ordered fish [*hal*][6] because in Finnish they call it *kala*, then butter [*vaj*], respectively *voi*, according to the Finns. We also asked for deer [*szarvas*], which the Finns call *sarvi*. Unfortunately, we didn't get any. Since the Finns, too, know it as *vesi*, we drank only water [*víz*] with everything, yet ice cold in view of ice [*jég*] being *jää* in Finnish. This is how we rejoiced that we had occasion, not so much for the food, but rather to swallow [*nyelni*] the words, namely *niellä*, as the Finns say it. In our youthful good spirits, we almost ate with our hands [*kéz*], because in Finnish hand is *käsi*. Finally, nonetheless, we prepared to leave [*elmenni*], which they express as *mennä*.

This was my first meeting with the relatives. Afterwards, for a good while I only searched for them in books. I became familiar with Finnish history, with their Supreme Commander, the amazing Kalevala's[7] cunning and charming Ukko — and this acquaintance was

no less moving than the meeting in Berlin. Then through the dense and not easily penetrable thickets of comparative dictionaries and linguistic publications, I became well acquainted with other relatives too. After the rich Finns and Estonians, with the Ugrian Ostyaks and especially the Voguls, who are the poorest relatives but linguistically the closest to us: not only do we have common words and sentence structures, but with some searching, such whole sentences can be put together from their words that, with a little attention, every Hungarian can understand them. [...]

We could learn the Vogul language very easily. In any case, much more easily than, for instance, German or Russian. The Ostyak language, too, shares this type of structural similarity with Hungarian: *Pegte lau lasinen menl tou silna* [Fekete ló lassan megy a tó szélén]. Meaning: A black horse goes slowly along the edge of the lake.

I would have liked even better to meet these people. God, how few are we! Altogether five thousand Voguls live up there, near the Arctic region where they drifted from Russian tyranny after hopeless but bloody wars, still preserving their unconquerable love of freedom. There are twenty thousand Ostyaks. The whole Finno-Ugrian family [...] barely counts more than twenty million souls.[8] Of these, twelve and a half million are Hungarians. Of the world's two billion people, therefore, barely one percent can be called relatives of the Hungarians.

Finally, I could personally meet one or two of the distant, poorer relatives as well. A few years ago, I had the opportunity to travel to Russia. A large part of these relatives live there: most of them on this side of the Ural Mounains, which is still in Europe, but some of them who are, however, closest to us linguistically, beyond the Urals, in Northern Siberia. I would have gone to the end of the world for their sake; I would go today too.

In every Hungarian there is something of Kőrösi Csoma's enthusiasm, of the love of adventure combined with a thirst for knowledge, of the restlessness of the boy drifting through the world and driving himself through libraries and jungles to come across a trace of his lost parents. Whose heart was not touched and who was not stimulated a little to follow the zeal of all those explorers, from Brother Julian to Vámbéry[9] who, like Stanley, Africa's explorer, or like Champollion, decoder of the Egyptian writings, set out to find the ancient, large family? A people without relatives in Europe, are we not perhaps the most prone to search for relatives?

Our ancestors! The mysteriously surviving words from the tents on the shore of the Ob River which would also ring familiar in

the Big Calvinist Church of Debrecen. The calls transferring the Volga and Konda swamps which, on the parting day, the small troop of mounted men starting west shouted back to those who stayed, and which still resound after thousands of years.[10] When my Moscow journey was confirmed, I immediately obtained an Ostyak grammar book. I rekindled my school memories. I smiled when I found that in my excitement for travel there was again a small part that, surprisingly, resembled my childhood excitement when we visited brother-in-laws and uncles in the neighbouring county. I am not going into the complete unknown — these were the emotions I was harbouring. I knew that in Russia today there are still many such village names in which Hungarian words are concealed. As they were transported in Russia, Hungarian prisoners of World War I stopped in wonder at a village or river when they heard the name. In the Orlov district, there is a village simply called Madjar. In the Caucasus there is a Madzhara river. In the province of Yenisey there is a Madzhar lake. Along the Kuma [river], wherever you travel you find Hungarian names in one form or another.

Right after my arrival in Moscow, I inquired about my "relatives." By lucky coincidence, I soon met up with a woman reporter whose mother was Zyrian, and she also understood the language. I asked her immediately about the relatives.

Unfortunately, I couldn't meet any Ostyaks: they lived twice as far away as I had travelled already. But they consoled me that the Votyaks were nearby, between the Volga River and the Ural Mountains, by train barely a two days' ride. I could see the Maris too, who, incidentally, resent that the world continues to call them by their Russian nickname, Cheremis, unlike the Zyrians who finally achieved that they are called by their original name, Komis. They dwell nearby, barely four hundred kilometres from Nizhny Novgorod. But I was told that I can meet Mordvins, who are as distant cousins as the Finns, right in Moscow. They have an entire district: according to reports, more than four thousand live in one of the suburbs, where they even have their own associations and clubs....

As we shall see from another reading in the next chapter, Illyés also tackled the objection raised by many: that Hungarian society before the conquest consisted of herders and warriors rather than hunters and fishermen, which virtually all other Finno-Ugric peoples were. Trying to please everybody, Illyés invented the return of the Altaic nomads who invigorated the peaceful Ugors. While this tale did not catch on, a few years later a colourful, iconoclastic modern-day historian, Gyula László,

mounted the most intelligent challenge to the Finno-Ugric hypothesis of Hungarian prehistory. Vindicating the early chroniclers and questioning the Romantic thesis that language and culture must be the same, László asks questions that will be debated for a long time. (The following excerpts are a representative montage from two separate works by László.)

Document 3. GYULA LÁSZLÓ

Many people believe that our prehistory is a mapped-out issue, and debates can only revolve around questions such as when and where the Uralic, Finno-Ugric, Ugric, and Hungarian periods of development took place. Alas, our prehistory is not at all clear — on the contrary, it is full of unsolved problems, of which some are basic ones. What you find below is intended to spell out the questions, some of which we are unable to answer as yet. [...] In the absence of sufficient archeological evidence, previously linguistics raised issues whose solution does not rest with it, such as the problem of the ancestral homelands, etymology, questions of cultural changes as reflected by loanwords, and so on. Nonetheless, I would not go too far in separating these fields of study from each other. History, social life and their various events are always encapsulated in language: historiography and archeology cannot ignore linguistic evidence.[...]

In recent decades archeology, anthropology, biology, ethnography, and other disciplines have contributed to the research on prehistory. Thus, the exclusive domination of linguistics has ceased to exist, although the study of language will always remain an excellent source of information and guidance. Clearly, the belief that the old history of our language is identical with the old history of our people is also disappearing. It is also unlikely that the Hungarian people has remained unchanged since ancient times.

Before presenting the achievements of the latest decades, let us point out a fundamental problem whose solution will obviously require significant efforts from future research. This, in short, is the following: our national and regal tradition teaches one thing about the Hungarian people's history, while modern linguistics and historiography teaches another. The former opens up the perspectives of Scythia and the Biblical world, the latter leads us to the Finno-Ugric inhabitants of the forest region. Actually, most of these contradictions arose from the attempt to reconcile these two — let's just call them Turkish tradition and Finno-Ugric scholarship. It is this author's conviction that

the reconciliation did not succeed because both theses are true, except not for one and the same people, but for two, maybe more peoples. Thus, we don't have to force various theories, but should rather accept the facts as they are. This is why most contradictions can be reconciled by the assumption of a "dual conquest."[11]

An earlier assumption was that the Hungarians were primitive hunters and fishermen when they wound up under Turkish cultural influence. This idea arose when scholars tried to relate our basic civilization before the conquest to the truly primitive culture of our language relatives, using cognates as evidence. The evolving Hungarian people, however, divorced itself from the Ob-Ugors already about 2,500 years before the conquest. This separation probably took place in the Bronze Age. Thanks to the archeological work of our Soviet colleagues, we are quite familiar with the civilizations of the forest region in the Bronze Age and later. These civilizations were a hundred times richer already in the Bronze Age than Ob-Ugor civilization was just a hundred years ago! Not one Bronze Age culture can be labelled as a "primitive hunting-fishing society": such formations lived in these areas only during the prehistoric age, and maybe as late as the newer Stone Age. [...]

If we classify the peoples of Eurasia according to their languages, or by focusing on the ever-changing state borders, we find an unparalleled diversity. On the other hand, if we classify them by anthropological criteria, we can use the characteristics of not more than eight or ten racial types in order to describe any people, even any individual. The dividing lines of these types may be blurred; yet, like circles in the water, they cover our whole continent. The geography of racial characteristics does not coincide with the linguistic or political borders at all, although certain characteristics dominate certain areas. We find the same large perspectives when we consider folk belief and tales: language barriers cease to exist and we recognize ourselves everywhere. Language divides us, while our human essence and our beliefs unite us. [...]

The Finno-Ugric peoples along the Volga belong to a different anthropological group than our language relatives along the river Ob. We Hungarians belong to the Volga-European group, while in the Ob-Ugrians the Mongolian character dominates. Thus, our anthropological ties with our nearest language relatives are weaker than our ties with other peoples. Consequently, we have to assume that the Ob-Ugrians took their present language from the Hungarians. [...]

As can be seen, the historical questions crystallize around the concepts "nomadic," "half-nomadic," and "agricultural"; therefore, we

will briefly return to these questions. We can safely infer back to the time of the conquest — with appropriate caution — from conditions existing a couple of centuries thereafter. For instance, in the eleventh century our laws already refer to settled Hungarians who lived in villages. This contradicts the equestrian nomad theory, and in my opinion, this contradiction can only be solved if we don't force the reconciliation, according to which the descendants of the shepherds settled in villages within a century. We must accept both facts: that according to the Mohammedan writers, and Western and domestic sources, we were a ferocious nomadic people.[12]

In a hundred years, a nomadic society couldn't produce of itself so many servants — and our servants' names were all Hungarian. Thus, two Hungarian societies stand before us, and there is no other choice but to accept the fact that there were indeed two. To deduce one from the other looks impossible. [...]

Not only have today's Hungarians become a typically East Central European people with at least one thousand years of national history, but already among Árpád's warriors, the first settlers, there were Europeans. We can see this from the fact that members of the confederation of the seven or ten conquering tribes[13] may have had different traditions and, if so, also different ancestries. In our very mixed race, one can find all dominant characteristics of both Europe and Asia, albeit not in equal proportions. If we want to write the prehistory of the Hungarians, which track should we follow? [...]

The question is further complicated by the circumstance that even in our earliest anthropological finds there is a varying degree of "foreign" element, which means that they represent mixed races.

The history of language is simpler, anthropology more complicated — we have to combine them when we study our prehistory.

We are now far removed indeed from the linear prehistory established by historical linguistics. Not to mention that anthropology also proves developments that contradict linguistics. [...]

With regard to our ancestors, we have not yet discussed one source: our chronicles. As I see it, that "Eurasian" interpretation which we just described will reconcile the controversy which has been growing between our historical scholarship and our chronicles since the past century. Our entire academic community spoke up against the prehistoric tradition described by the chronicles, and labelled these writings as fiction, because they didn't direct us to the Finno-Ugric interpretation of our ancient history. In an approach that includes anthropology, archeology, folk belief and folk songs, such bias will

> eliminate itself. Instead, we will ask: how do our chronicles reflect national tradition, and what is fiction, or even narrative tradition in them? Obviously, both are present in our chronicles, but to discard them just because they contradict another biased view would be a mistake.
>
> Thus, the new possibility of researching the evolution of Hungarian identity — our so-called ethnogenesis — has opened up before us. "Productive uncertainty" has taken the place of what was regarded as certainty and firm knowledge. [...]

László has upset not only ardent pro-Finno-Ugric linguists but also historians. Maybe he did not provide an answer — yet, he showed new directions for future investigations. Such vistas and sane methods are badly needed. Mostly in reaction to the Finno-Ugric theory, numerous other ethnic "relatives" were believed to have been found for Hungarians: Indo-Europeans, Japanese, and who else but the long-extinct Sumerians. The most absurd speculations include two books published between the world wars: one finding analogies between the Hungarian and Old English language (Anglo-Saxon = Engwer-Saecel); the other, between Hungarian and a Polynesian language (Magyar = Maori). What next?

Would it not be desirable to acquire deeper and more accurate knowledge of the culture for whose roots one is searching? And, a more thorough consideration of interrelations with other cultures that also have to be studied in depth? The great folklorist and historian Ottó Herman added some concluding remarks to his work on the Hungarian people's character. These remarks are not only worth minding now, a century later, but also bring the goals of our collection of readings into clearer perspective.

Document 4. OTTÓ HERMAN

> Certainly, what this book contains is not complete. It can be enhanced in every aspect, and it is also indisputable that it cannot escape modification.[...]
>
> It was a typical and insightful statement by Vámbéry when, finding my lacunae in the process of cultural comparisons, he stated that many unknown facts could be discovered if we were thoroughly familiar with the customs not only of the Hungarians but also of the related peoples. Indeed, if we intend to compare the typical customs

and the consequent evolution of the disposition of the Hungarians with those of our relatives, we get stuck already at the first step.

With linguistics much can be achieved and substantial knowledge gained, but linguistics is not everything. The same is true of that assessment of spiritual phenomena which is called folklore. There are, however, rather typical and profound characteristics in lifestyle, such as the manifestations of a nomadic spirit pointed out in our book, which should be studied thoroughly, lest the image gained about any given people remain incomplete. One cannot neglect these characteristics, because they are rather essential accessories of anthropology, inasmuch as they affect physical appearance. [...] Yet, all of us who study the problem of [the origins and relations of] the Hungarians have to admit that we do not know sufficiently well the private life, customs, and evolution of our people. This is a great shortcoming which must be remedied. But, by whom?

We, the elderly generation, cannot volunteer to undertake this task any more. We [...] always held the view that the precondition for the sufficient, or at least acceptable, solution of the Hungarian question is to become thoroughly acquainted with the Hungarian people and analyze their social conditions in their present homeland. Those who set out to do research among Asia's immense masses of peoples without possessing this precondition may have had respectable and rich scholarly capabilities. If you venture into the unknown, however, you are paralyzed without an essential accessory which is needed to set your course. That sensitive little instrument which helps you to orient, the compass, was missing. For those whose chosen task is to find traces of a certain nation in a distant region of the world, amidst the colourful melange of peoples and their customs, this compass is the thorough knowledge of the nation for whose tracks we are searching.

I admit that this view can be contested. One may say that the main thing is to gather much material and, having returned home, pick out what is related in view of national phenomena. [...] In my support, however, the most powerful argument gives irrefutable evidence: that even the most typical characteristics of a nation are rapidly changing. Time has run out for us to wrangle over the method. The point of the matter is to save whatever can be saved, if it is not too late already — because it may already be so.

As we can see, the final word on the origins of the Hungarians has not been uttered yet. The question is, whether it ever will be. Is it not symptomatic if a culture is this obsessed with its ancestry? The peoples of prosperous European nations hardly seem to care where they came from

and when. Perhaps the peripheral status and the outsiders' fate that Hungarians attribute to themselves is the clue to the question. Once they will take their deserved place in a united, post-communist Europe's structure of interests, defense, economic and political cooperation, they may turn their energy in some other direction.

The search for roots notwithstanding, historical awareness is a more or less emphasized preoccupation of any nation. Hungary is no exception. Historical interest has been traditionally high, although mythologizing of facts did also play a significant role. The following readings are not intended to provide a summary of Hungarian history. Instead, they highlight dilemmas and principles that underlie the thousand year old historical experience of this nation.

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III. Historical Tradition

Thus far, our readings have informed us of how a well organized nomadic tribal confederation of predominantly Hungarian-speaking warriors populated the Carpathian Basin in the late 9th century. In more recent times of romantic mythmaking, several nationalities, later independent countries around Hungary, accused Hungarians of conquering and subjugating their ancestors (who were, of course, assumed to be peaceful peoples of a higher civilization). Such have been, notably, the claims of Romanian and Slovak chauvinist historicism.

Gyula Illyés was no historian, yet he summarized succinctly the "secret" of Hungary's creation: the proclivity for persuasion and tolerance, and talent for organizing and nationbuilding. There is no objective proof for the assertion that the Hungarians may have conquered existing high civilizations. Instead, they found a geographic and power vacuum in a land which they populated, civilized, and politically stabilized. Illyés's emphasis on the multiethnic origins of the Hungarian nation is worth noting. Such separation of political and cultural aspects was a key principle of the Hungarian definition of a nation, making it possible for individuals to reconcile their loyalty to their country with loyalty to their culture. Hungarian historiography has confirmed Illyés's interpretation of the process and the results of forming a modern European country.

Document 1. GYULA ILLYÉS: *Who Is a Hungarian?*

> In the Carpathian Basin, not a single nation could find permanent dwelling before the Hungarians arrived. This was a dangerous area, just like a crossroads: migrating peoples met and clashed here, fighting battles and chasing each other.

In the course of history, few peoples created a country for themselves in such a short time and in such a dangerous region as the Hungarians. What explains this?

This, too, can be explained by the unparalleled composition of the Hungarians. The two halves of the people that had merged long before retained their basic characteristics. The Hun warriors fought as ferociously as no other nation did at that time in Europe, and soon conquered what became their country. The offspring of the humble fishermen conquered the soil and pacified the vanquished peoples. Árpád's descendants were soldiers and colonizers at the same time.

The kinsfolk of the Huns were not only brave and good at organizing, they were also tolerant towards the defeated peoples. Neither the Huns nor the Avars, not even the Turks in later times, meddled with the traditions, religions, or trades of the conquered ones. Árpád's warriors did the same. They did not drive away the defeated peoples, nor did they want to assimilate them against their will. That is precisely why these eventually intermingled with the Hungarians voluntarily.

The number of Hungarians increased tremendously by these additions to the population. Upon receiving the news about the good and permanent homeland, smaller and larger groups of peoples started arriving from the East: relatives of Árpád's tribe, Cumanians, Jazygians, and Pechenegs.[1]

Then came settlers from the West, too. They didn't weaken the Hungarians but, rather, enriched them. The Hungarian people were already a strong unified nation by then, and their country a securely established state. It accommodated all those who accepted its tradition, who became Hungarian in heart and soul and made the Hungarian language and way of thinking their own.

Almost exactly a century after the arrival of the Hungarians, the still pagan ruler Géza realized that his country could not survive on a Christian continent whose military might the Hungarians had experienced. He converted to Christianity, invited foreign missionaries, and arranged for his adolescent son, Vajk, to inherit the rule over Hungary. In 1000 A.D., this young man became Hungary's first Christian king, assuming the name István (Stephen). He ruled the country for thirty-eight years, and was canonized forty-five years after his death. The strong and influential medieval Catholic country that Hungary was for half a millennium, was Stephen's work.

As we read the translation of his *Admonitions* written to his son prince Imre, we are struck by the consistency of the principles of government, from Árpád's confederation to Stephen's centralized kingdom. Tolerance towards other cultures, and respect of the national tradition as the source of continuity and stability, are two principles that the medieval Hungarian state inherited from its pre-Christian founders. At the same time, authenticating the admonitions by Biblical and classical examples shows the ambition to embrace Europe's two underlying cultural traditions. With regard to Hungary's later tribulations, however, the thesis on the desirable attitude towards "foreigners" was cardinal. As opposed to the much later, intolerant Romantic principle of monolingual and monocultural nation states, Stephen defined his kingdom in the spirit of medieval statehood as one accommodating different peoples as long as they subject themselves to royal authority. As other rulers of his age, king Stephen too appreciated the variety of skills and talents by which foreign guests made the country greater and stronger. Indeed, until the last year of the Second World War no citizens of the country who represented other cultures were expelled, as were the Moslems and Jews from late 15th century Spain, or the Acadian French from Nova Scotia in the 18th century — just to mention two examples from the yet unwritten history of such abominable mass expulsions.

Document 2. THE ADMONITIONS OF KING STEPHEN

V. *About the practice of fair judgment and patience*

The practice of patience and fair judgment is the fifth ornament of the crown. David the King and prophet says: "Give your judgments to the King, God". And elsewhere: "The king's righteousness favours the sincere judgment." Paul the Apostle says the following about patience: "Be patient with everyone." God in the Gospel says: "You win your soul by your forbearance." Keep these in mind, my son: if you want to gain respect for your kingdom, worship the right judgment. If you want to keep your soul in your possession, be patient. Whenever you encounter a case worthy of your judgment, or a defendant accused with a major crime, do not behave in an impatient manner, nor make promises on oath to punish the culprit. This would be irresolute and fleeting because man tends to break the foolish pledge. Do not be inclined to bring judgment alone, lest your royal dignity may be

tainted by busying yourself with a petty case. Leave such matters to the judges: it is their job to settle things according to the law. Beware of being a judge but be happy to be a king and be called one. Patient kings rule their country while the impatient ones tyrannize theirs. If at some time you encounter something that is worthy of your royal judgment, bring this judgment with patience and mercy but without making promises on oath. In this way, your crown will be praiseworthy and adorned.

VI. *About welcoming and protecting guests*

Guests and newcomers bring such profit that their appreciation deserves to be called the sixth royal virtue. At the beginning of the Roman Empire many noble and wise people moved there in great numbers from various regions. This is why the empire grew and its rulers were hailed and became glorious. Indeed, Rome would still be a bond servant if the descendants of Aeneas had not liberated it. As guests come from different regions and provinces, they bring various languages and manners, virtues and weapons, by which they enrich the country and increase the grandeur of the court. The unilingual and unicultural country is weak and perishable. Therefore, I order you, my son, to benevolently protect and respect the newcomers so they would rather stay with you than elsewhere. If you wanted to destroy what I have built or disperse what I have collected, no doubt your country would suffer a great deal. So that this would not happen, increase your country day-by-day, which will make people hold your crown glorious. [....]

VIII. *Sons should follow their forefathers*

Following in our ancestors' footsteps is the eighth most important royal virtue. The greatest royal ornament, as far as I know, is to follow the royal ancestors and one's parents. Namely, he who despises the rules of his forefathers will not obey the laws of the Lord either. Fathers are fathers so that they guard their sons, and the sons are sons so that they obey their parents. He who opposes his father joins the enemies of God. That is, all those who are disobedient stand against God. The breeze of disobedience scatters the flowers of the crown. Disobedience is a plague upon the entire kingdom. Therefore, my dear son, your father's regulations, that is my rules, should always be on your mind so your luck would always be guided by the royal rein. Follow without scepticism those habits of mine which can be reconciled with royal

> dignity. Unless you follow the habits of those who ruled before your time, it will be difficult to keep your monarchy together in this part of the world. Which Greek governed the Romans according to Greek rules, and which Roman ruled the Greeks by Roman rules? None. This is why you should follow my customs. This is how you will rise above your dependents and this is how you will earn the praise of the foreigners.

Almost a whole millennium later, after such great historical blows were suffered by Hungary that would have destroyed other nations, Count Pál Teleki enhanced the inherited governmental principles, yet the ancient foundation is recognizable. Teleki was one of the few great political thinkers of 20th century Hungary. While pointing out the tribulations and injustices brought upon his country, he emphasized the need for responsibility and the avoidance of conquest to guide Hungarian political action.

Document 3. PÁL TELEKI: *Hungarian Political Thoughts*

> The Hungarian nation lives under Saint Stephen's legacy. What is the secret of the fact, it is asked by almost all foreigners and some Hungarians, that kings with Hungarian and foreign blood lines, great statesmen, and a self-respecting and freedom-loving nation with the penchant for disagreement, were able to hold on to Saint Stephen's ideals for nine hundred years?
>
> Saint Stephen's state does not strive for unlimited power, and never yearns to conquer beyond the Danubian Basin. On its land inside the Danubian Basin it is not power but the concepts of dedication and duty that prevail in the acts of our great personalities, in the memory of king Saint Stephen, and in the living thesis of the Holy Crown, this symbol of Saint Stephen's legacy. Its calling and duty is to bring peace, unity, and understanding to the Danubian basin. [...]

One of the tribulations that count Teleki referred to elsewhere dates back to 1541 when the independent and united kingdom of Hungary ended. The country fell into three parts, trying to cling to its tradition and re-establish itself amidst a formidable, extended power struggle of the Muslim East and the Catholic West: the Turkish Empire and the Holy Roman Empire (in practical terms, meaning Austria and the German principalities). After a nightmarish century and a half, which reduced the Hungarian population to one third of the original size, a united Europe

expelled the Turks, and Austria laid claim to the whole country. Repopulation by Austrian initiative started, bringing many German, Slavic, and Vlach-speaking settlers to Hungary and making the decreased indigenous population a minority in its own homeland. Most of the foreign settlers became Hungarian by free choice, appreciating the same tolerance and good qualities of the native people that King Stephen, Count Teleki, and Illyés described. Others, however, decided to side with various nationalist ideologies during the era of Romanticism. When in 1848 Hungary was forced into armed conflict with her Austrian (Habsburg) rulers to preserve her constitutional rights, part of the newly settled ethnic population turned against the national movement and supported the Austrian oligarchy, hoping for a dubious spoil.

Lajos Kossuth, leader of the War of Independence of 1848-49 (which eventually failed) developed, during his subsequent Italian exile, a blueprint for the future political system in the Danubian area. Having recognized the force of nationalistic sentiments of Hungary's various minorities, Kossuth attempted to offer them an alternative to the Habsburgs whose rule eventually disappointed the aforementioned groups as well.

Kossuth's plan for a Danubian Confederation is not flawless if read from the perspective of more than a century. Yet, it was a sincere and feasible attempt that would have provided peace and stability to a region which was, instead, turning more and more turbulent. The plan fell through since the emigre Kossuth's person no longer carried any weight in the eyes of those concerned. Since then, the Danubian area has been a powderkeg of conflicts that would take long pages to list. It should suffice to refer to the most recent bloody wars among the peoples of one-time Yugoslavia. One cannot help but ask: what if reason had prevailed in the 1860s?

Document 4. LAJOS KOSSUTH: *The Danubian Confederation*

> In so far as the countries which are situated among the Carpathian Mountains, the Danube, the Black Sea and the Adriatic Sea have their respective individual characteristics, it would be very difficult to establish a unified state. It is, however, desirable that these historic countries enter into an alliance, which may be called "Danubian Confederation." Other than matters of shared interest, which the confederated authorities would manage, each country would have its

own sovereign legislature, justice system, and administration. As a result of the greatest decentralization possible, each community and province would have ample freedom; all inhabitants of the confederation could enjoy unhampered progress; and each unique people could occupy its respective position in mankind's large family.

The basis for the new constitutional law would have to be agreed to by each country, either through a legislative assembly or by general vote. In this way, the inhabitants of Transylvania, for example, could determine whether their homeland should be part of Hungary; or, whether it should be only politically united with Hungary but administratively separate; or, finally, whether it should be only allied with Hungary and the other countries, while remaining autonomous just like the rest. As far as I am concerned, there is only one major condition that I would stipulate if Transylvania should choose to become an autonomous state and a member of the confederacy: that there should be a personal union between her and Hungary, that is, the sharing of the head of state. It does not matter what the title of their ruler will be. Mutual understanding between the Magyars and the Romanians is my most fervent wish, since it would ensure the welfare and freedom of both peoples. I sincerely hope that we will achieve this noble goal.

In the event that the Eastern question will be solved through the Christian peoples' independence,[2] it would be desirable if Serbia and the other Southern Slavic countries also joined the Danubian Confederation. In this case, the Confederation would stretch from the Carpathians to the Balkans, and would include Hungary, Transylvania, Romania, Croatia, and maybe some Serbian territories. With respect to those delicate issues which the countries may not be able to settle, friendly powers could be requested to mediate and render a decision.

The confederate treaty would be drawn up at a legislative assembly based upon certain principles, a number of which I shall outline.

1. Matters of shared interest would be the following: the Confederation's territorial defense, foreign affairs, foreign representation, and the commercial system, including commercial legislation, customs, the major traffic lines, currency, weights and measurements.

2. Everything in connection with land and naval forces, forts, and naval ports would be regulated by the confederate authorities.

3. States of the confederation would not have individual foreign representation; instead, the federate diplomacy would be one and joint.

4. Import duties would also be joint. The revenue would be distributed among the different states as fixed by the legislation. Commercial legislation would be joint: one currency, one weight and measurement system for the entire confederation.

5. The legislative assembly would also determine whether the parliament (that is, the executive authority) would consist of only one chamber or two, like in the United States of America. In the latter case, the House of Representatives would be elected in proportion to the population of each individual state. All states, large and small, would have equal representation in the Senate - this is an excellent guarantee for the small states.

6. The ultimate executive power would be practised by a confederate council elected by the chamber, or chambers, of the parliament. The confederate council would also set direction to foreign politics as well as control legislature.

7. The confederation's official language would be determined by the legislative assembly. In practice, the executive and legislative authorities could use their own mother tongue.

8. The seat of the confederation would alternate among Pest, Bucharest, Zagreb, and Belgrade.

9. The head of that state in which the confederate seat happens to be located would act as head of the confederate council as well as temporary president of the confederation.

10. Each state would design for itself a constitution which best served its interests, provided that its constitutional principles did not oppose the ratified principles of the confederation.

11. The interrelation of the different nationalities and denominations would be settled on the basis of principles that the Hungarian delegation in Turin has already included in their memorandum of September 15, 1860.

Notably:

a.) Every community will decide upon an official language. This language should be used at all oral conferences, in correspondence and reports to the county head, petitions to the government and the parliament. In addition, each community will determine which language will be used for teaching in schools.

b.) Each county will determine by majority vote which language would be used in administrative matters. Oral negotiations would take place in this language, as would minutes of meetings, and government correspondence. Similarly, the government would answer and draft all departmental orders in the same language.

c.) In parliamentary negotiations each representative could use any language spoken in the country.

d.) The laws would be set forth in the communities and counties in the languages spoken there.

e.) The inhabitants of the country could associate freely. In the interest of their nationality, large national leagues could be organized. Furthermore, they could hold meetings at regular intervals to settle their religious affairs. At the same time, they could elect a leader for their nationality, who could be called a *voivod, hospodar*, something of this sort.[3]

f.) Nationality associations could manage their own churches and schools. Also, they could freely elect their prelates who might be titled a *patriarch, metropolitan,* something of this sort.

g.) These associations could enact statutes to benefit their organization, their nationality, and their religion.

h.) The state expects only one thing from these associations: that their decisions and actions be made a matter of public knowledge.

I trust that the Danubian territories will accept the above recommendations, because these fulfil their desires and interests, and ensure their future. In this way, internal understanding would be achieved among the states. As a result, autocracy would be defeated, and decadent states such as Austria or Turkey, which currently hold the Danubian countries in a position of servitude and prevent them from attaining their noble aspirations, would disintegrate. In the name of Heaven, I implore the Hungarian, Slavic, and Romanian brothers to put a veil on the past and extend a helping hand to each other. Thus, we can rise and stand united for freedom. [...] In the name of Heaven, accept this plan, which is not a concession but a mutual and free pact. Each Lower Danubian nation, even if it could gather all its kinsmen who live elsewhere, could form a second-rate state at best. Its independence would always be in jeopardy, and by necessity it would be subordinated to foreign influence. However, if the Hungarians, Southern Slavs and Romanians embraced the plan stated above, then a first-rate, prosperous and powerful state of thirty million inhabitants could be created. This would weigh heavily on the European scale.

Unity, concordance, and brotherhood among Hungarians, Slavs, and Romanians! Behold, this is my most fervent desire, my most sincere advice!

World War I erupted from a political murder in Sarajevo, Bosnia — an area which could have been stabilized by a Kossuthian federation. In 1920, the victors meted out "justice" to the losers. On June 4, in the

small castle of Trianon in the vast park of Versailles near Paris, Hungary was deprived of seventy-three percent of its historical territory, sixty-four percent of its population, and about eighty percent of its natural and cultural resources by dictates of a peace treaty.

Ever since then, Hungarians have not managed to cope with these losses. We need to consider whether we would have coped better had our own country suffered the same trauma. Pain makes one revengeful — however, far-sighted thinkers knew this and wanted to prevent repercussions. In 1938 and 1940, when, by international consent, small areas of the old homeland were returned to Hungary, count Teleki had some useful advice for his countrymen. The degree of institutionalized tolerance that he advocated (comprising censorship of cultural products so that they don't hurt the sensibility of national minorities) was unprecedented in his time. Only modern multiculturalism in a few countries (like Canada) has been resolute enough to face the necessity of curtailing certain freedoms like those of the media and the arts — by censorship, if necessary — in order to assert the human dignity of all groups and traditions.

Document 5. PÁL TELEKI: *Hungarian Political Thoughts*

> The question arises in frequent thoughts of my leisure time: can we create history? This is the most important question of our time, because today everybody is a history builder: through his behaviour, work and deed. Shortly after the reannexation of Subcarpathia,[4] I visited Munkács. The town was burning with excitement that day. A young person visited a newly appointed official of high rank, whoever he was, and said: "Me no speak Hungarian, sir, would you speak with me in Ruthenian, please".[5] "What? That lingo? Go to hell!" - was the answer. Such a response could completely ruin public opinion and could set catastrophic nationality policy for large areas. One needs to be careful with such statements. One should watch his tongue whatever his thoughts are, because to make up for such a mistake takes weeks or months and the diligent effort of many people. Indeed, what does the question mean: can we create history?
>
> Some parts of Saint Stephen's kingdom were returned to us,[6] populated by a mix of Hungarians and other nationalities. To govern them is a historical task. On the basis of my experience I have to state that today's generation has not fully matured to this task. But we have to mature. We have to promote this idea. We have to draw conclusions

quickly and resolutely. We have to rely on direct experiences. We have to educate ourselves in order to fulfil the tasks. [...]

I concede that it is everyone's undebatable right to cultivate his mother tongue, customs, and traditions. It is the duty of the Hungarian State, nay, of all states, to support their citizens in their efforts by promoting education in various existing mother tongues. Safeguarding the cultural equality of minorities is part of Saint Stephen's legacy. This is why I keep emphasizing that we should learn the languages of the national minorities. We have to use these languages for communication with these minorities, because Saint Stephen's idea does not mean a forcible Hungarianization in either language or appearance. Coexistence and a shared form of life may mean, however, true adoption of Hungarianness, if it is sincere and stems from free will, because otherwise it carries no value. This is the only path leading people of different religions and world outlook to find unity so that they can live united and strive for shared prosperity. Of course, such community is needed by those who are confined to one land, breathing the same air, eating the same food, living the same way and, moreover, are led by the traditions of the past and the common will of the future. [...]

In the schools, children are to be taught in their own language to be loyal to the state. What does loyalty to the state mean? It means loyalty to the state principle and its individualized embodiment. [...] For centuries the Hungarian state has been, and is, the state of a multilingual, multi-rooted Hungarian nation. Loyalty to the state means loyalty to this nation, including the loyalty of various nationalities to each other as a duty of loyal patriots.

We have to assure the teaching of the mother tongue not only in elementary school, but also in secondary schools. Respecting paternal rights means allowing parents to decide which school their child should attend. We have to do our best to ensure the free prevalence of this decision.

The Hungarianization of names shall be demanded under no circumstances. I have never supported this movement because the Hungarianization of names in itself has no significance. It does not express feelings. It is a hoax and nothing else. Changing names can only be the final result of a longer assimilation process. If someone crosses over to another nationality — no matter for what family considerations — and later would fully associate himself with the new nationality, he may then ask the question, why should he preserve his foreign sounding name? Then he can change his name too. But earlier and otherwise such a thing serves no purpose. I would also add that

> the free practice of any ethnic activity shall be allowed, including cinema and theatrical shows. At any rate, we shall be careful that the movie or play should not insult any ethnic group, nor human feelings in general.

Perhaps Hungarians expected too much from other countries: help against the Turks in the 16th and 17th centuries, against the Habsburgs in 1849, and fair peace agreement from the victors after World War I. Monarchs and countries did indeed render support to other monarchs and countries — yet, such support could never be taken for granted. This sobering recognition was, actually, the basis for a new kind of national self-reliance that some outstanding military leaders advocated. The first among these was count Miklós Zrínyi who was equally brilliant as a poet and as a statesman. Already in the mid-17th century he called for the establishment of a strong national army and for the study of military strategy by the leaders of this army. His conclusion is clear: no nation can exist without modern and efficient defense based on reliable internal resources. If it reads like a banality in its starkly stated form, why did, even in the 20th century, certain governments hope so naively for foreign (nowadays called "international") help once they themselves could obviously not resist armed intervention? Illusions die hard; therefore, Zrínyi's 300 year old rational patriotism seems so much more timely.

Document 6. MIKLÓS ZRÍNYI

> God forbid that my pen should shame any foreign nation. That is not my intention, because I could prove the glory of every nation with historical accounts any time. But I would like to conclude that we Hungarians should not put our faith in the heroism of anyone else, but as long as God gives us strength and ability, we must strive so that the foreigners should not be our main helpers, but should only render accessory help. For surely, our wounds don't hurt anyone else as much as us, no-one else feels our misery as we do. Therefore, it follows that no-one reaches so briskly for the medicine as we should, especially if the medicine is associated with danger.
>
> At this point someone may stop me to inquire: what are you trying to say by all this? What is your advice? It is easy for anyone to declaim and preach, but the sick need medication and the wounded a patch. I will answer these questions shortly, repeating my cry: arms, arms are needed, and a good heroic resolution! Besides this, I don't

know, nor will say, anything. We Hungarians either protect ourselves in this manner or die a heroic death, because there is no other choice. Should we flee? There is nowhere to go! We won't find Hungary anywhere else, and no other people will leave their country voluntarily so we can settle in it. Our noble freedom is to be found nowhere but in Pannonia. We must triumph or die here. [...]

If our complaints and prayers are all in vain, let us reach for the remedy if there is one - and there is one if we want one. Although I have portrayed our people critically in their present state, if you ask me, who and what kind of nation do I wish for patronage, I will say: the Hungarians. Why? Because this is the most suitable, strongest, and if it so wishes, the most valiant nation. The Hungarians have battled with the Turks for nearly two hundred years now. How often did the Turkish emperors come into our country with hundreds of thousands of men! Even Sultan Suleiman, the most gallant emperor of the Ottoman nation, led five expeditions into our country,[7] yet God did not let us perish. When we lost something, it was mostly in peacetime, and due to false alliances, rather than in battles. This is why I desire Hungarians for my protectors, not [any other nation]. We should just improve ourselves, set a different course for our actions, reinstate military discipline to its former worthy place, and we won't be inferior to any other nation. Even if we are small in number, we are not so small that we could not make the Turks regret that they considered us to be next to nothing. [...]

It can surely be seen from this discourse that even if we have a great multitude of brave troops, they won't be of much use unless they study the art of fighting. Military skills do not only entail that soldiers fight any which way, but that they fight wisely. The bear is stronger than man, the panther faster, the lion more efficient, but nonetheless man conquers all of them with his cunning. Man forces horses, oxen, and elephants to serve him, which would not be possible if only strength and bravery were used instead of wisdom. It is even more desirable to possess wisdom when people fight against other people, particularly against such people as the Turks, who did not conquer us with strength or bravery, but with cunning and superior numbers. Thus, if victory goes to the best trained army, then there is no doubt that it will not be ours if we do not learn the art of warfare. It is true that the Turks are cunning and disciplined; however, their military tactics are not so perfect that they could not be better. When they find someone worse than they are, however, it is certain that the smaller prowess yields to the bigger one. Therefore, we must be better, more valiant, more educated, if we want to beat the Turks. [...]

> Let us look at our present wretched situation and consider it well. Nowadays, if something as much as rustles on the Turkish side, we frantically run here and there, through waters and across mountains, to plead for help from others. We do not have people who could face the dangers, we do not even have one person who could lead us.
>
> Blessed God, this is indeed a great vileness! Are we Hungarians? We do not deserve to be called by this name. If we cannot get Várad back,[8] if we lose Transylvania, there is no use fighting any more. It is now or never: we can just as well run out of our country if we don't succeed. I heard that there is enough uncultivated land in Brazil: let us ask the Spanish king[9] for a province, establish a colony, and become its citizens. But if you trust God, love your motherland, and have just one drop of Hungarian blood flowing in your veins, cry to God in Heaven!

Yet another historical delusion stems from the over-cultivation of history itself. This has been, and is, a major Hungarian fallacy. The nation's history is full of exciting, glorious events to look back at with nostalgia — even the struggles that failed developed their own uplifting ethos. The same history has also given rise to self-pity ("we defended Europe, yet it doesn't care about us!"), paranoia ("everybody was always against Hungary!"), and a tendency to isolation, cultivating this dubious attitude as some kind of merit.

Count István Széchenyi did not show much sympathy toward these fallacies of his country. It is impossible to call this widely travelled, enlightened aristocrat who sacrificed so much for the betterment of his nation anything but a patriot. Yet for many Hungarians it was difficult to cope with Széchenyi's blunt critique of his beloved nation's weaknesses. They found his great rival, the master orator Kossuth, more alluring. Excerpts from Széchenyi's most famous works, here and in other chapters, probably explain why. One cannot be lost in the past and fail to do one's best for a brighter future — that is Széchenyi's message. A word against self-pity and against laziness.

Document 7. ISTVÁN SZÉCHENYI: *On Credit*

> Some people sadly whistle the melody of the peril of Mohács, since they believe that the casket of ancient glory is buried there. And it might be so, although I do not believe it. The wise man does not look

back as much as he looks forward, and instead of crying over lost treasure, he rather examines what has been saved, is satisfied with it, and strives to gain more gradually.

A great many people cry for the good old times, while they totally forget about the present, and therefore they are not able to use it wisely. However, if not the *charm of antiquity*, surely nothing else can make the time of our forefathers more desirable than the days of our own lives. We cannot deceive others with glorious tales, because history speaks aloud, and self-deception is sheer madness. Many people respect antiquity so much that they consider an unwrought rock magnificent if perhaps at some time Cicero sat on it, and marvel more at a few thin fallen columns - since they are many centuries old - than, for instance, at the Waterloo stone bridge of London or the Simplon Tunnel, since these are only a few years old. But this weakness also arises from the attraction to perfection. In some countries, so much occurred in the distant past that bears the appearance of greatness, so much that is worthy of mankind's pride, that nothing is more natural than that these amazing phenomena captivate the impressionable people to the extent that they even admire the old rust more than the new shine. In our country such greatness that one could mourn has not yet existed. And thank Heaven for this, because it may still come. Let us rejoice that we did not live in olden time, and that our days are still before us.

As indicated in the preceding chapter, our readings on Hungarian history have given us more advice on how one should interpret and shape history than factual information. The uncompromising self-analysis of the thinkers and statesmen not only pointed out some confusion and inconsistencies in the national psyche but also offered guidance towards a more rational future that people cannot help but hope for. The thoughts of these eminent Hungarian authors still preoccupy us, perhaps because they touch on still unsolved dilemmas of collective human history and experience.

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IV. Ethnology and Folklore

History deals either with decisive events and personalities, or with general trends, in the "life" of a nation. The songs people hum, or the fish they prepare for their meal, are trivial elements of collective life, from a historical point of view. Yet history cannot ignore the study of such trivialities. Neither is history a discipline only — it is also a method of studying processes. Both music and cooking are legitimate fields of investigation, and both have their own history.

The inquiry into everyday life is determined by the fact that Hungary has been a predominantly agricultural country where rural forms of dwelling, life style, beliefs and customs prevailed. Only now that the future of humanity's consumable resources has increasingly come into question, does the wisdom of having a self-sufficient agricultural economy appear in a new light. Since the 18th century, approximately, optimistic modernizers and other ideologues of "progress" have tended to call the priority of satisfying hunger and thirst a conservative, outdated principle, opposing to it a faith in industry, commerce, and urbanization.

As we shall see, the economic aspects of Hungary's dominant form of production were also often debated by the nation's outstanding thinkers. The values and the form of life that rural settlement and production created, disintegrated only very recently. Just a few decades ago ethnologists were able to observe ancient customs and artistic phenomena in their actively practised, although perhaps modified, form. Ottó Herman's ancestors, as his name suggests, were German. It does not make sense to draw nationalistic conclusions from Hungarian family names since, as has been pointed out, disloyalty to one's ancestry was never among the criteria of becoming a patriotic Hungarian. With his German name, Herman became a pioneer of Hungarian ethnology — an eager patriot who wanted to enrich his nation by studying the traditions of its peoples. His excerpted writings about Hungary's various fish and, even more, their use for his countrymen, prove the extensions of the discipline that he practised into diverse fields, such as language, history, book

publishing, and, of course, gastronomy (which is both an art and a science). We know from the study of different cultures how deeply embedded eating rituals and taboos are in their consciousness. Herman's writings prove the same for Hungarian cuisine, which is strongly connected to the natural resources of the country.

Document 1. OTTÓ HERMAN

On Science and Hungarian Cuisine

A curious-sounding title which may make the reader smile. Yet, it can be further expanded, since it should actually read like this: "Hungarian fish in Hungarian cuisine, both discussed in relation to science." Perhaps this makes one smile as well?

It is not a joke after all, because it is both playful and serious — very much so. Tell me what you eat, and I'll conclude what kind of person you are. Show me your home and I'll see into your soul. Write a brief letter and I'll read your essence.

We learn much from Hungarian cuisine, especially from that of the past. It characterized the lifestyle of our ancestors; thus we find it edifying. It helps us draw a parallel between then and now. We learn much with regard to the economy, and quite a bit about language.

For the most part it is the latter which encourages us to look at old Hungarian cuisine, so that we learn more about fish. But simple, sober rationality also encourages us. If history taught us that fishing was first in importance among the ancient activities of the Hungarians, then it must have played a big role also in the kitchen.

With what sort of fish was old Hungarian cuisine familiar? What was it called? Do the old fish names coincide with those that fishermen use nowadays? All these questions instigate us to search for our oldest handwritten and printed cookbooks.

Something else also encourages us. That great and profound transformation which Christian religion brought about resulted in a strict adherence to the regulations of the new faith. Apart from the ceremonies, it also meant adherence to fasting, which thus made fish extremely important. Uniform religion meant that fish as a food of fasting gained importance on the table of the poorest serf just as much as in the refectory of the monasteries and at the feasts of the aristocrats, even the king.

Opportunity itself played an important role. By its mere existence, the pike-perch of Lake Balaton, the *sőreg* of the Tisza River, the giant sturgeon of the blue Danube, and the pike and carp of the swamplands, gave economic value to fish. It affected the world's greatest power: the stomach, which soon learned to discriminate among values. It distinguished the good from the bad, the tasty from the not so tasty, the bony from the boneless. Along these lines, it distinguished between the broiled and the cooked flavour, and other means of preparation.

This whole process gave birth to words which had to be added to Hungarian vocabulary. According to our knowledge, our oldest written, systematic cookbook was that of Gábor Bethlen, Prince of Transylvania.[1] While this volume was lost, during the rule of the same prince several aristocrats led magnificent households, had a court, and copiers and abstracters of his cookbook recorded the recipes. It is also certain that our oldest printed cookbooks got their material from Bethlen's written volume, because the names of the dishes and the methods of their preparation are identical.

The first source left to us is István Galgóczi's. We know his book from a handwritten copy the first part of which is incomplete. But the second part has survived, its title being The Second Part of the Science of Cooking. Thus, the main title may have been *The Science of Cooking*. [From this book we learn that] they prepared sausage of catfish, and doughnuts of sturgeon roe. They prepared fish the Hungarian way, as well as the German, Serbian, Wallach,[2] and Polish way. The cultural historical value of Galgóczi's book is beyond question. Even botanists can make use of his pilot words.

The creation of modern ethnology to which Herman contributed cannot be fully appreciated without a historical note. The national struggle for the recognition of Hungary's constitutional rights ended in 1867 when the Habsburg empire, shrunk in size and humiliated by a series of military defeats, granted this country equal rights with Austria in a dual monarchy. The unifying myths of Romanticism, among these the one of a united Hungarian folk and national tradition, lost their function. While the artificial 19th century "Hungarian song" (*magyar nóta*), widely popularized by Gypsy musicians, did not lose its appeal, it was becoming clear that, although long identified with the folk song, it was actually a different form of musical expression. After the turn of the century Béla Bartók, the internationally renowned composer, registered the return of a pre-Romantic regionalism. While composers of the Hungarian song picked

out what they thought was typically folksy in peasant music, modern collectors of folk songs reached back to the regionally specific elements of this tradition. The richness of peasant music was due to the local differences and to the variations of individual interpretation.

Besides being addressed to music theorists and composers, Bartók's writings have additional messages as well. First, he called attention to the differences among Hungary's many regions and cultures. Next, he advocated the rediscovery of the homeland and its peoples. Finally, he raised the idea of music being a code of communication. It is probably due to the isolated character of the Hungarian language that its speakers excelled internationally in some of the non-verbal systems of communication like mathematics, photography, the only partially verbal art of the cinema — and, indeed, music.

Document 2. BÉLA BARTÓK:

The Influence of Peasant Music on Modern Music

The beginning of the 20th century was a turning point in the history of modern music. The excesses of late Romanticism were becoming hard to bear for a number of composers. They started feeling that it was impossible to continue along such a path, and the only solution had to be an overall opposition to the 19th century. What provided an inestimable encouragement and strength for this resistance — shall we say regeneration — was peasant music. By this I mean what we know as peasant music in its narrowest sense. This was almost completely unknown before the early 20th century. In its formal aspects, this music is both the most perfect and the most varied. Its power of expression is amazing; nevertheless it is quite free of sentimentality or superfluous bombast. At times it is simple to the point of being primitive, yet it never becomes silly. In fact, it is impossible to imagine a more convenient point of departure for a musical renaissance. What better teacher can be found for a composer than this kind of music?

What is one of the conditions for the intensive effects of peasant music? It is that the composer should be as well acquainted with the indigenous peasant music of his country as with his mother tongue. In order to accomplish this, Hungarian composers themselves went to collect peasant music. [...] In my opinion, it is possible to experience the full intensity and impact of peasant music only by

> listening to it on site, in a peasant community itself. In other words, I think it is not sufficient to study peasant music from sound archives. The essential thing is to transpose the hardly describable inner character of this music into our compositions, to fill these with the very air of peasant music and performances. It is not enough merely to inject into composed music some motifs or pseudo-motifs from peasant music. This can only lead to superficial ornamentation.
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> Our well-wishers twenty or twenty-five years ago often wondered how it could be that well-educated musicians who were also renowned as performing artists could undertake such a lowly task — that is, lowly in their eyes — as the study and collection of rural music on location. What a pity, they said, that there was nobody else to perform this task for us — for instance, someone who was unsuited for any other musical undertaking. In fact, many people regarded our persistence and tenacity as the obsession of madmen. These people little suspected the enormous importance that our trips to the villages held for us, making it possible that we could experience this music which set a new direction for us.

While the primarily agricultural character of the Hungarian economy prevailed into the 20th century, country life has gone through radical changes. Bartók was indeed among the last generation of intellectuals who could still witness traces of the vanishing country values, lifestyle, and folk art. More recent illusions in such directions are simply false. Yet, it does not mean that the ongoing changes would justify forgetting about Hungary's centuries old rural economic foundations. Those eminent social thinkers of the past who scrutinized these foundations left an amazing treasure-house of ideas to us — ideas that were creative contributions also to the economic theory of their times, and, in the light of modern trends, need reconsideration for their non-waning value.

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V. The National Economy and Social Life

The year was 1815. The spirit of liberty and equality that Napoleon rather ambivalently represented seemed to have been crushed: the good old iron rod of absolutism returned everywhere in Europe. It was not otherwise in Hungary where the Habsburg king Francis I did not care to call Parliament for thirteen long years.

As elsewhere on the continent, the quest for reform and modernization temporarily took less conspicuous, non-political forms. One of these was the shaping of an expressive, rich national language to replace the bastardized, mixed idioms that resulted from the huge 18th century influx of ethnic immigrants from other cultures. Another consistent preoccupation pertinent in this context was with national economy, both its theory and practice.

The studious economist Gergely Berzeviczy and the landholder-writer Dániel Berzsenyi lived in a country which differed from the dominant Western European model in some respects. Their main ambition was the furthering of production and commerce among overwhelmingly agricultural conditions in which the development of urban middle class values and lifestyle was already a realistic possibility, but intensive industrialization was not yet a reality. There is no doubt that both Berzeviczy and Berzsenyi were familiar with Western European economic theories and had read much about the experience of the West; they were well-versed in the works of the French physiocrats and such later reformers as the count of Saint Simon and, above all, Adam Smith.

Like their Western models, Berzeviczy and Berzsenyi realized the importance of a national economy for all aspects of modern social life: the family structure, division of labour between the sexes, the accumulation of what a conservative, Spartan outlook on values called "luxury," and education for a more prosperous and productive existence. Both

pointed out convincingly that thorough changes of attitudes and aspirations were needed in their age of quickly developing modern capitalism if Hungary was to keep pace with European trends.

As was the case with their Western contemporaries, "happiness" occupied a central place in the writings of these Hungarian economic thinkers. Berzeviczy went so far as to state that the basis of happiness was an equal participation by all citizens in the national economy. He defined culture as the creation of surplus and luxury, and found Hungary's major problem in the lack of both. Repeatedly mentioning England as an ideal, Berzeviczy proposed a just and wisely utilized form of taxation as a solution for Hungary's shortcomings: a lack of surplus, social trust, and impetus to modernize.

Document 1. GERGELY BERZEVICZY

> The more fertile the land is, the more it abounds in nature's various gifts, the larger the population is and the better they live, the more significant this land's industry and commerce are, the more developed the cultivation of science and the arts is, the more accessible people find domestic products, and the more all this is promoted by a wise, benevolent and liberal government — the bigger the wealth of the nation.
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> Wealth should not be confused with either the income of the ruler or the public endowments, if these exist at all. By wealth I mean that almost miraculous phenomenon which astonishes people by the fulfilment of all contingent necessities of the nation's forces and production, and immediately reproduces the consumed quantity after the crises. Wealth has three prerequisites which are worth surveying for the purpose of easier comprehension.
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> 1. *The productive class.* This comprises the economy in a wider sense, differing from the private and state sectors. Everything that is produced in a certain category for the whole community in order to sustain man's physical existence belongs here. As the basis of economy, it should never be neglected — rather, everything should be constructed upon it.
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> 2. *The transforming class.* Workshops, big industrial enterprises (manufactures), and factories are, in a narrower sense, industries which give raw materials a more useful or agreeable form. This increases the utility of raw materials, promotes their consumption,

raises their value, expands the economy, and is at the same time the basis of commerce.

3. *The business class.* Speculation and commerce give mobility to agriculture and industry [...], promote exchange, make circulation perpetual, and invigorate the economy with new forces of production.

The ambition for perfection is present in all three prerequisites, and the people grow prosperous with their successful progression. Since the more thorough cultivation, respectively research, of nature, the arts, and the theoretical and practical sciences, flourishes in close relationship with the three aforementioned classes, the more they also ennoble the national character. The people among whom this is perceptible are civilized, and their status is civilization which is mankind's chief adornment.

The goal of every bourgeois society, every state, is to achieve a higher, more complete degree of happiness for the people. Just as private property, inviolable public security, a wise system of government, and fair administration of justice are necessary for this happiness, it is above all necessary that the people be able to exist and make a living. Therefore, every bourgeois society has to provide an amplitude of the necessities of life, and the means of producing supply and income, in order that, as far as it is possible, people can live an easy, comfortable, pleasant, and civilized life. [...]

Not much is needed for the preservation of sheer physical existence. After all, people can live like cattle on the prairie, feeding on fruit, grass and roots. But man's intended purpose is higher than that. After the necessities of life increase infinitely, they create the arts and the sciences of which they are both the cause and the effect. Also, they ennoble human nature, augment the diligence for acquisition, and multiply the population, commerce, and national wealth. For these very reasons they are the most effective tools of enhancing state power.

Habit becomes second nature. Let the cynics maintain that luxury is unnecessary, that we can do without coffee, sugar and spices, that having one dress is quite sufficient, and that stately mansions, orchestras, paintings which provide us with pleasant illusions, and the different spectacles of the theatre are all vanity. If people grow accustomed to these, they not only enjoy these, but also rank them among the necessities of life.

Even if the structures and principles of the governmental system change, these customs remain as necessities, albeit in modified forms. The governing power is incapable of altering them, unless the new generations themselves are tuned differently from childhood on,

and the changing spirit of the centuries brings forth a transformation. And why should any government want to alter the customs when, with wise moderation, it can direct them to serve its own interest, and when they are mankind's most beautiful bond?

Luxury is nothing else but the wider consumption and use of raw materials, products, and articles of industrial art. Since every luxury constitutes the stimulus of industry, it is perfectly clear that it promotes the increase of national production and, as such, it is indeed useful as an effective developer of industry and trade. Therefore, agriculture, industry and trade, which provide the people with sustenance and the state with power, require the special care of the government. Any restriction of a people's sustenance, any hampering of the course of industry and trade is just as harmful as an open attack on the region or the state.

I hear the objection that the economy is not essential to public happiness, that Hungary is quite strong in men and arms, that the peasant is happy about his humble existence, since he does not know a better life, and that the ignorance of poor people contributes more to happiness than the awareness of the abundance of things paired with wealth.

This objection is fairly delusive, but the incongruent ideas are worth discriminating. [...] Subjective happiness depends on the individual's own feelings. Thus, the gipsies, the simple-minded, and all low-ranking people who do not know or want a better life could be called happy. However, is such feeling of happiness desirable? Does it not pervert the true human essence? Would ignorance coupled with poverty be able to produce other feelings than the base sensation of dumb indifference?

Objective happiness is based on the lofty civilization that separates human beings from brute beasts. It also consists of an excellent perfection of a purpose that God intended for mankind. Finally, the high development of virtue, this best cure of all misfortune, is also a part of such happiness. This is the infallible measure of happiness which is capable of preventing misery, and of overcoming, or at least lessening, the hardships of destiny.

Subjective happiness usually cannot be measured, since views and feelings differ: what is happiness for one is misery for another. Undoubtedly, the English taxpaying citizen is happier than the naked African who does not pay taxes but is caught like an animal and sold as a slave for twenty or thirty gold coins if he is strong enough.

The particular question emerges: compared to others, is the Hungarian peasant happy? Aside from the fact that a conclusion has to

be reached by comparing objective factors of happiness, this question could be answered in one word. Ask the peasants of Austria and Hungary whether they are happy or not. If the former answers "yes" and the latter "no," the dispute can be considered resolved. Who would deny that Hungary would be a happier country if the peasants could pay their dues without any difficulties while keeping a portion of the surplus; if that petty nobleman who now has to make his living as a swineherd could live as a nobleman should; if everyone could perform his own duty and, in case of public danger, could also help the homeland; if the arts and sciences were thriving more; if the public were better educated in practical matters; if the trade of currency and goods were more prominent and acquiring them were easier; if the economic forces of this country, which is so well endowed in natural wealth, were to double; and, if there were a need, it would be possible to help the king with double intensity to defend the borders? Who could deny that in such a case the king, the country and its inhabitants would be happier than they are today? [...]

The peasant is made clever by the circumspection that he has to exercise in order to practise all his energies for the purpose of survival, and in order to seek for means to relieve his oppressed state. It necessarily follows that his smartness in these matters, and ignorance of most everything else around him in the world, makes him believe that he is very clever. He has not much appreciation for the qualities and intellect of those of higher status, because he thinks that they may be more educated but are neither smarter nor more useful than he is. He thinks that these people live only for enjoyment, while he lives in order to work hard and be useful. Actually, everyone who has a delimited but thorough knowledge of a particular matter tends to deprecate others.

The peasant exhibits distrust towards those in higher position, actually towards everyone who does not share his lot. He thinks that he is allowed to gain profit by outsmarting those who enjoy superiority due to their privileges. This mistrust has two roots, stemming from either ignorance or from the suspicion that the authorities consistently treat him with malevolence. The first source is a kind of fear well known by children and those individuals who feel weak. The other one is produced by the fact that many landlords do, indeed, keep only their interests in view when interacting with their serfs, craving to maximize their privileges and the size of their estate.

The peasant extends his mistrust to all administrative and legal authorities. But who represents these authorities? The landlords, or people who are somehow connected with the landlords. However,

the king is not subject to the mistrust of the peasants. Why? Because the king, due to his royal dignity, is perceived by the peasant to be above the landlords as much as the landlords are above him. Also, the peasants know that they make up the most important social class of the country, and thus they strongly believe that the king protects them. They see through the system of feudalism and are able to comprehend its true meaning.

The peasant hates every innovation and reform, especially if these originate from the landlords. He behaves stubbornly against these changes because he knows that there is a clash of interest between him and his landlord. In these changes he sees an attempt to further restrict his rights for the benefit of the landlord's privileges. Since he is unable to comprehend any wider ramifications, he does not even think that the changes would benefit him, because he is too preoccupied with the fear of the worsening of his life.

The peasants' disposition goes through a peculiar modification because they live so close to each other and interact only with each other. They see each other every day, they work together in the fields, in the forest and in the barn, they spend the holidays together, and the entire family resides at one place. What is called *esprit de corps* is not as strong anywhere else as it is among the peasants. This makes their life easier to bear, because it is easier to bear a burden if it is shared by others, and dear is to our heart the one who is our companion in misery. The peasants do not wish to associate with more prosperous people, nor does luxury tempt them. Instead, they drink and party together for leisure. Since they share the same ethical principles, their feeling towards authority is also the same, and if one of them turns unruly, that stirs up the whole community. The identical outlook on life held by those people who always live together results in major flaws in certain communities, while elsewhere we find equally obvious virtues. In some places the peasants are hard working, kind, and obedient, while in other places they are thieves and quarrellers, and they are bibulous and stubborn. It is difficult to change these habits that have been handed down through generations.

Why is it that many of the peasants are lazy, and even those who are not appear to be, because of the shape of their body and the way they move? My answer to this is that any hard and monotonous labour wears out parts of the body, creates a weary disposition, awakens in the soul a desire to rest, and makes the body numb instead of flexible. On the other hand, the flexibility of the body comes from the vivid spirit and the sound mind that is inspired by general knowledge and the desire for more. However, the peasant has few thoughts,

and even these are vulgar and trivial, since his mind and body are sluggish. He would be more capable and active physically if he had a wider range of culture and a more productive mind, as can be seen with peasants who reside near larger cities. [...]

A dull-witted person is lazy because he does not want a better life as he does not know a better life. A sharp-witted person, on the other hand, becomes lazy if he comes to the sad conclusion that he cannot advance in life, no matter how much he strives. Whatever the basis might be for this belief — the overwhelming public and personal taxes, the lack of the chance to increase one's income, or a stagnation of commerce — if the repeated attempts to get ahead by hard work fail to produce results for the peasant, he then loses his balance of mind and most often turns to drinking out of despair. It is depressing to hear the reasoning of the peasants as they sadly state: "If I do not have anything, no-one can take anything from me, but if I have something, surely I will have to give that to someone." [...]

How to let the peasants become more prosperous is the most difficult political task. One thing is for sure: the fear of the peasant becoming overly well-to-do has no basis. Free trade, industry, and circulation of money maximally contribute to their subsistence. There are countries in Europe where the peasants pay minimal dues, yet live in poverty; they do not require much but are given minimal care as well. On the contrary, where do they pay more dues than in England? Yet they are the strongest and richest in that country. You can take away a lot from those who have a lot. It is in the peasants' rights to pay their dues from the proceeds of their diligent work, be able to live under decent conditions, and even save some money for their old age just in case misfortune strikes. [...]

Those who wish to keep the peasant in his present state of ignorance and preserve him from any form of education say the following: "In the time of our ancestors the peasant could not read nor write, yet he still tilled the soil and was not worse off morally. Now, some of them can read and write, and some of them even spend their time reading books; but there are a lot more of those, too, who complain and file suit against their landlord or incite the community. Most of these troublemakers are literate and lead others astray. The most simple-minded peasant is the most obedient one. This can be observed in the army as well, where the one who is simple and obedient makes the best common soldier."

Those, however, who desire to elevate the peasants and make them more valuable through education, say as follows: "The most extreme and cruel contraventions take place where the peasants are

uncouth and uneducated. Under such circumstances it could be said that the peasant is as inferior as livestock is. However, when he goes wild, the outbreak creates havoc, as many examples in our own history show.[1] It is impossible that a person who has a more clear perception of God, human happiness, and the practice of morality, would be perverted by these. It is also impossible that a person who acquired some theoretical knowledge of agriculture and economy would be a worse farmer thereby. The one who comprehends the concept of law and duty cannot become a worse subject. On the contrary, these individuals can be guided and influenced by reasoning more successfully than by hitting them with chains and whips. Even experience indicates that everything goes better where the peasants are smarter and more educated."

In both Berzeviczy's and Berzsenyi's writings, the reader is struck by the lucidity of reformist analysis on the one hand and the descriptions of the obvious imperfections of Hungarian socio-economic conditions on the other. In itself, this gap proved the need for democratization and a strife for a more refined national well-being. The realistic human implications of economic betterment are even more clearly spelled out by the Hungarian economists than by their English predecessors. Sex roles, education, cooperatives, and immigration were some aspects that Berzsenyi added to the early 19th century Hungarian theory of a national economy — indeed, pioneering ideas if considered from a late 20th-century point of view.

Document 2. DÁNIEL BERZSENYI

There can be no doubt that one of the major and most noticeable obstacles hindering the progress of our agricultural development is the fact that the most fertile regions of our country are underdeveloped. Therefore, if we want our country's agriculture to flourish, undoubtedly the first condition must be to increase the farming population through every possible means. Considering the importance of this, I hope it won't be out of line to briefly mention a few means of increasing the population.

The example of our numerous German immigrants has proved that the easiest way to populate desolate areas is by settling foreigners there. They have provided us with many farmers, but also brought us money, diligence, and useful crafts. They built rich villages and cities

on barren lands where Hungarians, used to an easy life, could not have survived.

It must be nevertheless kept in mind that, as with all other human issues, we must focus on the golden mean also in this matter, lest in trying to solve the problem of underpopulation we overpopulate our country, which, in some respects, can be an even greater danger, because only happy people, and not an overcrowded poverty-stricken population, can bestow happiness on the country.

For the same reason, it is imperative that any sizeable immigration be controlled by the nation. We should make sure that immigrant groups do not settle all in one place but are interspersed with Hungarians, so that they too can become Hungarians. Both our country's happiness and the interest of the newcomers depends on their quick integration into the principal nation. [...]

It is a shortcoming of no little consequence in Hungarian upbringing to separate female and male chores to the extent that a man blushes and considers it belittling to do a woman's work, while a woman views doing a man's work as an equally improper behaviour. This division of labour often results in severe delays when pressing chores should be performed. I am very much inclined to believe that this bias also influences the character of people in such way which might be to an advantage to a warrior nation, but is a setback to a population of peaceful civilians.

One can regard it as an attractive national characteristic that among Hungarians, women perform only the lighter tasks, while men do those that require strength. I have to admit that to me it looks somewhat barbaric to see the Germans make their wives and daughters do the thrashing, reaping, ploughing, and so on. On the other hand, I also have to admit that the reputation of Germans as industrious people is due mainly to the fact that both sexes undertake equal shares in all tasks. While the Hungarian man only smokes and plays on his flute during the winter months, the German husband spins, knits, sews etc. with the women, yielding a product that is of much greater value than the sound of the flute.

Another bias appears in the Hungarian child-rearing, inasmuch as Hungarian boys are brought up in far too strict discipline. While the Germans give their sons three hot meals a day and a warm pillow for the night, Hungarian boys are kept on bread and bacon, sleep on bare ground under the stars during the summer, and in the stable during the winter. Only after they marry do they sleep on pillows. This severe plight is not due to poverty, only to an old tradition, since we know

that the Hungarians have enough food, and no other nation has as many pillows as we have.

With respect to this habit, I must repeat my opinion that harsh upbringing is very effective in fostering soldiers, since they are better trained to withstand the burden of military life than those who have been spoiled under tender care. Such harshness, however, also nurtures a violent character which works against the purpose of culture and industriousness mentioned above. Therefore, considering these goals, we must indeed conclude that raising children with undue strictness is a mistake. [...]

It isn't enough that the Hungarian farmer, due to the scarcity of craftsmanship in his country, must buy everything at a high price and usually must put up with poor quality, but he is also threatened by the circumstance that most of his revenue is spent on imported goods, and thus leaves the country. It is not enough that there is no national commerce, and the money leaving the country will not return to be reinvested in our agriculture. On top of it, we love foreign luxury articles, these sources of bad economy and the scarcity of funds, since money is the driving force of everything, including agriculture.

It is time for the country's nobility, who are getting poorer day by day, to establish at least some kind of mercantile associations, once they are unable to establish factories due to the lack of money and skilled labourers. We are surely ready for it, only the initiative is needed. [...]

We have to use what we are endowed with, any which way we can. If only we could pocket half of the money that foreign traders gain in spite of all our protective taxes, within a short time our purse, agriculture, and mentality (which is even more important than prosperity) would take on a different look.

If, however, the nation is unable to commercialize and industrialize, then the consumption of luxuries must be restrained. Our nation is indeed inclined to luxury, to the extent that not only our nobles are fond of display beyond their means, but also the commoners fall for fashion. In some regions the clothing of peasant women and girls differs from that of the noble women only in their cut. Also the peasant lads are no longer satisfied with their masculine outfit but have started wearing imported silk ties, fancy but trashy imported vests, and other pieces of clothing. [...]

The sense of honour is one of the driving forces of most things that make humanity attractive and good. This is what makes death easy for the hero, and heavy tasks a trifle for the hard-working

labourer. Also, it induces one not to be satisfied with basic needs but always strive for more, no matter how hard one's lot is.

A positive instinct can strongly motivate people, however, only if we treat them humanely, and thereby make them realize their human dignity and forget their subordination. We have to say that the way in which many landlords treat their serfs is no nurturer of any positive instinct. If we consider that here and there even petty officials or nobles do not respect their subordinates at the least but, rather, mistreat them, we cannot wonder that such brutality smothers the feeling of honesty and other beautiful virtues in the common people. [...]

You can command people, but not despise or degrade them. Hatred makes the lowly one mean, and the decent one hostile. Man feels his worth whether in the saddle or at the plough, and he can be useful or harmful in either respect, depending on whether he likes or hates you. One is extremely wrong if one expects more from hatred than love. [...]

Among the accounted and unaccounted obstacles of agricultural activity and public welfare one of the most profound and complex dangers is the fact that the working people are divided. They are not united and neither is their power; they stand alone and are left alone. Each of them fumbles with agriculture, this most important and most difficult occupation of mankind, according to his limited knowledge, or the lack of it. However, I truly believe that both agricultural activity and public welfare can be perfected only if agriculture is not practised by fallible individuals but by assemblies of people that would always possess everything needed for the cultivation of the soil.

Agriculture is accompanied by so many difficulties and worries, and needs so much intelligence, money, industriousness, experience, strength and knowledge, that individuals cannot pursue it, or at least not continuously or efficiently. It can only work well, in the long run, if it is handled by an assembly that always unites the forces needed to overcome the difficulties. Such unity of forces cannot be found in any individual, only in a union of individuals.

Our communities or villages are so imperfect that, although the huts are close to each other, their dwellers are divided by interests, and often the nearest neighbours are the biggest enemies. Instead of supporting each other, they hurt each other. It is a fortunate exception if there is a little agreement even within the wretched dwellers of one hut. [...]

The whole nation could be united by a national bank or similar economic institution, whose examples abound in the other, wiser countries. In the small Wurttemberg alone, those who pay five

percent interest after their bank loan double the working capital every hundred years, since the bank only adds four percent to its asset, thus the fifth percent renews the capital in a hundred years. What great blessing such beneficial institution would be for our helpless nation, and how efficiently it would eradicate usury, is clear to all of us for whom the future of our nation is not indifferent.

Also, serfs and the lower stratum of nobility could form looser or tighter structures. A looser kind of association would be created if each village established, from donations and public work, granaries or savings associations to help out those in need, at reasonable interest. Under prudent management, such reserves would develop to the point that they would always provide for people in any case of destitution. A closer organization would mean a degree of union in which the whole economy was carried out under the supervision of the elders, and everybody got his return according to his invested money or work.

We have met count Széchenyi already as an eminent historical thinker. He was also a man of concrete achievements: founder of the Hungarian Academy, builder of the first stone bridge across the Danube between the twin cities of Pest and Buda, and promoter of innumerable other economic and cultural projects. Széchenyi lists fewer pithy truths than Berzeviczy in the following excerpts from his two major economic treatises. Yet he is the one who hits the nail on the head by pointing out a major weakness of Hungary's public conditions: the lack of a milieu that would attract foreign investment. The "selling out" of national resources and the "abandoning" of key economic positions to foreigners were criticisms frequently made by 19th century economic nationalists — just as they are often voiced by today's nationalists. Yet Széchenyi, an admirer of England and a widely-travelled enlightened aristocrat, recognized that the economy was eventually an international network — the national economy was but a piece of a mosaic. While self-sufficiency in commodities was important, no nation could be entirely self-sufficient without international trust. In our time, as in the past century, Hungary is facing difficult choices in which Széchenyi's ideas play a key role.

Document 3. ISTVÁN SZÉCHENYI: *On Credit*

We must realize that this science [economics] is still in its infancy; but its not yet fathomable, wonderful future development is unquestion-

able. In recent times [it] has made such progress that the coming of its even more intensive evolution is beyond doubt, since what stands motionless in the universe? And just like geodesy and astronomy have progressed only very slowly to their present level of perfection but are now practised by exact and infallible computations and mechanical instruments, so too, agriculture, economics, commerce, finance, national growth and so on, have unfolded only slowly, but by now they already stand on some definite principles. Today, with the help of the empirical and comparative sciences, we can virtually predict, and with considerable certainty, what will be the outcome, for example, of the parcelling of pastures, the introduction of paper money, banking, premiums, and so on. [...]

I hold the lack of credit to be the cause of the following handicaps: that the Hungarian landed gentry is poorer than it should be in relation to its property, because it does not manage its affairs as well as its circumstances could allow; that the good farmer cannot develop his fields to their maximal capacity; and finally, that Hungary has no trade. Therefore, I believe that credit (or a bill of exchange law) is the foundation on which our agriculture and trade, in short our future economical development and prosperity, can be based. However, there is an even more profound aspect of credit, which is *credit in a wider sense.*

Namely, to trust and be trusted. Trust is a chain which links mankind with the Almighty; the sanctity of the word ties the ruler inseparably to his loyal serfs, and their unwavering loyalty comprises the throne's solid strength. The true word is the fountain-head of marital happiness, true honour, the honesty of action and, therefore, of all fortune.

The Light

My trips out of the country brought me together with some artists and manufacturers, whom I asked on numerous occasions whether they would like to move to Hungary and settle there. I offered them splendid promises which by far superseded the conditions in which they lived. I have to say that, to my great amazement, I met with little sympathy and readiness from worthy people (not fortune hunters) everywhere. There was always a secret about this, which I perceived instinctively, yet was unable to solve. After a long while, having experienced a variety of such cases, I realized the painful reason for the secret. Whenever I brought up the subject, and it happened numerous times, it was always known to the people whom I was trying to

coax to come to Hungary that I was Hungarian — therefore, I could not hear the naked truth from them. One day, twelve years ago, it happened, however, that a well-known, honest Belgian manufacturer who did not know I was Hungarian said the following:

"I would be happy to move to Hungary if the laws protected me; but now the way things are there, it is impossible to move to a country where practically nobody pays and everyone hurts you."

This is what I had to hear! Such a summation of all the obstacles and secrets that I had encountered so many times without comprehending them.

I could not listen to such talk silently, since this statement was entirely unsubstantiated, and also unjust. Trying to restrain myself, I explained: "How can you say that nobody pays and everyone hurts you? I can give you my word: such events are so rare that you can hardly name any," and so on. After a longer exposition, I managed to appease most of the audience with my poor country, which was a dark *terra incognita* for them and their information about it was scarce and quite ugly. Finally one of the listeners told me:

"I should like to believe, sir, that such occurrences which endanger the initiative and possessions of the craftsmen, manufacturers, and tradesmen are extremely rare in your country. However, may I ask you as an honourable man, if such things were to happen, can they go unpunished? This is the heart of the problem. [...] We are industrious and peaceful people who cannot do without the effective support of law, since our existence depends exclusively on enterprising. As we don't harm anybody (or, if we do, we are justly punished), we have every right to expect not only that nobody should harm us but also that any wrongdoing against us should be punished. We, too, are humans who need not only money but also honour. We want to owe our courage and wealth not to the mood, whim, or even grace of a privileged class, but to our own efforts, our quiet and honest ways. Frankly, we rather live in a country where our reward is meagre but we enjoy human rights than in one where a powerful group can oppress us if it pleases. No marvellous but risky gains make it worth while to give up a humble but safe existence — we don't play lottery with our lives," and so on.

These arguments made a very unpleasant impression on me, but I was unable to refute them. They stirred various feelings inside me. For a long time I was unable to calm my pride — or vanity — which made me think: "Let these finicky gentlemen stay in their own country. Why should we care? Our country doesn't need them!" Later, however, as the heat of temper subsided, I said to myself: "Put your-

> self in their place!" Having done so, the whole matter appeared in an entirely different light. Not only could I no longer condemn the attitude of foreign craftsmen, manufacturers and merchants towards us, but I actually learned to blame those who want to exclude from the benefits of mankind all other social classes that don't possess the same inherited privileges as they do.

The painful recognition of 19th-century economic thinkers of the fact that a democratic political system — and wisely defined national interests in setting economic priorities — were needed for the healthy development of the country, became obvious only to the generation that followed them. Satisfying such prerequisites was impossible in the absolutist framework of the Austrian Empire. After a short period of intensive growth following the compromise of 1867 (described in the previous chapter) Hungary was caught in the middle of the bloodiest conflicts of the 20th century: the two world wars. The cold war that followed World War II, spent by Hungarians under Soviet occupation, also made the assertion of national priorities impossible. Post-communist independence has brought hope that the economic thinkers' insights concerning the past can be matched with similarly constructive practical ventures adapted to the changed conditions.

Economics, however, is not only a mechanism. It is also part of a large cultural context. Hungary's economic thinkers did not lose sight of this fact. The preoccupation with these implications of the economy leads us to the next subject matter.

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VI. Education and the Sciences

While scholarship and science have become increasingly supranational during the past century, their importance for individual nations would be difficult to contest. The number of Nobel prize winners or the reputation of the best universities complement the achievements of industrial, medical and biological laboratories in any given country as indicators of the country's advancement and prestige. In all respects, science brings pride — and money. The diffusion of knowledge and the instigation to pursue it further are the tasks of education.

As has been mentioned, Hungarians cherished their unique language as the cornerstone of national identity. They have also been eager to cultivate knowledge. Often disadvantaged by the turns of history, they regarded the intensive development of education as a further means of national survival.

This is the central thesis of the Transylvanian educator János Apáczai Csere who, having travelled a great deal in Europe and thus having become acquainted with the universities of several countries, spelled out the national priority of higher education. Dominating the suggested curriculum are the applied sciences, and studies like rhetorics or ethics that contribute to statesmanship and a political career. Also notable is the eminent place that Apáczai Csere assigned to economics.

Document 1. JÁNOS APÁCZAI CSERE on the importance of education

> Why are there so many public affairs incompetently dealt with? The reason is that we, Hungarians, have not a single academy; therefore, we have no place to teach and at the same time advocate moral philosophy, which curbs sins; economics, which manages the life of families; medicine, which preserves health; mathematics, which creates

> cities, streets, churches, palaces and towers; and finally philosophy, which is the root of all sciences. [...] If thus we are deprived of such necessary support (I do not even mention the pressing lack of books and printing shops), do we dare to expect the fortunate development of our affairs, the radiant light of scientific knowledge? [...]
>
> The role of an academy or college in a country can be compared to the role of the eyes in the body. And the role of the human mind can be compared to the role that scientists play in any country. A body without eyes reminds us of darkness itself, whereas man without his mind is but a brute. [...] Academies, and academies alone, or at the least colleges, can save us, and not idle talk, conceited ideas, or blind emotion, which always flatters itself excessively. We will perish unless we recognize our real situation.

"Academies, and academies alone..." Apáczai brought to public attention a concept that was probably inspired, in his case, by the glorious French Academy. Wishing to put the theory into practice, he urged the creation of centres for the advancement of national scholarship. This, again, belonged into an even wider, more ambitious framework: the need for the institutionalization of national culture.

The idea of a Hungarian Academy was raised again and again by outstanding thinkers and writers. Yet, some one hundred and seventy years passed since Apáczai had made his plea, before count Széchenyi took energetic and eventually successful steps to establish such an institution. In 1825 this patriotic aristocrat offered one year's income of his sizeable estates to the creation of an academy, and the parliament proclaimed the goal a national cause. In a subsequent pamphlet, Széchenyi explained his ideas about the tasks of the planned institution.

The primary aim of the Hungarian Academy was the cultivation of language and, through this activity, the advancement of the sciences which, given the Hungarian definition, also included the humanities. Széchenyi refers to the fact that language is the foundation of society: imprecision in communication can cause misunderstanding and discord. As the excerpts explain, however, knowledge is also communicated with language. Are Széchenyi's ideas on this issue still relevant in our time? When we think of such often heard pedestrian pragmatism as the idea that knowledge and education should be "practical"; or, that the improvement of lower-level education should take priority over that of higher education; or, that the quantity (of, say, the registered students) is more important than the quality of education - when we think of all these pseudo-

democratic attacks on scholarship, Széchenyi's thought-provoking ideas seem anything but outdated.

Document 2. ISTVÁN SZÉCHENYI on the Hungarian Academy

In 1825, when the idea of the Academy was renewed, [...] many people could not comprehend why the establishment of a purely philological institution was singled out as most important from a long list of tasks — a project that demanded much hard work, time, and money. [...]

What good could an institution do — thus they reasoned — an institution that only produces words, refines sentences, and joints paragraphs, operating among four walls, thus locked away from society and the rest of the world? Perhaps it perfects language this way, but it will be of little use in securing and exalting our national identity. Until our native language will be spoken by people from all walks of life, our problems won't be solved. Therefore, we should rather have built schools to spread our language, instead of forming a philological society.[1]

We should have trained teachers to disseminate Hungarian among those inhabitants who speak other languages, instead of establishing an institution which only unites scholars and pays them for producing words.

Undoubtedly, these are weighty observations, and very tempting ones, too. They are tempting because Hungary is indeed lagging very much behind in any branch of crafts, arts, and science that one can think of. This backwardness was hardly a matter of general concern until very recently, but now it is widely recognized. Many people, maybe also some of those who contributed to the establishment of the Academy, may ask doubtfully, whether it would have been better and more expedient to join forces for the establishment of something more practical (a polytechnical school, for instance) rather than waste so much energy on setting up a purely philological association. [...]

"We should have invested our united power in something more practical that could be useful in our everyday life as opposed to something that manufactures only words." Indeed! However, I ask, what produces the most confusion and misery among people? Maybe the fact that they are heartless and evil? Surely not. Most mischief is due to the simple fact that people do not understand each other. Not even in ten out of a hundred cases can we find purposeful villainy at

the root of misery. The cause of most human suffering is misunderstanding followed by a heated argument, then revenge which kindles hatred and malice.

Why cannot people understand each other? Mostly because human language — not excepting any spoken tongue — is so insufficiently defined and so non-specific that often just one ambiguous word can turn even the best of friends into bitter enemies. Now, if it is true that first we have to terminate confusion that causes misery in all circles of society in order to insure public good, and, if it is also true that most confusion, and the misery that it creates, originates from misunderstandings, then it should appear that there is no nation so advanced that it could afford not to invest in the development of its mother tongue. A major project, such as the construction of the bridge over the Danube,[2] can be carried out smoothly and without delay only after successful preliminary planning. Likewise, we can fully elucidate truth, and thereby convince others and win, only after preliminary, precise definitions of what we intend to say in our general arguments. For this reason, no nation has a more urgent and serious task to accomplish than to make its language approximate scientific precision. Only with such language can a nation act most efficiently and quickly to advance its interests. [...]

However, one who has lived without dignity for so long and just now is starting to gain it back is more protective of this valuable asset than the one who never experienced such moral agony. Often he becomes quarrelsome and ready for bloody revenge if he believes to have been offended ever so little. This applies to the Hungarian language and nation as well. Where other nations simply see an honest competition, Hungarians (especially nowadays when their passions are regularly and systematically stirred) perceive oppression, hindrance, and intolerable grievance. While other nations — like normal human beings who are not overly concerned about their food and the manner of their clothing — consider only the desirability of things, not where they come from and how, Hungarians are very suspicious of even the smallest things that they are not familiar with. While people of other nations pray to the Almighty for wealth, power, virtue or wisdom, many zealous Hungarians pray on their knees for the general use of their mother tongue. [...]

"Teachers' colleges should have been established, in order to diffuse the language directly, instead of elevating its value, prestige, and thereby making it the greatest treasure of our nation." In response, let us answer the simple question around which, it seems to me, the disappointment is centred: "If somebody knows Hungarian, does it

logically follow that he also must have become a Hungarian thereby?" If the answer is yes, let us not hesitate to spare our last penny to hire "language teachers," nay, let us all become teachers, "so that the whole world learn to converse in Hungarian." Will it save, will it extol our nation? I don't believe that language and national characteristics could be maintained in such a convenient way, not to mention strengthening and expanding them. Let us remember: the spoken word is not the same as the unspoken emotion; language is not the same as heartfelt feeling. A speaker of Hungarian, even a great orator, is not necessarily Hungarian himself. [...]

They suppose that the greater number is blissful. Indeed! As if 30 million barbarians would have greater attraction and more assimilating power than a small but highly civilized nation! The greater number may determine a fight between two mobs equipped with fists and clubs. Otherwise, not even in war does numerical superiority always matter, and it matters even less in contests of intellectual talents, especially in our century when violence sooner or later will dig its own grave. No-one denies that under even circumstances, the greater number has the greater power. However, do we think that it is possible just to apply nationality onto someone who is in our hands like we apply paint onto the walls, or glaze onto a pot? Do we believe that an order is enough to make someone cast off his own national characteristics? [...]

Let us take an imaginary nation that embraces only one million individuals but contains abundant intelligence, civic virtue, beautiful manners, attractive taste, advanced knowledge, wisdom, practical sense, and other eminent qualities. This culture would be able to offer support, guidance, wise advice, perfect products, and a good feeling for everyone willing to adopt it. [...] Let us imagine such an ideal culture. Wouldn't we have to admit that such a culture would have far more attraction for people to assimilate into than some other that is made up of forty or fifty million unsophisticated and uneducated people who speak the same language? Accordingly, every nation, including the Hungarian one, is more vulnerable to be assimilated into another nation that is at a higher level of culture, than to be absorbed into one that is simply larger. This latter may devastate, ravage, and kill part of the population, but it is not able to assimilate or destroy native culture. It is also clear then that every nation, including the Hungarian one, can integrate others not because of its numbers but because of its quality. [...]

Not all those who speak our language may consider themselves Hungarians. Someone who was born in Hungary is not neces-

> sarily a virtuous man, and the one who boasts with his patriotism may not be a true patriot. Indeed, there are many of these pretenders working on the destruction of our country. Since they don't have any other qualities but blind passion, they question the patriotism of those who honestly and altruistically work for their homeland. This is the main reason why Hungarian patriotism meets with little appreciation in the world. This is why even the most glorious Hungarian virtue is unable to gain sympathy and raise positive public opinion outside our country.

As an example of the many tasks expected from the academy, the great mathematician Farkas Bolyai's letters make informative reading. The academy started its activity in 1830, but its impact could not be felt immediately everywhere — especially not in Transylvania, a historical part of Hungary which the government in Vienna arbitrarily decided to govern as if it had not been an organic region of the country. Insufficient standards of higher education, low status of the sciences, lack of adequate scientific terminology: these were just a few shortcomings that Bolyai complained about, and that the new Hungarian Academy set forth to remedy.

Document 3. FARKAS BOLYAI: *Two letters to K.F. Gauss*

> [October 3, 1836] Nobody has a desire here to learn mathematics. Among my students, only a few have a genuine sense for it. I use my book[3] for scrap paper, wrapping paper, and such purposes. [...]
>
> Here is an example that shows what our status is with regard to mathematics. A certain work recently published in Hungarian about the basics of arithmetics and algebra won the prize of the Scientific Society: two hundred gold pieces. This work does not have any other merit than the fact that it was printed nicely and correctly in Vienna. It lacks even a trace of originality or acumen, does not clarify anything, has no sign of conciseness, and its content is shallow. It is not only mediocre, but also bad. I would not like it if a prospective mathematician learned of it, since it does not contain one single correct technical term; it is but a servile translation. Nevertheless, I am still glad that this volume has come out, because with this we have climbed the first step. In another century we may be ascending on the thousandth one.

> [January 18, 1848] Several years ago I published yet another essay in Hungarian, in which I supplied terms for each concept, but neither the terms nor the concepts have been accepted, because people slavishly insist on the old ones. [...] Most people don't have a sense for thoroughness, for which reason the quality of teaching diminishes to the point where it becomes dull and ordinary. I have even been contemplating that I should quit. Mathematics does not yet grow in this climate.

The Hungarian Academy of Sciences was just one institution established to cultivate the national language. There was also the language revival movement, a wide-spread ambition of literati and publishers to develop a modern, flexible vocabulary. Another trend was the drive to establish a national theatre.

Those who assumed leading roles in this movement praised the theatre as a cultural institution that spread eloquent speech and enriched, unified, and propagated the national language — all these were urgent tasks after the influx of ethnic settlers of various languages and little education during the 18th century.

Ferenc Kölcsey was a poet and politician, an outstanding figure of the early 19th-century reform movement who made the cause of the national theatre one of his numerous ambitions. As if addressing Parliament, whose member he was at the time, in a pseudo-rhetorical form he enumerated the many advantages of the theatre and praised each.

Document 4. FERENC KÖLCSEY: *The Theatre in Hungary*

> Honourable Members! Even if theatre were not the measure of the cultural development of every refined European nation, even if it were not connected with any other notable consideration than language, on this single point all our attention, efforts and sacrifices would still have to be focused. As far as all peoples are concerned, if they do not wish to be cast out from among the respected nations, they must consider language and nation to be of the same rank. National life without a national language is unthinkable. Alas for the nation that has been driven out of its homeland! And alas for that nation which has been deprived of its ancient tongue! Our ancestors were wanderers, but they were held together by their language, and were thereby able to gain a homeland with their blood, and they Hungarianized this strange land. As for us, what should become of us in our own land if we were to

lose our language? And did this loss not threaten us inescapably once before? [...]

The theatre exists not in a particular area, but in many places, within several big nations, not as an ephemeral pastime but as beauty to last through centuries. Men, shining with prowess and learning and action, gladly participated in the theatre's pleasures; they watched with joy the magical recreation of tales of antiquity and the antics of the present made farcical. What did the great European nations lose, having built theatres for themselves and given to their excellent actors as their share respect and a good living? And what have we gained, having left our actors to wander without shelter or support to this day, closing our eyes and ears to their performances, and denying any compassion regarding their fates? [...]

Only the participation of the nation can create a national theatre for us, a theatre whose distinctive symbol would not be the national coat of arms painted on a lifeless stone wall, but that pride with which every Hungarian will step across its threshold; that enthusiasm which elevates the actor, who regained his self-confidence through the appreciation of the public, above everyday life; that noble patriotism by which the poet, confident in his nation, conjoins his own sentiments to the ones that reign among the people of that nation, and by this, the only possible means, he achieves a bond with his compatriots. In this way will the nation ennoble the theatre and, in turn, the theatre ennoble the nation. If we let ourselves become enthusiastic, our national character may shine again in a new light. We shall lend the features of this character to the theatre; we shall engrave them into the soul of the poet; we shall encourage him to seek a new, glorious path and guide our theatre to this path, upon which the theatre will not copy foreign nations, nor will it propagate foreign corruption, but will rather express the national feeling and will nourish national courage. Here shall be the strengthening roadstead for our persecuted language; here shall be its home where it shall rest having hitherto been ostracized. Here will be the centre from which it can finally burgeon forth to take its place, as befits its amazing qualities, among the other languages of Europe.

But what does it mean, Honourable Members, this bemused smile I see on certain faces? I wish to know what is amusing in this matter. [...]

Surely the smile arises because the theatre is not so significant as to be regarded as a public concern. How differently did the nobility of Pest County think,[4] those generous and foresighted patriots whose efforts were deserving of gratitude, not coldness and mockery.

> How differently did the banished French think, who on the prairies of America built French theatre before homes for themselves! Let us laugh at them, if we dare, lest beside them we blush, embarrassed because of our pettiness! Let us ridicule these enthusiastic refugees who in their hearts carried their home across the ocean and set it down again on the hitherto uninhabited plains of the New World. Let us ridicule this blessed patriotism which still burns inextinguishably in a few heroes even amid danger and pursuit, away from the homeland, in spite of the foreign climate. [...]
>
> Our forefathers gained and left for us a country and freedom; it is fitting that we also bequeath something to our descendants. In the present circumstances what else can we leave, what better thing can we leave, than just what our brothers of Pest County have brought to our attention?

Was Kölcsey too zealous in praising the virtues of the stage? The drive for a national theatre had been going on for decades by the time he wrote his address. It took another decade before the plan came to realization. At that time, in 1837, most residents of the twin cities of Pest and Buda spoke only German. In just over a generation (i.e. in thirty years), the newly united capital city of Budapest had only Hungarian stages, and the last German theatre closed its doors.

In culture and education, however, there are always new challenges. Such was the increasing awareness of the place of women in modern society. True enough, initially this cause was represented overwhelmingly by women; however, this was also the case elsewhere. Two educators of the time had such penetrating views on the necessity of assigning a new role to women that, as we may assume, their program and theoretical writings were, in some respects, probably pioneering also internationally.

The first of these far-sighted women was the countess Blanka Teleki (an ancestor of Pál Teleki, the 20th-century politician), who established an educational institution for young women. Far before sociologists proclaimed the same for society, Teleki found that "the nation is composed of families [whose] soul and centre [...] is the mother." Education for motherhood means an education for the betterment of the nation. Thus Teleki's project was part of the national revival that the country went through in the first half of the past century. Yet, her plan for the upbringing of girls had elements which set new directions for the educational ideals of her time. Noticeable, among others, are the emphasis

on the humanities and arts, and the distinguished place of physical education. Teleki's "Proclamation" and "Plan" show how one aspect of the modern world which is currently regarded exclusively from a social and legal angle can have other dimensions, in this case the service of national interest.

Document 5. BLANKA TELEKI'S PLANS FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG WOMEN:

Proclamation

Guided by the principle that contributing to the advancement of public good in accordance with one's ability is everyone's duty, I have decided to devote my efforts to the cause whose importance we realize in our country more and more, meaning the upbringing of women.

The nation is composed of families. The soul and centre of the family is the mother. Through her quiet but persistent influence she sets directions for the growing generation. Just as much as the physical fitness of the child can be attributed to the mother's careful and devoted fostering, the mother is also the one who develops the first lasting foundation of her child's character. It is proven by history and daily experience that men with solid and outstanding character were born to mothers of spiritual strength and noble feelings.

It is everybody's strict duty to consciously consider the education of women.

In our country, almost exclusively foreigners were entrusted with the education of women. Because of this, despite of all of the diligence devoted to the education of our daughters, when they grew up and had their own family, deficiencies became evident that cast a shadow on our whole national existence. Our women were not brought up to become patriotic Hungarians. Nobody planted in them the spark of a holy fire whose flame melts the individual citizens of the nation into a vast and wholesome unity. Our women became strangers in their own land.

Learning from our past, it can be stated now that the education of women, like other issues, shall rest on a national foundation. One can hear from everywhere the wish to establish educational institutions for women that could satisfy the needs of higher learning without sacrificing patriotism. Until the higher authorities approve the creation of an impressive national institution to educate women, individual initiatives are needed on a smaller scale. Therefore, address-

ing those parents who feel the deficiencies of the present educational system and honour me with their trust, I announce my readiness to take on the education of their daughters under certain conditions, and to carry it out with the assistance of the best educators under my personal auspice. My established key goal is furthering my students' intellectual, moral, and aesthetic education while keeping up patriotism and devotion towards our nation.

Basic educational plan

Eight to twelve-year-old girls are to be admitted for education.

One female educator and several teachers would offer the following subjects: world history, Hungarian history, general and Hungarian geography, natural sciences, physics, geometry and algebra, mythology, penmanship, Hungarian grammar, spelling, French and German grammar and conversation, essay composition in all three languages, literature, religion taught by priests of the respective denominations, drawing, dancing and handicrafts. If parents would desire so, also piano, singing, Italian language, and so on, can be offered for an extra fee.

The sciences will be taught in Hungarian, since this is the only way that a student would acquire the native language. The teaching of foreign languages will be intense, covering not only grammar but also communication.

Dry and boring educational methods will be avoided, and knowledge will be applied through the use of demonstrations and the like.

To avoid educational progress becoming a mere formality, there won't be ceremonious exams and distribution of awards. Instead, there will be informal tests on the last day of every second month and every semester, which parents and relatives can attend without invitation. I prefer this arrangement since such modest but real examinations neutralize the stimulus of vanity and accustom the student to account to herself about the progress that she made in a certain time period.

As to the arrangement of external essentials, clothing, furniture etc., neatness, order and simplicity should serve as principles. The physical education of the student will be the subject of careful attention. Affectation and compulsion create abnormality in intellectual education; likewise, the body develops in full health only if it is not hindered in its natural functions. Simply prepared healthy food, fresh air, exercise, clothing that does not restrict the body, the well-planned

> schedule of classes and the lively days of youth, full of enthusiasm and joy, will assure the physical and emotional welfare of the pupils.

Even more detailed and, from the point of view of our time, more contemporary are the writings of Mrs. Pál Veres. Like most young girls of the nobility, she too was taught at home, by foreign governesses. Once married to the main administrator of one of the counties (which were important administrative districts, similar to the provinces and states in North America, and unlike the North American counties), she was alarmed to discover that her proficiency in her native language was not satisfactory to carry on conversations in her husband's social circles. She perfected her Hungarian in order to teach it to her own children as their mother tongue. She made education in the national language a basic thesis of her pedagogical principles.

Mrs. Veres realized, however, that the education of women was but a part of a much wider social issue. She was the first Hungarian feminist to stir society in defense of women's rights, and to use her social influence to work for reforms, including parliamentary decisions. She was in touch with the international women's movement and corresponded even with American feminists. Her descriptions of contemporary women's lot not only betray considerable literary skill and psychological empathy but also, probably, record some personal experiences gained in her (basically happy) marriage.

Her "Two Letters" beg for a comment. The addressee, Imre Madách (1823-1864), was an outstanding writer: his play *The Tragedy of Man* (1862) is a classic of world drama. As it happens, great Hungarian philosophical and social thoughts usually appear in *belles letters* instead of philosophical or social treatises, in which genres Hungary produced hardly any prominent authors. Madách provided an intriguing and captivating picture of womanhood in his drama; however, when the academy elected him among its members, his inaugural speech titled "An Aesthetic Outlook on Women" (1864) contained several controversial statements, some open to misreading, others clearly misogynous. Mrs. Veres and Madách admired each other and were on friendly terms. So much more painful it was for her to read the great writer's rambling essay. She wrote two indignant letters to Madách. Always a gentleman, Madách apologized. One can only wonder how their friendship would have developed had Madách not died just months later.

Document 6. MRS. PÁL VERES: *Two letters to Imre Madách*

Letter 1.

The other day I read your inaugural speech in the journal *Koszorú*.

I don't have the opportunity to express to you in person my pain for your directing your scholarly prowess and your humour against the oppressed part of humanity. On a smaller scale, this had the same effect on me as the American Civil War, in which the southern states do not want to free the poor Blacks, although the master of creation - the male - is included there, because otherwise nobody would perform the big and tiring job so cheaply, and, consequently, certain people would not be able to get so immensely rich in such an easy way. Therefore, the human race must be oppressed as long as possible in order to make it work like a beast, deprived as it is from any chance of intellectual development. It is not given any opportunity to make progress with diligent education. [...]

It would be a pity to see support rendered to those here in Hungary who would like to force womankind to work in around-the-clock, monotonous jobs, for instance as salesladies, so that men's energy could be reserved for intellectual professions. The only shops in which those who think this way would like to find men are pharmacies, where a little intellect is also needed.

You state that it is not a convention but her sexual conditions that make woman the creator of the family and preserver of the home circle. However, for this very reason, the woman's family name should be the one inherited by the descendants. Nature herself justifies this, so, why does not she stand up for this truth? In order to show that she can also be fair, not only selfish.

Oh, what a nice thing that we men give our name to the family! How could we surrender this privilege to women?

[Apropos of the American Civil War:] By association I recall what a great role Harriet Stowe played through her book in the abolition of slavery. You seem to forget this, however, or just left it unmentioned intentionally.

Letter 2.

The woman learns some practical knowledge before the age of fifteen, or sixteen at the most. She studies aesthetics, a bit of poetry, very little physics, and just as much chemistry and astronomy that she would have a faint idea of what those sciences are about. Even this little she can only learn among favourable circumstances, in a family where both mother and father are interested in the sciences, and where the father does not fulminate: "I don't want to raise my daughter to be a professor!" At the age of sixteen, she is removed from her studies and introduced in social gatherings. At these events, men notice her only if she is pretty and tastefully dressed. This makes the girl observe that she may be neglected because her dress is not as pretty as others'. Therefore she would have to turn her dress more beautiful and more fashionable, which takes quite a long time. How happy men should be that custom does not force them to dress in as colourful and varied way as women must. Very often, girls get married at the age of eighteen, or even earlier. The duties of housekeeping weigh heavily on their young shoulders, since a good housewife who wishes to please her husband and family must focus all her attention on the household. It takes a lot of time to arrange everything well, and she has to acquire skill in it. Later on, in the nursery she has to pay attention to the careful tending of her little ones all day long; even later she has to listen to their childish chatter the whole day, with full attention at that, because it is her solemn duty, since a young individual's soul must be developed early in life so that it would not degenerate. The mother, therefore, sacrifices her most valuable treasure — her time — for her children and family, depriving herself of self-education. Even if she does not get married so early in life, in her younger years she does not like to try the hardships of study at all. There is nothing to encourage her to gain more knowledge, as no laurel, no golden award tempt her, no material reward or opportunity to secure a position for herself, making a living as a politician, lawyer, priest or teacher. She does not have a social circle in which she could carry on a congenial conversation with kindred souls about the results of her studies, and the recognition they led her to. Nor can she present her poetic attempts in such circles in order to be praised and encouraged for these. On the contrary: the girl who would spend her valuable time on scientific experiments would be ridiculed. [...] Should her yearning soul like to gain clear knowledge of various things, she may find that men (even her husband) to whom she turns for information answer her

willy-nilly, hardly deeming her worthy of learning something new, since it is not necessary for a woman to know about such things.

The man studies until the age of twenty-two and, if he has the inclination to expand his knowledge, all academies, libraries, and scientific societies are open before him. He can go to other countries, visit scholars of every field; they will willingly inform him about every new discovery. He can inspect everything, make comparisons, and think about what he learned, because he is praised, encouraged and rewarded for this. As a matter of fact, I am surprised that in spite of all these advantages, the number of highly educated men is relatively small. [...]

It is true, after all, that a thousand-year-old custom and a law created by men shoves women away from every political, intellectual, and other serious field. Women themselves can see that their freedom is restricted indeed. They are always troubled with meticulous problems if they want to fulfil their duty; therefore, they play no part in the course of the world, and have contributed in no respect to the advancement of the arts and the sciences. I admit that we haven't achieved any great scientific results, but let us be fair: the reason for this can be found in the entirely different scheme of our intellectual development.

I fully believe, however, that even if the opportunity were granted for women to compete with men in the functioning and designing of the world, or, for scholarly distinction, they would voluntarily resign from such opportunity, not because they do not have what it takes in intellectual capabilities, but because one party has to sacrifice her time to dealing with the petty problems of this imperfect life. [...] For sure, there would be a few who would revolt, but a good woman sacrifices her time and freedom for the fallible humanity, voluntarily and out of love.

MRS. VERES' *Call to Women: the First Conference, 1867*

Woman is not the opposite, but the half, of universal humankind. The destiny that God has set for us humans is perfection. Knowledge is a torch illuminating the path that leads to perfection. Public involvement in and effort toward a more practical organization and operation of schools is, therefore, natural. Also the establishment of scholarly societies and scientific associations is necessary for the improvement of men's intellectual capacities.

> Women are left out of all this. I see God's hint in this fact, which encourages us to take action and awaken to our consciousness. [...]
>
> First of all, we have to find a way to increase the intellectual growth of women. Second, we must improve the subsistence of the resourceless, mature, lonely ladies.
>
> We have to strive for women to continue their studies past their elementary education in language skills, aesthetics, logic, physics, applied chemistry, and hygienics. Further, we have to make sure that they get an education in every field of home economics and child rearing, both physical and intellectual. Furthermore, we also have to provide opportunity for the impecunious to learn commerce and bookkeeping. We have to train first-rate female educators, since in this respect, unfortunately, we still depend on foreign countries. This is one of the reasons why the cultivation of the national language often becomes neglected in the upbringing of women. Finally, we should find the way to have experienced, qualified female physicians trained by the royal university. We need this particularly because thousands of women are forced to repress their sense of shame for the sake of their health, since only male doctors exist.

It is relatively seldom that scientists of high esteem share their philosophy with the wider public. Considering their devotion to research, it is generally assumed that they have no time for philosophizing. An example of numerous Hungarian scientists who were also outstanding educators and administrators was baron Loránd Eötvös, President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and scion of a long row of patriots, statesmen, and writers.

The national bias is also evident in Eötvös's writings; however, like Széchenyi, he tended to emphasize the international character of science. This emphasis was partly due to the changing times. Having achieved a maximal degree of independence in a dual monarchy with Austria, Hungary aspired to be ranked, as it was centuries before, among the continent's leading nations. This is why Eötvös spelled out the advantages of an international higher education. There are just too many questions that Eötvös discusses, most of them still under debate. The relationship between education and personality, the definition of scholarship, the tasks of the university, the difference between mental creation and routine activity, science as fad and as dedication — all ring familiar to modern readers as well. One particular aspect of education on which Eötvös would be most vehemently contested nowadays as being "politi-

cally incorrect" is his thesis that university education is a luxury: whoever does not have the means to afford it should not enter it. The democratic North American model of open university entrance and subsequent gradual weeding out, by now also adopted in Europe, has been a challenge to the classical elitist model of university education. Does Eötvös's aristocratic upbringing shine through this idea? One may argue that North American graduate studies, which approximate the standard of European universities a century ago, do remind us of the elite education that Eötvös advocated. One may also add that the present university system is increasingly becoming a burden which will be eventually unbearable financially for even the advanced, rich countries, just as much as the overly generous, free-spending welfare system is. Eötvös's seemingly elitist warnings may well be guiding principles for tomorrow's universities.

Document 7. LORÁND EÖTVÖS

About university education: selections from two statements

I have been working as a professor at the University of Budapest for fifteen years. I chose this profession with enthusiasm because I was convinced that there was no job in which I could do more for the good of my country, and because I was enticed by the laurels which grow quite high along the side of the path; thus they can be picked only by the really outstanding ones.

In my first years as a teacher, when I held lectures on purely theoretical subjects to a small group of students, in my youthful pride I believed that I was strong enough to succeed alone. If the whole responsibility falls upon me, only mine will be the credit. At this time I cared little about educational rules, since I lived in the belief that a good teacher can reap success no matter what these rules are.

Later on, after I started so-called mandatory courses and thus the number of my students grew large, I had the opportunity to check the effect of my teaching on them, and my belief in the exclusive sufficiency of my capacity became weaker year by year. Every new academic year brought new students to my lectures, and every year I commenced my lectures with renewed strength and hope. Nevertheless, I had to witness again and again the students' diligence and their interest in the subject gradually declining from the beginning of the year until its end.

How depressing this experience is for a teacher, how much it paralyzes his energy, is something that only those can conceive of who profess that a conscientious professor lives entirely for teaching, and there-

fore he is preoccupied by his lectures during the entire academic year. Thus, at the end of the year, when it becomes obvious that his students did not follow his lectures, he has to admit bitterly that once again he squandered a year of his life to no avail.

The most bitter disappointment, however, awaits the professor at the examinations. After the carefully structured and scientifically reasoned lectures he is compelled to reduce his questions to the secondary school level, unless he wants to be absurdly consistent and fail ninety-nine percent of those being examined.

These troubles annoy not only me: I share them with a large part of my colleagues. By relating my problem confidentially, I believe to present to the Right Honourable Minister[5] the common concerns of many people. I know well that among my colleagues there are far more experienced ones than I. Because of their long teaching experience and keen insight, they are better qualified than I am to recognize the roots of the trouble and find remedy. Nevertheless, I dare to speak up in this matter, since I hope that my humble message will, at the least, bring to the Right Honourable Minister's attention the need to act in one way or another. While it is true that good regulations cannot produce a good school without good professors, it is also certain that bad regulations can paralyze the work of even the most outstanding professors. I feel that our university regulations concerning teaching exemplify the latter case to some extent. They were based on foreign models and thus reflected foreign circumstances. The experiences of the last decades provide sufficient proof that we can reform these regulations to suit our particular circumstances and requirements. Allow me to briefly present my views pertaining to certain aspects of this reform.

The task of the university is the education of youth who have been suitably prepared by secondary school for higher studies. At the university they will be trained by means of lectures and practical experience to become ready for the service of the church, the state and the society. This task is closely related to the university's duty to advance the sciences by educating scholars who will be professors themselves and thus will perpetuate the institution. For this reason, only research experience and independent thinking can qualify one for the professorial position.

We witness a fundamental principle of European culture when we see that the state does not recognize any other privilege than that which higher education provides. Those who are preparing to serve the state as officials, lawyers, or physicians, have to attend the school of scholars, and are required to base the practice of their profession on scientific knowledge. No matter how important an academic education is, however, for a great variety of careers, there are still many people who do not comprehend the

true meaning of such education. How many are there who cannot distinguish between one who knows much and another who is methodically educated: between the pedant and the scholar. I have heard about so-called scholars who could recite impeccably long rows of statutes or historical dates. Usually, however, such wondrous people are of little use for society, since they are not even worth as much as the booklet that they memorized, because its printed and repeatedly verified information gives more certainty than that noted in memory. [...] For these, but only for these pseudo-scholars does the oft-heard saying hold true that they are "scholars, but brainless," because brainlessness is not compatible with real scholarly education, which is the most perfect and most complete improvement of intellectual powers.

Contrary to bookish knowledge, we can call someone a man of scholarly education only if he trained his brain for thinking through the intensive study of one or another field, and also acquired a wide scope of knowledge, so that he can solve the tasks that he faces both in scholarship and in life, even if only after long deliberation and with the help of various research tools. Not he is the good judge or lawyer who can promptly quote some article pertinent to the legal case presented to him; not he is the good physician who only casts a glance at his patient and immediately decides which fashionable treatment method he will apply. The disorders which occur either in the state of our finances or our health are in many cases complicated to such an extent that it is absurd to believe that one can remedy them according to ready-made formulas and prescriptions. In judging such cases, independence of thought is necessary, and the abundance of practical regulations cannot provide this, only experience in those disciplines which produced these practical regulations. For this reason, if we expect the university to educate young people to the advantage of their homeland, we must jealously guard the scholarly character of university education, and remove every obstacle which stands in the way of reaching this goal.

One who walks through the lecture halls of the university of Budapest, which were built to accommodate a great number of students, and sees how few students are actually present and in what manner they follow the lectures, has to ask: Is it possible to educate students for the sciences if a large portion of them do not even attend classes? Is our academic freedom appropriate? Or, let us address the question more properly, without touching on the fashionable question of the freedom of principles, in this manner: Should it not be necessary to make it the university's task to offer not only lectures to the students, but also strictly supervised guidance to teach them how to utilize the lectures in their studies?

If we look around in Europe, we find schools of higher education which achieve the desired goals with total academic freedom, and others that attain equally good results with mandatory rules. German universities are witnesses to the former, while the specialized academic institutions of France are evidence of the latter. Where generally good teachers lecture to good students, and especially where the necessity of science is a principle that everybody shares, even a bad educational system will serve the desired result. We, however, have not yet risen to such a level of advancement that we could hope to see the flaws of the system compensated by the positive interaction of educators and students.

Our university is based upon the German model, almost completely disregarding our own conditions. Therefore we adopted, as a complement to the idea of freedom, the principle of so-called academic freedom. As a result of this, now the student has absolute freedom not to learn anything from the lectures if he does not wish to. The majority of students do actually exercise this right.

But, then, why is it that the same educational system works in Germany but not in our country? I can answer this question based on my own experiences.

Approximately twenty years ago, I spent three years at what at the time was a first-class university in Heidelberg, Germany. They say that circumstances have turned for the worse there also, but since I wish to bring to light the necessary components of success, allow me to refer to the perhaps more favourable past circumstances.

I will never forget the moment when the train arrived at the station of Heidelberg in the Neckar valley. I was happy, even for the simple fact that I could breathe the same air as those great scholars whose reputation lured me there. I am not ashamed to refer to my personal feelings, and I do not care if some will view this as ridiculous sentimentalism, because it is my conviction that the student's respect and love for the great scholars is the primary and strongest guarantee that he will indeed use his educational freedom for learning.

Most of my colleagues at Heidelberg thought and felt the same way. We didn't care about approaching exams, we didn't calculate the types of advantages that we could gain through studying. Our only goal was to come as close as possible to our teachers on the plane of knowledge.

And who were my colleagues? Sons of state officials, physicians, industrialists and landowners — generally, the children of wealthy and educated people. Among them were a sparse few of more humble origins, who felt themselves strong enough to advance from a lower social status to a higher one through education. The philosophy of life which manifests itself in the German proverb *Schuster bleib beim Leisten* [the cobbler must

stick to his last] and exorbitant tuition fees from which there was no escape in Heidelberg, prevented the masses of financially, and often educationally, deprived students from swamping the university. Consequently, a German student was normally free of concerns regarding sustenance; thus, he did not have to spend most of his time clerking and tutoring. He had his heated room in which he could study undisturbed, and had the books necessary for studying. [...]

The question pertaining to the university is, above all, a personal one. Beside it, questions pertaining to the organization and regulations of the university are of secondary importance. Abroad, this personal side of the question stands in the foreground indeed. It is the personality of the professors that determines the reputation of the university and the increase or decrease of student numbers. In our country, it is not yet customary to attribute the deserved importance to the personal value of university teachers.

We are normally quite satisfied with simply maintaining the established university chairs, sometimes perhaps even establishing new chairs. We do not do anything, however, for the kind of scholar who starts his career when all university positions have been filled already, or, who is cultivating a field which is regarded as one of little importance. This is not enough. If we seriously want the Hungarian university to be a school of the highest education, we have to do more for Hungarian scientists.

The essential requirement for science, like for art, is luxury. In one, like the other, only that which stands above the rest is truly worth something. It is not possible, nor should it be allowed, to estimate the needs [of the most eminent scholars and artists] according to the standards of a frugal state economy.

I am not saying that the cultivation and teaching of science are more worthwhile preoccupations than the proper settlement of official matters, only that it is an entirely different activity. It is possible to accurately calculate how many clerks need to be employed for how many hours so that an office can process certain heaps of files. I hold it to be an insoluble task, however, to determine how many scientists and how many of their working hours one nation needs in order to benefit from their knowledge.

As long as cultivators of certain fields of science can only count on three or four positions in our homeland to ensure some material and professional well-being, scientific life can't flourish and thus science will, in fact, remain a foreign force among us. Can we expect young people of outstanding talent to pursue the teaching profession without worry, when the chances of succeeding are about as slim as winning the lottery?

One does not have to think long about the solution to this big misfortune. We should increase, perhaps even double, the number of

teaching positions. By this, I don't mean establishing new university chairs. Neither is it necessary to find specialists for the already established chairs. We should rather establish the chair if there is a deserving scholar to fill it. If, for example, Hungary has or will have ten excellent scholars of Romance languages or ten excellent physicists (and this is not many), then we have to see to it that these ten Romance scholars or ten physicists not only survive, but that they are able to live in circumstances that make their undisturbed pursuit of the scientific and teaching profession possible.

The scholar's home is the whole wide world, we used to say; but let's not forget that Hungary is also part of this world. Let's not delude ourselves into thinking that now that we have two universities,[6] a technical university, and an academy, we have already done enough for the cultivation of science. If we want science to have not only a temporary residence here but also a real home in which it can freely develop, enrich and strengthen the nation, we still have to make big sacrifices which even surpass the foregoing ones.

About the goals of the Academy

On this day we celebrate our Academy, and at the same time report about our annual activities. We can step before the interested patrons, friends, and the whole Hungarian public with the conviction that we have once again faithfully fulfilled our obligations.

Perhaps this is not enough yet for a joyful celebration. We would like to hear for once the trumpets of triumph which proclaim and praise the world-wide importance of Hungarian scholarship. Instead, we can still play only the *tárogató's*[7] modest keys, because we are the last ones who can afford to slip into self-delusion which has become so common a fault.

No doubt, our nation has not yet occupied that position in the scholarly world which is befitting our numbers and our political importance. If, however, we were to set to the task with considerable effort and with our multitude of skills, we could certainly achieve, in a short time, a more prestigious place.

There is one difficult obstacle which stands in our way: a particular self-isolation from the scholarship of the world in which we live. What is more dangerous is our smug self-satisfaction with this isolation. Especially these days, our nation's biased definition of our duties has almost become a matter of popular public opinion.

There is no nation in this world that the reproach of strangers would hurt more; no nation that would be more proud of her sons who waved the flag, for the whole world to see, whether it bore the symbol of

military glory or those of scholarship and the arts. There is no nation which desires more fervently than ours to rise amongst the "number ones." And still, instead of diminishing, rather increasing seems to be the number of those who, though they desire triumph, reject the means to achieve our goals due to their antipathy toward foreigners. At the same time, they delude themselves in their contented, soniferous belief that in the world there is only one language, one literature and one culture: the Hungarian; and, above the Hungarian there is only one authorized judge: the Hungarian himself.

These people will certainly not conquer the world for us.

Those who always look at their image in the mirror may only beautify themselves, but they won't develop their capacity for action. Those who are preparing for a struggle in which they wish to triumph must acquaint themselves with all weapons of their competitors and must endeavour to establish a secure position on the battlefield. In the scholarly world this battlefield is not situated in one country, but is every nation's shared territory; consequently, the winning decision will favour those whose achievements better this world in which we live. Our annual celebration will be a truly triumphant ceremony when the whole world recognizes the progress of Hungarian scholarship and records this as its own achievement. We can approach this noble and patriotic ideal only if we learn and adjust to our way of thinking all that we can possibly learn from other nations. On the other hand, we have to publicize and submit to the world's judgment that which we have created.

A nation does not humiliate itself when it desires to learn from other nations. The proud Frenchmen are not embarrassed to show off their foreign masters of knowledge whom they were lucky enough to win over to the French Academy when it was first established. Similarly, the German scholars' laurels are not disgraced by the awareness that the trees on which these laurels grow were planted by Frenchmen invited to Berlin by Frederick the Great.

We have not been this fortunate. Our hardships throughout the past centuries have not allowed us to achieve such successful ends. [...]

If only the desire to get acquainted with the scholarly treasures of the world would inspire more people to travel and enrich our nation with their experience upon their return! On the other hand, if only those who cannot afford to travel could learn foreign languages and make the world's scientific publications available for us! Yet, it is true that gathering knowledge does not in itself further knowledge. Any nation would deserve belittling if they were content with such compilation. Only those can contribute to the building of science, only those will hoist the flag above the new floor, who are familiar with its foundation and design. The ones who

lack such knowledge will only patch together adobe huts whose rickety straw roofs they may show off with a flying flag, yet this will be a butt for ridicule rather than a sign of glory. Our nation must strive to build a palace as opposed to a hut for its scholarship.

Beside adopting international scholarship to advance our own, it is equally important, as I have already indicated, to make the results of our endeavours public. This scholarly publicity serves not only to present our achievements, but also to encourage the scholarly activities that produced these results. In the absence of acknowledgment, stimulation and serious criticism, our scholars who have devoted all their strength to the advancement of science become dispirited, dismayed and indifferent — for, from what else can they expect gratification? Without publicity there is no progression in science. The idea of preservation rather than progress made certain peoples of antiquity keep their knowledge secret, and enclosed science among the thick walls of monasteries in the Middle Ages.

Real progress began with the discovery of the importance of the press for science as much as for other aspects of culture. When I mention the press, I do not mean journalism that feeds the masses all sorts of information, entertains them with titbits, and expresses public opinion (which it often creates, thereby becoming a power that influences every aspect of social life). In short, I am not talking about newspapers that suddenly raise people high, then equally suddenly drop them. Rather, I mean that press which works slowly and with circumspection, although maybe more cumbrously, producing scholarly periodicals and books. Such publications are not snapped up by the masses; instead, they form stepping stones to a higher level of knowledge, and are therefore welcome by scholarly communities in every country and any age.

I admit that the newspaper press has served and can serve science when it directs the attention of the masses toward knowledge, thus recruiting friends and patrons for this cause. I must caution, however, every serious scholar not to seek glory in the newspaper columns which can unjustly turn on one. Their opinion reflects the present moment, is created by suddenly changing, temporary concerns, and makes no mention of things which will prove to be both interesting and valuable in the future. It is typical that newspapers make much mention of people like Edison, but keep quiet about others, such as Faraday. The scholar, on the other hand, pays more tribute to those who planted and nourished the tree of knowledge than to those who merely picked the fruit.

The only authorized public tribunal which the real scholar must account to stands amidst the perennial rows of bound volumes of strictly scholarly periodicals and publications in which the knowledge gained from research has been recorded for centuries. In any case, there is more glory

for a scholar to have his name appear, if just once, in these works than ever so often mentioned in the daily newspapers.

Besides the glory promised by the daily press, there are other temptations facing today's scholar. The popularizing associations, societies organizing public lectures, exhibitions, and the now almost annually recurring conferences in every larger city, serve as allurements to an academic publicity which would take him to some sort of a pantheon faster and more conveniently than the long and tiresome efforts of true scholarship.

The merit that one deserves because he studied hard does not exempt anybody from his social obligations. Thus, even the most knowledgeable person acts wisely, and is therefore worthy of thanks, if he descends from the high academy to offer edification and enjoyment to the masses with his carefully thought-out advice or delightful lecture. He should be on guard though not to regard the recognition that this type of service elicits sufficient to satisfy his scholarly ambitions, because this momentary splendour will soon disappear.

One of the tasks of the Academy is to select among the many manifestations of intellectual life those which are enduring and most worthy to be accentuated in public, and which really represent progress for scholarship. In-so-far as this publicity reaches the whole world, the duty of a national institution remains not only to cultivate and disperse knowledge within its country, but also to represent it to the outside world. Our Academy has not cut itself off from fulfilling this duty: it supports more than one enterprise whose goal is to represent our scholarly achievements before the tribunal of international scholarship. In the world of knowledge it is not the quantity of our troops which matters, but the individual heroes who bring victory. We Magyars are in need of such heroes to conquer the scholarly world for us.

We are preparing for our millennium[8] and at this celebration we will introduce ourselves to the world in the splendour of our past. I believe the compliments will be many, but let us not rest until the great cornerstone nations of culture consider us equal constituents in the process of solving the great intellectual tasks of mankind.

That is when we will truly celebrate victory!

Many of our readings have touched on the question of national existence, even those that deal with seemingly general subjects such as economics or science and education. As we have also seen, real traumas (such as the truncation of Hungary in the post-World War I Treaty of Trianon and the destruction thereby of her organic unity) and exaggerated, partly imagined experiences (such as the "otherness" of the language), can explain the preoccupation with collective, "national" characteristics. In

fact, it can also develop a whole thematic field unusual in post-nationalist countries: a preoccupation with an assumedly specific Hungarian character, both individual and cultural. The extensiveness of this intellectual tradition warrants the grouping of such writings together in a separate chapter, as a curious outgrowth of interdisciplinary studies in Hungary.

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VII. Hungarian National Character: Specific or Interactive?

Can an interdisciplinary investigation of a national culture be a legitimate field of scholarship? Such investigations are usually shunned by some social scientists and are left to informed writers, or to sociologists and anthropologists, although the latter usually discuss such phenomena in generalized terms. While not really an accepted scholarly field in Hungary either, the study of national character is nevertheless a proud tradition developed by some of the outstanding minds of the century.

Many speculations stem from 19th-century Romantic and reformist patriotism. Later generations tended to be critical, not about the subject and its methods but, rather, about the nationalist zeal that characterized the investigation. Examples of this critical attitude are the following views of the great rivals, István Széchenyi and Lajos Kossuth.

Széchenyi posed a painful question: why and how could the country's national minorities be Hungarianized if contemporary Hungarians cannot show them a positive example? Thereby he raises the still unanswered problem of assimilation: which civilizations have the moral right to expect their immigrants and ethnics to acquire their way of life? Is it power, a superior civilization, or tolerance that sets the track for assimilation? (These factors are not always mutually exclusive.) Seeing the heartbreaking state of ancient Hungarian towns that were assigned by the Trianon peace treaty to certain neighbouring countries, Széchenyi's message comes through with a renewed force: conquest that destroys an acquired culture is much less justifiable than conquest that preserves it.

Document 1. ISTVÁN SZÉCHENYI

> Shall we Hungarianize? How and by what means? All over the world authority is followed, and as far as the Hungarians are concerned, they can be pupils but no mentors in almost every respect. It is necessary first to cleanse Hungarians of all their imperfections if they are to serve as examples to others in the long run. The question remains how this cleansing can be accomplished in the case of a nation in which prejudice rules supreme and wisdom is seldom heeded. Furthermore, how can we eradicate prejudices and promote wisdom in our unfortunate geographic situation which separates us from every possible ally, and prevents us from realizing the benefits of international competition which made other nations prosperous? Few [Hungarians] have travelled abroad, and even those who have either do not understand what they see or, if they do, are reluctant to spell out frankly the backwardness of their poor country in comparison with other nations. Not knowing, and therefore overestimating, his homeland, our good earthbound compatriot insists on his values and knowledge as things that are the most rational and most practical in the world.

In his letter to Ottó Herman, Kossuth poses another question: who adapts to whom? Not a race but a specific cultural identity forms a nation. If this nation becomes weak, can it resist assimilation by a more aggressive, united group? This was, indeed, a sore problem of the post-compromise decades when Hungary's nationalities became increasingly vociferous. It would be challenging to make associations between this letter and Kossuth's idea for a Danubian Confederation which was presented in Chapter III.

Document 2. LAJOS KOSSUTH: Letter to Ottó Herman

> It is a fact that today's mightiest nations are composed of heterogeneous elements. I know the process of their formation. I can give an account of the components of the European countries which were in one respect provided by the ruins and the traditions of the Roman empire, and in another respect, by the influx of the Barbarians. Not only did the mightiest nations develop from heterogeneous elements, but even the Basques, probably the most ancient people in Europe, found yet more ancient elements with which they mingled at the time when they established themselves in their present homeland, probably

having fled from the sinking continent Atlantis. Even the Prussian-Germans, who struggled to supremacy among the Germans, are clearly a mixture of Slavic origin. To be sure, there is not even one pure race around here. The Turkish Janizaries,[1] who helped the Sultan Osman and his closest thirteen descendants develop, in less than two hundred years, into a world-shattering power from underneath two thousand tents,[2] were not of Turkish blood. I do not think, however, that the fact that a country developed from mixed elements should provide a basis for causal inferences. Mixed elements are parts of the process by which a nation is formed. It is not blood but national pride which is the result of an established collective identity. Such identity is one that does not change. A collective characteristic feature disappears only with disintegration. I did not think that because you, a Hungarian citizen of German origin, have developed a strong Hungarian identity, analogously it should follow that the Transylvanian Hungarians should turn Wallachs in their own homeland. This is not development but national erosion, which only the lack of national self-confidence can explain, whereas your case is that of simple social adaptation. He who lives in Hungary and feels an instinct to share in his nation's typical collective life will naturally adopt this nation's typical historical characteristics, unless he is an opponent of the idea that Hungary should remain Hungarian. Ever since the Hungarian language recaptured the place held by Latin in public life[3] this [adoption of Hungarianness by foreigners] has become a general phenomenon. And this is so elsewhere and everywhere. Every nation state continuously incorporates foreign elements without showing signs of discouraging the ethnic pride of the newcomers. However, if for example, the French people who have contact with, or are surrounded by, Germans were to become Germans *en masse* in their own homeland, this would certainly be evidence of the decay of their cultural pride. Thus, the fact that nations developed from various elements is one matter; the adjustment of some elements to their homeland's historical character is another matter; and the Transylvanian Hungarians becoming Wallachs in their own Hungarian ancestral land is a third matter. There is neither causal nexus nor factual analogy among these.

After the national trauma caused by the post-World War I Trianon peace treaty, 20th-century thinkers and writers took another, keener and more critical look at Hungarianness. Naturally, there were also other reactions: those dominated by self-pity, indignation, and unfounded speculations. Yet, the names below ring with prestige for every Hungarian, even for some non-Hungarians.

Béla Bartók kept aloof from politics. Political scientists are eager to remind us, however, that every act or statement of an individual is political. Bartók's view on the interaction of cultures is certainly a case in point. As an intelligent commentator of the problematic methods of defining national characteristics, Bartók denies that there are autochthonous cultures: even languages affect each other, let alone such fields of symbolic communication as folklore (more exactly, folk music). The degree of the presence of "foreign" elements in any culture can be occasionally exploited for political propaganda. The case Bartók describes is a poignant illustration of the irrational sensitivities of cultural chauvinism. While certain romantic ideals survived in various forms in Hungary, too, few of those who inquired into the national character of this country would have contested Bartók's view that cultures are interactive.

Document 3. BÉLA BARTÓK: Researching Folk Songs in Our Age of Nationalism

> If we have to consider it an entirely natural process that neighbouring languages mutually affect each other (and this neither harms the spirit of the respective languages, nor is it a cause for humiliation), then this thesis is even more valid for the mutual exchange of folkloric products. We should not forget, that it is virtually impossible that out of a few hundred nations in this world even the smallest one would only have primeval folksong scores. If the researchers subsequently have to ascertain the presence of a more or less significant interaction, foreign influence or foreign origins in or among the musical phenomena of various peoples, then these ascertainments will not be too favourable for these peoples. We should keep in mind, however, that such "unfavourable" ascertainments neither justify a feeling of inferiority, nor are they suitable to be exploited for political ends. Namely, where folk music still lives and blossoms in the true sense of the word, its mechanical adoption is impossible, since the borrowed material will change regardless, due to the new environment. It will acquire some kind of a local "national" character, its origins notwithstanding. As for political manipulation, it is true that, wherever politics begin, art and science, law and consideration cease to exist.
>
> Let us not waste any more words on the depiction of such possibilities which would, in any case, lead to the death of researching folk music.

Naturally, we can mostly bring up examples for such controversies from our own country. In the second half of the last century, for instance, a controversy flared up concerning the well-known text of the ballad about Clement the Mason (Kőmives Kelemen). This was the famous "wild rose" case, triggered by János Kriza's collection of folk songs titled *Vadrózsák* (Wild Roses), in which he printed, for the first time, the text of the ballad of Clement the Mason.[4] Just as soon as this Hungarian ballad text appeared, a storm broke out: Romanian folklorists accused Kriza of committing premeditated forgery. And all this for what? Because the variations of this ballad are well known by the Romanians - what is more, a few of these had already been published. Kriza (who probably didn't even know Romanian) naturally was not aware that such Romanian text existed. On the other hand, the respective Romanian folklorists totally ignored the fact that the text of the Hungarian ballad under attack was completely dissimilar in character to the Romanian versions, which makes the supposition entirely impossible that fabrication had taken place (meaning that men with literary education knowingly translated a Romanian text). Nowadays, when we realize that this ballad text is known throughout the Balkans, such bickering seems infinitely ridiculous.

Another example has to do with me personally. In my publications I established already long time ago that the folk songs from a relatively small Romanian area bordering the Transylvanian Székely[5] territory had come under strong Székely-Hungarian influence. This influence was evident in about twenty-five percent of the entire Transylvanian Romanian material with which I was familiar. This proven fact was sufficient for certain Romanian publicists to attack me viciously. In their attacks they didn't even raise any counter-arguments. Obviously they considered it an insult against all Romanians to state that one-quarter of the Transylvanian Romanian folk songs had been influenced by Hungarian folk songs. My attackers even accused me of committing this insult out of political considerations.

Luckily, one does not meet such degenerate sensitivity everywhere. For example, in my works I established that approximately twenty percent of the Slovakian[6] folk song material shows Hungarian influence. I also established that some forty percent of the Hungarian material is foreign, mostly demonstrating northern Moravian-Slovak influences. To my knowledge this information did not upset anyone in Czechoslovakia or in Hungary.

The ideological tensions in our age, unfortunately, promote the spread of such sick biases instead of leaving room for an objective

view. If, however, the above outlined bias becomes more and more widespread in scholarly arguments, then scholarship is doomed.

In the interwar years Hungary's relation to the neighbouring states became a central topic of discussion not only in Bartók's writings but in those of other Hungarian intellectuals. Many ideas brought up and sensitivities were stirred. László Németh — thinker, writer, and a gadfly of the 1930s and 1940s — issued a statement about his plans as newly-appointed head of the Hungarian Radio's cultural section. Better knowledge of the peoples living around Hungary was one of his goals. This was an unpopular idea in the eyes of many compatriots, especially the hundreds of thousands who had been ruthlessly expelled from their ancient homeland. Public sentiments were hostile to the peoples in surrounding countries who were all beneficiaries of the spoils of war, large Hungarian territories awarded to them in the Trianon Treaty. Németh thought that confrontation was counterproductive and detrimental to the interest of the detached Hungarian minorities. Besides, he feared a new form of self-isolation threatening Hungary.

Mihály Babits was another thinker and writer of the epoch, at least of the same stature as Németh. He was a pan-Europeanist with a strong Western bias. In his opinion, Németh wanted to juxtapose Hungary with newly-established or newly-enlarged neighbouring countries whose identity was based on the principle of ethnicity, unlike Hungary's one-thousand-year-old statehood. Naturally, this was an exaggerated interpretation of Németh's view which may have been interpreted as "know thy enemy." Yet, Babits seldom compromised, and was either unwilling or unable to penetrate Németh's elusive and often obscure style. The controversy of the two eminent men tore open an old Hungarian dilemma, and also had prophetic relevance for the second half of our century when the dictates of cynical politicians once again forced nations of very different backgrounds together in an unwanted, artificial power group under the aegis of the Soviet Union.

Document 4. LÁSZLÓ NÉMETH: *Orientation*

Our nation lives in the society of nations. As individual behaviour can be pro-social or antisocial, so do nations either know or not know how to behave. Great nations, under exceptional circumstances, may afford to be eccentric. The fate of small nations, like that of small people,

depends on their social behaviour. It is not true that the state is fenced off and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is its sole contact with the world beyond the fence. The entire nation must be taught a sense for foreign affairs, since diplomacy is successful only when it is helped by the whole nation's social sense. The prerequisite of correct behaviour is knowledge. [...]

Our minorities live wedged in foreign states and have long noticed that if they want to survive, they are the ones who have the most reason to orient themselves about the cultural, economic and political conditions of these states. We, living on this side of the borders, are content with the phrases adopted after Trianon. We wait for the earthquake that will shatter these countries, but until then we almost consider it a patriotic virtue that we should know nothing about them, nor learn their languages. It is worth for Italy to maintain a whole Oriental Institute and publish massive volumes (although of very poor quality) about the countries of the Danubian Basin. For us, the substitutes for such an institute are the fragmented and biased reports of newspapers. [...]

The Hungarian nation does not have a greater interest today than to loosen the borders that cut us off from one quarter of our people. In order to achieve this, it has to weaken the nationalism of the surrounding peoples. These peoples of the Danubian Basin formed parts of a great empire throughout centuries. The radio cannot come out in support of political goals, but it can spell out a common past and a common fate by disclosing the ancient cultural interaction in language, folk art, and the arts among the peoples of this vast territory.

MIHÁLY BABITS: *With Shield and Spear*

The situation of Hungarians has never been more precarious. In order to keep our status we need all our values and self-esteem. Then comes this writer [László Németh] and wants us to deny the better part of our values and self-esteem of which we can be especially proud. His notion threatens to undermine the authenticity of the European character of our culture in our eyes. What this would mean should be clear to anyone who truly absorbed our national culture. The devaluation of everything that is modern and European in the Hungarian spirit is a step that would make us the beggars of the world. Not without reason did one of our writers call what László Németh expects of Hungarians "self-mutilation." Also Gyula Szekfű warned us about the historical perils of this self-mutilation when he wrote: "We will end up in the

> community of Eastern European peasant states, except that our future brothers, the Romanians and the Slavs, will boast of a richer past, since they won't sacrifice their own great writers on the altar of an ethnic collectivity."[7]
>
> [...] Hungarian culture derives from Saint Steven, our first king who launched it nine hundred years ago. Since then, it has progressed in the spirit of his legacy, impeded from time to time, but never really diverted from its direction. Naturally, it has drawn from many deep sources, among them Balkan and Slavic ones. Still, our culture is neither Balkan nor Slavic but Western European in its character. [...]
>
> This character was nevertheless not shaped by a Western European "influence." Siblings do not resemble each other because they imitate each other. If we recognize a Western character in our literature, it does not mean that the specifically Hungarian flavour is missing. There is not only one Western European literature. As much as one cannot mistake an English poet for a French one, so too the Hungarian poet is distinct from a foreign one. It holds true at least of the greatest ones, who are the true representatives of our national spirit. [...]
>
> Would it not be sheer frenzy and catastrophe to discard this glorious and almost one-thousand-year-old treasure, and to underrate it in favour of the absurd and perverted illusion that we should revert the process which has widened the scope of our culture so marvellously? All this so as to make us a spiritual dwarf among the others, once our country has shrunk? How would we thereby get closer to the small nations around us, once they have started to evolve toward Europe themselves, not wanting to remain small? [...] Why should we condemn the assimilation of German and Western European impetuses and, at the same time, cheer the influence of the Balkans which is endlessly more alien to us? [...]

From his polemical answer to Németh, Babits may appear as a writer of strong opinions expressed in generalities. Yet, the most subtle analysis of what it means to be a Hungarian is attributed to him, or rather, to an eighty-page essay that he wrote for a collective volume by various authors. "On the Characteristics of the Hungarians" is an amazing work which probably has no equivalent in better-known literatures. What sense would it make for the English, French, or Americans to ask the question what spiritual resources make them survive and grow? Yet for smaller, often threatened nations, the question of "Hungarianness" (or "Irishness,"

"Finnishness", etc.) is a reminder of their identity in times when the very basis of their survival is threatened.

Considering the time (the late 1930s) when Babits wrote this essay, one of his most important theses is that Hungarians are not a homogeneous race. Nowadays this may seem more than natural (since even the concept of "race" has been challenged), yet in its own time it was an expression of defiance against the dark, yet tragically fashionable ideas of the epoch. Also, the refusal of ethnic chauvinism, attributing only good characteristics to the Hungarians, should be noted. Babits thought, as did the great reformists whom we met earlier (such as Berzeviczy, Berzsenyi, and Széchenyi), that self-criticism was as important a part of national consciousness as the recognition of positive characteristics.

Document 5. MIHÁLY BABITS: *On the Characteristics of the Hungarians*

> "What makes one a Hungarian?" A peculiar question, seemingly entirely simple, yet actually highly complicated. As a matter of fact, it is even difficult to understand, not to mention answer it. What is a Hungarian? Is it an unnecessary question or a natural one? It wells up in us like a problem of existence, appearing timely and pressing. We have never asked it more anxiously than today. If forced into a corner, however, it turns out that actually we don't quite know what we are asking. [...]
>
> Is it a racial trait to be a Hungarian? Not exactly, or not at all. On no account is the distinct feature some bodily or tribal characteristic which is physically inheritable. I can't hope to learn much about what I am searching for through anthropological research. Petőfi, who was not a full-blooded Hungarian, says more about what I seek than the whole science of anthropology. Hungarianness, whose essence I am inquiring into, is a historical phenomenon. As it developed historically, it is not a physical but a spiritual product. Heredity, which insures its continuity, is not physical but spiritual. The effect of physical inheritance is rather to the contrary here, as it keeps contributing colour and variation. Surely the Hungarian is a mixed race and has been constantly mixing since the time of Saint Steven and almost certainly already before then. I wonder what it is that we could rightly call the oldest basic layer, the "ancient Hungarian"? And, is this still identical with what we recognize as Hungarian today? Has it not

become unrecognizable as it gained more and more colour and richness in the course of the passing centuries?

How can I grasp such a constantly changing, temporal reality which, like a growing plant through the seasons, extends its life throughout a millennium? A difficult methodological question. Should I try to return to the ancient origins and envision the seed which as yet does not resemble the developed plant? Or, should I just care for the plant the present conditions? Or else, does this current state already represent a stage of decay, as the time of blooming has passed us by now, and should I find the true Magyars somewhere in-between now and then, in one of the glorious phases of our newer history? [...]

Of course, all these changing images are real. But neither one is the whole face of the Magyars. Occasionally they barely resemble one another, and some look practically like strangers to us. They gain their meaning and identity from the preceding and the following pictures in a sequence. I have to take into consideration the whole, see the past and the present simultaneously, like looking at the edge and the centre of a picture at the same time.

In a word, Hungarianness is something alive and its dimensions exist in time. I cannot base the examination of its essence merely on the knowledge of today's form. This would be inadequate: a flat dimension devoid of depth, on the fleeting surface of the present. Only a comparison with other dimensions can suggest the enduring essence. On the other hand, the exploration and recollection of the ancient or "original" Magyar would be just as insufficient a basis for an investigation, even if we assume that such an investigation is possible at all. The Hungarian essence which lives within me means much more than, and is entirely different from, the ancient and "original" one. I do not want to restore the ancient state — instead, I inquire into the nature and meaning of this current Hungarianness that lives within us. For this inquiry, I need to recall our whole history, past and recent alike. [...]

I myself first arrived at the problem in the following manner. In one of my early essays I examined the value of Hungarian literature from the angle of world literature. For this research it seemed necessary to portray the "Hungarian character" the same way as a critic portrays the characteristics of the writer whose work he is reviewing. He tries to represent the contradictory facts in unity, and gropes about hopelessly toward some dominating quality. Of course, my assignment was different to a certain extent, and it was also much more complicated. Instead of a writer, I had to criticize or praise a collective being: an entire people, a nation. I had to analyze the colours of the Hungar-

ian mental landscape and trace the extremities of our nation's soul. Only by doing so could I hope to surmise the barriers which form the contours of the national character. My work could not be anything but an attempt. My method was the same as the one utilized by critics for the characterization of writers. I made use of the biographical facts at my disposal, that is, national history itself. I based my ascertainments mostly on literary works: those of our most prominent poets. They reveal the depth of the Hungarian soul most sincerely, even if unintentionally. Surely, great literature can only draw from mental reality, and what has once bloomed in poetry must have deep roots in the soul.

Recent examiners of the dilemma, who were motivated by the tragic turn of Hungary's fate after the war,[8] seemed to follow a similar method. Uncertainty took hold of us, and destiny and danger had never compelled us more directly to understand ourselves. The existential problem of our nation was pressed into the foreground, and the study of the "national character" became fashionable. The tendency of European nationalism also favoured this search. Books and studies deal more frequently with the question of the Magyar character, and most of the time they, too, start with quotes from our poets and philosophers. This is not really my method. Such analyses do not cite those texts in which the Hungarian soul reveals its secrets sort of involuntarily, without a distinct and conscious intention. Instead, their authors search for declarations, conscious confessions, or the revelations of important Hungarians on their being Hungarians, which they use as authoritative arguments to reinforce their own assumptions.

This is different from my method: more comfortable and more dubious. Poetry emerging from the subconscious always tells the truth about the soul. On the other hand, many factors influence the deliberate and conscious revelations. The words of the patriots and national prophets rarely serve objective goals. We should rather see in these the eruption of their shocks and desires. They may have political and educational intentions, and these were dictated by the ideals of the time, which may not have been Hungarian ideals. A love poem is a more trustworthy source with regard to the Hungarian character than the same poet's most beautiful exclamations about Hungarianness. Besides, in what differing shapes have we Hungarians seen ourselves! In various works of the very same poet I can find the most contradictory national profiles. There is scarcely anything which I could not verify with quotations from Ady,[9] for example.

Today's researcher is far from being an indifferent scholar. The study of the Hungarian character for him is not a goal in itself. What really interests him is Hungarian fate. Under the influence of

events, and according to his political hopes and fears, he has already established his own theory. In order to reinforce this theory of fate "scientifically," he has a need for grasping the concept of the Hungarian character. He sees a secret connection between fate and character, and unintentionally he looks for a method with the help of which he can satisfactorily portray this character according to his theory of destiny. For this, the most suitable method happens to be one which collects the thoughts of the great Hungarian spirits regarding their idea of their homeland. From this collection, our researchers can select those ideas which fit into their prefabricated construction of thoughts. [...]

[Even this method poses problems.] The great Hungarian spirits are at the same time the great travellers and students. They say a nation lives in the few; but then, these are the ones in whom the nation changes the most and diverges from itself. Instead of "high culture," perhaps we should turn to "low culture".[10] If we get lost in the labyrinth of civilization, maybe the primeval time can show the way. Anyway, in the Hungarian tradition we like to regard the ancient, ethnic, and primitive as being the most Hungarian. Folklore teaches us, however, that often precisely these traces are the most international. The ancient popular customs, folk tales and ballads are repeated worldwide. Where can we find, then, Hungarianness itself in a pure and peculiar form, or how can we segregate that like an element which only abounds in compounds?

National pride inspires us to see something peculiarly Hungarian in everything which is brave, noble and attractive. For us, the most persuasive and reassuring thing is to look for the national character in the unsophisticated, patriarchal, and spontaneously noble behaviour and mentality. It is easy to make ourselves believe that this is a relic from ancient layers of race, which does not appear as an improbable idealization, since it is associated with the imagined roughness and primitiveness of the past. This roughness and primitiveness raises, mainly, the notion of power; therefore, it is not at all offensive or shameful. This whole train of thought is so inviting that it emerges to all people with the same obviousness. The result is that almost every nation likes to depict its own ideal type in similar ways. Hungarians think of themselves as hospitable, gallant, warlike, proud, brave and frank. But if you ask a Castilian or a Serb, he too will describe his compatriots as hospitable, gallant, warlike, proud, brave and frank. What's more, the Japanese or the Arabs would do the same. All of them lay claim to these simple virtues.

This kind of "national character," which is actually quite international, was also fed by literature. The very first self-idealization was that of the Romans: they were the ones whom the problem of national character preoccupied first. The Greeks faced only "Barbarians," not nations of their equal. The conflict of the Spartans and the Athenians was not that of two nations - instead, two poles of one and the same nation's soul challenged each other. The more reason did the Romans have, precisely *vis-a-vis* the Greeks, to feel different. And it is understandable that the features of their national self-image were formed by the grudge they bore against the cultured and refined Greeks. This is how the Latin poets developed their ideal of the Golden Age that found the proto-Roman in the primeval, the unsophisticated, and the rustic. Nations in more recent times adopted this ready-made ideal under the influence of classical civilization, and we cannot be surprised if, for example, Berzsenyi's conception of the real Hungarian resembled that which already Horace had evoked with a sceptical sigh as the true Roman ideal.

This tendency, which searched for a true national character in the primitive and the ancient, was further strengthened by every new trend in our culture. Hence the excessive comfort that our romanticists found in the shine of old glory. Or, there is the popular democratism of our national classicist poets.[11] We should also remember the historical outlook[12] of the post-Compromise era,[13] which attempted to revert to the roots in every respect and was interested in the models of the past.

It is, however, precisely the historical viewpoint which could serve as a reminder that we can grasp the essence of a spiritual presence only in its full temporal extension. The germ may foretell the fruit, and the physicist can safely extrapolate a complicated process from the knowledge of initial velocity. The spiritual sphere is nevertheless the realm of independence. Here, every second brings something new, and the true essence can be observed only retrospectively, in consideration of its total past. Ancient and primitive traces are not any more important in this process than the more recent ones. In fact, the actual intellectual phenomenon becomes ever richer and more colourful in the course of its development, and thereby distances itself from other phenomena more distinctly than in its primitive state. Just as peasant culture is more international than upper class culture, likewise one has to refute the contention that simple peasant life is more typically national than the life of the upper classes. On the contrary, the life of simple people shows surprising similarities everywhere, and differs only in attire and appearance rather than character

and thought. Maupassant's peasants are not much different from Zsigmond Móricz's peasants.[14] Often we fall upon a foreign proverb or a minor trait characterizing the folklore of a strange people that we would find just as typical if anybody mentioned it to characterize our people's mentality. In descriptions of a Russian milieu we sense Hungarian traits, just because we confuse their peasants with ours.

In the same vein, we should not overestimate the scant data of Hungarian prehistory. The chronicles recorded these data rather dryly, in an abstract manner, and with an international one-dimensionality. The Middle Ages, whose relics they are, was a period of an abstract perspective and international spirit. Scholars practically dissect each word, so as to find significations in them which far outgrow their real meaning. [...]

Hungarians are a mixed race, but it does not mean that their collective character is not integral. The Hungarian people did not develop from the union of two or three races, as did for example the English, but from the small fragments of numerous races that merged into one single, strong stock. This is why we became more homogeneous, yet more colourful than many other peoples, in our spirit and in the culture that expresses this spirit. The stronger stock that merged the others has actually disappeared already beneath the layers of the peoples that it attracted, and its purity was probably questionable as early as the beginning of our history; every doubt is possible here. It nevertheless bequeathed its unity to the newly established community's spirit and culture which continued its work as an amalgamating force. Of course, we must not mistake this for a high, conscious culture, complete with literature and artistic masterpieces. At a basic level language itself is culture. The Hungarians have solved their language problem in quite a different manner than the English or French who, too, were once mixed races, no matter how united they appear now. English is also a mixed language whose elements are clearly separable even today. On the other hand, French adopted a civilized foreign language, namely Latin, in order to destroy and redevelop it. In the case of Hungarian, the language of the victorious stock won. People brought their language from their distant country of origin. Therefore, it is a strange, almost exotic language, entirely different from those peoples' tongues who were either autochthonous dwellers of our homeland or moved in later and were slowly assimilated. It is understandable that our language could not mix with theirs, not even adopt their essential elements that could have changed its special character. Yet, their influence enriched Hungarian, and made it more colourful and heterogeneous, while leaving it also more coherent and specific

than any other European language. [...] This language was the first one to take over the role of the vanished and diluted ancient race, in order to preserve and shape the spiritual product that we call Hungarian. "A nation lives in its language,"[15] as they used to say once, and this proverb is almost verbatim true for the Hungarian nation. "A language affects a nation almost as if by some magic power, and vice versa," wrote István Széchenyi in his work *Light.* These days, it is fashionable to belittle the role of language. It is, however, precisely the Hungarians who can least afford to do this. Knowledge of the Hungarian language itself does not make one a Hungarian. The wires alone don't generate electric current. The Hungarian language is a medium, a "wire," in which the live spiritual current of the Hungarians throbs on. [...]

Just as the Hungarian language differs greatly from any other, so does our nation stand alone in Europe. This surrounded country, a small world in itself, was an ideal location for Hungarians where they could preserve their distinct existence, so close to, yet so far from, Europe. Those who are nowadays searching for the secret of the Hungarian soul often mention the "frontier spirit." By this they mean the peculiar inclination of the Hungarians to fence in and dig in themselves. If the choice of the country was influenced by this tendency, nobody could have come upon a better location.

Do we have to infer from this aloofness another, nowadays equally often mentioned, tendency — that of Hungarian "finitism"?[16] The wish to be intentionally stranded, to be isolated from life, a morbid thirst for permanent closure which is the suicide of the spirit? One thing is certain: no matter how entrenched the homeland was that we acquired, we could not hide away from the experiences here, even if there hadn't been any gates on the fortification. [But there were.] Many people and things that were foreign to us flowed into our land through these gates in the past. This land has, in itself, given us a lot of exciting experiences. [...]

Our beautiful homeland is in a bad location: at the borderland between the East and the West, the crossroads of peoples, and the meeting-point of cultures. The Hungarian sat down here, under the Carpathian bulwark, like a shepherd sits down in a storm and wraps himself in his sheepskins. When the rain pours, everyone is a finitist. Indeed, we cannot call combativeness a separate, particularly "Hungarian" trait. What if we had given up fighting?

The warlike nature which Hungarians brought with them from the East was like that of all nomadic peoples. [...] Hungarian history is a series of hardships and improbabilities. From the summits of shining glory we fell into abysses that threatened us with eradication. We were

alone and defenceless: frontiers did not protect us, we had to protect the frontiers. We were an obstacle in the eye of mightier powers which stared at each other ravenously across our country. We had to fight, even if it seemed hopeless. [...]

Hungarians are not a people of ideas and slogans.[17] They supported the evolution of European ideas, but were not affected by these so much as to alter their identity. At most they died for these ideas. Even then, they lived for their own possessions, their own truth, and they lived according to their own way. This causes them to appear unprincipled. [...] Until very recently, the Hungarian homeland meant the Hungarian nation, and this nation consisted of the nobility only. It constituted virtually a large family, regardless of how open, or, as social scientists put it, exogamous, it was. With his love of sluggish comfort and hospitable oriental conservatism, the Hungarian felt snug amidst his big family. It was already mentioned that the true basis of Hungarian patriotism was the love of home and family. A certain warm familial pride evolved in Hungarians, rather different from the so-called national pride of other peoples. They jealously guarded their big family's tranquility and dignity against any disturbance.

"Don't bother me": this is the essence of Hungarian freedom, as it was understood over the centuries. Do not disturb my tranquility, inertia, comfort. "My house is my castle," as the English say, whose constitution was akin to the Hungarian precisely for this reason.[18] The essence of the Hungarian constitution and love of freedom can also be compressed into Miklós Zrínyi's slogan: "Do not hurt the Hungarians!"[19] In effect, all of our national struggles meant the defense of our ancient national tranquility, national comfort, and phlegmatic national dignity against disturbances and infringements. While on the one hand indignation about European innovations stems from this feeling of snugness, on the other hand those innovations themselves, and the national reform movements, were also consequences of the very same defiance. [...]

Nevertheless, Hungarians are an observant and open-minded people. Hungarian and European cultures have progressed together in unity for the past nine hundred years. Our openness developed from profound life experiences and for historical reasons. Our kind is inherently open-hearted and has treated strangers with hospitality for a thousand years. Our language was able to absorb the most diverse elements without losing its fundamental character. The colourfulness of our country and the turmoil of our history inured us to continual arrays of impressions and to the alternation of experiences. We receive intellectual experience with the same open-mindedness also. One pride

of our literature is the multitude and aesthetic quality of translations of world literature into Hungarian. [...]

Our small and unknown people created a remarkably sizeable literature and art of high value which hold its own compared with the accomplishments of mighty nations not just in individual achievements but also as a whole. It is impossible for me not to see and feel this, despite the self-restraint with which I tried to judge it. Today, when culture's soul and strength seem to be decaying in all of Europe, the torn and humiliated Hungarian still upholds his literary and artistic standard, which stands not at all below the best of Western standards.

It is an odd phenomenon, but not inconceivable. Our people may be slow in action, but it is susceptible and rich in perception. In fact, the two things are deeply connected as fundamentally one and the same. We are not an active, but a contemplating people. We have already lived, for a millennium, in this country which offers continuous surprises, exposed to high-level Western culture. The openness of our spirit and our receptiveness are much greater than the freedom of our movement or the temptations of our possibilities. We look upon matters of the world with a certain doubt and indifference. And the strength, which for other peoples is released and consumed by action, changes in us to an internal richness, to a secret wealth of the soul. This wealth accumulates apparently uselessly, does not become manifested, does not make us wittier nor more skilful; rather, it impedes action and life even more. But sometimes, amidst fortunate circumstances, when the rare interaction of chance motives and opportunities allows it, a creation arises like a sprouting spring from the soaked ground, to which another creation reacts from somewhere nearby. The sequence of creations breaks periodically: conditions barely allow it to grow into an uninterrupted culture. The sources repeatedly dry up, like water in the sand. They do not nourish the spirits of the nation's millions. Our creations do not affect the wider strata of society. And who knows, will they survive into the future at all in these turbulent times? Will they reach the distant lands to spread the news of the wealth of the Hungarian spirit? Nevertheless, they exist, they are here, and the fact remains that a small nation that came from afar, brotherless, warlike and wartorn, could become, in one of Europe's hidden and tormented corners, the faithful custodian of the great Western culture.

Such people have completely different conditions of existence than those of the active nations which achieve through their actions. They do not need so much collective discipline but rather peace and freedom — the freedom of private life, which allows for tranquil

meditation and work. The Hungarian people, traditionally and according to common knowledge, are a people for freedom. Their attitude is irreparably individualistic. Those who wanted to deal with it often considered it undisciplinable. However, the discipline is not lacking, but this is not the discipline forced on the masses in order to achieve a concerted action. Hungarian discipline is the product of individual calmness and contemplative superiority. It does not contradict personal freedom, in fact it assumes it. Hungarian discipline is equivalent to Hungarian coolness. This coolness is itself the Hungarian freedom, the contemplating free spirit, which makes one feel master in his own house, in his life, and looks at the world with wisdom, ascendancy, and with an open mind. This sort of freedom can make the Hungarian creative, that is to say, happy.

I arrived at the point from where the entire dialectic of Hungarian life is clearly visible. The metaphysician, who says that the varied and typical Hungarian mentality lacks dialectic and fruitful contrasts, is wrong. By no means does it stand that the Hungarian existence is "unproblematic." And it is not enough here to think only of the evident and generally known problem: the endless conflict of East and West among us and within us. Also deeper dialectic conflicts strain our national spirit. We are a realistic, sober people and at the same time upholders of a Platonic law. We are warlike and a battle-hardened people, and still, we always ensured and advanced our national existence by way of making peace and wise political compromises. Our spirit is meditating, indifferent and doubt-filled; nevertheless, we are a truly political people. Nearing compulsion is our passionate and burning desire for action. On the other hand, our meditating way of life and our whole spiritual structure point to creation in place of action.

These many conflicts cannot be barren and unproductive. The soul's inner conflicts may cause pain, but at the same time they bring life, too, and new energy for the future. [...] Perhaps our strength stems precisely from our difficulties and suffering. [...] A mission for the Hungarian may also be non-action. In this, we are still related to the wise and eternally calm East. For us, our calling could be — to use our forefathers' favourite words — passive resistance: Opposing overbearing foreigners, a world that ignores the sacred ancient rights, worships raw violence, and cannot tolerate the individual's freedom, the tranquility of contemplation and the happiness of creation. [...]

Hungarians today perform their duty also by maintaining their ancient, noble and fruitful inactivity. Around us the slogans of innovation hum and we truly must take action; as long as we live, there is a

> continuous need for change. But for us, this is only a necessity and a means rather than a pleasure and an aim. And woe to the Hungarian if once he completely loses his inherited national inertia, this splendid and wise sluggishness, which served him well for a thousand years. He does the greatest service to the world if he preserves his national characteristics and stays as he is. We are a nation, in the world's old, spiritual, legal and moral sense. We are not a race among rival races, not some wretched, little striving factor on the battlefield of large, formidable powers. [...]

The above excerpts constitute only a small part of the remarkable treatises, yet even these provide enough food for thought. Especially, one should realize that such semi-philosophical inventories of national characteristics are no narcissistic, self-gratifying speculations. While the authors' methods are subjective, the genre could serve the attempt at self-examination and self-definition of nations whose identity often comes into question, although for diverse reasons. Mostly because of its young history and multi-ethnicity, Canada is one such nation.

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VIII. Confrontations with Illusions and Misinformation

As has probably become evident from previous readings, Hungarian culture has a long tradition of critical self-examination. Such search for a collective ego occasionally resulted either in defensive self-pity or its opposite, masochistic self-hatred. Truly outstanding intellectuals managed to avoid both pitfalls, nevertheless constructively contributing at the same time to the seemingly never-ending national pastime: the search for identity.

The example of the two extremes mentioned above is exaggerated. Yet, they may ring a bell upon reading the excerpts that follow. Their authors were two critically-minded 20th century poet-thinkers. The first one, Mihály Babits, scrutinizes the home scene, warning his compatriots of possible aberrations in Hungarian intellectual developments. The other author, Dezső Kosztolányi, points out one good reason for the preoccupation of Hungarians with themselves and their place in Europe, namely, the shocking ignorance of the continent, not only that of the general public but so-called scholars as well, about Hungary's culture.

In 1929 a Frenchman called Julien Benda published a much debated book on "the treason of the intellectuals." His advise to the intellectuals was to stay aloof from current political interests. Babits took issue with this thesis. He thought that intellectuals should actively defend the impartial, humanistic principles of the realm of the mind. Our excerpts touch on a specifically Hungarian dilemma treated in this essay, namely: is there any particular "Hungarian way" to follow? Babits's answer manifests an open attitude to the world, and insists on his country's place in a cultural context that all too often disclaimed and unjustly ostracized Hungary.

Document 1. MIHÁLY BABITS: *The Treason of the Intellectuals*

[...] We were pacifists, and today — let us be nationalists! I am one, too. This nationalism has the same essence, however, as our pacifism: the denial of the principle of force. We have the more right to protest against violence, we, who never for a moment accepted this principle which is nowadays recognized on this pathetic continent even by the representatives of human spirit who had once vehemently denied it.

One may well ask, why should the treason of the intellectuals concern us, then? What practical consequence could this whole matter have for us? He who poses this question answers it at the same time, since he proves that this issue, so hotly debated by European intellectuals, touches a raw nerve among us, too. Why should the entire world outside of ours, the crisis of the human spirit, the deposition of intellect, or the obscuring of truth concern us? What business of ours are truth and morals if they yield no immediate "practical result" to our nation? Such questions can only arise in an age which has already been poisoned by the treason of the intellectuals, and we too live in such an age. Our great and independent spirits could remain intact from this betrayal, but the contagious air irresistibly infected smaller characters.

This is how the face of Hungarian intellect gained features which lend it the colour of gut-level passion rather than the old, noble expression. "Before me there is no truth, no morality, other than the benefit of my nation," says the Hungarian writer almost automatically. Perhaps such outcry is understandable in passionate moments, but inappropriate if uttered by guardians of truth and morality. This is the twisted morality of the hunted ones, not worthy of the noblest spirits of an undeservedly treated, dignified nation. Not to mention the bad service it renders to the homeland, whose rights it compromises, raising the suspicion as if all national truths were just guided by biased interest.

The beautiful word, Hungarian truth,[1] which once meant Hungary's claim to universal truth, is taking on another meaning. On these modern lips, Hungarian truth sounds as if the Hungarians had an entirely different truth, separate from so-called truth as it is known elsewhere — as if truth changed from nation to nation, and was not like a supreme and impartial judge, only a local servant of interest. I know well that this idea, regarded as absurd until recently but nowadays rationalized even philosophically by modern pragmatism, is not a Hungarian idea but a wave of Europe's current intellectual tendencies. Therefore, this "Hungarian truth" is but a copy of foreign truths, an

image of the German, French, and other petty, fragmented truths. All I wanted to show is that this weird tendency has reached us too, it influences us as well. It stems from the spirit of the treacherous intellectuals, and regards the classical concept of truth as something obsolete, as if truth were different not only by nations but also by ages.

How far we are removed from Catholicism and the one and only truth which our religion preaches, along with the oneness of God! God himself is no longer one. The God of the Hungarians was identical with the Christian God for nine hundred years, powerful enough for every people to profess Him as its own, just as any point in the Universe can be regarded as its centre. Today, however, the nations are discontented with their shared religion: they don't even consider God great enough so that they could calmly share in His adoration. This is how some people in our country dream about a kind of old pagan god of their own. The rise of such national religion is just more proof of how little the modern intellectuals care about the concept of truth, even though we refer here to the most sacred Truth, the religious one. No-one can believe that these "proto-Hungarians" yearn for paganism because they believe that paganism is a truer religion than Christianity. No, this question hasn't even occurred to them. Behold, this is the true picture of our current enlightenment. In which past age could one imagine a Christian priest who, having extensively studied the problem, rejected the old pagan religion just because, in his opinion, today's Christianity has already adjusted itself to the Hungarian impulses and suits the Hungarian peasants' taste? The God who adjusts Himself to the impulses of the people, and peasant taste being the decisive criterion in religious matters, in our democratic and pragmatic time all this is self-explanatory. Won't God punish the peoples which look not for the Truth but for the satisfaction of their own racial instincts in religion?

Now, for a light but not funny intellectual exercise, consider the following absurd idiocy. If somebody, for example an academic, openly accused the French language of being a barbaric tongue which reflects an inferior state of culture, probably nobody would bother to refute his statement. If passed about a less familiar language, however, a similarly nonsensical judgment could be deemed as an educated assessment.

Dezső Kosztolányi — poet, writer, and lover of the Hungarian language — dared to take to the court of conscience and scholarly impartiality a respected French linguist for slandering Hungarian culture. As a

sad statement about the century, Kosztolányi's polemical essay documents that countries out of political favour with the big powers, winners of the most recent and most destructive war in history, were targets for the most outrageous accusations presented in a pseudo-objective manner. The same essay also brings home the original meaning of the idiom, "the treason of the intellectuals" — in this case, a betrayal of both scholarship and human fairness. Finally, this selection seems appropriate to finish the readings of the present collection by returning to the starting topic: the uniqueness of the Hungarian language. This language has been the keystone of Hungarian identity and national principle for more than a thousand years, and the fanatical yet moving insistence on its use and renewal is, in the eyes of many, still a guarantee of the future of Hungary.

Document 2. DEZSŐ KOSZTOLÁNYI: "Open letter" to Antoine Meillet

> My Dear Sir, After having read your book (*Les Langues dans l'Europe nouvelle*), I feel it necessary to approach you publicly. I am not a linguist. I am a writer who, while struggling with his material, often and gladly speculates about linguistic phenomena. In this letter only an ardent, enthusiastic layman tackles those questions on which you, scholar of comparative Indo-Germanic linguistics,[2] are an authority. Pain made me decide to write this letter. In your work, you belittle that intellectual and spiritual community to which I belong, that language which eleven million people speak. I speak to some degree on their behalf. This gives me courage.
>
> From your analyses, from your conclusions, but even more from your allusions that concern us, it more or less appears that: we [Hungarians] are rootless tyrants; our whole literary production thus far is worthless junk; our language lacks origin and is uncouth, has no past, and even less future. In the past, according to you, only the oligarchy saved it from death, which may still set in, and may be desirable, in the interest of a higher principle.
>
> Personal grievance passes quickly, but the one that struck me while reading your work still has not passed. I have little hope that I can convince you of the untenability of your interpretation, and of your glaring errors. I do have the hope though, that I can at least clarify my feelings and thoughts, and can gain a little relief for myself while writing. I know that my situation is awkward. I am directing an open letter to a world-famous celebrity of the Parisian College de France who will perhaps not even read it. As I work, I imagine that I

am arguing and communicating, when it is only a monologue. Is this ridiculous? Almost every man is this laughable. When they are conversing with each other, they are for the most part only conducting monologues. I don't even care that I will be laughable. As long as we breathe, we must fight for truth. The rest is not our concern.

In your book's new second edition you provide an overview of European languages as they have been shaped and arranged in the post-war period (p. 288). You treat the Hungarian language harshly. [...] For every language and literature you have some words of praise, or at least excuse - except Hungarian. At times it actually appears as if you despised this miraculous orphan of the Finno-Ugric language family, whose parents died early, and whose relatives have moved to distant foreign lands in the maelstrom of history, and who still survived against all odds. This should be yet one more reason for you, the sensitive scholar of comparative linguistics, to be that much more curious and forgiving. You, however, are more cruel and malicious to Hungarian than was its own destiny. Compared to it, you even defend the German language, which you, as you had mentioned earlier, do not want for either your body or soul. You write:

"If the German language had remained the language of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, it would at least have kept its prestige of being the language of this empire. When Hungarian was accepted as the official language of half the dual monarchy, the privileged position of the German language was over. The German settlers and the Jews, of whom there are many in Hungary, and who played important roles before the war, were forced to learn Hungarian if they wished to succeed in the Hungarian state. As a result, the influence of the currently used German language was lost. This was because in Hungary the ruling class spread its language with force."

Following this "objective" historical description comes a linguistic description, similarly objective.

"At any rate, Hungarian is not the language of an old civilization. The vocabulary bears the mark of every kind of external influence. It is crammed full of Turkish, Slavic, German, and Latin loanwords, and has itself barely had any lasting effect on neighbouring languages."

As for the roots of our civilization, I bring up the fact that in our press in Buda, they had already printed two books in 1473. János Apáczai Csere, a student of Descartes, wrote his philosophical prose in Hungarian in 1653, at a time when in Europe only Descartes dared to use the national language, and all other scholars and writers wrote in Latin. You also err in regard to our loan-words. Every modern Euro-

pean linguist claims that the originality of a language depends on its spirit and structure, not on how many loan-words have diffused in it during contacts with various peoples. If you were right, we could surely discard the English language as well, since it is made up in equal proportion of Romance and Germanic elements: its Anglo-Saxon vocabulary is so tiny that it can be barely measured. But even the facts you provide in your allegations are false. If we analyze a written Hungarian text or scraps of Hungarian speech heard on the street at random, in terms of the origins of the words, the results always show that ninety percent of these words are of ancient Finno-Ugric origin. This has been verified. Our academy's newest dictionary, which is far from being complete, indicates a word-pool of 122,067. Out of these, 330 are of old Turkish, 756 of Slavic, and 1393 of German origin, but these latter ones are gradually disappearing from the everyday language, and are only used in a few Transdanubian dialects. As a result, the number of our German loan-words is not even half of the registered one. Our Latin loan-words are insignificant.

The French language adopted 604 words from German, 154 words from English, and 15 words from Russian. I admit, it was a justified adoption, on the basis of Indo-German kinship, and as a kind of trade among relatives. But French also borrowed 146 words from Semitic-Hamitic Arabic, 99 words from Asian languages, 44 words from our Turkish relatives, and 4 words from us: *hussard, shako, soutache*, and *cocher*.[3] As often as you mention a coach — and you do mention it often — you unknowingly pay homage to our sixteenth-century industry's humble victory, and to the village of Kocs, in Komárom county. In those days they manufactured a covered "kocs" — wagon[4] there, which came into fashion in foreign countries as well. I publish these data on the basis of H. Strappers's *Dictionnaire synoptique d'etimologie francaise*. If, however, I immediately characterized your language in this way to an uninformed child who does not know French as yet, and wanted to make it appear as a trashy thieves' nest, then — I believe — I would not be entirely well-intentioned.

Do you weigh other languages in this manner? In the same chapter I read this:

"The Czech language has a long past, and it became a civilized language in the nineteenth century. With strong determination, the Czechs created for themselves a flawless language of civilization. The Rumanians have a highly developed literary language, which, belonging to the Romance linguistic group, is equal in rank with the great Western European languages. The Croatians possess one of Europe's most enchanting literary languages."

Such characterizations differ from the previous one, not only in terms of appreciation but in their tone as well. We cannot find anything objectionable in the assessments. We do not question the beauty or the expressive power of any language. To this day we have not had a linguist who would have belittled the Czech, Romanian, or Croatian language because they are different from ours. If there was such a linguist, I am sure that he would be barred from the academic community immediately by our serious scholars.

The degree to which the above characterization is different from the one concerning us becomes evident when we further read the charges brought against us:

"The Hungarian language does not belong to the same linguistic family as the majority of languages spoken in Europe, especially in this part of Europe. Its structure is complicated, and no-one can learn it easily. It is totally unknown outside of Hungary. A Hungarian who does not know any other, widely-used language, is incapable of making himself understood outside of his country's borders, and it is unlikely that he will be able to find an interpreter anywhere. A scholarly treatise which appears in Hungarian, no matter how valuable, is condemned to remain unknown; it must be translated, or summarized in a major foreign language."

I ask you: is it a scholarly evaluation that a language's "structure is complicated"? Is it a linguistic criterion that "no-one can learn it easily"? I ask you: is your enchantingly musical and sparking clean mother tongue so easily learned by foreigners? I ask you: is it not yourselves who are most amazed when you notice only after ten minutes that the guest with whom you were conversing is not a born Frenchman? Is it not you yourselves who display as a miracle the foreigner who writes French flawlessly and artistically?

The author of this French linguistic work is obsessed by the idea of a myriad deficiencies in the Hungarian language. After 43 pages, when he contemplates the isolation of languages on a purely abstract basis, he repeats himself word for word.

"The increase in the number of civilized languages in Europe causes an inconvenience which steadily grows. The citizens of small nations who have not learned another civilized language and only speak their national language are muted as soon as they leave home. A Hungarian who only speaks Hungarian cannot make himself understood anywhere in the world. If he wants to leave his country, he has to take an interpreter with him. The European who is passing through Hungary becomes confused, even if he speaks more than one lan-

guage, because everything goes on in Hungarian (*tout s'y fait en magyar).*"

Well, the Hungarian is again the resounding example of a linguistic cripple, not the Lithuanian, Basque, or any other peoples. It is always the poor Hungarian who is muted outside of his borders. Only he grabs at everything, and only he howls for an interpreter, even though it is "unlikely" that he can find one. Well, is the Frenchman who does not speak another language besides French so endlessly at home lecturing in [...] Chicago or Peking? Is a Portuguese who does not speak other languages so talkative in Warsaw, or a Pole in Lisbon? Furthermore, why is the astoundingly educated multilingual European so pitiful when he becomes "painfully" confused in Budapest, where every schoolboy at least stutters in one or two languages? Why is the thought so amazing, so gruesome, that "everything goes on in Hungarian" here? We do not find it amazing or gruesome that everything goes on in Bulgarian in Sofia, or that everything goes on in Japanese in Tokyo. We also find it very delightful and understandable that in Paris everything goes on in French. The only thing we find incomprehensible is that a professor of comparative linguistics finds this so incomprehensible.

But everything becomes understandable as soon as the author throws off the mask of objectivity, and his indictment becomes a funeral speech:

"If Hungary's oligarchic system would have conceded to the popular movement sweeping through the world, the Hungarian language would have been swept away with the ruins of the aristocratic order which forced this language on others. Only this order's political strength protected the Hungarian language. This language does not harbour an authentic civilization."

Is this rationalism? No: this is linguistic oligarchy. We should cry, but we end up laughing. We have never come across such a ridiculous distortion of historical facts in a serious work. According to this, our language was not upheld by poverty-stricken serfs who remained faithful to it even under one-hundred-fifty years of Turkish rule. Not by the lower nobility, which fought a life-and-death struggle with the Germanizing Habsburgs for Hungarian schools and for Hungarian jurisdiction. It was not our language reformers who guarded and supported this language, who made our rural idioms attain literary status. Not Kazinczy,[5] our Malherbe, who was a prisoner for seven years because of his French conceptions of freedom, nor Gergely Czuczor,[6] our Littre, the compiler of our first large dictionary. He was a down and out peasant's son who was sentenced to death because he

stood up for his language and his people. He was later granted mercy, and spent six years in imperial prisons. No, it was not those who grafted our language hoping for better centuries, who made it shoot into bloom. [...] No, ladies and gentlemen: it was the oligarchs, who only knew French and German, the aristocrats who hunted with greyhounds, those principled, noble counts who bowed to the lackeys of the imperial palace in Vienna, and revelled in Paris with their cosmopolitan allies, the rich.

It seems that you are as unfamiliar with our language as with the history of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. But no: you surely do know the latter. Of the Czechs you write:

"The aristocracy, which flattered the Habsburgs, became Germanized due to its contact with the Austrian nobility. With the country's economic progress, however, a national bourgeoisie developed. It demanded its own place, stood firmly by its right to have Czech schools, and designed Czech public education from school to university."

Further, you write of the Czech language reform movement, which occurred later than ours, and cannot be compared to ours in terms of significance, duration, and social impact:

"The national concern went so far as to weed out even the German words that had penetrated into the Czech vocabulary in great numbers."

From this we learn that numerous German words penetrated even this pure and perfect language of civilization.

Subsequently, you state: "A language is valuable only in so far as it is a vehicle of original civilization. It isn't necessary for the civilization to be widely spread; it is enough if it has a character of its own. However, it is difficult to wipe out an authentic language of a civilization once it has developed."

After we found out that our language is not part of an original civilization, that it doesn't have a character, our last hope is that at least its literature will rescue it, which has already started to circulate in the world, even if not always its most valuable products have been translated. You only have one single sentence about Hungarian literature, however: "[This] literature lacks prestige."

If one is truly familiar with a literature in the original (since one cannot judge it from summaries), and passes such judgement about it, arguing with him would be improper. Everyone has the right to form his own opinion. But the above is not your own personal opinion — it is the opinion of others. A conclusion drawn from the assumed views of other people, which creates the false illusion that it is the

world's generally shared opinion. In its stated form, it is an exaggeration. Our literature actually has a certain prestige. Sándor Petőfi left an impression on the whole of Europe, and the greatest authors of the nineteenth century placed him among the immortals: Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare, with admiration. Only we know, who enjoy him in our sweet mother tongue, that he deserves this rank also by virtue of his deep inner value. Too bad that I cannot familiarize you with this aspect of Petőfi. Maybe you wouldn't even desire it. You only questioned the civilizing influence of our literature abroad. For this reason, I will quote a few random opinions that contradict you.

Carlyle writes the following on Petőfi: "In his songs, Petőfi expresses a sublime humanity that bears a resemblance to Goethe, the lyric poet, with whose greatness he ranks equal."

In Hermann Grimm's words: "I regard Petőfi as one who must be ranked among the greatest poets of all nations."

Heine writes: "I cannot find his match in Germany. Such ancient tones of Nature seldom appear in my own poetry."

Finally, I quote the most distinguished representative of contemporary French spirit: Paul Valéry, member of the French Academy, who writes this about the short stories of some modern Hungarian writers whose works have been translated into French: "They remind me of Flaubert and Maupassant in their conciseness and perfection."

With your opinion you can consider yourself an outsider, most honoured professor, among the company of such geniuses. Let me assure you: you are not completely alone. In times past, there were always some who tolled our death knell. Herder predicted that "The Hungarians form the smallest minority of their country's population among the Slavs, Germans, Romanians and other nationalities now; as centuries pass, even their language will be scarcely found."

Herder wrote this in 1820.[7] Three years later Petőfi was born, who is known and talked about by many more people around the world than that colourless Romantic German. Prophesying is risky; nevertheless, we have already become used to such death-prophecies as well, and face them with a certain hardiness. Our peasants believe that if someone is given out to be dead, he will enjoy a long life. It seems to come true also for nations and languages, whose fate is not decided by idealistic or rationalistic linguists, but by more irrational and more merciful forces. This is our only consolation.

Further, the bulky (205 page) appendix at the end of your book cheers us up. An informative register proves that in modern Europe one hundred twenty languages are spoken. These languages are

ranked in order of the number of speakers. These statistics were compiled by your one-time student, Mr. L. Tesniere, professor at the University of Strasbourg. From his comments it seems that he is not much of a friend of our culture, either. Despite his antipathy, he had to place the Hungarian language in the eleventh spot among the hundred and twenty. He was able to "demote" our language by combining Dutch and the very different Flemish language[8] — thus, the total of their speakers outnumbers Hungarian by barely one and a half millions. In terms of speakers, our language is preceded by German, Russian, English, Italian, French, Ukrainian, Polish, Spanish, Romanian and Dutch. It is followed, not even closely, by Czech and Moravian, Greek, Belorussian, Swedish, Catalan, Bulgarian, Danish, Finnish, Norwegian, Slovak, [European] Turkish, Albanian, etc. Perhaps our "isolation," which seems to be such a concern for you, should not be a cause for alarm. Occupying the eleventh place means that our language is actually among the larger ones in Europe. We don't fall behind on the world list either. As we can learn, in the twentieth century 1.8 billion people speak 1500 languages world-wide. Our global ranking is the twenty-ninth. [...]

But wait a minute! At the head of the list a mammoth number demonstrates that 400 million people, a quarter of the world's population, speak Chinese. Everything is relative. These first scribes of mankind who still think of the same thing, all 400 million of them, when they see those strange signs of theirs that we cannot decipher — according to your theory they could rightly regard any great nation a dwarf, any world language an isolated, barbaric patois. But they would be wrong. Neither the number of speakers nor the civilization are objective indicators of the greatness of a language. You mention yourself that the Babylonian language, once carrier of the whole Asian culture, disappeared without trace. Likewise the Egyptian one, unparalleled for 4000 years, perished completely. It is only since a century ago that we have been able to decipher its written relics. Civilization cannot be measured — least of all by the arbitrary criterion whether somebody finds a language melodious or pleasant-sounding. Such criteria are meaningless and valueless.

After this momentary flare-up of my pride, I am once again overcome by humility, love, and admiration toward all languages. It is just as impossible to answer questions such as, what sense it makes that a people speaks its own language (for instance, that we speak Hungarian) as it is impossible to rationalize the meaning of existence. It leads us to a secret.

The other day I was wandering around in a forest without encountering a single soul. I came to a clearing where I noticed a rare flower which can only be found in our country. We call it goldenflax; our scholars call it *Linum dolomiticum*. I stood looking at it. I was wondering why its leaves were so perfect, why it was so graciously resilient, why its petals were golden, and why it bloomed at all, since I was probably the only one who set eyes on it before it would die. In spite of these questions the goldenflax still blooms around here profusely, all over. The flowers don't care about the meaning of their existence, nor about the fact that somewhere else people are admiring other beautiful flowers. While the flower blooms, it is perfect, and it turns towards the sun to gain perfection. After it dies, new ones spring to life. They bloom and die just as everything else around them does, just as "big" and "small" nations do, just as "civilization" does. To live and die: this is perhaps what life is all about.

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DOCUMENTATION

A: Notes

Chapter I. Myth: The Foundation of Historical Consciousness (pages 3-14).

1. Scythia: territory inhabited by nomadic peoples in ca. the 8th to the 1st centuries B.C. The Scythians probably were a mixture of Mongolian and Indo-European tribes. Occasionally they controlled huge areas of the Southern Russian steppe. Since they were nomads, the physical boundaries of their sphere of influence constantly changed.

2. Gog and Magog: mysterious rulers mentioned in the Old Testament. All attempts for a closer identification (assumptions that the country called Magog was ruled by Gog, that Gog was another name for the Asian king Gyges and his people were the Scythians, that they were "giants", etc.) remained conjectures. Reference to Alexander the Great: according to the fantastic *geste* of Alexander (ca. 320 A.D.), the Macedonian king built a protective wall somewhere in or around the Caucasus to defend his empire against raids by the barbarians.

3. The assumption that Magog, son of Japheth (Genesis, 10) lent his name to the Magyars is an example of so-called naive etymology which bases semantic observations on morphological similarities of unrelated words.

4. Menroth is identical with the mighty Biblical hunter-king Nimrod, Noah's great-grandson from Ham's lineage (Genesis, 10). Evilath: the Biblical Havilah, land of gold (Genesis, 2). According to the Hungarian chroniclers, it was the ancient homeland of the Hungarians. In fact, both Menroth and the Evilath of the Hungarian chronicles had nothing to do with the Biblical person and site.

5. Maeotis: Greek name for the Sea of Azov.

6. Belar: ruler of the Bulgarians (a Turkish people) at the Sea of Azov. Dula(n): according to the Hungarian chronicles, king of the Alans (an Iranian people) — in fact, another king of the Azov Bulgarians.

7. Attila, king of the Huns (433-453): while demonized as one of the most abominable historical figures in Western consciousness, in the past centuries many

Hungarians proudly (but erroneously) regarded him as an ancestral ruler of the Hungarians. The first written document that briefly mentioned this myth was the *gesta* of Anonymous. Later chroniclers elaborated on the myth. Buda was Attila's older brother with whom he shared power for a while, then killed him.

8. Reference to the abandoned Roman settlement along the Danube, between Buda and Aquincum to the north.

9. Emesh: "the female one," also referring to female animals. Like the name of Enech, Nimrod's wife, Emesh is also a totemic name.

10. Turul: a bird of prey of much debated ornithological identity, totemic symbol of the nomadic Hungarians.

11. More exactly, *almus* means "the blessed one" in Latin. A typical example of medieval historiography that tried to find analogies between Pagan and Christian times, or their symbolism. This practice was widespread in Europe.

12. Pannonia: Roman province; in the early 2nd century A.D. emperor Traian extended its eastern border to the Danube, which flows across Hungary in a north-south direction. The Romans abandoned the Hungarian part of the province in the mid-4th century.

13. Árpád: head of the Hungarian tribal confederation that entered the Carpathian Basin in 895-96 A.D., establishing there what became the Kingdom of Hungary.

14. The Rhetor Priscus: 5th-century Greek historian. Among others, he wrote a report about his mission to Attila's court as emissary of the Byzantine emperor Theodesius II. This report is regarded as one of the few authentic human profiles of the mysterious Hun king.

15. Galeotti: Galeotto Marzio, Italian humanist (1427?- 1497). Between 1461-1479 he sojourned several times, for several years, in the court of the Hungarian king Matthias (Mátyás, 1458-90). In 1484-87, back in Italy, he wrote a Latin work lavishly praising the personality and court of the great Hungarian Renaissance king.

16. Son of János Hunyadi, a Transylvanian warlord, Mátyás was the only Hungarian king elected by "the people," i.e., the lower nobility. Consequently, he was probably the most popular figure of his country's royal oligarchy.

17. Andrew III (1290-1301) was the last king of the Árpád dynasty. The source of Arany's reference to an award for poets is unknown.

18. On August 29, 1526, the Osmanic Turkish imperial army smashed the Hungarian royal army at the southern town of Mohács. The defeat started the disintegration of the country. In 1541, when the Turks took Buda by cunning, Hungary fell into three parts: the western Hungarian Christian kingdom ruled by the Habsburgs, the vast central area under Turkish yoke, and the Transylvanian principality in the east and southeast. The tripartite division lasted until 1695.

19. The 150-year-long Turkish occupation affected all aspects of life (demography, culture, psychology, ecology), and had such devastating long-term

consequences that, in the view of social and cultural historians, the country has not overcome them yet.

20. Sebestyén Tinódi Lantos ("the Luter," 1510?-1556): Hungary's most famous bard, narrator of many heroic songs about battles against the Turks. Texts and authentic melodies of his songs have been preserved.

21. Miklós Toldi was a semi-legendary 14th-century knight, famous for his great physical strength. A series of amazing adventures were attributed to him. Physical strength was a characteristic of both mythical (Hercules) and folkloric (Paul Bunyan) heroes.

22. A concise summary of the democratic-reformist, but historically untenable, idea of mid-19th century Hungarian intellectuals that the concepts of nation and people (folk) coincided in the early (nomadic) Middle Ages.

Chapter II. Roots, or the Never-Ending Polemics on the Origins (pages 15-28).

1. Kőrösi Csoma's hesitation between Transylvania and Hungary (earlier he calls the college of Nagyenyed the best one in his country, and later mentions that he set off to find the cradle of his nation, i.e. Hungary) derives from the fact that after the expulsion of the Turks at the end of the 17th century, the large historical territory Transylvania, once organic part of the kingdom, was not reunited with Hungary but was pronounced an Austrian province, administered directly from the imperial court in Vienna (1690-1867). Hungary, on the other hand, was a sovereign kingdom whose monarch happened to be the (Habsburg) Holy Roman Emperor.

2. Hungarian Scientific Society: an early alternative name for the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (founded in 1825, actual activity started in 1830).

3. János Hunyadi (1387?-1456), Transylvanian oligarch and warlord, father to king Matthias (Mátyás), successful military opponent of the increasingly threatening Turkish attacks. See note 16, chapt. 1.

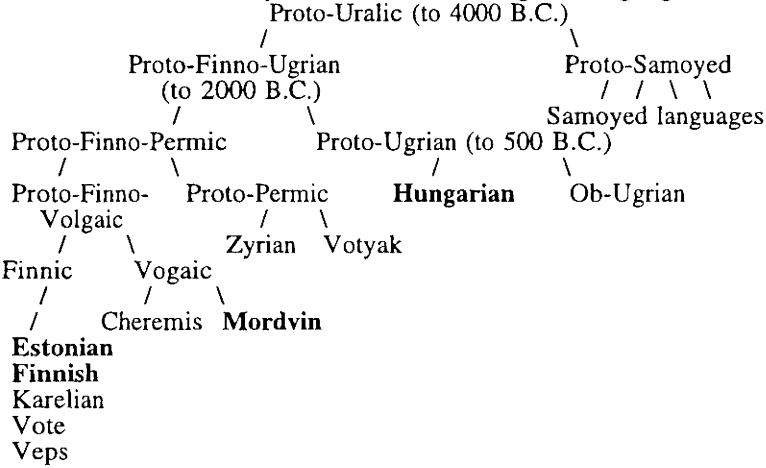
4. Sándor Petőfi (1823-49), born to a Hungarian-Serbian butcher called Petrovics and a Hungarian-Slovak servant girl, became questionably the greatest, unquestionably the most popular, Hungarian poet ever. His spontaneous language and vivid images make the identification with his poetic world easy.

5. Reference to Hungary's conversion to Christianity and the end of nomadic life.

6. The Hungarian equivalents of the Finnish words are cited in brackets. In both languages, diacritical marks (that is, various unfamiliar "accents") are used to qualify the pronunciation and length of the vowels. The following chart represents the family tree of the Finno-Ugric languages. In the Hungarian lineage,

the end date of coexistence is indicated. (The language groups with more than a million speakers are listed in bold characters).

The Family Tree of the Finno-Ugric Languages



7. *Kalevala* is the national epic of Finland, a poetic compilation of folkloric myths based on old Karelian songs. The compilations was the work of Elias Lönnrot, a country doctor, who published the first version of *Kalevala* in 1835.

8. The demographic statistics provided below, are courtesy of Dr. Harri Mürk of the University of Toronto. Like certain other ethnic groups in our century, some Finno-Ugric peoples have objected against their traditional (in their opinion, patronizing) name. The name they prefer is indicated in parentheses.

Hungarians	14 500 000
Finns	5 000 000
Estonians	1 120 000
Mordvinians	1 191 800
Votyaks (Udmurts)	713 700
Cheremises (Maris)	622 000
Zyrians (Komis)	477 500
Karelians	138 000
Laps (Saamis)	48 000
Ostyaks (Khantis)	20 900
Voguls (Mansis)	7 600
Vepses	8 000
Votes	10

9. Ármin Vámbéry (1832-1913): orientalist, writer, and university professor. He travelled extensively in Central Asia, and became preoccupied with the cultural ties between Hungarians and the Turkish peoples.

10. Reference to the final secession of the Hungarians from their nearest linguistic relatives.

11. One of several attempts to justify the right of Hungarians to the Carpathian Basin. Earlier, the assumed Hunnish-Hungarian relationship provided such justification. László theorized that the so-called "Late Avars," a Caucasian people who dominated the Basin from the 670s till the early 9th century A.D., were related to the Hungarians. According to this interpretation, the Hungarians moved into the Carpathian Basin in two phases.

12. The first Eastern (Arabic) and Western mentions of the Hungarians originate from the early 860s A.D. Al-Dzhaihani, a high-ranking emissary of the Bokharan emir, wrote about the "ferocious" Hungarians with fear and respect. In Western Europe, we find the first reference in a Belgian chronicle from 862 A.D. By the end of that century, when the raids of the Hungarians reached the West, chroniclers began to demonize them, attributing bizarre inhuman traits to them.

13. The Hungarian chroniclers mention seven tribes, while the Turkish word *onogur* (from which the name Hungarian was derived) means "ten arrows," probably referring to a confederation of ten tribes.

Chapter III. Historical Tradition (pages 29-44).

1. Three peoples that were the enemies of the Hungarians in nomadic times, yet found refuge from their enemies in Christian Hungary and assimilated to the Hungarians. All three groups were multiethnic: the Cumanians and Pechenegs spoke Turkish languages, while the Jazygians were Iranian. The Cumanians came from the Black Sea area, first attacking the Hungarians in the 11th century; their big influx was in the 13th century. The Jazygians started their migration to Hungary at an unknown date. Once enemies, other times allies of the Hungarians, the Pechenegs started arriving in the mid-10th century, but the biggest wave came in the early 12th century. By the mid-14th century, all three groups were fully assimilated; only a number of geographic names keep their memory alive.

2. The expulsion of the Turkish empire from the Balkans was a simmering issue of the 19th century. In 1862, when Kossuth made his views on the Danubian Confederation public, the whole Balkan Peninsula was still under Turkish rule or control, with the exception of Greece and Croatia. Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia gained their independence in 1878, after long military and diplomatic pressure on Turkey by Russia and the Western powers.

3. In Romanian and the Slavic languages both titles are approximate equivalents of the ruling prince.

4. The north-eastern fringe of historical Hungary, held in special esteem since the Verecke Pass, through which chief Árpád led the Hungarians into the Carpathian Basin, is situated in this area. The Trianon treaty assigned the area to Czechoslovakia. In 1939, when this country ceased to exist, Hungary reclaimed Subcarpathia. After World War II the region was occupied by the Soviet Union; today it belongs to Ukraine, where it is known as Transcarpathia.

5. Ruthenians are a Slavic group inhabiting Subcarpathia. They have a sense of ethnic identity, although Ukrainians claim they are just a subgroup.

6. Two international conferences held in Vienna returned to Hungary parts of the Upland (Felvidék) in 1938 and Transylvania (Erdély) in 1940.

7. Sultan Suleiman's (1520-66) five expeditions to Hungary took place in 1521, 1526, 1543, 1552, and 1566.

8. During the 150-year-long Turkish threat and partial occupation of Hungary, the town Nagyvárad (now Oradea, Romania), on the edge of the Great Plain, flourished, until it was occupied by the Turks in 1660. In Zrínyi's eyes, "Várad" had great strategic importance for Hungary.

9. Actually, Brazil was under Spanish rule only between 1580-1640, 23 years before Zrínyi wrote his pamphlet. Otherwise, Brazil was a Portuguese colony. News from other continents travelled slowly in those times.

Chapter IV. Ethnology and Folklore (pages 45-50)

1. Gábor Bethlen (1613-29), ruling prince of Transylvania, and for a short time (1620-21), uncrowned king of Hungary. While harbouring ambitious plans for Hungary's liberation from both Austrians and Turks, Bethlen's greatest success is believed to have been the consolidation of his principality which prospered during his rule in all respects.

2. Wallachs: originally dwellers of the Balkan mountains who gradually migrated north to the Lower Danube Valley. Beginning with the thirteenth century A.D., some of them moved on to Transylvania.

Chapter V. National Economy and Social Life (pages 51-66)

1. Reference to numerous peasant rebellions that took place in the course of Hungarian history.

Chapter VI. Education and Science (pages 67-92)

1. Philology: "love of the word" — once regarded as the basis of comparative cultural studies, it is hardly used in English any more. This discipline presupposes the perfect knowledge of the language(s) in which the scrutinized documents are written, and derives far-reaching historical, anthropological, social, even scientific, conclusions from the linguistic facts. A philologist was a person of wide and thorough knowledge.

2. Széchenyi is referring to one of his ambitious projects: the construction of the Chain Bridge (Lánchíd), the first permanent bridge connecting Pest and Buda. He commissioned two English masters, both called Clark (but unrelated): William, the planner, and Adam, the builder. Construction started in 1840, and the opening was in 1849.

3. Reference to Farkas Bolyai's most important contribution to mathematics: the two-volume *Tentamen* that he published in Latin in 1832. The lengthy Latin title is usually not quoted in its entirety. It means, more or less: "An attempt to introduce the studious youth to the basics of mathematics." The modesty of the title does not reflect the pioneering character of this internationally acclaimed work.

4. Long and difficult decades preceded the opening of the National Theatre (at that time called the Hungarian Theatre of Pest) in 1837, in the course of which Pest county's mid-rank nobility assumed initiative and pushed forward with the plan.

5. Eötvös is addressing Ágoston Trefort, Minister of Religious Cults and Education, in this "open letter". See the biographical notes.

6. At that time in Budapest and Kolozsvár (now Cluj, Romania).

7. A traditional Hungarian wind-instrument, most popular in the early 18th century, during prince Ferenc Rákóczi's campaign against Austrian supremacy.

8. In 1896 Hungary celebrated the one thousandth anniversary of its statehood with splendid commemorative events.

Chapter VII. Hungarian National Character (pages 93-111).

1. Elite soldiers of the Ottoman Turkish army, composed of kidnapped Christian boys who were raised to become fanatical fighters for the Sultan.

2. Osman (1288-1326), first ruler of the Turks, founder of the Ottoman Empire that later challenged Hungary and Europe. The data provided here about his thirteen descendants is incorrect; that his nation developed from the dwellers of two thousand tents may be more of a figurative expression than historical fact.

3. After hundreds of years of using Latin, Hungarian public administration adopted the national language in 1844.

4. The Unitarian bishop János Kriza's *Vadrózsák* (1863) was a celebrated collection of Transylvanian folk ballads. "Clement the Mason" revolves around a topic well known not only from Eastern European but also world lore: human sacrifice for the public good.

5. Székelys (Saecler): Transylvanian Hungarian group of much debated origin. Assumedly, they constituted a Turkish-speaking tribe of the nomadic Hungarians who seceded in the 6th century, and arrived to Hungary some time after, that is, potentially centuries before the conquering Hungarians.

6. Slovaks: a Slavic speaking group in Northern Hungary.

7. Gyula Szekfű was a historian in the first half of the 20th century. The source of his quote by Babits is unknown, but the same idea rings familiar from several of Szekfű's other works.

8. Reference to the Trianon peace treaty.

9. Endre Ady (1877-1919) was a rebellious Symbolist poet of many controversial ideas.

10. Distinguishing between "high" and "low" culture was a once fashionable division of cultural production along the horizontal line of social stratification. The debated issue was whether folk art and customs were "sunken" manifestations of upper-class culture, or whether the latter was refined folk culture.

11. The term "national classicism" was an attempt to reconcile the concept of Romanticism with the earlier, great poetic tradition. Actually, the poets who were thought to fall into this category, and the critics who coined the term, were closer to national romanticism.

12. The typical late 19th-century historical outlook in most countries of Europe was historicism. Rooted in Romanticism, it advocated the idea that history was a continuum. In poetry and ethics it also meant, figuratively, that the past and its heroes were still actively shaping contemporary consciousness.

13. After humiliating defeats on various European battlefields, Austria was compelled to yield to the long-time Hungarian demand for independence. In 1867, Austria made Hungary an equal partner in governing the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (known in English terminology as the "Austro-Hungarian Empire"). The emperor was Hungary's king. Hungary gained full autonomy in all respects except external affairs, defense, and finances. About half of the country celebrated the Compromise as realization of a centuries old dream, while the other half regarded it as a betrayal. The debate still goes on. At any rate, the new arrangement led Hungary into decades of very intensive economic and cultural progress.

14. Zsigmond Móricz (1879-1942) is regarded as a writer (of mostly prose works) who developed an unprecedented sympathetic, yet non-idealized, literary image of the Hungarian country people.

15. Although 18-19th century Hungarian authors often referred to this assumption (familiar from Romanticism) in their works, no one expressed it in writing in exactly these terms. It is a composite wisdom.

16. In 1936 Lajos Prohászka, a Hungarian philosopher, published an influential book, *A vándor és a bujdosó* (The wanderer and the refugee), in which he used sweeping allegories to compare the national character of Germans and Hungarians. One of his controversial concepts was Hungarian finitism: the assumed preference of Hungarians to close down their world, delimiting themselves, and resisting change and expansion.

17. The original sequence of this and the following two excerpts was rearranged.

18. Until 1949 Hungary did not have a single document that would have clarified the rights and responsibilities of government and citizens. Instead, gradually enacted laws regulated political life. Similarly, in Great Britain codified legal agreements and laws fill the role of a constitution.

19. The motto of Miklós Zrínyi's prose pamphlet *Remedy Against Turkish Opium.*

Chapter VIII. Confrontations (pages 113-124)

1. "Hungarian truth" (*magyar igazság*), later on "God of the Hungarians" (*magyarok istene*): two expressions of much less semantic significance than that which Babits attributed to them.

2. Obsolete name for the Indo-European language family.

3. Meaning of the four French words: hussar, kepi (also from French, but also shako), frog (not the animal!), coachman. (Hungarian originals: *huszár, csákó, sujtás, kocsis).*

4. Adjectival form *kocsi* (of/from Kocs).

5. Ferenc Kazinczy (1759-1831): poet, literary and language reformer. Thanks to his activity, in the early 19th century Hungarian language was modernized and standardized. More important than his fine literary oeuvre are his polemical essays and his letters, the latter published posthumously in 23 volumes.

6. Gergely Czuczor (1800-1866): poet and linguist, editor of the first major dictionary of the Hungarian Academy. Along with Petõfi and Arany, he did much to break down the dividing walls between poetic and colloquial language and imagery.

7. Actually, in 1791.

8. Kosztolányi was wrong: linguists regard Dutch and Flemish as practically identical languages.

B: Biographical and Bibliographical Notes

ANONYMOUS. All that we know about the author of the first Latin chronicle based on old Hungarian historical tales is that he was "King Béla's anonymous notary" who signed his name as Master P. While there were four kings of the Árpád dynasty known by the name Béla (in the two centuries between 1061-1270), research ascertained that the author had to be the court notary of Béla III (1173-96), and his chronicle must have been compiled around 1203.

Gesta Hungarorum (The chronicle of the Hungarians) was first published in Hungarian in 1746. English translation: 6% of total text.

János APÁCZAI CSERE (1625-59). Transylvanian Protestant theologian and educator. He studied in Holland for five years and gained his doctoral degree there. Back in his homeland, the Transylvanian Principality, he was ostracized for his modern pedagogical ideas. He was compiler of the first encyclopedia in the Hungarian language, and author of a book on logic. He delivered his inaugural speech on the occasion of his appointment to the presidency of the college of Gyulafehérvár (now Alba Julia, Romania) — a position he did not manage to hold for long.

"Az iskolák fölöttébb szükséges voltáról" (About the great necessity of schools), 1656. English translation: 2.25% of total text.

János ARANY (1817-82). Poet, critic, editor, secretary-general of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Part of his poetic activity was aimed at recreating the Hungarian heroic epic. Why he thought this endeavour was so important is explained in "Naiv eposzunk" (Our naive folk epic), first published in the periodical *Szépirodalmi Figyelő*, 1, 2, 3, 1860. English translation: 30% of total text.

Mihály BABITS (1883-1941). One of the most respected literary and public figures of the early 20th century. His activity covered all fields of literature, from poetry to translation. He was also a thinker, often tackling unpopular problems. Selections in chapters VII. and VIII., in sequence, are from the following works:
"Pajzzsal és dárdával" (With shield and spear), first published in the periodical *Nyugat*, 1939: 65-72, 173-79. English translation: 9% of total text.

"A magyar jellemről" (On the characteristics of the Hungarians), first published in the collective volume *Mi a magyar?* (Budapest, 1939). English translation: 30% of total.

"Az írástudók árulása" (The treason of the intellectuals), first published in the periodical *Nyugat*, 1928: 355-76. English translation: 7.5% of total text.

Béla BARTÓK (1881-1945). Composer, musicologist, one of the internationally best known Hungarians. He researched the musical tradition of a number of countries, most importantly his own, and achieved probably the most impressive synthesis of folk and avantgarde music in his compositions. Selections in chapters IV. and VII., in sequence, are from the following works:

"A parasztzene hatása az újabb műzenére" (The influence of peasant music on modern music), first published in the periodical *Új Idők*, 23, 1931. English translation: 22% of total text.

"Népdalkutatás és nacionalizmus" (Researching folk songs in our age of nationalism), first published in the periodical *Tükör*, 3, 1937. English translation: 35% of total text.

Gergely BERZEVICZY (1763-1822). Hungary's first economist. After his studies and travels in Germany, France and England, he participated in Hungarian public life for eight years, then retired to his estate to be a freelance scholar. As such, he received much recognition. Beside economic progress, he also wanted to implement social reforms.

The excerpts are from two of his works written in Latin, translated for this volume from Hungarian: *De commercio et industria Hungariae* (About Hungary's commerce and industry, 1797), only a few pages of the total translated; and, *De conditione et indole rusticorum Hungariae* (About the state and nature of the peasants in Hungary, 1806). English translation: 7% of total text.

Dániel BERZSENYI (1776-1836). Transdanubian landlord, writer of poems in classical metric and conventions. His balanced reformist essay on the rural conditions of his country is an exceptional digression from the rest of his oeuvre, partly because it was based on personal experience. "A magyarországi mezei szorgalom némely akadályairul" (About some obstacles of Hungarian agriculture), 1833. English translation: 15% of total text.

Farkas BOLYAI (1775-1856). Mathematician, inventor, poet. Studied in Germany (where he met the great mathematician Gauss), was appointed to the college of Marosvásárhely (now Tirgu Mures, Romania) in 1804 as professor of mathematics, physics, and chemistry.

Since Bolyai corresponded with Gauss in German, the two letters were translated from this language as they were published in Franz Schmidt and Paul Stückel, eds., *Briefwechsel zwischen Carl Friedrich Gauss und Wolfgang Bolyai* (Leipzig, 1899). The letter of 1836 is from pp. 122-24. English translation: 25% of total text. The letter of 1848 is from pp. 128-31. English translation: 7% of total text.

Loránd EÖTVÖS, Baron (1848-1919). Physicist, university professor, president of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences for sixteen years. He pursued higher studies in Germany. Better known as a scientist, he had penetrating observations as a teacher and academician as well. Selections in chapter VI, in sequence, from three essays:

"Néhány szó az egyetemi tanítás kérdéséhez: nyílt levél Trefort Ágoston vallás- és közoktatásügyi miniszterhez" (Some observations on university teaching: an open letter to Ágoston Trefort, Minister of Religious Cults and Education), first published in the periodical *Budapesti Szemle,* 1887: 307-21.

"Az egyetem feladatáról: rektori székfoglaló beszéd a Budapesti Tudományegyetemen" (About the task of the university: inaugural presidential address at the University of Budapest), first published in *Természettudományi Közlöny,* 1891: 505-14.

The above two writings were conflated here; English translation: 27% of total text.

"Elnöki beszéd a Magyar Tudományos Akadémia közülésén, 1895" (Presidential address at the general meeting of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1895), first published in *Akadémiai Értesítő*, 1895: 321-25. English translation: 90% of total text.

Ottó HERMAN (1835-1914). Natural scientist, ethnologist, politician, member of parliament 1875-86. He was famous for his vivid style and his success at presenting the natural and anthropological sciences to the wider public. Also, he had merits in developing Hungarian scholarly terminology. Selections in chapters II. and IV., in sequence, are from the following works:

"Bezáró szó," *A magyar nép arca és jelleme* (Postscript to: The physiognomy and character of the Hungarian people), Budapest, 1902. English translation: 1.5% of total text.

"A magyar konyha és a tudomány," *A magyar halászat könyve* (On the relation between Hungarian cuisine and science, in The book of Hungarian fishing), Budapest. 2 vols. English translation: only three pages from the book.

Gyula ILLYÉS (1902-1983). Writer, poet, public figure. Between the world wars, he was one of the leaders of the leftist populist reform movement. He endorsed the communist takeover after World War II but became disenchanted and, not surprisingly, welcomed the national revolution of 1956. During the relatively liberal decades that preceded the collapse of communism, Illyés was revered as a national icon, but also put under surveillance when he raised his voice on behalf of the Hungarian minority of the detached historical territories.

Selections in chapters II. and III. are from the same pamphlet: *Ki a magyar*? (Who is a Hungarian?), Budapest, 1939. English translation: 16% of total text.

Lajos KOSSUTH (1802-1894). Statesman, newspaper editor, as proxy of various aristocrats delegated to several parliamentary sessions in the 1830s. For his unwavering opposition to Habsburg supremacy he was regarded as a radical and imprisoned for three years (1837-40). He became instrumental in the 1848-49 Hungarian revolution and fight against the Habsburgs, then was elected governor of Hungary for four months in 1849. After the defeat of the revolutionary war in August 1849, Kossuth spent all the rest of his life in exile, bursting with plans that had less and less to do with Hungarian realities.

Selections in chapters III. and VII., in sequence, are from Kossuth's collected works (*Iratai*, ed. Ferenc Kossuth. Budapest: 1898).

"Dunai szövetség" (Danubian Confederation, 1862), VI, 9-12. Full text translated.

Dezső KOSZTOLÁNYI (1885-1936). Poet, writer, translator and journalist. Without yielding to extreme formalist tendencies, he introduced a new poetic style and perspective in Hungarian literature. He had an inclination to criticism, as the translated polemics (triggered by a sense of fairness) proves.

"A magyar nyelv helye a földgolyón: nyílt levél Antoine Meillet úrhoz" (The global place of the Hungarian language: an open letter to Mr. Antoine Meillet). First published in the periodical *Nyugat*, July 16, 1930. English translation: 44% of total text.

Ferenc KÖLCSEY (1790-1838). Poet, critic, member of parliament 1832-34; an outstanding public figure of the so-called reform age (1825-1847). His well-known moral integrity also brought recognition to the liberal reform movement that he represented.

"Magyar játékszín" (Theatre in Hungary), 1827. Published posthumously. English translation: 17.5% of total text.

Sándor KŐRÖSI CSOMA (1784-1842). Transylvanian scholar, traveller, linguist. After his studies at the college of Nagyenyed (now Aiud, Romania) and in Germany, he set off to trace the route of the migrating Hungarians from the Orient to their homeland. His hypothesis about the ancient cradle of his nation did not coincide with the Finno-Ugric theory. During the decades of his Asian sojourns, he became an internationally noted orientalist who, among others, compiled the first dictionary of the Tibetan language.

Selections are from the same collective volume: *Kőrösi Csoma Sándor levelesládája* (The correspondence of S.K.Cs.), Budapest, 1984. Letter to his sponsors; dated Teheran, December 21, 1820. English translation: 50% of total text. Letter to Gábor Döbrentey; dated Calcutta, July 18, 1835. English translation: 25% of total text.

Gyula LÁSZLÓ (1910-1998). Archeologist and historian, prominent figure of the new historical school that has challenged the official, linguistically oriented views on Hungarian prehistory.

Excerpts are arranged as a mosaic from two of his works: *A honfoglalókról* (About the conquerors), Budapest, 1974; and *Őstörténetünk* (Our prehistory), Budapest, 1981. English translation: 4% of the total of two books.

László NÉMETH (1901-1975). By profession a physician, one of the most influential and controversial thinkers, writers and critics of 20th-century Hungarian intellectual life.

"A magyar rádió feladatai" (The tasks of the Hungarian Radio). First published in the periodical *Tanú*, 9, 1934: 197-222. English translation: 8% of total text.

SIMON OF KÉZA. Court chaplain of king László (Ladislaus) IV (1272-90). He wrote his Latin chronicle around 1283, in which he provided a colourful (although fictitious) account of the Hun-Hungarian relations. First translated into Hungarian in 1862. English translation: 3% of total text.

(Saint) STEPHEN I, born in 975, first king and converter of Hungary 1000-1038. He was born to the last pagan chieftain Géza (who also converted later) and was named Vajk, until he became Christian and adopted the name István (Stephen). During his rule he forged a feudal kingdom from the previous tribal system. He was canonized in 1083. His son and appointed successor, Prince Imre, died young — seven years before his father.

"Admonitions": the complete Latin title is *Libellus de institutione morum ad Emericum ducem* (A book of admonitions to Prince Imre). Hungarian translation 1738. English translation from Hungarian: 20% of total text.

[The genre is European, where similar medieval "King's Mirrors" summarized the characteristics of the good monarch. The actual author who wrote down Stephen's rules around 1015, was probably a German monk.]

István SZÉCHENYI (1791-1860), Count. Patriotic reformist aristocrat who used his great wealth to initiate so many economic and cultural projects that only more substantial biographies list all of them. Pertinent to our readings is that he tried to modernize Hungarian finances and economy, and established the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, which is still the citadel of research and scholarship in his country.

Selections in chapters III. and V. are from *Hitel* (Credit), 1830. English translation: 1.3% of total text.

The excerpt in chapter VII. is from *Világ* (Light), 1831. English translation: 1.5% of total text.

Excerpts in chapter VI. are from *A Magyar Akadémia körül* (About the Hungarian Academy), 1842. English translation: 12% of total text.

Blanka TELEKI, Countess (1806-1862). Pioneer of Hungarian women's education, she opened the first school for girls in 1846. Because of the war of independence of 1848-49, the school closed down. After the defeat of the revolution, countess Teleki was charged with conspiracy and suffered six years of imprisonment.

"Nyilatkozat" (Proclamation). First published in the periodical *Honderű*, 24, 1845. Full text translated.

Pál TELEKI, Count (1879-1941). Scholar, politician, statesman. Received a Ph.D. in geography; his work on this field brought him academic membership. Between the world wars he filled several political positions, among others as minister of different cabinets. He did much to introduce social reforms and propagate Hungarian history in Europe. In 1941 Prime Minister Teleki committed suicide, in despair about Hungary's irreversible alignment with Germany.

Magyar politikai gondolatok (literally: Hungarian political thoughts, i.e. Hungarian thoughts on politics), Budapest, 1941, is a collection of already published essays. English translation: 1.75% of total book.

Mrs. Pál VERES, née Hermin Beniczky (1815-1895). Educator, emancipator, founder of the first, extant, women's college (1867). Also founder of the National Association for Education of Women (to whose first meeting she refers in one excerpt), and author of a handbook in psychology.

A complete [?] collection of her writings was published in Budapest, 1902: *Veres Pálné Beniczky Hermin élete és működése* (The life and work of ...). Selections from: "Két levél Madách Imréhez" (Two letters to Imre Madách), 1864, pp. 130-35; "Felhívás a nőkhöz közvetlenül az első értekezlet előtt" (Call to women preceding the first conference), 1867, pp. 142-43. English translation: 50% and 60% of texts, respectively.

Miklós ZRÍNYI, Count (1620-1664). Poet, soldier, statesman. He was brought up to be loyal to Hungary's Habsburg kings, appointed captain-general of Croatia, and celebrated as an outstanding leader. As time passed, Zrínyi got in conflict with the attitude of the Viennese court towards Hungary. As it has been surmised, he could have become head of an openly anti-Habsburg opposition. Because of his early death (a topic of many conjectures), we will never know. His most famous poetic work is a Baroque heroic epic about his great-grandfather's battle with the Turks. He wrote several military and historical treatises and polemic pamphlets.

Az török áfium ellen való orvosság (Remedy against Turkish opium), 1660-61, first published in 1705. English translation: 8% of total text whose considerable parts are quotations from Latin sources.

C: Chronological Table

Since the persons or events listed below are explained either in the text or notes, further information is not provided here. For the sake of continuity, however, important long periods not covered by the readings are mentioned below in brackets.

895:	The Conquest: Árpád and the Hungarian tribes arrive in the Carpathian Basin.
1000-1038:	Stephen I, first Christian king, converts Hungary to Christianity
1000-1301:	The rule of the Árpád Dynasty. Ca. 1203: The first Hungarian chronicle written (in Latin) by Anonymous.
1247:	The Mongol invasion. [1302-1458: Hungary is ruled mostly by foreign-born kings — a familiar phenomenon in the Middle Ages. Rulers of the 14th century are generally more benevolent than those of the 15th.]
1458-90:	King Matthias rules Hungary. [After Matthias' death: decades of eroding power and declining morale.]
1526:	The Mohács disaster.
1541:	The Turks take the fortress of Buda by cunning. Hungary falls into three parts. 1541-1690: Historical Hungary is governed by three rulers: the Habsburg emperor (king of Hungary) in the West, the Ottoman Empire in the centre, and the Transylvanian Principality (a Turkish vassal state) in the East.
1685- :	The united Christian armies of Europe expel the Turks from the territory of the whole of historical Hungary. Transylvania is not reunited with the kingdom — it becomes ruled directly fromVienna. [1699: a peace treaty between Austria and the Ottoman Empire ends Turkish claims to Hungary.]

1703-11: Rákóczi's War for Freedom
[Prince Ferenc Rákóczi's attempt to regain Hungary's independence from the Habsburgs. Defeated in 1711, Rákóczi leaves the country and dies in emigration in Turkey.]

18th century: Repopulation of the war-torn country by the Habsburgs.
[For a while, Hungarians become a minority in their own homeland.]

1825: After years of absolutism, the parliament convenes. Call for reforms; Széchenyi establishes the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

1825-47: The "Reform Age": hopes for a peaceful way to gradual independence.

1837: The National Theatre opens in Pest.

1848-49: Peaceful changes having failed, a revolution (March 15, 1848), then a War of Independence erupts, led by Lajos Kossuth. Hungary demands the restoration of its autonomy, later its full independence.
[April 1849: Hungary becomes a republic. Desperate to win, the young Austrian emperor seeks the help of the Russian emperor. The struggle for independence is crushed. Hungary surrenders in August. A brief period of terror, then almost two decades of absolutism follow.]

Aug. 1849-1894: Kossuth lives in exile; eventually dies in Turin, Italy.

1867: The Austro-Hungarian Compromise: Hungary regains full autonomy and is reunited with Transylvania.

1896: The Millennium: one thousandth anniversary of the Conquest.

[1914-18: as Austria's partner, Hungary is drawn into World War I, ending up as loser.
Fall 1918: after almost four hundred years, dethronement of the Habsburgs is achieved.]

June 4, 1920: The Trianon peace treaty is signed, meaning catastrophic losses to Hungary.

[1920-44: nominally Hungary remains a kingdom, ruled by regent Miklós Horthy, a rear-admiral of the Austro-Hungarian navy in World War I.]

1938: First Vienna Award: the southern part of the Upland (*Felvidék*) is returned to Hungary.

1940: Second Vienna Award: northern and eastern Transylvania is returned to Hungary.

[1941: Hungary enters World War II as ally of Germany and Italy. For the country, the war ends in April 1945. The barbarism of the conquering Red Army defies description.
1945-91: the country is occupied by the Soviet Union, with a communist puppet regime in power from 1948 to 1989.]

Fall 1956: unsuccessful national uprising against communist rule and Soviet occupation.