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LINGUISTICS

GÁBOR BÁLINT DE SZENTKATOLNA (1844-1913) AND THE STUDY OF KABARDIAN, BY LÁSZLÓ MARÁCZ

January 31, 2018

The Zichy expedition in the Caucasus.

From the book Exploring the Caucasus in the 21st Century: Essays on Culture, History and Politics in a Dynamic Context, Edited by Francoise Companjen, Laszlo Maracz, and Lia Versteegh is published by Amsterdam University Press. [Chapter 1].

The article in PDF can be downloaded by clicking here .

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Gábor Bálint de Szentkatolna was one of the most talented Hungarian linguists of the late nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. He devoted his life to the study of the so-called 'Turanian' languages, i.e. the hypothesized language family of Uralic, Altaic and Dravidian languages. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the languages of the Caucasus were also considered to be scattered members of this language family. This Hungarian linguist wrote a number of grammars and dictionaries of these languages.

Bálint de Szentkatolna also wrote a grammar and a dictionary of the Western Caucasian language, Kabardian, which he thought to be closely related to Hungarian. The Kabardian language is presently spoken by 443.000 persons in Russia, who live in the Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachai-Cherkessia native territories. The capital of these territories is Naltshik. The other speakers of Kabardian, more than

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one million of them, can be found in Turkey and in the Middle East. The fact that half of the Kabardian population has left its Northern Caucasian homeland is due to Russian colonial policy, starting in the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Kabardian is generally considered to be a rather difficult language, and its sound system, especially, is rather complicated. The language counts 56 sounds, having only a few vowels. The set of consonants includes rare fricatives and affricatives, like the ejective ones displaying a clear phonemic distinction. Kabardian is closely related to Adyghe that is spoken by 125.000 people in Russia, in the Northern Caucasian Adygean Republic, of which Maikop is the capital.

Most linguists, including Bálint de Szentkatolna, claimed that Adyghe and Kabardian are only dialectical variants of Circassian.[1] In the prefaces of his Kabardian grammar and dictionary, the terms Adyghe, Circassian and Kabardian are used as alternates. The term Adyghe actually functions as a kind of super-category covering Cirkassian and Kabardian.[2] According to the Russian scholar, Klimov, (1969, 135) the Adyghe-Circassian-Kabardian language is formed with Abkhaz and Ubyx that are no longer spoken in the Western Caucasian language group. The Western Caucasian languages are related to the Eastern Caucasian languages, including Avar, Chechen and Ingush, yielding the family of Northern Caucasian languages.[3]

In this paper, we will address the question of how a Hungarian linguist became interested in the study of a complicated Caucasian language like Kabardian. It will be argued that this was due to three reasons. Firstly, Bálint de Szentkatolna was of Székely stock. The Székely is an ethnic Hungarian group living in the southern region of Transylvania, the so-called Székelyland at the foot of the Eastern Carpathians. Transylvania belongs presently to Romania but, before the First World War, it was under the suzerainty of the Hungarian Kingdom. Secondly, Bálint de Szentkatolna was a member of the Zichy-expedition to the Caucasus, in 1895, visiting the territories where Kabardian was still spoken. Thirdly, the Székely linguist was convinced of the fact that the so-called Turanian languages, including Kabardian, were related.[4] Finally, we will evaluate Bálint de Szentkatolna's study of the Kabardian language.

The Székely heritage

The Székely, Gábor Bálint de Szentkatolnai, was born on March 13, 1844, to Endre Bálint and Ágnes Illyés, in the village of Szentkatolna, in the County of Háromszék, which was one of the Székely counties of the Hungarian Kingdom. Szentkatolna was a typical Székely village in the so-called Székelyland in the southern part of Transylvania. The Székely were border-guards in the old Hungarian Kingdom, protecting the south-eastern borders, i.e. the mountain range of the Eastern Carpathians. Because of this, most of the Székely were granted nobility by the Hungarians kings or rulers of the semi-independent Transylvanian principality that existed in the seventeenth century, during the Ottoman occupation of Hungary.[5] The ancestors of Gábor Bálint had been granted nobility as well. They received nobility from the Habsburg King of Hungary, Rudolf (1572-1608) and it was reinforced by Prince Gábor Rákóczy I of Transylvania (1630-1648). The Bálint family originally lived in the neighbouring village of Lemhény. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, one of their branches moved to Szentkatolna. Hence, instead of referring to Lemhény in their noble title, the branch, to which Gábor Bálint belonged, used the Hungarian style notation *Szentkatolnai* meaning 'from Szentkatolna' or the French style notation with *de* , i.e. 'De Szentkatolna' for international use expressing nobility.[6]

The Székely nobility has always been a group among the Hungarians, who have a strong awareness of their Hungarian identity. The Székely military played an important role in the Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence of 1848-1849 against the Austrian absolutism of the Habsburgs. Gábor Bálint de Szenkatolna's father also joined the Hungarian *honvéd* 'army', established by the leader of the Hungarian War of Independence, Lajos Kossuth, in order to fight the Austrian troops and, later in 1849, the Czarist Russian troops that came to the support of the Austrian Emperor, Franz Jozef. The inhabitants of the village of Szentkatolna, just like other Hungarians, were punished severely for their rebellion against the Austrians and the House of Habsburg. The village had to accept the burden of the

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presence of the Russian soldiers and their horses.[7] Because the Hungarian Revolution and the War of Independence was crushed brutally by the Austrians, the Hungarians took an anti-Austro-German stance in the second half of the nineteenth century, although politically the Austrian and Hungarian conflict was pacified by the *Augleich (Compromise)* of 1867, when the Austrians recognized Hungary as equal to Austria, within the framework of the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy. Hence, little Gábor, who was four years-old at the beginning of the Hungarian Revolution in 1848, grew up in an anti-Austro-German atmosphere in a humiliated Hungary, where the Hungarian defeat at the hands of the Austrians and the Russians was remembered bitterly. Another important feature of the Székely-Hungarian heritage was the legendary remembrance of the Orientalist, Sándor Csoma de Kőrös (1784-1842), who tried to solve the puzzle of the Hungarian *Urheimat* in Central Asia.

Bálint de Szentkatolna was born only shortly after one of the most celebrated fellow Székely heroes of his time, Sándor Csoma de Kőrös, died in 1842, in far away Darjeeling.[8] The remembrance of the Székely Orientalist must have been especially strong in the Székelyland, where Csoma de Kőrös was born. His birth village was actually quite close to Szentkatolna, Gábor's birthplace. Szentkatolna is only twenty kilometres away from Kőrös, both villages lying in the County of Háromszék.[9] Sándor Csoma de Kőrös had studied Orientalism at the University of Göttingen in Germany, and left for Central Asia in 1821 to search for the ancient Hungarian homeland. Csoma de Kőrös, like most of his contemporary Hungarians, was convinced of the fact that the Hungarians were descendants of the Huns and that their ancient homeland must have been somewhere in Central Asia. The belief in the Hunnic origin of the Hungarians is especially strong among the Székely. In their legends and folklore, the Székely are considered to be one of the peoples that succeeded the Huns and who settled, under the leadership of their Prince Csaba, in the southern parts of Transylvania, after the collapse of the Hunnic Empire of Attila.

Csoma de Kőrös arrived on July, 16 1822 in Kashmir, where he met William Moorcroft, an official of the British East India Company. It was William Moorcroft, who foresaw a struggle between Britain and Russia for influence in Central Asia, the so-called Great Game.[10] It was the same William Moorcraft, who put the Székely-Hungarian scholar on the track of Tibetan studies, offering him a scholarship from the Royal Asiatic Society to study the Tibetan language and culture. When Csoma de Kőrös died in 1842, in Darjeeling, on his way to the capital of Tibet, Lhasa, it was a complete mystery what he had discovered about the ancient Hungarian homeland in the libraries of the Tibetan monasteries. In any case, a side-effect of his quest for the ancient Hungarian homeland would turn out to be his greatest achievement, namely the publication of a Tibetan grammar and dictionary.

A number of myths, legends and rumours started to spread about Sándor Csoma de Kőrös in his native country, Hungary, after his unfortunate death. These stories had an enormous appeal to the fantasy of young Hungarians. A scholar without any real help, suffering from poverty and tough climate in the Himalayas, had sacrificed his life to solve the puzzle of the origins of Hungarians. The remembrance of Csoma de Kőrös must have had a great appeal also to the young Gábor, a fellow Székely from a neighbouring village. In fact, Bálint de Szentkatolna would soon become one of the most important successors of the Central Asian traveller Sándor Csoma de Kőrös.

'The Ugor-Turkish War'

Although the Bálint family was of noble origin, this did not guarantee a wealthy life. Gábor grew up under poor circumstances. After his elementary school years at several schools in his native Székelyland and Transylvania, he took his final examinations at the Catholic Lyceum in Nagyvárad.[11] When he graduated from the Catholic Lyceum, he already knew a dozen European and Oriental languages, including the classical languages. Gábor had a special talent for mastering new languages quickly and, in the years to come, he would acquire some thirty languages, including Esperanto. After his final examinations, Gábor continued his studies at the Faculty of Law at the University of Vienna. The young student also took classes in Oriental Studies and Languages. Because Gábor ran out of money, he decided to finish his law and linguistic studies at the University of Pest. The young Székely graduated

from the Hungarian university in 1871. Shortly afterwards, he became acquainted with two other scholars, who were active in Budapest, namely János Fogarasi (1801-1878) and Ármin Vámbéry (1832-1913). These two men had an important influence on his future career.

János Fogarasi was a judge at the High Court of Justice and a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. After his co-editor, Gergely Czuczor died in 1866, he continued to compile the Great Dictionary of the Academy of Sciences alone. This dictionary was the first scientific dictionary of the Hungarian language, organizing the Hungarian vocabulary in terms of the root, i.e. the minimal linguistic entity that has a recognizable phonetic form and semantic identity without suffixes. The co-editor of the Great Dictionary, Gergely Czuczor, was a monk of the Benedictine Order, who wrote romantic poems and, because of his anti-Austrian activities during the 1848-1849 Freedom Fight, he was incarcerated in the prison of Kufstein.[12] A military court, under the leadership of Austrian General Alfred von Windischgrätz, sentenced Czuczor to six years imprisonment in chains because of his poem, *Riadó* 'Alarm', in which he called for the Hungarians to take up arms against Austrian tyranny.[13]

After the defeat of the Hungarian *honvéd* in 1849, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, established by the liberal Count István Széchenyi, became Germanized in the anti-Hungarian era under the Austrian governor Alexander Bach. In the Bach era that lasted until the *Ausgleich* of 1867, a scholar, loyal to the Austrian cause, Paul Hunsdorfer, a lawyer belonging to the German minority of Upper-Hungary and a representative of the Peace Party in the Hungarian Parliament, which wanted to compromise with the House of Habsburg, became one of the leading scholars at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Hunsdorfer, who Magyarized his name into Pál Hunfalvy, was appointed chief librarian of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1851. The Great Dictionary of the Academy of Sciences, also referred to as the Czuczor-Fogarasi dictionary, which was finished in 1874, was heavily attacked by Pál Hunfalvy. Hunfalvy, who claimed that the dictionary was based on false premises, could however not prevent its publication.[14]

The other scholar, who played an important role in Bálint de Szentkatolna's further scientific career, was the Orientalist, Ármin Vámbéry. Vámbéry was a traveller to Central Asia and he lectured in Turkish at the University of Pest. Although Hunfalvy designated the Finnish language as the most influential in the research of Hungarian language relationships already in 1861, Vámbéry kept advocating the genetic relationship between Hungarian and the Turkish-Mongolian languages, especially from 1870 on, when he published his study on 'Hungarian and Turkish-Tatar Cognates'.[15] In order to prove that the Hungarian language was genetically related to Finnish, Hunfalvy invited the German linguist, Jozef Budenz (1836-1892), educated at the University of Göttingen, to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Budenz was however not successful in applying the methods of comparative Indo-Germanic linguistics to Hungarian and Finnish. He at first even thought that Hungarian was related to Turkish.[16]

The debate between the two camps, on the one hand, the supporters of the Finnish and, on the other hand, the Turkish relationship to Hungarian, was called the 'Ugor-Turkish War'.[17] In fact, the term 'war' is not as obscure as it seems at first sight because it was actually a continuation of the Hungarian-Austro-German political and military clash of 1848-1849. The 'battlefield' was this time not Hungary but the Hungarian identity, i.e. the quest for the origins of the Hungarians and their language. The German camp, including Hunfalvy and Budenz, pushed the Nordic relationship of the Hungarians; the Hungarian camp, including Fogarasi and Vámbéry, looked to the south for Hungarian relatives. Since the southern option was closer to the cradle of human culture and civilization than the Nordic one, it was favoured by the Hungarian camp and disliked by the German camp. Bálint de Szentkatolna joined – how could he do anything else as a Székely - the Hungarian camp. The Székely scholar was of the opinion that it was unacceptable for Germans, like Hunfalvy and Budenz to head the Department of Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and decide on the origin of the Hungarian language.[18] In 1871, Vámbéry urged Bálint de Szentkatolna to study the Central Asian language affinities, i.e. Mongolian, Tatar, Chinese, to the Hungarian language in situ. Fogarasi advised him to take up Mongolian and Russian.[19]

In isolation

Between 1871 and 1874, Bálint de Szentkatolna travelled to Russia, Central Asia and Mongolia to study the so-called Turanian languages. This field trip was sponsored by János Fogarasi, who gave the Székely scholar 100 golden forints. The amount was doubled by József von Eötvös, the Hungarian Minister of Culture and Education after the *Ausgleich* . In those years, Bálint de Szentkatolna also visited Kazan and the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences to collect Turkish, Tatar and Mongolian language material. When he arrived back in Hungary in 1874, the Academy of Sciences offered the Székely linguist a monthly salary of 500 forints only, half of the salary of a young university teacher. Because of this, Gábor found it difficult to pay his expenses. His difficult financial situation hindered the elaboration of the enormous files of language material Bálint de Szentkatolna had collected in Russia and Central Asia. It was, however, not by accident that his financial existence was kept uncertain by the Academy of Sciences. By then, Hunfalvy and Budenz had already gained full control over the positions within the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and they were not interested in a scholar arguing for a Hungarian language relationship with Oriental languages, like Turkish or Mongolian. Budenz must have felt personally offended by Bálint de Szentkatolna because the Székely linguist questioned Budenz' study of Cheremiss. Gábor, who had checked Budenz' Cheremiss language study, on his request, with Cheremiss informants in situ, was not able to make anything out of it, because Budenz had mixed up two dialects of Cheremiss.[20] In 1877-1878, Bálint de Szentkatolna again travelled to Eastern Asia, this time as a member of the expedition organized by Count Béla Széchenyi, the son of Count István Széchenyi. During this expedition, Bálint de Szentkatolna focussed on his Dravidian and Tamil studies.[21]

In his 1877 study, 'Parallels in the Field of the Hungarian and Mongolian Languages', Bálint de Szentkatolna argued that Hungarian is an independent branch within the family of Turanian languages and cannot be derived from a non-existent Finno-Ugrian *Ursprache* . According to the Székely linguist, there is a genetic relationship between Hungarian and Mongolian, and Mongolian is closer to Hungarian than Finnish.[22] In his 'Parallels (…)', Bálint de Szentkatolna strongly criticizes Pál Hunfalvy for trying to reconstruct the Hungarian *Urgeschichte* on the basis of linguistic affinities only. [23] Hunfalvy and Budenz were embarrassed by the Székely linguist and he became their most important opponent to be marginalized definitively.[24] After the death of his protector, János Fogarasi, in 1878, Hunfalvy and Budenz kept Bálint de Szentkatolna away from Vámbéry, who already had a teaching position at the University of Budapest. Finally Bálint de Szentkatolna tired of the machinations of his enemies and decided to leave his beloved Hungary:' For me there was no position at the University, at the Academy, at the ministries, or at some foreign embassy, while others, who hardly did anything for Science, were given old and newly established positions with a good income.'[25] The conflict between Bálint de Szentkatolna and Hunfalvy and Budenz inspired the national poet, János Arany (1817-1882), who was, between 1870 and 1879, Secretary of the Academy of Sciences, to write the following epigrams in 1878:

To Budenz. Bálint is a really iron-headed Székely,

Who does not go, where Pál Hunfalvy wants him to go. [26]

Arány wrote the following epigram about Bálint de Szentkatolna's pamphlet in which he attacked the Academy of Sciences and the Hungarian Ministry of Culture and Education,

On the pamphlet of Gábor Bálint. Poor Gábor Bálint, unhappy crafty Székely; how much you are suffering, what is the good in it![27]

From 1879 until 1892, the Székely wanderer lived in voluntary exile in the Middle East and Northern Africa. With the financial support of his friends and the Székely counties, he was however brought home. Finally, in 1893, he was appointed Chair of the Department of Ural-Altaic Languages at the Franz Jozef University in Transylvanian Kolozsvár.[28] Until his retirement in 1912, he would teach the so-called Turanian languages, including Japanese, Turkish, Tatar, Mongolian, Korean and Kabardian and he would study their grammatical and lexical relationships. In 1896, he received an honorary doctorate from

the University of Kolozsvár. Bálint de Szentkatolna did not establish a school, however. In 1918, six years after his retirement, the Ural-Altaic Department at the University of Kolozsvár was closed down.[29]

The Caucasian expedition

In 1895, Count Jenő Zichy invited Bálint de Szentkatolna to join his scientific expedition to the Caucasus.[30] The other members of the expedition were his colleague from the Franz Jozef University, the historian Lajos Szádeczky-Kardoss, a specialist on the history and culture of the Székely; Jacob Csellingarian, a Russian interpreter of Armenian origin, who happened to be in Hungary and had travelled in the Caucasus before; and the priest Dr. Mór Wosinszky, a trained archaeologist. The purpose of the expedition was to search for the traces of the ancient Hungarians, who once lived in the territory of the Caucasian region. Count Zichy also had a private agenda. He wanted to meet a Georgian prince named 'Zici' because he was convinced of the fact that the aristocratic family of this Georgian and his noble family were close relatives.

The leader and the main sponsor of the Caucasus-expedition was Count Jenő Zichy (1837-1906), a descendent of the Hungarian magnate Zichy-family, who played an important role in Hungarian history. His father, Count Ödön Zichy (1811-1894), was remarkable for his great activity in promoting art and industry in Austria-Hungary. He founded the Oriental Museum in Vienna and was one of the highest sponsors for the Austro-Hungarian North Pole Expedition to Franz Jozef Land. His son Jenő, inherited his father's notable collection and followed in the footsteps of his father. Jenő studied Law in Germany, was a landowner, a member of the Hungarian Parliament and President of the Hungarian National Industrial Council. Because of his activities in the field of economy and industry, he was nicknamed the 'industry count'.

It was not by accident that Count Zichy invited Bálint de Szentkatolna to be a member of his 1895 expedition. The Székely linguist, who only joined Zichy's first expedition to the Caucasus and Central Asia in 1895, and Count Zichy were actually brothers in arms. They shared the same views on the ancient history of the Hungarians. Bálint de Szentkatolna and Count Zichy both strongly opposed a one-sided Finno-Ugric origin of the Hungarians; and they both considered the Hungarians to be descendants of the Huns and hypothesized that one of ancient Hungarian homelands must have been somewhere in the area north of the Caucasus, neighbouring the South Russian Steppes, continuously inhabited by the

Scythians, Sarmatians, Huns, Avars, Magyars and other steppe peoples, migrating from the East westwards. Hence, the expedition was meant to contribute evidence to this hypothesis by studying the languages, people and cultures of the Caucasus.

In an interesting public lecture in the National Casino in Budapest on March 31, 1895, a month before the expedition would take off, Count Zichy explained the objectives of the expedition, arguing against an exclusive Finno-Ugric origin of the Hungarians. The 'industry count' claimed that the ancient Hungarians could not have originated from the Finno-Ugrians who wandered from the Gobi Desert, over the Ural Mountains, to their present location but that 'they must have been an ancient race that occupied the space in the Maeotis marshes, i.e. the Caspian Sea, the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea, the Volga and the Don, stretching its influence to the Caucasus region, bordering on the Persian and Babylonian territories.' According to Zichy, the Hungarian tribes settled thousands of years ago in this area. During several westward migrations, some tribes split off and turned to the north at the Volga, meeting the ancestors of the so-called Finno-Ugric peoples, including the Finns, Mordvins and Voguls. 'This is supported by the fact that legends, folksongs and historic memories of these peoples refer to a southern climate.' According to Count Zichy, the ancestors of the Hungarians did not come southwards from the Urals but were living in the so-called Scythian area north of the Caucasus in the first century A.D.

To support his claims, Zichy put forth the following arguments. Firstly, a number of classical Greek, Roman, Armenian and Byzantine sources point to the same people under different names, like Huns, Avars and Magyars. Secondly, in ancient sources, Hungarians are called the Western Huns. Thirdly, Alans, who originated from the eastern part of the Caucasus, joined the armies of Attila the Hun (406? -453). This has also been spelled out in the work of Vámbéry. The remains of the Avar tribe that followed the route of the Huns westward settled in Dagestan and are now referred to as Lezgic. Fourthly, Hunfalvy had neglected the Hungarian chronicles and symbols that shed light on the westward migrations crossing the area neighbouring the northern Caucasus. Fifthly, Hunfalvy did not take into consideration the data linking the Huns to the Caucasus region. These data are in correspondence with the ancient sources, however. Sixthly, according to Zichy, there is a relationship between the name of the Huns and the other name of the Magyars, i.e. Hungar. Seventhly, from the fact that the tribes of the Hungars and Onogurs settled to the east of the Sea of Azov in the sixth century A.D., Zichy concluded that the Huns and Hungarians, i.e. the Magyars were the same people, spoke the same language and must have lived for a long time in the vicinity of the Caucasus area before they started to migrate westwards.

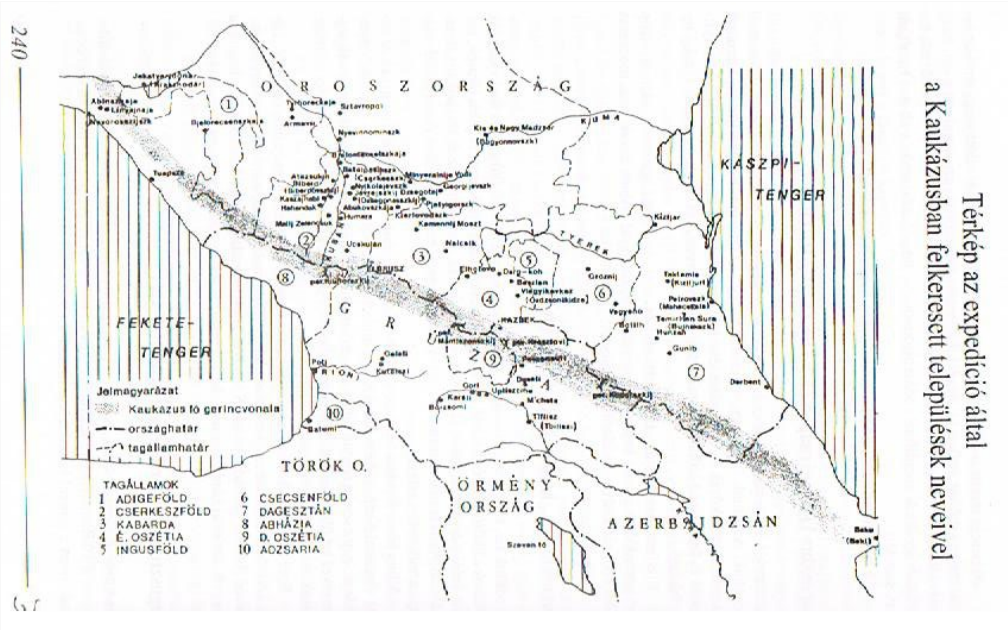
The fact that the expedition was intended to challenge the official view on the Hungarian ancient history that claims that the Hungarians originate from the Nordic Ural area might explain the lack of interest Count Zichy engaged from the Hungarian government and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Count Zichy complained: 'I had the duty to ask every minister who was in charge of one of my functions, including my membership of the Industrial Council, the Monuments' Council and so on for a holiday (…) with the only exception of Ernő Dániel, I received no answer (…).[31] The Academy remained completely silent, although I only asked for a certificate to verify that I am Zichy.'[32] The expedition was however welcomed by the Russian Czar, Nicolas II (1868-1918) and his government, although the Hungarians were forbidden to dig in Russian soil.

This Zichy-expedition to the Caucasus has been recorded by Lajos Szádeczky-Kardoss in his stenographic travel diary. The original diary of the 1895 expedition – together with seven original photos – is presently kept in the library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. This diary has recently been decoded by the Hungarian stenographer Pálma Schenken, who succeeded in deciphering the 400 handwritten pages denoted in the style of the nineteenth-century Gabelsberger-Markovits version of stenography. The decipherment took Pálma Schenken twenty years of work and the manuscript is extremely hard to read. The travel diary gives a good impression of what Count Zichy and his team were doing in the Caucasus.

The 1895 expedition and the two others to the Caucasus and Central Asia, organized by Count Zichy in the following years,yielded much precious material to the Hungarian researchers of the Caucasus and also to the researchers of the ancient Hungarians. The ethnographical collections and photos of the Zichy-expeditions can be found in the Hungarian Ethnographical Museum in Budapest. The archaeological objects collected are kept in the collection of the Ferenc Hopp East Asian Museum.

In the Caucasus

The expedition to the Caucasus started on April 30, 1895, leaving from Budapest, and ended on August 14 of the same year, when the Russian-Austrian border was crossed. The members of the expedition had to prepare in advance, bringing tents, summer and winter clothes, weapons, ammunition, equipment for horse-riding and mountaineering, a minimum of food, photography equipment, phonographs, maps, books, medical supplies and so on. Within three and half months, they had travelled 20.000 kilometres by train, boat, horse farm-wagons, horse and camel. Count Zichy and his men wandered through deserts, over mountain tops several thousand metres high, and they visited cities and camps of ethnic Turkish nomads. They had to deal with different weather conditions like storms, rain, hail-stones and the expedition members had to stand the heat of 40 degrees Celsius. The travellers visited all the territories of the Caucasus, including Adyge, Circassia, Kabardino, North Ossetia, Ingushia, Chechnya, Dagestan, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Adzharia, Georgia and Azerbaijan. In all these territories, they stayed overnight in villages and towns.[33] Count Zichy and his research team met with a lot of different Caucasian people and tribes, speaking different languages, like Adyghe, Abkhaz, Chechen, Avar, Georgian, Mingrelian, Karatsjaj, Circassian, Lezgic and so on. They took part in interesting meetings, festivities, celebrations, rituals and dinners with princes. Count Zichy and his men kept their supporters and families informed by letters and articles for Hungarian newspapers. Bálint de Szentkatolna claimed that each of the expedition members was left with his own branch of sciences 'because there was complete freedom of study.' This freedom of study was however interpreted completely differently by the leader of the expedition. In a letter from Odessa dated May, 10 1895, Count Zichy wrote: Szádeczky and Bálint are of no use to me, they are spending the whole day in the libraries. Csellingarian has picked up an ancient Russian with whom he is playing chess all day. Only Wosinszky is doing the research with me.'[34]



Térkép az expedíció által a Kaukázusban felkeresett települések neveivel

From the Szádeczky-Kardoss' diary we receive an image of the somewhat unworldly personality of Bálint de Szentkatolna, the Székely, as a highly talented scholar, always eager to learn, everywhere collecting books and impressing people with his extensive knowledge of languages but also as a hot-headed, opinionated, often quarrelling, eccentric person:

On May 1-2. The first night on Russia ground: 'A Greek merchant travelled with us, who spoke French, English, Russian and Greek. He was quickly impressed by Bálint. He came into our department to chat and gave information about Odessa.'[35]

On May 2. Odessa. In Odessa, Bálint was looking for stones but the shops were closed.[36] Bálint did not find the book on linguistics and the Caucasus that was published in Tiblisi[37].

On May 2. Odessa. Bálint dominated conversations with officials. Already in the beginning of the expedition, Count Zichy wanted Bálint to keep his mouth shut because he was dominating the scene during conversations.[38] Count Zichy was not amused by the fact that, at the reception of the Austro-Hungarian Consulate in Odessa, Bálint took the wife of Consul Henrik Müller, a nice Viennese woman, to one side.[39]

On May 3. In Odessa, Bálint met the Director of the City's Museum, W. Jurgewics, who told him much about the Hungarian roots of place names in the Crimea.[40]

On May 7. Jevpatorija. In the morning, it turned out that Bálint has left his purse with 30 rubels and his passport in Odessa.

On May 9. Novorossijs. Bálint had not slept enough and made a lot of noise, this all was terrible.[41]

On May 14. Sometimes Bálint de Szentkatolna was not motivated to join the group for dinner and ate alone, like in Kamennij Most in Circassia.[42]

On May 22. In Voroncovko, the expedition met a Mongolian camel driver; Bálint was extremely happy and started to talk with him about the Hungarian-Mongolian ancestry.[43]

On May 27. The expedition reached Naltshik. In Atazsuk, the Kabardians did a dance performance. Bálint did not want to dance but he walked around with a *burka* , a sleeveless frieze cape that is the typical outfit of the Kabardians, on his head.[44] After the dance, Bálint greeted the Kabardians like

brothers.[45]

On May, 30. In Gori, Count Zichy asked the way, after having crossed the mountain range of the Caucasus and Bálint started to quarrel with him.[46]

On May 31. Bálint de Szentkatolna received a letter in Tiblisi that he was appointed as ordinary lecturer at the Franz Jozef University.

On June 3. Tiblisi. Bálint visited Inspector Lopatinsky, who was of Kabard origin and a linguist who had been writing grammars and dictionaries.[47]

On June 9, we arrived in Baku and what did Bálint do? He looked for books. [48]

On July 11. Tiblisi. It was discussed whether the Ossetian language is related to Hungarian. This is true for Alan. Gábor provoked the expedition members, stating that the Huns were just a branch of Hungarian people and spoke Hungarian. [49] The Székely language is simply the ancient Hun language, he said.[50]

On July 13. The Count quarrelled with Bálint. Bálint wanted more time to read a book on the 'Huns in Dagestan'.[51]

On July 18. The expedition was received by the Georgian Prince Zicianov. Count Zichy thought they were relatives due to the similarity of their family names. The Georgian noble family complained about Bálint's uncivilized behaviour.[52]

On June 25. Petrovsk. Bálint said during lunch that people get lazy and stupid when eating fish.[53]

The last important visit the Zichy-expedition made was to St. Petersburg, where Count Zichy and his team arrived on August 2 and where they would stay until August 11. On August 6, the expedition members met a relative of Count Jenő Zichy, Count Mihály Zichy, the famous Hungarian painter, who was appointed as a court painter in St. Petersburg in 1847. Mihály Zichy was also highly honoured in Georgia, because he painted illustrations for 'The Knight in the Panther's Skin', the Georgian national epic poem, written by the Georgian poet, Shota Rustaveli, in the twelfth century. Only Count Jenő Zichy was allowed to have an audience with Czar Nicolas II, who wanted to know everything about the expedition, asking Zichy whether they had found the Hungarians the researchers had been looking for.[54]

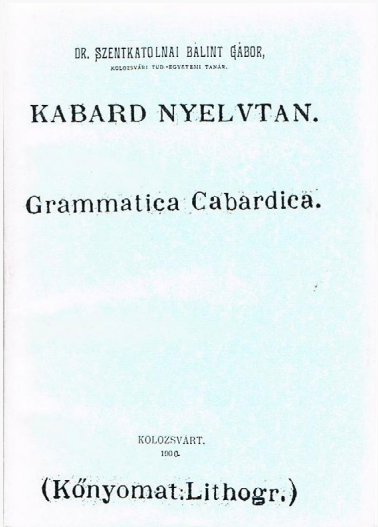
Kabardian dictionary

The classification of languages into three main branches, namely Turanian, i.e. all the agglutinative languages, Aryan, i.e, languages displaying flexion and Semitic, i.e. languages displaying root flexion, was initiated by Max Müller, a German linguist teaching in Oxford. His lectures on linguistics were translated into Hungarian in 1874 and were highly influential.[55] Bálint de Szentkatolna also accepted Müller's classification and distinguished, in his report on his linguistic studies in Russia and Asia, different branches of the Turanian languages, like Manchu, Mongolian, Turkish-Tatar, Finn-Ugric, Hungarian, Dravidian and so on.[56] Bálint de Szentkatolna was highly impressed by the Kabardians during the Zichy-expedition. The Székely scholar was convinced of the fact that their language must be an old Turanian language, as well as being closely related to Hungarian.

The Turanian language family is, however, something highly controversial, referring more to typological relationships than to genetic ones. The genetic relationships, involving massive grammatical and lexical affinities, were not demonstrated convincingly. Bálint de Szentkatolna did not prove the genetic relationship between Kabardian and Hungarian either. However his descriptions of the so-called Turanian languages should deserve credit. The reason that his studies of Kabardian and other so-called

Turanian languages stood the test of time is that he correctly considered these languages to be of the agglutinative type. Bálint de Szentkatolna did not waste his time with the reconstruction of phantom roots, unable to prove a genetic language relationship. Instead, he operated with roots and suffixes only.[57] From a methodological point of view, this is the right approach to investigate and analyze agglutinative languages. Bálint de Szentkatolna was a pioneer in comparing agglutinative languages on the root level, as he convincingly demonstrated in his 'Parallels in the field of the Hungarian and Mongolian languages', thereby heavily relying on Hungarian root dictionaries, like the ones of Kresznerics and Czuczor-Fogarasi.[58] As a consequence, the studies of Bálint de Szentkatolna can be used without exception, reflecting the state of the so-called Turanian languages in the second half of the nineteenth century. In conclusion, the relevance of his work on the Turanian languages can be summarized as follows:

Firstly, Bálint de Szentkatolna correctly recognized that the Caucasus, especially the northern parts of it, played an important role in the ancient history of the Hungarians. This area had been used as a transit area by the equestrian people of the Steppes, such as the Scythians, Sarmatians, Huns, Avars and the Hungarians originating from the east and migrating westwards. Hence, due to the fact that the ancient Hungarians had been in contact with the peoples from the Caucasus area, language affinities between Hungarian and Caucasian languages are to be expected. A contemporary of Bálint de Szentkatolna, the Hungarian linguist Bernát Munkácsi, already referred to such affinities, including Hungarian and Ossetian.[59] Kabardian is also a good candidate because, before the Kabardians fell victim to the imperial policy of Czarist Russia in the first half of the nineteenth century, the Kabardians, grouped in twelve tribes, dominated for at least 1500 years the whole area of the Northern Caucasus, along the Rivers Kuban, Terek and Malka. Only in 1864, long after the equestrian people of the Steppes had crossed the area in front of the Northern Caucasus westward, the number of the Kabardians was reduced heavily and their territory diminished substantially, when a half million of Adyghe-Kabardians had to leave the Northern Caucasus for Turkey.[60]


DR. SZENTKATOLNAI BÁLINT GÁBOR,
KOLOZSVÁRI TUD-EGYETEMI TANÁR.

KABARD NYELVTAN.

Grammatica Cabardica.

KOLOZSVÁRT.
1904.

(Kőnyomat:Lithogr.)

Kabard nyelvtan.

Irta:
Dr. Szentkatolnai Bálint Gábor.

Grammatica Cabar-
dica.
(Seu lingua progenitei Hunno-
rum Chazari et Utiguri dicto-
rum.)

Péter Veres, a Hungarian ethnographer and researcher of the Caucasus, has recently observed some interesting linguistic affinities that can be found in the Kabardian dictionary of Bálint de Szentkatolna.[61] So far, Hungarian linguistics has no satisfactory etymology for the word *isten* meaning 'God'. This word is classified as being of unknown origin. In his Kabardian dictionary, Bálint de Szentkatolna links Hungarian *isten* to the Kabardian form *s-te-n* that means 'fire-giver'. The alternate Kabardian form *Ošten* refers to the place where the Gods live at the highest point of the Caucasus, namely at the top of Mount Elbrus that is 5642 metres high, found in the western mountain range of the Caucasus. Veres correctly hypothesizes that the etymology of Hungarian *isten* might be related to Kabardian *s-te-n* and *Ošten* . This link is of course not a proof of genetic relationship between Hungarian and Kabardian but it offers a highly intriguing trace of language contact that deserves further

investigation.[62]

Secondly, it took Bálint de Szentkatolna nine years to arrange the Kabardian language material he had been collecting in the Caucasus and to publish his Kabardian dictionary. Veres (2007) claims that this dictionary is the first dictionary of the Kabardian language, matching an acceptable scientific standard. It is true that, in the course of the Zichy-expedition, the Székely scholar did everything to extend his knowledge of Kabardian. He collected dictionaries of this language, especially in Odessa and Tiblisi. Furthermore, he contacted Dr. L. Lopatinskij, an education inspector in Tiblisi, who had written a Russian-Kabardian dictionary containing detailed information on the Kabardian language.[63] Finally, he worked with informants. One of his informants was the Circassian officer, Aghir Kanamat, who was for ten days the guide of the Zichy-expedition along the Kuban River in 1895.[64]

Due to the fact that the Kabardian language is so complicated, not everyone is able to transcribe this language properly. In the preface of his grammar Bálint de Szentkatolna refers to Dr. L. Loewe's 'A Dictionary of the Circassian Language: Containing all the most necessary words for the traveller, the soldier, and the sailor: with the exact pronunciation of each word in the English character (1854, London: Bell)' as a bad example of a Kabardian dictionary. The Székely linguist notes that 'the British author writes down the sounds of Adyghe with Latin and Arab letters. This English-Adyghe-Turkish and Adyghe-English-Turkish dictionary is largely an invention, such that no-one is able to understand the Adyghe language because the author had no idea of this language.'[65] Bálint de Szentkatolna succeeded however in transcribing the Kabardian items because he had an enormous training in writing down complicated languages during his travels in Asia.

Bálint de Szentkatolna's Kabardian dictionary of 611 pages can still be used and it is of enormous value to the researchers of the Kabardian language and to the Kabardians themselves. In fact, Bálint de Szentkatolna's dictionary is a kind of collective memory for present-day Kabardians, reflecting a part of the knowledge of their ancestors. Speakers of Kabardian can find a lot of authentic material in the dictionary, for, under each lemma of a given word, an example sentence with that word is included. Hence, the Kabardian communities were extremely grateful when, in 1994, several photocopies of Bálint de Szentkatolna's dictionary 'returned' to the scientific centres in the cities of Maikop and Naltshik, where the Adyghe-Kabardian language is spoken and studied.[66] But not only the Adyghe-Kabardian speakers have rediscovered and credited the work of Bálint de Szentkatolna, the underestimated Székely linguist, who published the Kabardian studies on his own expense.[67] In 1994, in his birthplace, Szentkatolna, a scientific symposium took place, supported by the Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the birth of the Székely linguist.[68] In 2006, Budapest was the location of a scientific conference to underline the merits of Gábor Bálint de Szentkatolna for the study of the ancient history of the Hungarians, the Hungarian language and other so-called Turanian languages, like the Caucasian language Kabardian.[69]

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[1] See www.ethnologue.com.

[2] See Szentkatolnai Bálint (1900, 1904).

[3] Compare www.ethnologue.com.

[4] Compare Szentkatolnai Bálint (1888).

[5] See Köpeczi (1994, 301-355).

[6] See Palmay (2000, 33).

[7] See Bakk (27-29) in Borcsa (1994).

[8] Compare Csetri (2002).

[9] Hence his name in Hungarian transcription: Kőrösi Csoma Sándor 'Sándor Csoma from Kőrös'.

[10] See Hopkirk (1992, 88).

[11] Today's Oradea in Romania.

[12] Kacziány (2004, 20-21).

[13] Náday and Sáfrán (1984, 39).

[14] Marácz (2008, 565-566).

[15] See Vámbéry (1870, 1877, 1882).

[16] Marcantonio (2002, 35-42)

[17] Pusztay (1994).

[18] Zágoni (2005, 10).

[19] Zágoni (2005, 8).

[20] Zágoni (2005, 124).

[21] Szentkatolna Bálint de (1897).

[22] Szentkatolnai Bálint (1877).

[23] Szentkatolnai Bálint (1877, IV).

[24] Péntek (1994, 14).

[25] Zágoni (2005, 13).

[26] Arany (1956, 439). Budenzhez. Igazi vasfejű Székely a Bálint, nem megy arra, amerre Hunfalvy Pál int.

[27] Arany (1956, 439). Bálint Gábor röpiratára. Szegény Bálint Gábor, Boldogtalan góbé; Amennyit te szenvedsz, mi ahhoz a Jóbé!". The Hungarian *góbé* is actually a nickname of the Székely attributing

crafty capabilities to them.

[28] Today's Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca Romania.

[29] Péntek (1994, 13).

[30] See Bodor (1994, 10).

[31] Baron Ernő Dániel was minister of Trade between 1895-1899 in the Bánffy-government. He was the nephew of the Hungarian *honvéd* general Ernő Kiss, who fought against the Austrians in the Hungarian War of Indepencence, 1848-1849. Kiss was one of the 13 Martyrs of Arad, the thirteen Hungarian freedom fighter generals who were executed on October 6, 1849 in the Transylvanian city of Arad (presently in Romania) to reestablish Habsburg rule over Hungary. The Baron had another reason to support the Caucasian expedition of Zichy. The wealthy Dániel family, who had its estates in Transylvania, was of Armenian origin.

[32] Szádeczky-Kardoss (2000, 11).

[33] See the map in Szadéczky-Kardoss (2000, 240).

[34] Szádeczky-Kardoss (2000, 241).

[35] Szádeczky-Kardoss (2000, 25).

[36] Szádeczky-Kardoss (2000, 26).

[37] Szádeczky-Kardoss (2000, 27).

[38] Szádeczky-Kardoss (2000, 27).

[39] Szádeczky-Kardoss (2000, 29).

[40] Szádeczky-Kardoss (2000, 28).

[41] Szádeczky-Kardoss (2000, 42).

[42] Szádeczky-Kardoss (2000, 63).

[43] Szádeczky-Kardoss (2000, 91).

[44] Szádeczky-Kardoss (1917, 304).

[45] Szádeczky-Kardoss (2000, 103).

[46] Szádeczky-Kardoss (2000, 114).

[47] Szádeczku-Kardoss (2000, 128).

[48] Szádeczky-Kardoss (2000, 131).

[49] Szádeczky-Kardoss (2000, 192-193).

[50] In an article written in 1917, Szádeczky-Kardoss (1917, 371-372) quotes Bálint de Szentkatolna(i), claiming that the etymology of the name *szekély* is derived from the root *zich* 'sik'. This is the name of

the Kabardians in their own language meaning ‘chair, dwelling’. The root of *székely* , *szék* in Hungarian has the same consonantal root form and the same meaning as its Kabardian counterpart. According to Bálint de Szentkatolna, the suffix -e*ly* of *székely* is related to the suffix -*li/eli* used in the Caucasian languages and Turkish-Tatarian to express origin from a place. If ‘szék, sik’ is related to the name ‘Scythia’, then *székely* means ‘originating from *szék* ’, i.e. ‘Scythia’. According to Bálint de Szentkatolna, this supports the historic fact that the Hungarians and the Székely come originally from Scythia.

[51] Szádeczky-Kardoss (2000, 194).

[52] Szádeczky-Kardoss (2000, 201).

[53] Szádeczky-Kardoss (2000, 158).

[54] Szádeczky-Kardoss (2000, 238).

[55] Péntek (1994, 17).

[56] Zágoni (2005, 143).

[57] Szentkatolnai Bálint (1888, 45).

[58] Compare Szentkatolnai Bálint (1877), Kresznerics (1831) and Czuczor-Fogarasi (1862-1874).

[59] See Munkácsi (1901).

[60] Szentkatolnai Bálint (1901, 10-11).

[61] See Veres (2007).

[62] The Persian item *Yazdan* meaning ‘God’ might be a good candidate as the final source of the Hungarian word *isten* . If this etymology turns out to be correct, the Caucasian languages, like Kabardian, where variants of this word appear, have been mediating between Persian and the languages of the equestrian people of the Steppes, including ancient Hungarian. Another option is that the ancient Hungarians originate from an area much closer to Persia, present-day Iran, than the Caucasus.

[63] L.G. Lopatinskij’s book in Russian-latin transcription is mentioned in the preface of Bálint’s Kabardian grammar ‘Russko-kabardinski slovar [Russian-Kabardian Dictionary]’, in Sbornik materialov dlya opisaniya mestnostei I plemen Kavkaza [Collection of Materials for the Description of the Districts and Tribes of the Caucasus], Tiflis (Tbilisi), vol. 12, 1891. [With index].

[64] Szentkatolnai Bálint (1900, 1).

[65] Bálint (1900, 4-5).

[66] See Veres (2007).

[67] His grammar is written with his own hand-writing.

[68] See papers in Borcsa (1994).

[69] See studies in Obrusánszky (2007).