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Opera and nineteenth-century nation-building : the (re)sounding voice of nationalism

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Chapter Five

Tu Felix Austria? – A realm of culture and conflict

The Development of the Hungarian and Romanian National Consciousness in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century and the Habsburg Monarchy

“And it is certain that those who do not yield to their equals, who keep terms with their superiors, and are moderate towards their inferiors, on the whole succeed best. Think over the matter, therefore, after our withdrawal, and reflect once and again that it is for your country that you are consulting, that you have not more than one, and that upon this one deliberation depends its prosperity or ruin.” (Thucydides)¹⁹³

I. The development of the Hungarian national consciousness in the late eighteenth-century

Eighteenth-century Hungary, which had previously been partitioned between the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburg Empire, was characterised by a great ethnic and linguistic variety. After the country was liberated under the Ottoman Turkish rule (1699) it was devastated and largely uninhabited. The Magyars formed only 40% from the total population, whereas this in the Middle Ages would have been around 75%.¹⁹⁴ The next largest ethnic group was the Romanians 16%, followed by Slovaks, Croats and Germans, which were each around 10%. And there were also 6% Serbians and 3% Slovenians and Ruthenians. In Transylvania 50% of the population were Romanians, and about 30% Hungarians and Seklers, who differed by law from the Hungarians, but were ethnically identical with them. The Habsburgs began to establish in Hungary many Roman Catholic ethnic German settlements, so by the 1790s the population increased from about four million to ten million. The Slovak, Romanian, Serb, Croatian, and German ethnic groups were not living in separate great blocks, but they were scattered and mixed with each other all over the country forming communities of different size. For a long period there was no sign of ethnic tension between the various groups. Patriotism was connected to the concept of the land (Kingdom of Hungary as part of the Habsburg Empire) and not to ethnic or

¹⁹³ Thucydides: *The Melian Dialogue*, In. History of the Peloponnesian War, 431 BC, [Internet] Available at: <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/melian.htm> [Accessed on: 29-02-2008]

¹⁹⁴ *A Concise History of Hungary*, (ed. István György Tóth), Budapest: Corvina, Osiris, 2005, 314.

cultural consciousness. The authors spoke very often more than one languages, priests preached or taught in more than one language, and when they went abroad – regardless to their ethnic or linguistic affiliation – they all considered themselves “Hungarus”.¹⁹⁵ Language was considered a means of communication and social interaction without any emotional resonance; Latin dominated both the state bureaucracy and the academic sphere.

This peaceful social and political life began to be disturbed around the 1780s. The Magyars, the greatest ethnic group living in Hungary, had a crucial role in questioning the legitimacy of the empire and began to express their wish for more autonomy. Beginning with the 1780s the major issue of the Hungarian politics was the problem of language, and for the next eighty years it remained the protagonist of the political, intellectual, cultural scene. Thus the consciousness of the Hungarian Kingdom as related to the homeland was challenged by a newly emerging *national consciousness*, primarily based on the language.

How and why did patriotism turn into nationalism by the 1780s? Why did the problem of the language become such a crucial issue in the development of Hungarian national identity? One might think that the urge for the use of the Hungarian language was a consequence of the increasing wealth and power of the Hungarian aristocracy. The Habsburgs generously gave them plenty of titles and estates in order to ensure their loyalty towards the empire. However, if we place the question in a European context, we see that for example in the same period in France the economic growth of the aristocracy was incomparably higher than the accumulation of wealth of the Hungarian nobility, still the problem of the language did not become an issue of any interest among the French aristocracy. It was only in 1793 when from the commission of the Convent abbé Grégoire made a summary about the state of language in France. From this *Rapport présenté à la Convention par l'abbé Grégoire...sur l'usage du français et des divers "patois et jargons"* we learn the astonishing fact that from the 26 million Frenchmen only 10 million actually spoke French, and in addition 3 million spoke French, *too*.¹⁹⁶ Therefore it would be quite misleading to draw a direct line between the economic factors linked to the Hungarian aristocracy and their plea for the cause of the Hungarian language.

¹⁹⁵ Tarnai, Andor: *Extra Hungariam non est vita...*, Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1960.

¹⁹⁶ See Baggioni, Dániel: *Langues et nations en Europe*, Paris : Payot, 1997.; *La langue nationale. Problèmes linguistiques et politiques*, In. La Pensée. Janvier, 1980, 36-49.

Another plausible explanation would be that early awareness for the language as a symbol of the nation might have been linked to political factors. In the eighteenth century there was a serious conflict between the Hungarian nobility and the Viennese court. This was mainly due to the fact that both Empress Maria Theresa (1717-1780) and his son, Joseph II (1741-1790) were trying to modernise their empire by reforms which almost always met with the Hungarian nobility's strong rejection. The cause behind their opposition was mostly the fear of loosing the inherited privileges and rights¹⁹⁷. This hostility towards the Viennese court might be a reason for the increased attention of the Hungarian upper classes towards the Hungarian language. However, if we cast a look on the contemporary political debates between the Hungarian nobility and Vienna, which peaked in 1764-65 at the diet of Pozsony (Bratislava), the language did not play a serious role, if any.¹⁹⁸ The situation changes in 1780s when the language problem was already presented as an important issue in the interactions between the Hungarian nobility and Joseph II. However, in these conflicts with the Habsburgs the central problem was not the promotion of the Hungarian, but rather the Hungarian nobility's reluctance towards the introduction of German as the official language, which was advocated by king Joseph II. They would have preferred Latin instead of German. Even though the Hungarian nobility protested against the official use of the German, this did not mean that they would have favoured Hungarian. Their reluctance towards the German language was linked to their fear of loosing the ancient rights and their status in Hungarian society as a whole, rather than to some kind of emotional or conscious choice for Hungarian. Eventually, however, Hungarian was regarded as a kind of compromise, since Latin was not allowed anymore to be the official language in the state bureaucracy. At the diet in 1790 the Hungarian nobility already stood united and claimed unanimously the recognition of Hungarian as the official language of the Hungary. The Statutes (országgyűlési rendek) of the diet decided that the proceedings of the diet should be written and published in Hungarian, and they also voted for the status of the Hungarian language to become the official language of Hungary.

Interestingly enough, if we take a look at the attitude of the Viennese government, we see that they did not hinder the cause of the Hungarian language, but

¹⁹⁷ Here one should think for example of such liberties as not paying tax to the Viennese court, which Joseph II, wanted to abolish.

on the contrary, they were actually very permissive in the questions of language use, moreover they themselves promoted the use of the Hungarian. King Leopold declared in April 1790 that Hungarian should be diffused and should have a wider circulation within the Monarchy.¹⁹⁹ This was however, just a political tactic of the Austrian government: they precisely knew that the official use of the Hungarian could cause tension among the Magyars and the other ethnic groups, which by that time already formed more than the half of the total population. We do not have to wait long until we see that the plan of the Viennese officials worked out as intended: in the late 1790s the ethnic conflicts do break out in the Hungarian Kingdom because of the promotion of the Hungarian language. Thus due to the *divide et impera* policy of the Viennese court, the Magyars had to face a serious internal problem, which was not easy to solve.

The ideology of the language already had a strong support both in the press and in the other forums of the emerging public sphere, and was backed up and promoted especially by the landed gentry strata of the Hungarian society, which actually dominated the literary life in Hungary. An irreversible social, intellectual change had started. The aristocracy did not have either the intellectual power, or the political possibility to stop the process, thus they had to incorporate it somehow into their policy towards Vienna. By promoting the status of the Hungarian language at the diet, the aristocracy gained the support of the gentry literati, too.

But as soon as the diet of 1790 was over, the issue of the Hungarian language lost its significance and the interest of the Hungarian aristocracy and the Hungarian Statutes was again focused on socio-economic questions. The problem of the language was subordinated to political issues that involved the social position of the aristocracy in the empire. For the conservative aristocracy the crown, the banner, and the national dress – the symbols of the Hungarian nation –, were more important than the language. The ceremonial national dress worn by the Hungarian aristocracy was not only the icon of the Hungarian nobility's legal, military, and economic independence from the foreign court, but also a token of its detachment and superiority from the rest of the Hungarian society.

¹⁹⁸ Kosáry Domokos: *Bevezetés a magyar történelem forrásaiba és irodalmába*. II. 1711-1825., Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1954, 186-191.

¹⁹⁹ Benda Kálmán: A magyar nemesi mozgalom 1790-ben. In: *Emberbarát vagy hazafi? Tanulmányok a felvilágosodás korának magyar történelméből*, Budapest: Gondolat, 1978, 81-84.

While during the rule of Joseph II Hungarian nobility unanimously wanted the restoration of their ancient rights, after 1790 this policy was less assertive and homogenous. Some reformer aristocrats considered that they should support the intellectuals, who beginning with the years 1770s wanted to improve the general conditions in the country and to decrease the existing differences between the nobility and the lower classes of the society. Some of the enlightened aristocrats realised that the maintenance of the feudal society would lead not only to the disintegration of the Habsburg Empire, but foremost to the collapse of Hungary. Let us illustrate this with an example: after the unpopular reforms, which jeopardised the rights of Hungarian aristocracy, were declared by Joseph II and were ready for implementation, the representatives of the nobility gathered in Vienna for a council. Ábrahám Barcsay (1742-1806), a major figure of the Hungarian literature from the 1770s and himself an aristocrat, wrote a letter to Ferenc Széchenyi (1754-1820), the father of the “greatest Hungarian”, count István Széchenyi (1791-1860). According to Barcsay the “enemy” (i.e. the Viennese court) can build its power on three things: first, the “inequality of the Hungarian nation” (the differences of the upper aristocracy and the lower nobility, the gentries); second the inequality between the nobility and the peasants (in this case he does not use the word *nation*, because peasants were not included in the nation concept); and third, on its powerful army, which however, could do no harm, if the country could deal with its first two weaknesses.²⁰⁰ His second fear was becoming a reality: in those months, when Barcsay wrote this letter, there was a serious unrest between the aristocracy and the peasants in Transylvania caused by the revolts of Horea²⁰¹. The uprising soon became an ethnic clash, too, since the majority of the Romanians were peasants, who worked on the estates of the Hungarian nobility. The social inequality began to materialise as an ethnic conflict.

During the negotiation between the Austrian court and Hungarian Statutes language was a second or a third rank problem for a long time, simply because of practical considerations of the multiethnic society. Thus we can find the causes of the increasing concern for the importance of the language neither in politics, nor in the economical situation of the Hungarian nobility in the second half of the eighteenth

²⁰⁰ Bíró Ferenc: *A felvilágosodás korának magyar irodalma*, Budapest, Balassi Kiadó, 1994, 121.

²⁰¹ The peasant uprising of Horea, Cloșca and Crișan in Transylvania in 1784 was an anti-aristocratic revolt. Although this was a classic peasant riot, with mainly socioeconomic causes, its timing and its combination with discontent in the Orthodox Christian fold (composed overwhelmingly of Romanians) makes it a manifestation of early ethnic Romanian nationalism.

century. Hence, there must be another more plausible reason for the transformation of political thinking.

The Hungarian aristocrats in the 1790s were divided regarding their support for the emerging Hungarian intelligentsia. These Hungarian intellectuals were mainly middle-class writers and churchmen, who ardently fought for the spreading and standardisation of the Hungarian language. In order to be able to bring the cause of the national language on a political level, they tried to gain the support of the landowner nobility, the gentries, who had political influence. Language gradually became a democratising factor between the aristocracy and the other strata of the Hungarian society. Until the 1790s the word *nation* referred only to the Hungarian nobility. Nevertheless, regardless to their social position, the new concept of the *national language* already included *all the people* who spoke Hungarian as their mother tongue. Language as the material of the literature, gained increased prestige among the middle-class intellectuals, but also amongst the enlightened nobility.

What kind of *literature* are we exactly talking about? And what did they mean by *literature* at the end of the eighteenth century? Literature meant mainly poetry written mainly by Catholic or Protestant churchmen. Language played an important factor in the spreading and development of the sciences. György Bessenyei (1747-1811), the “founder” of modern Hungarian literary consciousness,²⁰² elaborated a complex cultural program that became one of the pillars of the early Hungarian nationalism. In his work entitled *Egy magyar társaság iránt való jámbor szándék* (A devout intention for a Hungarian society) (1781) he linked the progress of the society to the level of development of the national language. According to Bessenyei, the aim of the society as a whole is to be happy, and the more educated a society, the happier it is. He regarded language as the basis of education. Education should be available for a wide public, including the lowest classes, the peasants. This can only be achieved through the elevation of the mother tongue, the Hungarian, to a higher level, in order to become an adequate medium for the complex academic thinking. The language should be renewed, polished and made suitable for such a noble task. Since Hungarian was used mainly by the lower classes of the society, and it served mainly

²⁰² Bessenyei, György (1747–1811), Hungarian dramatist and writer. In Vienna he was one of the bodyguards of the empress Maria Theresa. He came in contact with French rationalism and was an ardent follower of Voltaire and the Encyclopedists. Bessenyei’s major importance lay in his encouraging the revival of the Hungarian language. He has been called the father of modern Hungarian

everyday communication purposes, it should be consciously elevated to fit the pursuit of scientific knowledge. It is obvious, that language had a very important role in Bessenyei's thinking, but its role was functional: it was regarded a tool, but not an end. Nevertheless, language became a popular topic in the public discourse, and already at beginning of 1780s it was viewed as a symbol of the nation. By the 1780s the concept of the *nation* referred to *all the people* living in Hungary speaking and cultivating the *national language*.

The supporters of Bessenyei's program began to consciously develop his ideas formulated in the *Devout intention* and his other writings, like the *Magyarság* (Hungaricum) (1778), a pamphlet, that became famous for the following sentence: "Every nation became an intellectual power only by using its own mother tongue, but never using an other nation's language"²⁰³. Later, this sentence was one of the most frequently used quotations of the Hungarian nationalism. Bessenyei's other important recognition was to emphasise the importance of Europe as a unified cultural community: "Whenever the concepts of homeland and patriotism are mentioned, you should think of Europe."²⁰⁴ For Bessenyei language was the *par excellence* medium for the unity of the Hungarian nation, but he always referred to Hungary as an organic cultural and political entity of Europe.

József Kármán (1769-1795), the founding father of the Hungarian prose and editor of the literary review *Uránia* (1794), in the preface of the first issue of his journal asserted:

"The national language is the defence castle of the nation, which keeps the foreigner, if he is foreigner, away from our borders, or it transforms him into a patriot. Language is the ultimate means for the survival of the Hungarian nation".²⁰⁵

József Péczeli (1750-1792), the protestant pastor from Komárom (today Komárno, Slovakia) formulated the same idea in the following short sentence: "One language, one nation."²⁰⁶ Benedek Virág (1754-1830) another important poet and thinker

literature, and the date of the appearance of his work entitled *Ágis Tragédiája* (The tragedy of Ágis), 1772 is usually considered as the beginning of Hungarian enlightenment.

²⁰³ „Minden nemzet a maga nyelvén lett tudós, de idegenen sohasem.”

²⁰⁴ „Mikor hazát, hazafiúságot emlegetnek: Európát értsd rajta.”

²⁰⁵ A nemzeti nyelv „az a palladium, mely fenntartja alkotmányunkat: az a végvár, amely az idegent, míg idegen, eltölt határainkról, vagy hazafivá változtat, az a mód, amely nemzetünket létében megtartja, az a jegy, amely megóv, hogy többek közt el ne olvadjunk...” In. *Uránia, Bé-vezetés*, 1794/1.

²⁰⁶ „Egy a' nyelv, egy a' nemzet.” (In. Bíró (1994), 125.)

maintained that “Our nation can be called Hungarian, until its language is alive.”²⁰⁷ And we could quote many more variations on the same idea, whose essence is that a nation lives in its language, and the cultivation of the national language leads to a flourishing nation.

In 1791 Herder published his *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, where in the fourth chapter when talking about the Slavs, he mentioned the possibility of the disappearance of the Hungarians in the Slavic “see”. The fear of the death of the Hungarian nation entered the public discourse in Hungary much earlier than the publication of Herder’s work. Someone who is familiar with the Hungarian history has to admit that this fear was not just some kind of intellectual paranoia, but a real threat. After the devastation of Hungary by the Ottomans resulted in the separation of the country between the two competing powers, the Habsburg Empire and the Ottoman Empire. Most of the cultural heritage was destroyed and there was no suitable environment for renewal. The country suffered by the constant wars with the Turks and later by a series of civil wars. Ferenc Kazinczy (1759-1831), the founder of the Hungarian language movement, in 1789 in his letter addressed to the Protestant pastor József Péczeli, also expressed his fear about the disappearance of the Hungarian culture. Among other things he mentioned that he had translated Helvetius’s essay about the popularisation of sciences, and Kazinczy made a reference to Bessenyei’s *Devout intention* in which the idea of the education was connected to the language, hence to the nation. The first four issues of Kazinczy’s own literary journal, *Orpheus* (1790-1792) also dealt with the problem of the death of the nation. Language and nation became strongly intertwined concepts by the end of the eighteenth century in the Hungarian discourses and the middle class literati succeeded to convince a great part of the Hungarian nobility to sustain their cause.

II. Cultural-Political epistemes and the formation of nineteenth-century Hungarian national consciousness

In Hungary we can discern three major paradigms regarding national consciousness: 1. consciousness of common *polity*; 2. consciousness of common *ancestry*; 3. consciousness of common *cultural heritage*. (Here and there the

²⁰⁷ „Nemzetünk tsak addig magyar, ameddig nyelve él.” (In. Bíró (1994), 125.)

consciousness of common *social class* is also to be noticed, but its importance to the previous three is negligible.)²⁰⁸ All these three commonly held systems were interested in creating a separate and unified concept for the national values.

1. Consciousness of common polity

Pál S. Varga, who worked out a system theory for the history of the Hungarian literature based on these three categories, argues that the consciousness of common polity cannot be regarded as an independent paradigm for national literature, because the nation conceived as the community of all the subjects of the state did not develop a separate individual concept of national literature in the nineteenth century. Yet, it has to be mentioned that the idea of the nation as polity defined the community's consciousness living under the rule of Hungarian Kings²⁰⁹ for centuries, from the Middle Ages till the late eighteenth century.²¹⁰ This was also a valid nation concept nevertheless, different from the one created in the nineteenth century. On the other hand, even though Transylvania as an autonomous principality existed independent from Hungary from 1571 until its integration in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in 1867, the Magyar population never ceased to question its Hungarian identity. Nevertheless, this nation concept did not necessarily include territorial unity with the Hungarian Kingdom or total identification with the Hungarian identity as developed within the borders of Hungary. Actually the consciousness of common cultural heritage within the Hungarian culture is older than the nineteenth-century nationalistic ideologies.

2. Consciousness of common ancestry

According to the consciousness of common ancestry Hungarian *nation* is the community of Magyar nobility. Only later, beginning with the 1780s by the expansion of law, the *nation* started to refer to someone having Hungarian as mother tongue or being born on the territory of Hungary. But originally *nation* denoted only a narrow social strata and it was characterised by its particular values. In terms of literary culture this meant "high culture *belle-lettres*", a certain amount of texts, which –

²⁰⁸ Varga, Pál S.: *A nemzeti költészet csarnokai. A nemzeti irodalom fogalmi rendszerei a 19. századi magyar irodalomtörténeti gondolkodásban*, Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2005, 13-15.

²⁰⁹ Hungarian king could also be of foreign origin, was not necessarily genetically Hungarian. Maria Theresa, the Austrian Habsburg Empress was also Queen of Hungary. Or Joseph II did not crown himself as Hungarian King (therefore he was mentioned as the *hatted king*) because he knew that as Hungarian King he would be responsible by law for Hungarian constitutional rights of the nobility. The sacred crown was an important national symbol throughout the ages.

²¹⁰ See Szűcs, Jenő: *A magyar nemzeti tudat kialakulása*. Budapest: Osiris, 1997.

beginning with the eighteenth century – were separated on aesthetic grounds from other written documents. According to this view, the aesthetic value was linked to the individual genius. In the eighteenth century creativity was defined as *erudition* (knowledge), later during Romanticism it was ascribed to *ingenuity* and creative *imagination*. As regards musical culture *national music* did not exist within this paradigm. Art music in Hungary – as well as elsewhere in Europe – was completely international even though it might have had local character. The narrative of common ancestry if imagined on a vertical plane, goes from top to bottom, from the upper classes to the lower social levels. The upper class was the determining factor, the taste dictator, to whom lower classes had to be lifted and conformed.

3. Consciousness of common cultural heritage

The third paradigm that developed chronologically the last and eventually became the strongest in the nineteenth century could be called the consciousness of common cultural heritage. The emphasis in this system of thinking falls on the continuity of primordial cultural patterns and their perpetual inheritance by the subsequent generations. According to this view the essence of the development of a national cultural canon is similar to the nature of language: it is subjected to permanent change, but all the new elements and influences adjust to the true authentic nature of language. While in the paradigm of common ancestry the accent fell on the narrow strata of the erudite few intellectuals whose task is to teach the uncultivated masses, the paradigm of common heritage emphasised the *shared* culture. According to this view, poetry – one of the supreme art forms besides music – is born organically out of language. Aesthetics and national consciousness are inseparable. In the paradigm of common cultural heritage the peasantry and the folk culture associated with it play a central role. The rural population is the major gatekeeper of traditional culture that is preserved, transmitted and disseminated from generation to generation in its purest and most authentic form. This idealised image of peasantry was a typical recurrent motif of the Romantic value system.

In the nineteenth-century it is difficult to find examples where one of these three paradigms would have had appeared in a pure form, completely isolated from the other ideologies of national consciousness. They are usually intertwined, and authors opting for the one or the other in many cases consciously or unconsciously combine ideas belonging to these three major paradigms. However, all these paradigms, despite their inherent differences, had one major feature common

characteristic: they were all thinking within the framework of *nation* and regarded *nation* their symbolic meaning system.

III. The development of the Romanian national consciousness

The Treaty of Karlowitz (26 January, 1699)²¹¹ marked the beginning of the Ottoman decline and the growing power of the Habsburgs in Central Europe. The Habsburg Empire had to face a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural territory. In Transylvania the Habsburgs tried to reduce the differences, by proposing to ethnic Romanians, who were on Christian Orthodox faith, to unite with the Catholic Church. According to the deal, if the bishops joined the Catholic Church they could keep the Orthodox rituals and would be granted equal rights with the members of the other three nations²¹² – Hungarians, Saxon Germans and the Seklers (Székelys)²¹³ – included in the Diploma Leopoldinum (1690)²¹⁴. The Transylvanian Statutes (the *rendek* in Hungarian) were hostile to the union, which however, was accepted and signed by Archbishop Teofil in

²¹¹ The Treaty of Karlowitz (1699) was a pact that concluded the Austro-Ottoman war of 1683–1697 in which the Ottoman side was defeated.

²¹² This nation concept referred to the collective rights of the nobility and free burghers – but excluded the peasants for example – who were granted collective right by the monarch. The right of the nation was a matter of ancestry, thus it was substantially different from the nineteenth-century European nation concept that instead of ancestry stressed the legitimacy of cultural unity and shared cultural traditions.

²¹³ The Székely's (or Sekler) origin is a matter of controversy among historians, however they consider themselves Hungarians. They live in a homogenous block in the southern part from Transylvania, in the so-called Székely Land (Terra Siculorum), which is today part of Romania. According to the first Hungarian chronicler, Anonymus, the Székelys were already present in the region when the Hungarians settled in Pannonia at about 895 A.D.. For centuries their task was to defend the eastern borders of Hungary. In exchange for their service, for centuries the Hungarian Kings granted them freedom, which meant equal rights with the nobility. In 1438 they were also the founders of the Unium Trium Nationum (Union of Three Nations), the other two being the Hungarian nobility and the Saxon (German) burghers. Romanians (Vlachs) constituted the fourth major ethnic group in Transylvania, but were generally excluded from political power at the time (as were Magyar serfs, and Saxons living outside the Universitas). They gradually lost their privileges in the sixteenth century when Transylvanian rulers tried to cut back on their rights. The Székelys revolted against the rule of the monarchs and the Transylvanian Diet several times. The most notorious are: 1599 – this revolt helped Mihai Viteazul, the Prince of Wallachia, to the Transylvanian throne, because the Székelys supported his army against the troupes of the Transylvanian Prince, András Báthory; 1562 – revolt against Prince János Zsigmond (1540-1571); 1764 – the revolt against Maria Theresa, the so called Siculicidium, when the Austrian army massacred hundreds of Székelys, who denied military service. Many Székelys fled to Moldova, but when the Monarchy gained Bucovina, the Székelys were settled in five villages in Bucovina. Many of them moved back to the territory of Hungary during the nineteenth and twentieth century. After the Treaty from Trianon (1920), the Székely Land became part of Romania. Since then, except a period after the second Treaty of Vienna (1940) between 1940-1944, when the Székely Land was returned to Hungary, the Székelys live on the territory of Romania, but preserve their ethnic Hungarian identity.

1697, one year later, in 1698 modified by Bishop Anastasie Anghel. Nevertheless, the official union was not expressing the will of the Romanians in Transylvania – as historians pointed out – but it was the personal ambition of some bishops and Romanian nobles, who wanted similar privileges as the nations living in Transylvania.²¹⁵ The Habsburgs did not count with the fact that the agreement of a few Romanians is not the same as the common assent of the orthodox Romanian masses, who did not profit from the pact. Eventually this led to tension between the high Church officials and the people, whose discontent was also instigated by the lower priests. This was one of the reasons why many Romanian peasants joined the Hungarian *kuruc*²¹⁶ movements against the Habsburgs.

Nevertheless, the union opened the Occidental perspective for a few Romanian boyars and priests, who went to study abroad. After they finished their studies came home to Transylvania and formed the so-called Transilvanian School (Școala Ardeleană) and became the forefathers of Romanian high culture. They were later regarded by some historians the founders of the Romanian nationalism.²¹⁷ However, we have to note that this interpretation of the Transilvanian School was a nineteenth-century projection. The members of the Transilvanian school were not thinking in modern *national* terms, but were the representatives of the enlightenment and demanded equal human rights. Even such issues – which later in the nineteenth century became very important and were included in the nation-building strategies – as the right of the Romanian people in Transylvania were based on Rousseauian concepts about the equality of men and not on a modern, nineteenth-century nation concept.

The exemplary forerunner of the Transilvanian School was Inochenție Micu Klein (1692-1768), (**Image 14**) who after his studies at the Jesuit University at

²¹⁴ The *Diploma Leopoldinum* was a document conceived by the Statutes of Transylvania (Saxons, Hungarian nobles, and Székelys) signed by Leopold I (1640-1705), which served for more than 150 years as a kind of constitution of Transylvania.

²¹⁵ See the Introduction to the *Supplex Libellus Valachorum*, (eds. Pervain, Iosif and Köllő, Károly), (Trans. Köllő, Károly), Bukarest, Kriterion Könyvkiadó, 1971, 12-13.

²¹⁶ The word *kuruc* denoted that part of Hungarian nobility, soldiers and peasants, who were against the Habsburg rule in Hungary. Hungarian linguists cannot agree about the etymology of the word. Some maintain that it comes from the latin “*crux*” (crusaders), some suggest that it originates from the word *kuroc*, *kurus* and meant *rebel* or *thief*. Later the *kuruc* movements and uprisings were also supported by other nationalities living on the territory of Hungary. The antonym of *kuruc* was *labanc*, which always referred to the Habsburgs and Austrians in general.

²¹⁷ See Chindriș, Ioan: *Cultură și Societate în Contextul Școlii Ardelene*, Cluj-Napoca: Editura Cartimpex, 2001 or *Istoria României* (eds. Bărbulescu-Deletant-Hitchins-Papacostea-Teodor), București, Corint, 2005, 249-253, 264-269.

Nagyszombat, in Hungary, was appointed the bishop of Gyulafehérvár (Alba Iulia, Karlsburg). He wanted to establish another Diploma Leopoldinum, which would acknowledge and include the rights of Romanians as well.²¹⁸ In 1732 he gained the title of baron and was allowed to participate at the meetings of the Transylvanian Diet, where he raised his voice for the rights of the Romanians living in Transylvania. His rhetoric was based on the ideas of the enlightenment, and he was claiming the right for freedom and equality for all the people. In his plea, he was stressing the high number of Romanian inhabitants, who should be entitled to equal treatment. He was the first to use in his arguments the claim that Romanians are the descendants of Roman colonists, who came to Transylvania around 2 A.D. with Emperor Traianus. Thus he was regarded by the later generations as the forerunner of Romanian nation-building movements. Micu-Klein's projects about the cultural education of the Romanians was achieved by Petru Pavel Aron (1709-1764), a Greek-Catholic Bishop, who after he finished his studies in Rome and came home to Transylvania, founded the first Romanian School at Blaj in 1754. This school became the cradle of Romanian nationalism.

The prominent members of the Transylvanian School (**Image 15**), Samuil Micu-Klein (1745-1806), Gheorghe Șincai (1754-1816), Petru Maior (1756-1821), Ion Budai Deleanu (1760-1820) all started their studies at the Romanian School at Blaj, and later continued their career at Vienna and Buda. The press at Buda, in Hungary, was especially important for the development of Romanian national identity. Both Șincai and Petru Maior worked as correctors and censors in the press of the Hungarian capital.²¹⁹ They were the spiritual fathers of the famous *Supplex Libellus Valachorum* (1791) that was addressed to the Emperor Joseph II and was pleading for equal treatment and rights for the Romanians in Transylvania. The Transylvanian Diet rejected the demand of the Romanians. The arguments of the *Supplex Libellus* included the continuity of the Latin origin of the Romanians and the significant number of the Romanian inhabitants, as well as general ideas of enlightenment about human rights for freedom.²²⁰ The cultivation of language and the ascension of the

²¹⁸ See footnote 11.

²¹⁹ Király, Péter: *Typographia Universitatis Hungaricae Budae (1777-1830)*, Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1983.

²²⁰ „Est Natio Valachica omnium Transylvaniae huius aetis Nationum longe antiquissima, cum Romanis ipsam coloniis, per Imperatorem Traianum saeculo II inchoante in Daciam frequenter copiosissimo veteranorum militum numero ad tutandam Provinciam deductis, propaginem suam

nation through education were popular ideas towards the end of the eighteenth century in Europe. Şincai published Samuil Micu-Klein's grammar *Elementa Lingue Daco-Romanae sive Valachicae* in 1780, which became one of the most influential works of the *paşoptists*,²²¹ language theories in the 1840s. Thus we can see that the travelling intellectuals were interested in the cultivation of culture, and in political, ethical questions about the collective rights of the community. Neither substantial economical developments, nor an established and recognised political authority preceded the cultural developments of the Romanians in Transylvania. Although they were still the representatives of the eighteenth century, their ideas and cultural patterns later became the cornerstones for the development of Romanian nationalism.

Maria Theresa's *Ratio Educationis* (1777), the reforms of Joseph II about the abolition of serfdom (1781), the patent of toleration (1781) and the language act (1784) were trying to transform the Habsburg Empire into a strong and enlightened state. But since they wanted to keep the absolutist-centralised monarchy, they had to face the resistance of the nobility – especially that of the Magyar conservative's – who felt that Vienna ignores their rights. The discontent of the Hungarian nation and the Habsburg government's inability to cope with the situation led to the revolutionary movements of 1848. It was an extremely complex situation where the Habsburgs had to face the discontent of both the reformist and conservative aristocracy. They both turned against the Austria however, for different reasons. The reformist nobles were willing to give up their privileges in favour of the modern nation concept, on the other hand the conservative aristocracy, resented Vienna because the Habsburg government tried to limit their rights.²²² The result was that eventually they both joined forces against the Habsburgs.²²³

habere, fide historica, traditione nunquam interrupta, idiomatis et morum consequetudinumque similitudine sit certum probatumque." (In *Supplex Libellus Valachorum*, 47.)

²²¹ The term *paşoptism* is used to denote the mid-nineteenth century (1840-1860) period of the Romanian cultural life. The name is a haplology and it was derived from the Romanian word for the revolution from 1848 (*patruzecişiopt*).

²²² This is why the enlightened Habsburg Emperor Joseph II (1741-1790) had to withdraw his acts concerning the reforms of the Hungarian social structure. Among his modernisation decrees he also issued a law concerning the official language in Hungary, which until that time was Latin, to be changed into German. The Emperor had purely practical considerations with this language decree. Nevertheless he had to face the resistance of the Hungarian nobility, who on the one hand regarded the decree offensive, because it would have deprived them from the privilege of using Latin, thus also of exercising in the country the role of the highest social class. On the other hand the decree would have prevented the lower nobility and the ever-growing intellectual strata to use Hungarian.

²²³ Nevertheless, there were also monarchist aristocrats, but their number and influence was not so substantial as the reformists.

Around 1815 the Habsburg Empire was one the greatest political powers in Europe. This position was shaped by the Austrian statesman Klemens Wenzel von Metternich (1773-1859), who after the Napoleonic wars managed to co-ordinate the Congress of Vienna (1814-1815) and to fashion the politics of balance in Europe. Under Metternich's orchestration the Holy Alliance, a coalition between Russia, Austria and Prussia was signed in 1815. The Holy Alliance was meant to function as a kind of peacekeeping organisation in Europe and was actually designed as such by Tsar Alexander I, who appealed to Christian values that should represent the basis of the agreement. Almost all the European nations joined the alliance, except the Moslem Turkey, the Papal State, which was suspicious of the Orthodox Russia's plans, and Britain, who did not trust the premises of the Alliance. The Alliance was in fact intended to guard the old political structure in Europe, which actually meant to preserve the monarchies from disintegration. Thus the Holy Alliance was turned into a fortress against revolutions and democratisation processes. However, the Alliance managed to keep the structures of old Europe for about fifty years and suppressed every revolutionary movement that would have had jeopardised it. The revolutions from 1848 also became the victims of the peacekeeping efforts of the Great Powers.

After the peace treaty from Adrianopol (Edime) (14 September, 1829) – following the Russian-Turkish war 1828-1829 – came an end to the Phanariot rule²²⁴ in Moldova and Wallachia, and the Sultan recognised the administrative autonomy of the principalities. Moldova and Wallachia entered under Russian protectorate, “East” and “West” existed side by side each other for decades to come. Many literary works and pamphlets of this time ridiculed either the old-fashioned Eastern traditions of some boyars, or the aggressive Westernisation of the reformist Romanian intellectuals. Russia was regarded until the mid-nineteenth century as the saviour “orthodox sister”, who helped to liberate the principalities from the Turkish rule, but after the Russian suzerainty the Romanian nationalists began to view the “big sister” as a threat.

The two Romanian lands, Wallachia and Moldova, in 1848 were Turkish suzerainties, but had been placed since 1822 under Russian protectorate. After the

²²⁴ The *Phanariots* were the members of prominent Greek families living in the Phanar (Fener) district of Constantinople (Istanbul), who acquired great wealth during the seventeenth century and occupied important political and administrative positions in the Ottoman Empire. Between 1711 and 1821 they were also the governors of the Romanian principalities Wallachia and Moldova. Romanian historiography refers to this period as the *Phanariote Rule*.

declaration of the revolutionary goals in the Proclamation from Islaz (9-21 June, 1848), an intermediary government started the implementations of its reform measures. But the interference of Russia and the Ottoman Empire put an end to the revolutionary plans, because even though Russia and the Ottoman Empire were not partners in the Holy Alliance, still they were both interested in keeping the old political system alive. However, the old system, proved to be soon very ephemeral. The monarchist peacekeepers could not stop either the modernisation processes, or the national movements, which eventually swept away the Habsburg Monarchy.

Around the revolution from 1848, most of the nations – except Italians and Hungarians – showed great adherence for the Habsburg Monarchy. “If Austrian did not exist, it would have to be invented.” – was the legendary saying of the Czech historian, Frantisek Palacky (1798-1876). This sentence also expressed the wish of the small countries in the Danubian Federation²²⁵ to sustain the Monarchy, which could protect them on the one hand from Russia, on the other hand, from Prussia. Romanians from Transylvania also wanted to be acknowledged as a nation, with equal rights. But the unification with the principalities of Wallachia and Moldova, which were still partly under Turkish suzerainty and partly under Russian protectorate, was only a far-fetched dream. Romanian national aims were clearly formulated at the assembly at Blaj (3-15 May, 1848), but the idea of the unification with Wallachia and Moldova did not play any role yet in the national rhetoric.

The Romanian revolutionary movement in Transylvania, which was led by intellectuals, but later supported by a large number of people, was a response to Hungary’s plan to unite with Transylvania. Hungary’s main reasoning in favour of the unification with Transylvania was based on cultural arguments. Hungarian government tried to make a pact with the other ethnic groups living on the territory of the country to accept the unification. In exchange Hungary granted reforms and equal personal rights to all the inhabitants of the country, but refused to acknowledge collective rights or to approve the national autonomy of the different ethnic groups. This political strategy of the Hungarian politicians actually led to the reactionary movements of the ethnic groups, who just like Hungarians, wanted to define themselves as nations. They turned against the Hungarian goals including independence from the Habsburg rule, joined forces with Austria, who actually

promised them national autonomy in the Constitution forced by the Czechs (April 28, 1848), but eventually abolished both the constitution and all the promised national rights.

Even though many ideologically biased Romanian history textbooks present Romanian nationalism as the natural and organic development of the people's awakening national consciousness, we have to be aware of the fact, that there was neither organicity, nor natural awakening of national consciousness in the nineteenth century. First until the 1840s when young Romanian intellectuals go to study abroad and come home with already developed national models, which they plan to implement in Romania, we actually can speak only about patriotism, but not nationalism. Second, because this "national awakening" began only later, almost at the beginning of the twentieth century and it was due to the restless work of many Romanian intellectuals among whom the most prominent figure was Nicolae Iorga (1871-1940).

In Hungary by 1848 there were three distinct national paradigms: the democratic, which defined nation as the collective of shared traditions; the conservative, which was still thinking in the eighteenth century nation-concept, according to which belonging to the nation was a matter of aristocratic ancestry; and the ultra conservative monarchists, according to whom nation is a legal pact between the monarch and the people and the monarch represents the nation. However, these paradigms appeared most of the time intertwined in the nineteenth-century Hungarian discourses.

Austria also had to deal with the ever-stronger German question and the position of Austria within the German federation. Even though the aims of this dissertation do not need an analysis of the German national movements in the region, nevertheless, this becomes an important model for the Hungarian and Romanian nation-builders. The Germans living in the Empire certainly played a vital role in spreading modern ideas about the relation of shared cultural traditions and national ideas. This was embraced first by the Hungarians, but later also claimed by the Romanians and other ethnic groups within the Habsburg Empire. The German unification plan, in which Austria's role was not decided yet, indirectly caused the escalation of the national thought in Central Europe.

²²⁵ Danubian Federation included the countries situated on the river Danube: Austria, Hungary,

The slow deterioration of the Habsburg Monarchy might be explained with economical or social factors, but the fact that no national identity could be attached to it as a conglomerate is only to be understood by an extensive cultural investigation. Its disintegration was due to its cultural diversity. The revolutions for national independence in the region could not be explained without the framework of the Monarchical political-cultural environment. National movements did not grow out organically amid the specific cultural communities, but they were fostered and enhanced by the symbiosis within the Habsburg Monarchy. The development of nationalism, as well as the disintegration of the Habsburg Monarchy has to be understood and analysed in a cultural, social and political interaction of the periphery and centre.

IV. The awareness of language and the development of Romanian identity

Just as in Hungary, there were early signs both in Wallachia and Moldova for the need of a standardised language that could be a suitable means for communication among all the Romanians, regardless to their social class or territorial distribution. Even though coming from a different path, by the end of the eighteenth century both Hungarian and Romanian men of letters realised that language is an important factor of identity construction. Additionally the Romanians had to overcome the difficulty of territorial diversification – as Romanians were living scattered on the territory of Wallachia, Moldova and Transylvania – and the fact that for centuries the official language – as a consequence of the affiliation with the Orthodox Church – was Greek and Slavic. The process of language standardisation and unification started later than in Hungary, nevertheless, followed an analogous model: the first books in Romanian are related to the church and are translations from official church Slavic; the next stage is linked to the ever growing number of Romanian boyars, who study at the renowned universities in Europe, in Italy, France, Germany, Hungary, Kiev and Istanbul; the third stage is the appearance of the first Romanian grammars and the chronicles; the fourth stage is related to the translation of the European masterpieces in Romanian and to the endeavours of the Școala Ardeleană; the final stage is connected to the increasing importance of the public sphere, to the theatre, the

Bohemia-Moravia, Poland, Romania, Serbia and Croatia.

appearance of the first Romanian literary journals and the ever growing literate public in the two capital cities of Wallachia and Moldova, in Bucharest and Iași.

It would be more fruitful – just as in the case of Hungary – to situate this development in a European international and supranational context. It should be clear that the earliest records about the need of a literary Romanian language were not connected to any kind of national consciousness. In the beginning, the language was meant to serve practical and spiritual purposes. The earliest translators of church scripts expressed their wish to spread the religious idea as effectively as possible among the people, who did not speak the official language of the church. This phase can be compared to the period of the Reformation in Western European tradition, when the cultivation of the vernacular had first and foremost a religious goal. As it happens, the first books in Romanian language were printed in the press of Diaconus Coresi (d. 1583) in Brașov (Brassó, Kronstadt) in Transylvania, which in that time was a Saxon German city strongly influenced by the Reformation. Here Coresi was offered the possibility to print religious books both in Slavic and in Romanian using Roman letters, which was strictly forbidden in Wallachia by the Episcopate of Hungarowallachia. So paradoxically, the first books that are regarded the founders of the Romanian literary language appeared under the current of the Reformation, in a German Saxon city, in spite of the ban of the official Wallachian authorities.

The next printing presses are founded in Cîmpulung with the help of Petru Movilă (or Moghila) (1596-1847), the Episcopate (Metropolite) of Kiev, and later in Snagov, Buzău, Rîmnic, Tîrgoviște, Iași. Varlaam, Simeon Ștefan, Dosofei are among the first to argue that the official language of the church should be brought closer to the language of the people. Simeon Ștefan, the Archbishop of Transylvania wrote in 1648 in the preface to *Noul Testament de la Bălgrad* (The New Testament from Belgrado) – where Belgrade does not refer to the capital city of Serbia, but to a city in Transylvania, Alba Iulia, (Gyulafehérvár/Karlsburg) – that words should be like money: the wider the circulation of a currency, the more it is worth, similarly, the wider the usage of the words known by everybody, the more they value.²²⁶ However, he complained that since the Romanians do not speak the same language, even though the translator did his best, his message might not reach everyone. In 1680 Dosoftei in

²²⁶ *Scriitori Romîni despre limbă și stil*, (Ed. Gh. Bulgăr), București, Societatea de științe istorice și filologice, 1957, 42; “Bine știm că cuvintele trebuie să fie ca banii, că banii aceia sânt buni carii împlă

the preface to the *Psaltirea slavo-română* (Slavic-Romanian Psalmody) also plead for the use of the Romanian language, but again not driven by nationalistic passion, but rather because of religious consideration:

“That who speaks the language of the people and who is understood by the people, contributes to their education and improvement, caresses and encourages their soul. That who speaks a language edifies himself, but that who speaks to be understood by the people, edifies the church.”²²⁷

In 1688 appeared the first Romanian Bible, *Biblia de la București* (The Bible from Bucharest), which is considered a landmark in the evolution of the Romanian literary language. However, these writers and translators did not think in a nation yet, and the cultivation of the language served purely religious and humanistic purposes. In these first Romanian texts from the seventeenth century there is no trace of any national consciousness. Nevertheless, they are going to be seen as such by the later generation of writers, who project back on the literary endeavours of these early literati the ideology of the nineteenth century.

In 1697 the first Romanian grammar was published. In 1744 the translator of the *Octoihu*, a religious book, has already a different attitude towards the text and language. The translator of the *Octoihu* linked the cultivation of the Romanian language to patriotic duty. He explained that he decided to write in Romanian “for the happiness of my country and for the enlightenment of the Romanian language”.²²⁸

While earlier authors emphasised the glory of the church and the necessity of translations for the spiritual benefit of the people, in the mid-eighteenth century the concept of patriotism and that of the cultivation of the literary language, gained more and more space in the thinking of the writers. The chronicles were the first men of letters, who gave a literary form to the spoken language and who wrote about secular topics instead of religious matters. They focused on the history of their country and on the life story of the suzerains. Grigore Ureche (1590-1647), born in Moldova as the son of a boyar who gained nobility for his loyalty towards the Polish crown, opens the

în toate țările, așa și cuvintele acele sînt bune carele le înțeleg toți.” Ștefan Simion: *Noul testament* (1648)

²²⁷ Ibid. 43, “Iară cela ce prorociaște, adecă spune de-nțelăs oamenilor, grăiește zidire și mîngăiere, îndemnătură și dojană. Cela ce grăiește în limbă, pre sine se zidaște; iară cela ce spune de-nțales, besiareca zidiaște.” Dosofei: *Psaltirea slavo-română* (1680)

²²⁸ Ibid. 9, “Întru bucuria patriei și întru lumina limbii rumînești, după aceste multe ale vremilor premeniri și clătiri ale începătorilor cestor împărătești și lumești”. *Octoihu* (1744)

line of historiographers. In 1611 Grigore Ureche began his studies in Lemberg (Lvov), Poland, and after his return to Moldova he fulfilled different positions as high courtier. Towards the end of his life he wrote a historiography known as *Letopișețul Țării Moldovei* (1642-47) (**Image 16**), which is appreciated for its ingenious art of portrayal of the Moldovan suzerains and for its inventive narrative structure. Ureche plead for the independence from the Ottoman Turkish rule that – according to him – was possible only if Moldova became an ally of Poland. He was among the first “polofils” of Romanian historiography. One of his most frequently quoted lines refer to the origins of the Romanian language, which according to Ureche is the descendant of the Roman (Latin) language. Nevertheless, he gave examples that prove the influence of other languages of the neighbouring cultures: Slavic, Greek, Turkish, Polish, Serbian and French.²²⁹ The original version of the chronicle was lost, but circulated among the men of letters in some copies. Miron Costin (1633-1691), who also studied for twenty years in Poland, continued to write Ureche’s chronicle and he cherished the tradition of the Moldovan-Polish relations. He was the first to claim in *Pentru numele moldovenilor și a muntenilor ...* (For the name of Moldovans and Wallachians...) that there are historical evidences about the Roman descent of the Romanians. He based his argument partly on the kinship of language – as already mentioned in Ureche’s chronicle –, because – according to Miron Costin – the language is the best proof of a nation’s origin.²³⁰ On the other hand, he maintained that there were some historical evidences for the Roman origin of the Romanians living on the territory of Dacia in the ancient Roman chronicles written by Aeneas Silvius and others, who mentioned that the Moldovans living in upper Dacia and Wallachians, living in southern Dacia are in fact one and the same people²³¹, and the

²²⁹ Ibid. 45, “Măcar că de la Rîm ne tragem, și cu ale lor cuvinte ni-s amestecate”. Grigore Ureche: “Pentru limba noastră moldovenească”, In. *Letopișețul Țării Moldovei* (1642-1647)

²³⁰ Ibid. 45, “Înțălege-vii și den capul care să vă scrie de graiul acestor țări, că și în limba iaste dovadă că în graiul nostru pînă astăzi sînt cuvintele unele lătinești, altele itălienești.” Miron Costin: *Pentru numele moldovenilor și muntenilor...*

²³¹ Ibid. 46, “Un istoric, anume Enea Silvie, și alții pre urma și pre cărarea lui, ai scris în istoria sa, cum moldovenii, ce lăcuiesc pe pămîntul Dachiei cei de sus, și muntenii în Dachia cea de gios, acest nume vlah să se trage de pe Fliac, hatmanul rîmnelesc. Și aceasta părere a lui Enea, nu iaste de aiurea; numai au cetari niște stihuri a unui dascal, anume Ovidius, pre care l-au trimis în urgie în Cetatea Albă, August chesariul Rîmului, pentru niște scrisori în stihuri, ce-au fost scrise de dragoste, de să împulsă Rîmul de curvii, den scrisorile și cîntecele lui. Acel Ovidius au scris cîteva cărți în Cetatea Albă, fiind închis, urgisit, tot în stihuri, și acolo ș-au sîrșit și viața. Prenumele lui iaste balta Vidovul la Cetatea Albă. Una din cărțile lui ce are nume de Pont, scrie la un priiatin al său la Rîmu, anume Grețin, aceste stihuri, precum le scriem aicea pre limba noastră, de pre lătine: ‘Gheții ținea într-o vreme, acmu Flacus ține, / Rîpa scump-a Dunării, el singur cu sine: / El a ținut Misiia în pace, cu credință, / Pre Gheții i-au scos de aicea el, cu biruință.’ Așea însemnează aceste stihuri, pomenind pre acel Fliac, cărui numele la istoriile

word Wlach (Wallach) would be a variant of Fliac, a derivative from the mane of Fulvius Flaccus, consul of Rome in 264 BC. Nevertheless, he also mentioned some objections against this theory of Roman progeny.²³² This work remained unfinished, but was transmitted to the next generation in twenty-nine manuscript copies and became a major point of departure for the scholars of the Școala Ardeleană. The next most important figure, who wrote a historiography about the Romanians, was Dimitrie Cantemir (1673-1723) (**Image 17**), the suzerain of Moldova appointed by the Turkish Porta in 1710. In spite of his education in Istanbul and his close relationship with the Ottomans, when he became the leader of Moldova he allied with the Russian Tsar Peter the Great, turned against the Turkish rule and placed Moldova under Russian suzerainty. However, his plans to completely liberate Moldova under the Ottomans failed, when the Russian army lost the battle of Stănilești (1711) and Cantemir could not return to his homeland anymore. He died in 1723 in Russia, in Harkov (today Ukraine). Cantemir was not only an enlightened and learned statesman, but also an important man of letters, writer, the first Romanian to be elected among the members of the Academy of Berlin in 1714. He can be regarded the first Romanian musicologist, who besides publishing his compositions began to explore the musical world of the Balkans, and gave a detailed, scholarly description of the Ottoman religious and secular music in a book written in Turkish, *Kitab-i-musiki*, (The book of music), where he used modern notation to illustrate the influences and intersections between the Byzantine church music and the other traditions in the region. His main literary creation was the *Descriptio Moldaviae* (1714-1716), which he wrote in Latin while staying in Russia at the request of the Academy from Berlin. The book is a comprehensive geographic, politic and cultural depiction of Moldova, in which Cantemir also emphasised the Roman origin of the Romanian language, which would unite the Romanians living in Wallachia, Transylvania and Moldova.²³³

Language as a medium of nation-building was a central issue in the oeuvre of the representatives of the Școala Ardeleană: Samuil Micu, Gheorghe Șincai, Petru

Rîmului iaste fulvie Fliac, consul, precum să numiia pre acele vremi hătmaniile lor. Și de aceste stihuri s-au legat întâi acela Enea Silvie, și după dînsul și alții. Întru acia aflu și pre Ureche vornicul următoriu, să fie numele țărălor acestora vlah, de pre numele acela a lui Fliac, hatmanul Rîmului.”

Miron Costin: *Pentru numele moldovenilor și muntenilor...*

²³² Ibid., Carion istoricul stă împotriva, și cu acela și Topeltn de Mediaș, anume zic ‘că cei ce-au scris, cum numele vlah, acestui neam, moldovenilor și muntenilor, îi de pe Fliac hatmanul, basne sînt’.”

²³³ Ibid. 51, “Locuitorii din Valachia și Transilvania vorbesc aceeași limbă ca a moldovenilor.”

Dimitrie Cantemir: *Descriptio Moldaviae* (1714-1716)

Maior, who – as it has already been mentioned in the previous section of this chapter – elaborated the linguistic and historical foundation of the discourse of the Daco-Roman origin of the Romanians. Later the nineteenth-century literati like Heliade Rădulescu, Budai-Deleanu, Alecsandri, Negruzzi, Kogălniceanu and Bălcescu referred to the works of the Școala Ardeleană in their historiographies and grammars about the Latin source of the Romanians. By the 1840s these writers and thinkers discovered the importance of the public sphere, especially the effective role of the theatre in spreading the national idea. One of the most ardent advocates of the theatre was Iancu Văcărescu (1786-1863), a Wallachian boyar, member of the renowned Văcărescu family, the nephew of Ienăchiță Văcărescu (1740-1794) the writer of the first Romanian grammar (1787), who wrote in the prologue of the first Romanian performance in Bucharest in 1819: “We gave you the theatre, guard it / As the home of the muses. /.../ Render the ornaments of our language / with Romanian words.”²³⁴ Theatre as the medium of conveying, shaping, and even mocking the national consciousness was going to be explored by the next generations and most successfully accomplished by Ion Luca Caragiale (1852-1912). The artistic enthusiasm for the cultivation of the Romanian language and the creation and spreading the national consciousness and national identity of the Pașoptist period (pre 1848 period) was institutionalised and elevated to a scholarly level by the Romanian Academy of Sciences founded in 1866.

V. Nationalism as interaction

The awareness of the cultural potential of the language played a central role in shaping both the Hungarian and Romanian national identity. It were the intellectuals studying, working and living in big European cultural centres in East or West, who after getting acquainted with the most recent academic achievements and cultural trends went home and spread the ideas – consciously or unconsciously – started a movement that was followed by political actions. Even though the debate about the primacy of culture versus politics is actually not a useful undertaking, one cannot help but notice that the Marxist ideology about the economic and political base and

²³⁴ Ibid. 13, “V-am dat teatrul, vi-l păziți / Ca un lăcaș de muze; /.../ Podoabe limbii noastre dați / Cu românești cuvinte.” (Iancu Văcărescu)

cultural superstructure is simply not tenable either in the Romanian, or in the Hungarian case. It is obvious that intercultural and supranational ideas were those that influenced the creation of patterns of national consciousness. However, there is a difference between those nations that existed as a cultural-political entity for centuries and were present as a nation²³⁵ in the European cultural memory, or those that were remembered as a people, a folk, but did not have a secular institutionalised cultural life.

The Romanian national consciousness developed relatively later compared to Hungary because of the rural social environment and the lack of secular cultural institutions. In the two Romanian principalities – Moldova and Wallachia – city burghers emerged only in the late nineteenth-century. Even around 1900, after urbanisation had been going on for at least twenty years, 81,2 % of the Romanians still lived in rural villages.²³⁶ In Romania all the educational and cultural institutions even in the second half the nineteenth century were the privileges of the boyars and the already existing very narrow intellectual strata. There were more illiterate people in 1900 in Romania than in 1500 in many parts of Western Europe. Romania could be compared in that time rather with Egypt or Turkey than with Central Europe.²³⁷

In the absence of a bourgeoisie it was the Western oriented higher social class, the so-called boyars, that brought the ideas of modernisation and national consciousness into Romania. In Hungary and Transylvania²³⁸ a strong burgher stratum – consisting mainly of Hungarians and Germans – had already existed for centuries. In Hungary, about two million inhabitants (one in seven) lived in the 1840s in a total of 224 urban settlements that were either free royal boroughs or corporate towns that were not dependent on landlords.²³⁹ Nevertheless, many aristocratic families played a vital role in spreading the national idea. So in both countries – but especially in Romania – the nobility (the boyars in Romania) contributed substantially

²³⁵ Even though this notion of the nation was different from the nineteenth-century nation concept.

²³⁶ Boia, Lucian: *Istorie și mit în conștiința Românească*, București: Humanitas, 2006, 66 and *Istoria României*, (Eds. Mihai Bărbulescu, Denis Deletant, Keith Hitchins, Șerban Papacostea, Pompiliu Teodor), București, Corint, 2005, 324.

²³⁷ Drace-Francis, Alex: *The Making of Modern Romanian Culture. Literacy and the Development of National Identity*, London-New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2006, 41.

²³⁸ However, we have to note that about 1900 87,4% of the Romanian living in Transylvania were agricultural workers and inhabitants of rural settlements. The number of Romanian burghers was very low: in 1880 from all the Romanian inhabitants of Hungary only 3,4% lived in cities, and around 1910 this number increases to 4,5%. In 1910 in the major Romanian cities the number of Romanian inhabitants was also scarce: Brasso (Brașov, Kronstadt) 28,7%, Nagyszeben (Sibiu, Hermanstadt) 26,3% and Kolozsvár (Cluj, Klausenburg) 12,4%. (*Istoria României*, 334)

to the development of national institutions, since they had the privilege to travel and to spread the European current ideas at home. In both cases in the eighteenth century the German cultural influence was of major importance for the development of national consciousness. Because of Romania's geopolitical situation and the long Ottoman or Russian suzerainty both the influences of the Balkan and Russia were determining factors for shaping the national identity. In the case of Hungary the 150 years of Turkish occupation (until the liberation of Buda in 1686) and the subsequent partition of the country left a brake in the continuity evolution of the Western European civilisation. During this time Transylvania was the guardian of the Hungarian and Western culture. After 1686 the series of civil wars (the Rákóczy movements) and the constant opposition with the Habsburgs determined the political orientation of the national identity.

However, culturally the Habsburg Empire was a cradle for the development of the Hungarian national consciousness. Vienna was an important cultural centre and later this function radiated to the regional centres like Buda or Prague. The Habsburg Empire – that in spite of its Spanish and French heritage was associated with Austria – became an important world power by the eighteenth century. It was called “Felix Austria” (happy Austria) because its expansion was mainly due to affluent marriages than to wars. As it happened, these marriages did not always mean “a happy ever after”. The autocratic absolutist monarchy of Maria Theresa and the enlightened but still absolutist rule of Joseph II could not completely dominate their partners and subjects. The happiness of the “Austrian marriages” and the peaceful symbiosis of the different peoples in the empire was more a superficial appearance than a reality. For the sake of the empire's future the Viennese government tried to control the regional and local tensions with a “divide et impera” policy, which eventually led to its fall. The urban centres of the peripheries like Buda, Pozsony (Bratislava), or Kolozsvár (Cluj) had more and more influence in the region. By following and adapting the general European trends to the local culture these regional centres actually strengthened the position of the local culture. In the nineteenth century, in the age of the political instrumentalisation of culture, culture became the most important factor in shaping national identity and transforming patriotism into nationalism. Social and political problems became to be regarded more and more emphatically as national

²³⁹ A Concise History of Hungary, (Ed. István György Tóth), Budapest, Corvina-Osiris, 2005, 353.

issues. Dormant cultural memories was revived, reactivated, re-circulated and transformed according to the new circumstances. The nineteenth-century nation-building process in Europe was anything but organic, authentic or pure. Instead it was a typically European international entangled process that nevertheless, made use of the recurrent patterns of the existing ethnic, local, and – in some cases – national cultural memory.

Nationalism theories usually disregard the idiosyncrasy of nations and countries. Undoubtedly, it is not realistic to expect from a theory to take into consideration every particular case with all its various aspects. However, to apply general theories on individual case studies might be in many cases misleading. History and culture cannot be modelled the same way as sociological trends like population growth or migration. Comprehensive cultural theories could give us a methodological background, but in a different way than social models. Historical topics need “thick description” in order to draw general conclusions in the end. Comparing individual cases could be eye opening and relevant, but applying general theories on a certain historical context might strangle the historical reality of a particular case. History is characterised by the complexity of several factors: social developments, political thought and cultural embedment. These factors can be studied separately, but the changes in their specific system, the “paradigm shifts”, cannot be limited only to one system, because usually every change is due to the interplay of several factors of several systems.

In the last decades historians pointed out that conventional history writing restricts its perspective to a narrow social strata, while the life story and history of those who did not belong to the mainstream discourse is either depicted within a subordinate relation, or completely neglected. In reality there are always more discourses in play at a certain time. To limit official history writing to only one, and to present this as the one is misleading. Instead of writing one teleological narrative is more fruitful to approach history as a network of complex inter-cultural, interdisciplinary loops. The Habsburg Empire was governed from Vienna, in the centre, but decisive happenings actually occurred in the peripheries. Therefore when analysing either the imperial identity or national consciousness, the peripheries should deserve more attention. In spite of the undeniable role of the big cosmopolitan urban centres, European history cannot be reduced to them; neither can it be reduced to the

controlling politics of the great powers. Wars often broke out on the peripheries that always fulfilled the role of carriers of culture and conflict.

History cannot be restricted to the chronicle of wars, the birth and fall of empires or to the story of succeeding rulers. Everyday cultural patterns characterise more deeply the life of a community than the changing political systems. Politics always explored, appropriated and used for its own purpose the cultural elements of a community, because this proved to be one of the most direct ways to influence people. Therefore to understand the cultural practices of a certain community means to get an insight into political, social changes, too. The differences and similarities between certain communities could not be understood without paying attention to the particularities of their cultural practices. Therefore the dynamism and cross-cultural characteristics of nationalism should be taken seriously. National consciousness should be seen as an ever-changing historical force that becomes relevant or fades away, is preserved or transmitted in relation to other factors that shape history. It can be best understood if studied within the dynamic network of particular cases set in a larger comparative perspective. Therefore nationalism should be analysed as a form of epistemic system created by the interaction between local and global, particular and universal, regional and cross-cultural movements. On the one hand nationalism as a trend is always transnational, on the other hand the development of the national consciousness of a specific cultural community is always individual, and should be analysed as such, keeping in mind however, that it is part of a larger international, historical framework.