

# ABSTRACTS

## Csukovits, Enikő: Sources, Genres, Possibilities: The Elements of the Medieval Image of Hungary

There are numerous sources providing insight into the medieval image of Hungary and Hungarians: in addition to geographical writings, books, and travel literature, there is a wealth of geographical-ethnological information contained in historiography, an increasing number of literary works, and in documents originally not intended for the public, such as legatine reports. Examining these sources, the present study addresses two questions: first, the extent to which modern historians use different sources than their medieval colleagues; second, the possibility of an insight into the perceptions and knowledge of Hungary and Hungarians in medieval Western Europe.

Surviving sources provide information to varying depth and degree. Medieval travel accounts seldom include reports about Hungary, and often at a tangent. The first modern geographical descriptions written in the fifteenth century were not yet proper geographical works, and contained limited information about the country and its inhabitants. The richest source of consistent information about the medieval image of Hungarians is historiography. There is significantly more information concerning Hungarians in the historiography of neighbouring countries than in more remote regions of the continent. In these remote countries, Hungarians featured in the news in two cases only: either when an event of historical dimensions happened in Hungary itself or when Hungarians appeared in large numbers in the land of the chronicler. Historical crises appeared in narrative sources almost immediately. Thus, contemporary historical writings precisely reflect which Hungarian historical events were of European consequence, drawing the attention of the wider public: the raiding campaigns of the Hungarians, the founding of the Christian state, the Mongol invasion and the Ottoman threat.

As for the image of Hungarians, medieval diplomatic sources, primarily the large number of reports by papal legates and ambassadors of Venice, provide the largest pool of information. From the 1390s, proper legatine reports began to be written. These reports, however, informed a limited number of people and their content was inaccessible for the wider public. The late medieval authors' approach to gathering information was markedly different than that of their modern counterparts: geographers of the Antiquity were considered the primary authorities for geography and ethnology until as late as the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Their importance and frequent use is attested by contemporary works and the surviving or reconstructed booklists of medieval libraries. Works

of Strabo, Pliny, Solinus and Ptolemy, as well as Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies*, were definitive sources of medieval geographical knowledge to such an extent that it is impossible to fully appreciate it and avoid misinterpretation without an understanding of these antique authorities.

Although in the fifteenth and sixteenth century the library of classical geography was indispensable for erudite literates, they were keen to complement their readings with practical knowledge. This practical knowledge corresponds to the examples of legatine reports. The information contained in the writings of contemporaneous historians, travellers, and legates is perhaps not dissimilar to the actual information and knowledge of late medieval *literati*.

### Körmendi, Tamás: The Representation of Hungarians in Western European Narrative Sources until the End of the Thirteenth Century

This study aims to review the process in Western Christian historiography, whereby Hungarians turned from a pagan tribe, often described by models used for Huns and Avars before them, into a member of the Christian fold. In addition, the study explores those characteristics which differentiated the Hungarians from other Christian peoples in Western historiography between the ninth and thirteenth centuries. Since the medieval European world view essentially divided peoples into Christian and pagan, the representation of Hungarians in Western sources dramatically changed after their successful conversion to Western Christianity. To reflect this change, the study is divided into two parts. The first part explores the characteristics of the representations of ninth and tenth-century pagan Hungarians. The second part focuses on sources about Christian Hungarians between the eleventh and thirteenth century. In the former, the complete body of sources is analysed. However, in the latter, the analysis of the entire body of materials regarding the period after the foundation of the state is not possible due to the large amount of surviving sources, and thus only the main trends are demonstrated.

The sources about pagan Hungarians use the commonplaces describing Huns and Avars in annals and chronicles written centuries before: they emphasise the savage and cruel ways of Hungarians, and at most their skills of warcraft. This is not surprising considering the crippling damages that the raiding Hungarians caused in the Western population and church. The sources mentioning Christian Hungarians contain significantly fewer generalising references, which are explained by three causes in this study. 1. In medieval Western historiography, peoples of Latin Christendom were considered to belong in the same community, and are characterised exactly by this common affiliation alone, without adding further distinguishing details. 2. After converting to Christian-

ity, Hungarians, earlier known only from military conflicts, developed increasingly complex ties with Western European regions. This brought about a better flow of information, which had a significant impact on the increasing precision (and decreasing generalisation) of Western chroniclers about the history of Hungarians from the eleventh century onwards. 3. In medieval Western historiography, conflicts between Western Christian communities were simplified to struggles between one warring party fighting for universal truth and the enemy of these universal values. In these cases, the descriptions were influenced by the political agenda of the chroniclers, rather than the contemporary image of Hungarians (if there was one at all). The materials examined in both parts of this study have one thing in common: Hungarians, most often mentioned as the enemy in the context of military events even after 1000, are described in a negative tone in the majority of the texts examined.

### Radek, Tünde: The Image of Hungarians in Medieval German Historiography from an Imagological Perspective (1150–1534)

This study presents the conclusions of research conducted in the field of the Hungarian image in medieval German-language historiography (universal, provincial/regional, monastic/abbatic and city chronicles). The texts were selected along two criteria: the use of vernacular on one hand, and chronological and geographical parameters on the other. The earliest source examined is the *Regensburg Kaiserchronik* (c. 1150), the latest is Hans von Haug zum Freystein's *Hungern Chronica* (1534). The study aims to explore the image of Hungarians, shaped by the contacts between the two peoples and subsequently integrated into sources, as well as its manifestations in available materials. The methodology is based on imagology, focusing on those 'images' of nations and peoples, which are contained in texts either explicitly or implicitly, and which have the capacity to become the means to typify those. This methodology entailed the survey and collection of 'imagotypical' elements concerning Hungarians in the selected texts, which was followed by the descriptive phase of research, whereby these elements were organised and analysed thematically. Adapting Reinhart Koselleck's theory of 'asymmetrically contrary conceptual pairs', the analysis of the imagotypical elements of these texts revealed three asymmetric and mutually opposing pairs: Western–Eastern, Christian–Pagan, and moral–amoral.

## Nagy, Balázs: Medieval Hungarian Towns in Foreign Travel Accounts

The study examines reports of foreigners who travelled in, or are well-informed about, Hungary, as well as other relevant documents from beyond the borders. Specifically, the focus of the study is medieval Hungarian urbanisation, and data about the composition of urban population.

The Raffelstetten Customs Regulation (903–906) and the accounts of Ibrāhīm Ibn Ya‘qūb are valuable sources of information about contemporary Hungarian urban development in the tenth century, both with regard to information recorded and omitted. Following these early examples, an increasing number of foreign authors reached Hungary in the crusader campaigns. Several different types of accounts survive from the middle of the twelfth century onwards. Information about contemporary Hungarian urbanisation was recorded by Westerners like Odo of Deuil (1147), Otto of Freising (1147), Arnold of Lübeck (1189), and Muslims such as the traveller Abū-Hāmid al-Garnāī (1153) and Al-Idrīsī, the author of a geographical gazetteer (1154). Rogerius’s account of the Mongol invasion in Hungary (1241–1242) reports important information about the town of Esztergom. The author of the *Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis* (1308) summarises everything a fourteenth-century foreigner may have deemed important at the beginning of the century. Bertrandon de la Broquière (1433) recorded his observations primarily about Late Medieval Szeged, Buda and Pest.

The accounts of foreign authors about Hungarian towns suggest that these sources contribute valuable information to our present understanding of urbanisation in medieval Hungary. Despite the fact that none of the authors cited wrote with the expressed aim to describe contemporary urbanisation, their writings often precisely reflect the characteristics of urban centres, the multiethnic nature of towns, the role of foreigners in trade, as well as the relationship between town and trade. While early texts reveal few shared characteristics between Hungarian and Western European towns, the sources from the post-Árpádian era suggest that Hungarian cities were increasingly similar to European urban models: instead of emphasising the differences, fourteenth- and fifteenth-century texts tend to view Hungarian towns as integral parts of the European urban network.

## Reed Papp, Zsuzsanna: Hungary in a Neglected Source: Lists of Papal Provinces in Medieval England

The aim of the study is to bring into the limelight a type of source that shows little textual variation and user interference across the dissemination process, and thus is generally not included among the usual sources of changing percep-

tions of the Kingdom of Hungary. *Libri provinciales*, lists of papal provinces, were in fact typically immutable documents used all over Latin Christendom for centuries. The English examples presented in this study, however, suggest that some of them reflect the practical knowledge that insular copyists possessed about medieval Hungary.

The Appendix provides an overview of the relevant passages of four manuscripts. The lists reveal information about the relative geographical position and size of the Hungarian province in Christian Europe. Despite the obvious orthographical variation suggesting the scribes' unfamiliarity with foreign placenames, the information about the Hungarian province seems to have remained relatively consistent and precise throughout repeated copying. Besides addressing the textual contexts, as well as the possible purpose and medieval use of this type of document, the study examines the idiosyncracies of two identifiable authors who included these lists in their works: Matthew Paris and Gervase of Tilbury.

Both Matthew Paris's and Gervase of Tilbury's versions attest to an active authorial and editorial approach towards *Libri provinciales* as integral parts of their major works. On one hand, Matthew's copy reveals an acute sense of the need to update and correct the traditional text by later generations. On the other hand, Gervase's version, thus far never examined as a useful medieval English source about Hungary, is unique because it contains passages and reorganisation of material not found elsewhere. It is one of the few surviving pieces of textual evidence of the precise and up-to-date nature of pragmatic knowledge of an English author about the relations between Slavonia and Hungary. The unique details of this rare example, as well as the number of other surviving manuscripts suggesting a relatively wide dissemination of these lists, shed light on the complexity of actual medieval English perceptions of Hungary. They offer an insight into pragmatic English knowledge and perceptions which seem to have been more informed than is usually reflected in historiography or other surviving sources often strongly anchored in traditional narratives and bound to the conventions of their genre.

## G. Etényi, Nóra: Topoi and Innovation in the Early Modern Image of Hungary in the Mirror of Seventeenth-Century German Publications

The political, economic and military capacity of Early Modern Hungary, the battleground in the struggles with the Ottomans, was a definitive question for the contemporary European public. The interest in German pamphlets, historical and geographical gazetteers and travel accounts about Hungary is strongly tied to current military events in the Ottoman wars. The Habsburg Empire had vested interest in the dissemination of news to the widest public possible from the

frontline of fighting against the common enemy, both through traditional and modern channels such as printed newspapers and illustrated newsletters. The lay and clerical centres of the Holy Roman Empire also actively participated in the propaganda about the role of the Empire in the fight against the Ottomans. Parallel to this, the increasingly powerful public in the Empire was informed in detail about the economic, political and cultural assets, natural characteristics and resources of the territory at stake. Although the illustrated newsletters reporting on military operations, as well as printed pamphlets and weeklies, retained the topoi about the country's treasures and customs, they were beginning to report about the political, military and cultural elite of the Kingdom of Hungary, the relations between the ruler and the Estates, the courts of higher nobility, towns of political and economic consequence, and the military significance of castles and fortresses, in an increasingly complex and informed manner.

In the illustrated reportage of newsletters, the strategic position of castles was depicted by layouts, siege plans and maps prepared by military engineers, and they also contained recognisable and authentic portraits of nobles and major military commanders. It was in the publishers' business interest to present a more intricate image of the castles and towns in the focus of attention in a growing number of genres providing valuable and captivating background information, such as calendars, historical treatises, chronicles, travel accounts, fairground pamphlets, and biannual diaries. Recognising the significance of printed press, Early Modern intelligentsia considered it important to interpret and organise the voluminous flow of information in hindsight; parallel to perpetuating earlier traditions, they also integrated new information into historical and geographical works. Under the spell of the new theory of the state, the reconquered territories in the war against the Ottomans were mapped, and the resources and opportunities of the Kingdom of Hungary assessed, in order to serve the best interests of the efficient running of the state.

Seidler, Andrea: A Theatre Director on Business Trip:  
The Eighteenth-Century Description of Hungary  
by Christoph Seipp

The paper deals with eighteenth-century travelogues written either by Hungarians travelling to western parts of Europe, or by foreigners visiting the Kingdom of Hungary in the second part of the century. The main focus, however, lies on the works of Christoph Seipp, alias Johann Lehmann, born in Worms. Seipp at that time worked at the theater in Preßburg – he was the director of the institution – and undertook at least two travels to Upper Hungary and the Zips as well as to Moldavia and Silesia. Seipp published two volumes (in 1785 and 1793) on his travels that can be approached in manifold ways. The

---

author, on the one hand, aimed at analysing the political judgement of Seipp on the echo that Joseph II's politics provoked among the Hungarian population. On the other hand, the paper shows how Seipp's works fit into the new genre of eighteenth-century travelogues not longer written as general descriptions of a land or country based on old books but more as personal travel diaries.