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LEVENTE T. SZABÓ

NARRATING „THE PEOPLE“ AND „DISCIPLINING“ THE FOLK

*The Constitution of the Hungarian Ethnographic Discipline
and the Touristic Movements (1870–1900)*

Preparadigmatic and early paradigmatic ethnographic imagination and practice played a crucial role in mid- and late 19th-century Hungarian nation-building. Different versions of national identity competed within the new discipline called ethnography. They used, translated, transformed, and remade the emerging discipline. In order to map these transformations, I will focus both on the ideological transfers and on the internal cleavages to simultaneously see the sources, and the reception of texts and phenomena that are used in the crossings and interactions of this disciplinary formation.

At the same time, this train of thought is also a broad history of the early (preparadigmatic and early disciplinary) phases of Hungarian ethnography. As such, it will try to follow the history of the professionalization and „disciplinarization“ of ethnography along several shifts: from the mainly textual interest of Hungarian ethnography of the 1840s-1860s to the „visual turn“ and exhibition of folk objects of the 1870s, and to the complex interaction of the phenomena of tourism and ethnography in the last two decades of the 19th century. In following these shifts, it will attempt to understand and analyze how the emergence of this new discipline coincided with the rise of the nation-building process of modernity, and what were the consequences of their complex and multi-layered relationship.

***THE VISUAL SHIFT IN HUNGARIAN ETHNOGRAPHY:
THE POLITICS OF MUSEUM-MAKING
AND THE DIFFERENT VISIONS OF THE NATIONAL***

Some museums are sites of scientific research, and some collections have been formed as part of the development of particular scientific disciplines. In this way, they have played important roles in the constitution of scientific knowledge and helped to define and perform scientific conceptions of „truth“ and „objectivity.“ Furthermore, all objects bestow meaning upon their production, display and consumption. We respond less to the intrinsic attributes of cultural goods than to the symbolic meanings attached to them. Hence the processes, the interest groups, the negotiations of meanings, the silencing or overemphasizing of elements inherent in the process of constructing an exhibition cannot be neglected when trying to analyze both synchronic and diachronic phenomena of museum culture. Exhibitions and museums are always linked to visual narratives that arise from historically and disciplinarily different taxonomies. These taxonomies have a poetics embedded in visions and relationships of power. The establishment of the ethnographic section of the Hungarian National Museum was strongly intertwined with such visions of nationhood and ethnicity, revealing the subtle struggles and shifts within the new discipline.

The idea of establishing a separate section of ethnography (actually ethnology) in the Hungarian National Museum clearly brought a gradual shift regarding the focus of the ethnographic discipline: from the text to the object. Thus the folk were represented not (or not mainly) by what it said, but by the objects it produced or lived by. This shift couldn't only be linked to the restructuring of visual culture (a sign of which was the new, public role of the museums), but also to the formation of the new disciplinary system and the new taxonomies standing at the basis of scientific categorization. The Hungarian National Museum gradually became a site of public display from a site of research: the 1840s already brought about the first disputes on whether the museum should be open to a wider public (transcending social boundaries) or only to research. The debates commented mainly on the character of the general public and whether this public could be transformed so as to produce citizens who would themselves take on the task of self-improvement. These debates and the gradual opening of the Hungarian National Museum for the wider public brought about also a change in the production, distribution and consumption of „exhibitional knowledge.“¹ This new exhibitional knowledge comprised not only the public museum practices, but also a new culture of local, national and international exhibitions. In Hungary (too) the politics of exhibiting the modern nation went hand in hand not only with the advent of

1 Among the secondary literature on the Hungarian ethnographic context surrounding the establishment of the Ethnographic Museum, see Gráfik (1997); Szilágyi (1990); Szemkeő (1997); Balassa (1972); Hofer (1991).

the museums, but also with the theory and practice of the national exhibitions. A telling sign of this can be that the first debates over (and the change of political vocabulary describing) the metamorphosis of the visitors of the museums coincided with the advent of the national exhibitions. The national exhibitions staged relatively new identity components that were to become paradigmatic: they brought to the forefront assumptions of social identities (work as the basis of gaining social status, social ascent through qualified work, specialization and learning), and also canonized the figure of the entrepreneur and entrepreneurial values in national culture. It was again the national exhibitions (and the international ones) that helped to domesticate a new type of social identity. By emphasizing values like professional labour and craftsmanship, and linking all these to education and professional formation, they not only helped to canonize professional identity, but also inscribed the historical components of this identity into the politics of exhibiting the nation. On the other hand, exactly this symbiosis of the different forms of social identity led to nationalization of the professional identity: concepts of craftsmanship and specialization were permeated with notions of ethnicity and the national. The nationalization of professional identity (including that of the emerging ethnographic profession) was due also to a competitive dimension of „national exhibitionism“: at the „universal“ exhibitions, of which the Great International Exposition held at Crystal Palace in London in 1851 was the first², nations were awarded medals and ranked in ceremonies (later) modelled on the Olympic Games. This competitive dimension brought completely new aspects also into Hungarian national exhibitions. For instance, a remodelled version of this pattern can be found in the way some 19th-century commentators of the 1885 general exhibition were linking the events to a vindicative type of politics in which the nation was assumed to assert itself. They were using Western models of competitive exhibitions, but at the same time they reworked them. The former Western pattern was used against „the Western exhibitions“ to assert an alleged equality of the Hungarians with the Western world: „The 1885 Budapest exhibition was a complete success. [...] If all the aliens saw a paramount political significance in the exhibition (at which crown and nation have more intimately been bound than ever before during the last two centuries), why should we ignore the momentous economic character of our national enterprise. Let us regard it a memorial that leads us from the backwardness of the past, through the progress of the present to the successes of the future“³ – as Károly Keleti put it in the official report of the exhibition.

But the national itself was a multi-layered pattern at these exhibitions that were partly or entirely ethnographic: they presented us with different vocabu-

2 For an excellent overview of this paradigmatic exhibition and its consequences in canonizing powerful cultural images about this phenomenon, see Auerbach (1999).

3 Keleti (1886).

larities of the national. The 1885 exhibition mixed the vocabularies of nationhood: it contained a subtle co-mingling of the double roles, of Hungarian king and Austro-Hungarian emperor, of Franz Joseph and the alternation of the concept of the *patria* and that of the ethnic nation. Unlike later (for instance, during the Hungarian millennial celebrations in 1896) these didn't seem to come into contradiction, but co-existed unproblematically in 1885. This was also due both to the fact that Hungarian ethnography in the 1880s was mainly of ethnological character (regarding especially the ethnographic section of the Hungarian National Museum) and to the fact that the Hungarian objects were only having their first successes and it was mainly the *Kronprinzenwerk* that set the standard in interpreting these objects. In the 1880s the strongest way to define the ethnographic discipline was linked to this so-called *Kronprinzenwerk*, the collection of volumes entitled *The Austro-Hungarian Empire in Words and Pictures* patronized by Prince Rudolf himself. In the programmatic and highly influential introduction of the project he was coordinating till his early death, he connected ethnography with the idea of strengthening the feeling for a common *patrie* and patriotism in the monarchy. In his vision, ethnography seemed to be the chief discipline able to convey this type of loyalty to the masses:

The study of the people living within the borders of this monarchy offers excellent possibilities not only to the scholar, but it has quite an important practical role in improving general patriotism. The more we study the good qualities of the groups of people, respectively their mutual dependence on one another, the more we'll strengthen their feeling of being together, a feeling that should connect the people of our country. Those groups of people who seem to be different from the core of the country due to their language, customs and historical evolution will seek for their spiritual centre in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy when they will encounter a true scientific interest in their national character. That is the reason for the paramount importance of ethnography and its related sciences in our country. [...] Is there any country so rich and various in economic and geographic qualities, a country that shows the coexistence of the different ethnographic groups in such an enthralling way than our monarchy does? [...] we will highlight how one group of people came close to the other, how these different people came to be united by the power of their own common interest. We will stress the way their inner connection became natural law and that is the image of our present days, the image of a huge and powerful Austro-Hungarian monarchy (the *patrie* of all of us).⁴

In the 1890s, the establishment of the Hungarian Ethnographic Society occurred in terms of the so-called empire-identity already known from the *Kronprinzenwerk*. But the first texts commenting on the Society (and its aims of establishing a separate ethnographic museum) suggested divergent images of what Hungarian ethnography should be. These different types of comments regarding the aims of disciplinary ethnography were mixing the vision of the

4 Budapest, 1887, pp. 5–9.

supra-national (expressed by the *Kronprinzenwerk*) with an ethnic concept of the nation. According to the latter ethnography was meant to prove an alleged cultural superiority of the ethnic Hungarians over other, non-Hungarian ethnic communities of Hungary. But some of the essays mixed the two programs within one train of thought, remaking both of the concepts: „The aim of the [Hungarian Ethnographic Society] is to study the contemporary and bygone people of the Hungarian state and historical Hungary. [...] By gathering all sorts of phenomena of the people living in this country, the Society will raise and maintain the friendly accordance and the sense of belonging together.“⁵ In a famous text upon the tasks of the Ethnographic Society, Antal Hermann incorporated the words of Mór Jókai, the famous writer and main Hungarian contributor to the *Kronprinzenwerk* into a completely different framework: the political vocabulary of national and ethnic struggle. Thus his paper, entitled *Upon the founding of a national ethnographic museum*, translated and reworked the original supra-national idea of an ethnography bringing peace to the people of the empire into a efficacious discipline to be used as a weapon against other ethnic and national communities: „Our greatest living poet who called ethnography „his companion always full of ideas,“ also emphasized with the spirit of a clairvoyant that it will be the consequence of the spread of ethnography if eternal peace ever comes into being. Eternal peace is a glorious dream, and till it comes true much fight will take place and ethnography will be both the realm and the instrument of these fights. It is for the assurance of our national life if we prepare the arsenal of this peaceful war: the Hungarian national museum.“⁶

An official letter, written by the newly established Committee for Museums of the Ethnographic Society and addressed to the Ministry of Religion and Public Education, portrayed the situation of ethnography in terms of ethnic nationhood. The letter not only interpreted ethnography as the best discipline for national self-cognition, but also envisioned an allegedly unstable and inhomogeneous past for the nation that required such a discipline to control a process of nation-formation (that was still incomplete): „[W]e have to come to know ourselves, and this is a more serious, but valuable scientific issue at us than it is at other people. This is so because we are in the interesting position of being a former immigrant race under the natural supremacy of which a whole bunch of nationalities formed a thousand-year state. Nay, the evolution of this state is still going on.“⁷

The interplay of these different visions about the future of the discipline and its main goal, the founding of a separate ethnographic museum, made their impact on the different patterns of objects and collections of the separate eth-

5 Pál Hunfalvy's presidential inauguration [of the founding séance of the Hungarian Ethnographic Society] *Ethnographia* 1890, pp. 2, 7.

6 *Ethnographia* 1890, p. 24.

7 *Ethnographia* 1890, p. 96.

nographic section and museum that was finally founded after the immense success of the ethnographic exhibits at the grand exhibition celebrating the Hungarian millennium in 1896. The subtle interplay of all these concepts was already present also in the organization of the ethnographic knowledge at the 1896 exhibition that was expected to provide the material to the foundation of a separate and independent ethnographic museum. In a letter to the director of the National Museum János Jankó, the well-known scholar and later the first director of the Museum of Ethnography, explained his conception on how the future museum should be organized: „1. Our first task is to show the objects of the people of our *patrie*: i.e., the objects the Hungarians and the nationalities. [...] In order to understand the ethnography of our nationalities, these groups should be compared to their own core people as they are the fragments of a foreign core. [...] In order to understand the ethnography of the Hungarians, we need historical ethnography that brings to the forefront the aboriginal character of the Hungarians.“⁸ Jankó put together different types of criteria and made the ethnographic village of the Hungarian millennial exhibition a scene of the already problematic oscillation between the representation of „millennial“ and ethnic character of the Hungarian „people“ and the supra-national conception of nationhood. This double-sidedness could be followed well through the two main loci of the exhibition where ethnography demanded a special place: the ethnographic village (that was thought to represent the [then] contemporary folk architecture of Hungary⁹) and the exhibition of archaic Hungarian trades (which was part of the historical exhibition and was organized by Ottó Herman).

Since the material of the temporary exhibition was preserved – and like in many cases in and outside Europe – became the core of a permanent exhibition, these elements came together again in 1898 at the opening of the new, desired permanent exhibition. The situation was even more complex, since the new ethnographic units were integrated into the former ethnological ones. The collections of the new establishment were: Malayan-Papuan culture; Indo-Chinese culture; American ethnography; West African ethnography; Caucasian collection; Finno-Ugrian room; Hungarians of Cisdanubia; Hungarians of Transdanubia; Hungarians of the Tisza region; Hungarians of Transylvania; ethnography of the minorities in Hungary and objects of archaic occupation (hunting, pastoral life, etc.).¹⁰

The different sections entailed completely different visual narratives, they offered divergent interpretations of their objects, and they linked their objects to different narratives of the national. For instance, the establishment of the fishing collection of the Ethnographic Museum as a separate, distinct sub-

8 Szemkeő (1997), p. 76.

9 Jankó (1989), p. 12.

10 Jankó (2002).

ollection was not a matter of chance, but it signalled the preferences of the professionalizing ethnographic discipline. The existence of a separate fishing collection was due to a coherent theoretical program of Ottó Herman. According to him the study of the contemporary fishing techniques was important because of their alleged links to a gradually disappearing autochthonous – and above all – ethnical Hungarian fishing culture. Most of the objects that were drawn and commented upon in his *A magyar halászat könyve* [*The book of Hungarian fishing*] could be found both at the 1885 national and the 1896 millennial exhibition. So these objects were already ethnicized and associated with the theory of the autochthonous Hungarian character of fishing. Moreover, the symbolic content associated to the objects determined both their separate place in the taxonomy of the National Ethnographic Museum and shaped the interest of the ethnographic discipline in objects of fishing.

The establishment of the Hungarian Ethnographic Society and of the Hungarian Museum of Ethnography took place in the framework of a professionalization process that not only asserted the discipline by developing its institutional mechanisms, but also inscribed rivalling values and narratives of nation and ethnicity. The shift from the editions of folklore texts to the gathering of ethnographic objects brought to the forefront of an emerging discipline visual narratives about community and nationhood.

NATION IN-THE-MAKING.

A HIDDEN TRADITION OF HUNGARIAN ETHNOGRAPHY: THE „TOURIST NETWORK“

Till the mid-19th century, Hungarian travel writing was almost exclusively a privilege of the literate. Travelogues were intimately linked to social status and literary knowledge, and often their writer had never visited the places he or she wrote about. But even if the writer did visit them, the travelogue was still due to act upon complex poetical rules: it was supposed to be the proof of scholarly erudition. That is why travelogues and travel representations were linked less to the empirical experiences of one's travel, but to a scholarly work of reading and compiling sources about the scenes of the travel. During the 19th century the availability of new means of travel, the reform of the train system in the 1870 – 1880s, the new division of time (and the reconceptualization of leisure) all led to the democratization of travel and travel writing. The struggles between the different forms of travel and travel representations were already present in a debate of the early 1850s when the *Encyclopaedia of Recent Knowledge* published a headword dedicated to „tourists.“ Otherwise the encyclopaedia didn't contain any headword on travel or travel writing; this was a sign of the highly domesticated nature of traditional

travel accounts. The way travel accounts should be written did not constitute recent knowledge – their rules and regulations ran in the blood, they needed not to be reinforced. The „recent“ exception was the one that was to be made clear: according to the *Encyclopaedia of Recent Knowledge*, being a tourist was an irregular way to be a traveler. The passage dedicated to tourism and to those having a passion for this kind of travel, implicitly distinguished „good“ travel from „bad“ travel, including the accounts of these types of travels.

According to the headword, „tourists“ were those travelers who traveled without any clear aim (including that of educating themselves and others). They traveled exclusively for the sake of traveling and didn't follow the wellknown rules of things to be seen and heard. In this sense, their travel accounts leaned too much on their own perspectives, giving an exaggeratedly personal account of the travel:

Tourists. That is the name for an unusual category of recent travelers. The name and the concept has English roots since „going on the Great Tour“ is one of the demands regarding gentlemanlike behaviour. The real *tourist* differs from the other travelers in having no precise aim (for instance, a scientific one), traveling for the sake of traveling. It is needed that the traveller should give evidence of fine education in his or her habits, clothing and views, and to be excessively subjective in his or her manner of presentation. That is why the interesting nature of the travelogue depends entirely on the personality of the tourist. Usually the accounts of the tourists are to be counted amongst the light and entertaining readings, since they lack the core of the matters present in other travelers' texts.¹¹

The travels and texts termed and described by the *Encyclopaedia of Recent Knowledge* under the headword of „tourism“ signalled (of course, negatively at that time) a new paradigm in Hungarian travel conception and textual representation of travels. They were the first to witness the gaze of the *curious* traveler, the tourist, but they also spoke about the institutionalization of tourism practices and the nature of these institutions, respectively their uses. The new phenomenon concerned a ceaselessly growing number of people and a great variety of social groups. That is why different ideologies and institutions perceived it as an excellent opportunity to gain audience, popularity and status. Also, the old and the new disciplines took notice of the phenomenon, because it could legitimate their social role. But it was the emerging Hungarian ethnography that benefited especially from its connections with the touristic movement.¹²

From the 1870s onwards the new travelers organized themselves into a series of touristic associations. They were based mainly on social, occupational or regional/local identities and, when listing their aims, they hardly ever touched

11 Pákh, Albert, (ed.), *Újabbkori Ismeretek Tára. Tudományok s politikai és társas élet encyclopaediája VI. Budapest: Heckenast Gusztáv, 1855, p. 368.*

12 On the history and ideological uses of tourism see especially Clifford (1992); Clifford (1997); Royek (1993); Royek – Urry (1997).

upon didactical, national, etc. purposes. The only double-edged aim was the linking of tourism to physical and mental health, and specifically mountain climbing with manhood and gentlemanlike qualities. Of course, these discourses were often permeated with ideas of social order and hierarchy, but they lacked those traces that brought to the foreground the ideologies of the national while linking ethnography with tourism. One of the institutions that stood at the beginning of this process – and implicitly framed most of the other associations – was the Hungarian Carpathian Association. Like most of these associations, they had also a separate newspaper, entitled *Turista Lapok* [Newspaper of Tourists]. The programmatic essays and news published in it from the mid-1880s onward, as well as the texts republished in the scholarly journal *Ethnographia* (the first Hungarian journal of the scholarly ethnographical establishment) defined tourism as a telic activity that was closely linked to the study of the people (*népisme* in Hungarian). Moreover, one of the prominent ethnographers of the age, university professor of ethnography at the University of Kolozsvár (Cluj), Antal Herrmann, defined tourism in his *Tourism and ethnography* (which served as a kind of introduction for *Ethnographia*) as follows: „The land is interesting for us first and foremost as the dwelling-place of the people. [...] Tourism should take people as intimately bound to the land. The tourist is not a misanthrope. Never think of him as of somebody that flees from his fellows to the nature. And how enthralling are the people living on Nature’s bosom! How refreshing are the meetings with them *if we can handle them*. Getting to know the people can be refreshing for a tourist. [...] So, when meeting people, tourists are actually acting hand in hand with ethnographers.“¹³ When defining tourism along with ethnography, Herrmann was inscribing a strong ideological aim into the different favorite social practices of recreation of the time. From this angle tourism was not an aimless travel, but an alleged acting out of one’s belonging to a national community.

What we clearly witness is the way different types of knowledge forms were transformed through their contamination with the discourse and thinking about the folk, and, on the other hand, this sheds light to a possible content of the institutionalization of the folklore studies. It seems that these folklore studies used the immensely popular touristic activities and movements to gain a wider quasi-scientific community around a discipline having still an indefinite status in the 1880s-1890s. Actually, it was such a kind of tourist association – the Transylvanian Tourist Association – that proposed the inclusion of ethnography into the university curriculum for the first time. In an official public letter greeting the appointment of Antal Herrmann to the newly established ethnographic chair of the University of Kolozsvár (Cluj),

13 Herrmann (1891), pp. 16–17 [italics mine – L. T. Sz.]. For other sources from Antal Herrmann, especially relevant in connecting the Hungarian touristic movement with early Hungarian ethnography, see Herrmann (1889); Herrmann (1890); Herrmann (1892); Herrmann (1894); Herrmann (1896); Herrmann (1897); Herrmann (1898); Herrmann (1898a); Herrmann (1899); Herrmann (1900).

the Association urged the newly appointed professor to represent their „noble and national“ aims.¹⁴

A clear sign of a stronger ideological impetus from the side of ethnography (and mostly from those ethnographers that had leading roles in the national touristic associations, like János Jankó or Antal Herrmann) was the fact that the major touristic review of the time established a supplement dedicated exclusively to the ethnographic goals of tourism and to the way that simple tourists should prepare themselves to be helpful to institutional ethnography. The supplement was entitled *Erdély Népei* [*The Folks of Transylvania*]. At the same time, the very same association created a separate section for educators mainly with the aim of emphasizing the ethnographic character of tourism, linking travel and ideologies of health to ethnography – and thus establishing a powerful support for a new discipline *vis-à-vis* old or new rivals, like literature, history or sociology. It was therefore of no surprise that educators were addressed in the following way: „Probably every school-master and school-mistress is aware of the fact that espousing tourism is not only a favour, but their duty at the same time.“¹⁵ In this framework being a „simple,“ „humble“ „aimless“ tourist came to be an increasingly despised possibility: „Those making a pleasure trip and calling themselves tourists – while they look out from the windows of their extra railway carriages – are immensely far from real tourists“¹⁶ – commented a leading scholar on them. The nationalization of tourism by the emerging ethnographic studies came to reposition the cultures of travel within different types of discourses about the national, but on the other hand, the process shed light on the strong premises the emerging new discipline had around the last decades of 19th-century Hungary. One of these premises was linked to the ethnographic object as a commodity. The touristic culture attributed an economic value to the ethnographic objects, and this new value was used and reworked by the touristic associations into an economic narrative about the role of ethnography in economic nation-building.

**RE-WORKING AND PRODUCING THE DIFFERENCE:
THE ECONOMY OF THE ETHNOGRAPHIC OBJECT
AND THE NOVEL ETHNOGRAPHIC VISION OF MODERNIZATION**

It was in the 1880s that the vocabulary of economy began to permeate the ethnographic culture. This was the period when various regional and national exhibitions of arts and crafts offered also samples of ethnographic objects produced by the „domestic industry.“ The 1879 exhibition at Székesfehérvár

14 Herrmann (1898), pp. 20–21.

15 Moussong (1893), p. 44.

16 Rodiczky (1890), p. 68.

was the first to display the cottage industry within the framework of hands-and-crafts products and this didn't occur by accident: the recently established Society for Domestic Industry and the Development of Industry (*Erdélyi Házipar és Iparfejlesztő Egylet*) took care of the presence of the domestic crafts and arts workshop producing exclusively toys – a similarly new institution founded in Kalotaszeg and born out of a deep economic crisis.¹⁷ The 1887 arts and crafts exhibition picturing the ethnographic culture of Hungary through 15 rooms also emphasized domestic industry. In the room dedicated to the ethnography of Kalotaszeg, it portrayed not only customs from the region, but also the carving of toys. This implicitly advertized the local workshop that had begun producing toys. The immense success of the room for Kalotaszeg pushed the workshop to produce not only toys, but costumes, embroideries, *varrottas* and pottery from Kalotaszeg. Through their presence at these exhibitions the ethnographic objects became part of discussions on the possibilities of a new national economic boom. As count Jenő Zichy, the organizer of this and several other exhibitions wrote: a prosperous national economy can be achieved only if consumers stick to the commodities that have been produced within the country.¹⁸ This protectionism soon became a favourite idea of the touristic associations¹⁹, and since *the protection* of the national had been an essential part of the politics of ethnography already before the 1880s, ethnographic objects were embedded fairly smoothly into this economic narrative on the long run.

These successes were reworked by the touristic associations into an economic narrative about the role of ethnography. The commercial uses of the ethnographic commodity, the potential economic value of the ethnographic objects came to be a part of their vocabulary, but in a very peculiar way. As one of the executive officers (and the chief one for the study of national dress) of the national touristic congress planned to be part of the Hungarian millennial celebrations, Antal Herrmann prepared a highly elaborate plan regarding national costumes. He began his proposals by recommending to all the tourist associations „to include into their programs – unless they had done so already – the observation and presentation of the folk, the collection of ethnographic objects and the establishing of ethnographic museums.“ He went on to give grounds for his scholarly position: „It is not only the heritage of the word and the belief that are visibly disappearing among our rural population, but also

17 The building of the regional railway-network between Kalotaszeg and Nagyvárad (Oradea) left the local population without its main source of income deriving from transportation. Cf. György Kövér, *Iparosodás agrárországban. Magyarország gazdaságtörténete 1848–1914*. [The economic history of Hungary 1848–1914]. Budapest: Gondolat Publishing House, 1982.

18 Zichy (1880), pp. 7, 19, 21.

19 The issue was lambasted even in the parliamentary debates of the time. For instance, one of the leaders of the opposition, Albert Apponyi became an ardent protector of the idea: "He [...] confronted the Parliament with the idea that the folk populace of Hungary are actually a hidden source of the fitness to work. Espoused and protected, the domestic forms of industry could further the economic well-being of the folk." (*Vasárnapi Újság* 1879, p. 33). The role of the state in taking the initiative cannot be neglected.

their proper, picturesque and economically important dress is changing. [...] The maintenance of the latter is significant for several reasons“ – he argued and mentioned the economic goal as the top priority. The economic factor came into sight also in his action plan when he proposed that „the tourists should favour the domestic industry of the folk, and especially its clothing aspect [...] This action could be a starting point for broader nationwide movements that would aim at making the folkish popular in all fields of everyday life, be it articles for personal use, mores, literature, arts and society [...] This would hugely contribute to the development of our national output and industrial life, it would make the nation wealthy, powerful and independent.“²⁰

In the 1840s-1870s Hungarian texts fiercely opposed the notion of the ethnographic primitive to that of the civilized: they represented the folk as the depository of ancient values that had been „tragically“ „fading out“ with the advent of modernity. Modernity was thus portrayed in these preparadigmatic texts of mid-19th-century Hungarian ethnography as the past and present peril of the nation. This was one of the reasons why the stigmatization of modernity (including and represented also by industrial progress) was so frequent in these texts. As we saw, from the 1870s onwards the touristic associations viewed the „primitive“ folk culture as the main element in reviving national economy through industrial-sized handicraftsmanship, and thus also the engine behind the possibility of an organic rebirth and modernization of the allegedly destroyed character of the nation. The ethnographic objects as commodities became part of a reconfigured narrative about the relationship between the ethnographic primitive and modernity: „We know quite well that the tourists enthralled and refreshed by the beauties of nature are highly responsive to the primitive, but original folk objects, the so-called souvenirs. [...] Let us naturalize this foreign habit used extensively by others: let us offer the maidenly primitive objects of our handicraft industry to the tourists. [...] If there is anyone among you that was ever in Stockholm you should know that the Swedes are mastering this really well: we should follow them and we'll make our economy grow.“²¹ Gyula Merza even imagined a special sort of ethnographic movement in order to transform the „simple“ ethnographic object into a marketable commodity, and to make the folk sensitive to this difference, forcing them to produce this new type of commodity: „We should make the folk attentive to those peculiarities that can arise the interest of the foreigners or the tourists. [For instance, the] organization of a Transylvanian competition of folk costumes could really focus the attention of the foreigners to our land.“²² Etelka Gyarmathy, one of the founders of the ethnographic arts and crafts movement spoke about the latest huge Western European success-

20 Herrmann (1896), p. 89.

21 A házi és népipar turista szempontból [Handicrafts from the perspective of tourism], Erdély, *January 1901*, pp. 5–6.

22 Merza (1898), p. 16.

es of the Transylvanian handicrafts based on ethnographic objects: „Bánffy-Hunyad, this small town of Kalotaszeg sets the standards of the latest fashion in Paris. It is this small town that establishes what is in vogue regarding kerchiefs, hats, *varrottas*, all kind of embroideries for underwear.“²³ The very idea of the „primitive“ ethnographic commodity being in vogue or setting the latest trends in fashion assigned the alleged primitiveness of the folk a central role in the modern trends. The emphasis laid on the Western European reception and economic successes of the Kalotaszeg workshops made some commentators portray the „primitiveness“ of the Transylvanian ethnographic objects as the first successful attempts of the Transylvanians to be even more modern than the Western Europeans. This new image of modernity based on and intimately interwoven with (and not opposed to) the primitiveness of the folk was radically different from the narrative that viewed ethnographic texts and objects as repositories of ancient national values not destroyed by modernity. This situation made the emerging ethnography portray itself as the national discipline that successfully fused the ancient and the modern. Ethnography could represent itself as both a major discipline of the national heritage and the drive behind a possible economic revival after the economic crisis of the early 1870s.

In the 1870s-1880s this whole framework was linked almost exclusively to Transylvania. For instance, in one of the 1893 issues of the review *Erdély*, József Sztérényi focused on the relationship between „public economy“ and „tourism,“ suggesting that ethnographic sights were the main driving forces behind the Hungarian national economy. He also imagined a future economic priority for Transylvania. The marketing of the Transylvanian exotic and primevalness thus tacitly touched upon an alleged hierarchy of the regions within the Hungarian nation-building process.²⁴ It was exactly in this spirit that the link between the Transylvanian ethnographic objects, tourism as their economic utilizer and the national economy was made in several ethnographic essays. According to the introduction of *Erdély*, that set the goals for the review and the Transylvanian touristic movement: „This realm of the country has specific interests that derive from its special place and history [...] the Transylvanian Carpathian Society [should] preach the beauties of this part of the country and make them useful not only for the individual spirit, but also regarding the national economy.“²⁵ So the new ethnographic attitude towards industry, industrialization, economic growth, economic market not only harmonized the national narrative with economic development, but was an answer to the question as to whether economic progress and the national could be harmonized. This ethnographic narrative was also part of an interesting version of nation-building. It constituted a part of a series of

23 Etelka Gyarmathy in 1887, quoted in Herrmann (1896), p. 89.

24 Sztérényi (1893), p. 274.

25 "Olvasóinkhoz" [To our readers]. *Erdély* 1890, p. 1.

complex attempts to represent the relationships between Transylvania and Hungary, but it also brought to the forefront the novel answer Transylvanian Hungarian elite was trying to give regarding its own roles in Hungary and the empire.

**TOWARDS A FIN-DE-SIÈCLE TRANSYLVANIAN ETHNOGRAPHY?
THE POLITICS OF THE ESTABLISHING
OF THE KOLOZSVÁR (CLUJ) MUSEUM OF ETHNOGRAPHY**

*TRANSLATING THE „WESTERN“ EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE:
THE RE-CONSTRUCTION OF THE NATIONAL ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM
NARRATIVE OF THE WEST*

The Hungarian ethnographic museum conceptions of the 1890s and the models that were commented and debated both in Hungary and in Transylvania could lead us to the roles Transylvanian ethnography was playing in *fin-de-siècle* national identity debates. I have already brought to the forefront the way Hungarian museum politics worked from the „visual turn“ onwards. I have spoken mostly of the reworking of the ethnological museum and the way different conceptions of the national overlapped and struggled in the exhibitions and at the first national permanent exhibition of 1898. It is nonetheless essential to have a deeper look at the way the issue of the ethnographic museum was perceived in the Transylvanian context due mostly to the Transylvanian Carpathian Association, first only a branch of the Hungarian Carpathian Association, then its rival with different aims.

Exactly in the years when the establishing of the first permanent „national“ exhibition took place, a fierce debate arose within the Transylvanian touristic movement upon the models of the Transylvanian museum to be established and its theoretical orientation *vis-à-vis* the Budapest-based museum and its national character. One of the most comprehensive essays written about the issue projected a clear-cut cleavage between the ethnological and the ethnographic way of exhibiting cultures. Its author, Gyula Merza began his Western European museum travelogue by dividing a strong line and creating a dichotomic taxonomy (instead of a more *laissez-faire* type which would have allowed also the mixed versions): „Ethnographic museums can be grouped into two types of institutions: those that exhibit all types of people in different rooms or sections and those which are targeting the exhibition of a sole nation or ethnic group [*népelem*].“²⁶ Merza was extremely confident that the

26 Merza (1899), p. 49.

future Transylvanian ethnographic museum of Kolozsvár (Cluj) should and would aim only at the latter possibility.

Merza stressed the experiences of his stay in Berlin according to the same logic. He reported of the Museum of German Domestic Industry and National Costumes that he strayed upon with huge interest, since it served solely „German national [!] ethnography from 1889 onward.“ When he spoke about his visit to the ethnographic museum of Leipzig, this was again not entirely separate from his present Transylvanian experiences and his future agenda of establishing a museum that would be not only national, but would also emphasize the strong bonds between tourism and ethnography. It was this institution that – according to Merza – joined ethnography with tourism and took the liberty of bringing together ethnographic objects and „art works taken and drawn after nature, i.e., paintings, drawings, panoramas, geographic photos and maps“²⁷. He clearly alluded to the Transylvanian situation of the intimate relationship of tourism and ethnography, and constructed a Western canon for the legitimization of this bond in museal representation when he went on to Scandinavian examples:

Even though they are situated rather unfavourably, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Denmark, Gronland, Iceland, Norway and Lappland have museums that bring to the foreground all the various signs of life of the far Northern Europe.

The Nordiska Muset that was formerly called Scandinavian Ethnographic Museum owes its being to Dr Hazelius Arthur. Originally it was founded in 1872 to protect the Swedish folk culture from the pathological changes due to the changed traffic.

Merza was enthralled by the interiors exhibited and divided according to regions, represented by means of lifesize dolls. Even though he didn't elaborate upon the issue, he seemed surprised that „the museum actually consisted of two distinct parts: the folk museum and the collection about the higher classes.“ Probably that is why he called it a museum of the history of culture – even though he considered the „folk part“ of the institution exemplary for Transylvania.

His fascination with the open spaces where the mores and customs of „the people“ could be learned found a natural goal in the zoo and the Skanzen: he reported on the *Djugarden*, the zoo built in this spirit, emphasizing the circumstance that „the foreigner who visited Stockholm could learn about the whole Swedish people: how they used to live and work, but also how they enjoyed themselves in the present. On holidays and weekends the zoo was a crowded ethnographic museum, with presentations of folk dances and customs in the Skanzen. All of this was happening to the background of the

27 Merza (1898), p. 49.

common people that arrived to the capital city and were dressed in their traditional cloths, enthralling our attention."²⁸ When his systematic survey of Northern European museum traditions and types touched also upon Denmark and the Dansk Folkemuseum that „brought together all [!] the ethnographic objects“ of the Danish people, he was probably referring not to a quantitative totality of the objects, but the systematic character, a kind of qualitative, representative totality of the exhibition, and at the same time he was tacitly setting the standards and the models for the exhibition in Kolozsvár (Cluj). When he emphasized the existence of a special and separate museum for domestic carving culture, probably he was hinting at the Kalotaszeg antecedents.

His conclusion was clearly a pleodary in favour of a distinct type of museum. Although he met not only museums of national ethnography (exhibiting the ethnographies of their own cultures), he definitely translated his German, Czech, but mostly Scandinavian experiences in a peculiar way. This West-East (or to be more specific, Northern-Eastern) type of transfer of knowledge about the exhibitionary culture of ethnographic commodities was subtly biased towards a Transylvanian ethnographic museum overemphasizing the „national“ elements. It looked for Western models that underlined and legitimated this, and concealed or even removed the ethnological elements of the museum culture he had met: „[...] in Scandinavia it is the national ethnography (including village dwelling places, clothing and other objects) that is valued and appreciated both by the king and the nation.“²⁹

It is useful to position Merza's Western and Northern European survey on the national character of the museums of these realms in the context of the opinion of his fellow scholar, the first director of the ethnographic museum. In 1897 (and even in 1898 when the permanent exhibition was opened), János Jankó, the well-read and scholarly established young director of the ethnographic section decided to participate in the continuation of the so-called Zichy project. His scholarly travel was not direct and straightforward to Russia, but led through Berlin and Finland with the clear aim of cataloguing and interpreting the Finno-Ugric objects gathered in several Western and Northern museums. This was the occasion (and of course, probably the unavoidable comparison with the state of the art in matters of Hungarian ethnographic museology) when and why he commented upon the Northern museums in several papers that have been only recently published.³⁰ Jankó touched upon the same reasons for establishing the museums that Merza did, and stressed the same idea of a wide social touristic movement that Merza praised. He

28 *Idem.*, p. 52.

29 *Ibidem.*

30 Jankó (1893). See especially the chapters entitled *Néprajzi múzeumok Finnországban* [Ethnographic museums in Finland] and *A finn néprajzi múzeum tipológiai csoportjai és sorozatai Helsinki-ben* [The typological groups and series of the Finnish Ethnographical Museum] in Jankó (1893), pp. 47–73, 74–146.

saw a technically well-organized museum culture that abounded in objects regarding the Finno-Ugrians, and which allegedly shed clearer light on the historical object culture of the Hungarians. While important figures of Hungarian ethnography offered interpretations of the Western and Northern museums and modelled the new ethnographic museum of Budapest accordingly, well-known figures of the Transylvanian Hungarian touristic association formulated their wish for a separate and independent Transylvanian museum by translating and reworking the premises of the Museum of Ethnography of Budapest. This pointed to a somewhat independent Transylvanian ethnographic establishment with a partly separate agenda. The premises of ethnography used for establishing the Ethnographic Museum of Kolozsvár (Cluj) were partly different from those seen in the case of the Hungarian Museum of Ethnography.

***TRANSYLVANIAN ETHNOGRAPHY:
THE SOURCE AND CAUSE OF DIFFERENT TYPES
OF „DOUBLE-TALK“ OF THE NATIONAL?***

The existence of this partly double (Hungarian-Transylvanian) framework of Hungarian ethnography could be seen by the way some well-known Hungarian ethnographers of the time acted in a curiously different way and employed different vocabulary in the Hungarian and in the Transylvanian context. For instance, those ethnographers (like Jankó and Herrmann) who behaved in a certain way in a Budapest milieu, acted in a different way in the Transylvanian context. While having written a very up-to-date, professional and detached monograph on Kalotaszeg, focusing on the material culture of the region, János Jankó used the vocabulary of the Transylvanian Carpathian Society on the occasion of his lectures held in local communities: „It is a most urgent task to collect the whole of Hungarian ethnography, so as we could save and revive all that is truly Hungarian in the Hungarian. This should happen as soon as possible till the culture absorbs even the virgin territories and thus it nips the development of the national character in its bud.“ Jankó didn't stop here and this made his position so intriguing. The young scholar went on alluding to the peculiar place he was offering to the Transylvanians in his mental construction of cultural decay in which ethnography played the part of the saviour discipline that would regain the fading and corrupted national character of the Hungarians: „Ladies and gentlemen, please, have a look at the map of contemporary Hungary and all of you will see – what we all painfully feel – that the people of our country are too colorful. The Hungarians are crowded homogeneously mainly on Alföld and Dunántúl. But this homogeneous unity has already been corroded by the ethnic groups, they are eating it up step by step. [...] This [process] will give us strength for our national fight, which – especially for the Hungarians from Transylvania – is the

struggle for life.³¹ Jankó's assertions were characteristic to the premises that characterized the Transylvanian Hungarian touristic association: for instance, Dezső Radnóti, its highly influential member reckoned his society was a peculiar one among all the other similar groups. According to him it represented „the vital issue“ of „winning over the citizens speaking a language other than Hungarian to the spirit of the national state.“³² Similarly, when the local councillors visit the newly established ethnographic museum in 1902, the president of the Transylvanian touristic society sketched not only the hardships of the gathering process of the ethnographic objects, but he also spoke highly about the alleged individuality of the Ethnographic Museum of Kolozsvár (Cluj): „Concerning its character, this museum is unique because it entails only the objects of a single region. The similar foreign museums are colonial, the character of the ethnographic museum in Budapest is too international and cosmopolitan.“³³ When the president was defining the peculiar character of the local ethnographic museum in comparison to an alleged Western and Budapest model, he used an Occidental argument: he translated the values of the ethnographic museum of Budapest as being Western, non-national and undesirable.

So, this ideal of a Transylvanian ethnography that had different functions from the „general“ Hungarian one was already at the foundations of the idea of a separate ethnographic Transylvanian museum. Antal Herrmann, in one of his first proposals, had already put forward the rationale of a museum that not only presented, but also re-presented, suggested and projected interethnic relationships, including the socialization of the different social and ethnic communities regarding their relationship with the Hungarian political nation. He wrote: „In Transylvania there has been for a long time what one could term ethnographic common knowledge [*köztudat*]. And it is only Transylvania that has monographic ethnographic literature.³⁴ [After the ethnographic initiatives of the Saxons and the Romanians] there are only the Hungarians left – their supremacy obliges them to gain a leading role in ethnographic research of all the ethnic groups populating this area [hazarész].“³⁵ This was the premise on which he founded his claim for „a Transylvanian general Carpathian Museum in Kolozsvár [Cluj], with a special regard to the touristic and ethnographic relationships.“ The building he thought to be the most fit for the functions of an ethnographic museum wasn't a neutral place: „[The best place for it] would be the birthplace of King Mátyás that has been consecrated by the national feeling“³⁶ The opening of the museum wasn't neutral either: it

31 Jankó (1892), pp. 117, 122–123.

32 Radnóti (1894), p. 341.

33 'Kolozsvár törvényhatósága a múzeumban' [The officials of Kolozsvár (Cluj) in the museum], *Erdély* 1903, pp. 45, 46.

34 He was probably referring to János Jankó's monograph on Kalotaszeg, the first systematic work dedicated to an ethnographic region in Hungarian ethnography.

35 Herrmann (1898), p. 14.

36 *Ibidem*

coincided with the similarly ceremonial erection of the statue of King Mátyás. In fact, they were viewed both by the organizers, and by the participants as two constituent parts of the same event. That is why the grand opening of the museum was perceived also as a kind of symbolic appropriation, *magyarization* of the Transylvanian space. Even though the vocabulary of the opening ceremony often returned to the language of an imperial patriotism (due to the presence and patronage of Prince József Ágost), there was a strong discourse emphasizing the common origin, and implicitly excluding those groups that could not be subsumed under this criterion: „Let us unfold the flag of our society here, in this place, in the house of birth of our beloved Corvin Mátyás, and promise to triumphantly go around the whole Transylvania where everlasting beauties of the nature, overt or hidden treasures, fights gained or lost are calling us and make us love the earth that had been gained by our Fathers [!] with their blood.“³⁷ Due to the presence of the imperial prince, the opening speech of the museum, delivered by baron Arthur Feilitzsch, played subtly on two possible meanings of what or who was exhibited, and whose cultural progress should the visitor grasp along the exhibition: „[...] our museum is meant to bring the foreigner to us, to offer material for the scholars and to prove our cultural progress and civilization.“³⁸ For the representative of the emperor and in the context of an imperial nationalism the speech probably hinted at Transylvania as being part of the empire and its civilization. For the members of the local Hungarian touristic association, it was a speech on the cultural superiority both of the Transylvanians in general, and of the Hungarians in particular.

The opening of the Ethnographic Museum of Kolozsvár (Cluj), (and the beginning of the local ethnographic university studies also in 1902) made visible different, struggling identity models and options. The ceremony used and sometimes translated imperial patriotism in view of the presence of the members of the imperial family. This type of discourse implied a *double (or even triple) loyalty* to the empire, the state and the local community; its recurrent cognitive metaphor was Switzerland. The *Romanians* and *the folk* appeared in it as the subjects of a civilizing process: „we should civilize them so as they could understand and appropriate this loyalty.“ It was intertwined with economic arguments: for example, this type of loyalty was seen to assure peace and thus economic well-being. *Tolerance* was a recurrent concept of the framework in the sense of accepting the (ethnic or social) otherness in change of the double/triple loyalty („we are inviting you and taking you as you are in exchange for your loyalty to the region, state and/or empire“).

37 "Az Erzsébet-zászló felavatása," *Erdély*, nos. 9–12, 1902.

38 *Idem*.

The other identity option present in the speeches reworked the former model into an exclusivist ethnocultural framework. This implied loyalty to the state (and sometimes to the region), and this loyalty was measured by language differences. It was again intertwined with economic arguments: in such types of narratives this type of loyalty assured a homogeneous and sure economic well-being (with)in the state. *Tolerance* was again a recurrent concept here, but having another logic than in the former case: „we are tolerant, because we are inviting you to join the community, we don't exclude you – but if you don't master the language, you are excluding yourselves, because this equals the fact that you don't wish to become a loyal member of the community.“

But the visual logic of the exhibition was a significant sign that the latter narrative was embedded into the logic of the selection and organization of the folk objects, and representations of the folk and the land. This narrative was peculiar since both the Romanians and the Saxons withdrew from the preliminary discussions on the museum, but on the other hand, they both withdrew because of the tendency of the narrative that would unfold. So it was both a cause and a consequence of this situation that the museum was organized according to the following logic, as reported by the annual detailed accounts of the touristic society: „The museum takes up 12 rooms of the birthplace of King Mátyás. The far left room of the ground floor contains the library of the society [...] The nearby room is closed and used as a store room for the identical objects. The left room is the first to open the exhibition: it is the room where our king was born and exhibits historical [Transylvanian] objects like the skirt of Brandenburi Katalin, the church chairs of Mihály Apaffy [...] together with the flag of our society. The next rooms are at the disposal of the balneological section [...] The whole upper floor and all the corridors are taken by the ethnographic section according to the following rationale: 1) several types of *varrotas*; 2) a traditional room from Kalotaszeg; 3) a traditional kitchen from Kalotaszeg; 4) weaving and spinning; 5) domestic clay industry; 6) ancient trades (hunting, fishing, shepherd activities); 7) agriculture.“³⁹

While the museum grasped the logic and the model of the Hungarian Ethnographic Museum, it also rewrote this „Western“ tradition by submitting its own central ethnographic loci and the objects characteristic to them. By this gesture the new exhibitionary space was made both to complete and broaden, but also to rival the Hungarian ethnographic scene offered in the museum of Budapest. The ethnography shown here attributed a strong exclusivist ethnic character to itself and spoke about its role in strong metaphors of ethnic struggle: „One could say that Transylvania, the classical land of national selfpreservation in the past, is still an undiscovered realm not only for the foreigners, but also for us. It is its rediscovery our society is aiming at: the Transylvanian

39 "A választmány éves jelentése" [The annual report of the association], *Erdély*, 1902, p. 54. Also cf. Semayer (1902), pp. 141–149.

Carpathian Society attempts to lead this region back to the united bosom of the Hungarian state, since it is this part of the country upon which the fate of the whole nation and state rests. If it falls, the nation will fall, too."⁴⁰

This central role in an alleged ethnic fight attributed to Transylvanian ethnography could explain the centrality of the emerging discipline among all the other humanistic and social disciplines of the new disciplinary system. According to the taxonomy of the Transylvanian Ethnographic Museum: „[A]ll the objects exhibited can be divided into two separate groups: the proper ethnographic part includes folk architecture, interiors, clothing and embroidery, working tools, folk customs, folkish [*népies*] literature [!], music, dance and finally sociology [!]. The second group comprises *the complementary sciences of ethnography, i.e. geography, anthropology, demography and linguistics (dealing with the language of the folk)*.”⁴¹

The exhibition placed non-Hungarian to a peripheral position. The only representations of non-Hungarian inhabitants of Transylvania were the visual ones, respectively some Romanian-painted sacred pictures in the antechamber along with „Seklar glass paintings of a much better quality.“ They were placed outside the core of the main exhibition, in a narrative sequence that was evaluating them and this evaluation didn't turn out to be favourable to them. Almost all the industrial-quality objects were Hungarian ones, and in the logic of the exhibition they became master examples of technical progress. This was reinforced by one of the detailed newspaper descriptions of the ethnographic museum: „The aim of this collection is to bring together all the commonly used objects of all the people that populate the historically and naturally bordered territory of Transylvania. They speak different languages and are at *different levels of civilization*.”⁴² Due to the strong impact of the Transylvanian Carpathian Society the image of Kolozsvár (Cluj) as the new ethnographic capital became intimately interwoven with a strong exclusivist ethnic character and the overemphasizing of the role of ethnography in bringing Transylvania and the Transylvanian Hungarian to the forefront of Hungarian nationbuilding: „The foreigner would obtain a comprehensive and impressive image of the land by means of a well-organized Transylvanian ethnographic museum. This latter could help them to compile an accurate tour guide that overlaps what they wish to see: one can immediately learn what is worth seeing. But it is also through the museum that our fellow countrymen [*honfitársaink*] [i.e., both the Hungarians from Hungary and the ethnic groups from Transylvania] will finally be able to encounter this land of dreams [*tündérbkert*], this most beautiful creature of God, so they can actually learn about the nation and their place in it. This is the real and fundamental

40 "Erdélyi útikalauz. Előfizetési felhívás" [Guide to Transylvania], *Erdély*, nos. 1–4, 1899.

41 Merza (1899a), p. 15 [emphasis mine – L. T. Sz.].

42 Hankó (1902), p. 80 [emphasis mine – L. T. Sz.].

condition of the improvement of the individual and of the folk. [...] This special function would make the town [i.e., Kolozsvár (Cluj)] the main spot and milestone of Transylvanian tourism, and an ethnographic capital."⁴³

Transylvanian ethnography claimed a central and unifying disciplinary role to itself that was unprecedented for Hungarian ethnography. This is so, since the discursive field surrounding it saw it to fulfil allegedly special („social“) tasks. Due to the perception of these special tasks it came to rival the Hungarian model and to rewrite the configuration of Hungarian nation-building.

CONCLUSIONS

The Hungarian ethnographic discipline, that emerged in the second half of 19th century out of the restructured traditional literary system, broadened and partly shifted its disciplinary interest from the folklore texts to the objects of „the folk“ from the 1870s onwards. This went hand in hand with the discovery, exploration and remaking of the contemporary immensely popular visual narratives of the national. The presence of ethnographic narratives at the international, national and regional exhibitions, and in the recently established public museums was not only a mere fascination with the emerging discipline with the visual, but also a constitutive part of the representational politics of early ethnography. That is why the different ethnographic exhibitions and the establishment of the different Hungarian ethnographic museums became a battlefield of the struggling versions of the national.⁴⁴

Tourism played a strong role in these debates, and influenced the way they were shaping the emerging ethnographic discipline. Preparadigmatic and early professional ethnography discovered the touristic phenomenon during its search to find a wider (a „national“) audience that would strengthen its social role and position as the alleged national discipline. The large number of people practicing different forms of tourism became a fertile ground for professional ethnographers that established many institutional and ideological links between their discipline and touristic practices. But the internal cleavage

43 *Ibidem*. In a contemporary biography of József Sándor, the founder of the Transylvanian Cultural Society of the Hungarians, and one of the founders of the Transylvanian Carpathian Society, the writer concluded somewhat surprisingly after a seemingly innocent beginning: "The drive behind his scholarly activities was the ethnic question, about which he had always made interesting declarations. He emphasized that he was a true friend of Romania, which he considered a huge ally of our homeland and nation against Slavism, but the only condition of this alliance was that they [i.e., Romanians] should leave Transylvania alone." Regarding the debates with the Germans, see *Deutsches Tageblatt* 1894, p. 6219, *Kronstadter Zeitung* 1894, p. 133.

44 Just like 19th-century Eastern European national characterology, also 19th-century Hungarian ethnographic museum-making was the battleground of the competing projects of "defending the local tradition" and "importing institutions from the West." For the specific clusters and configurations of the former process, see Balázs Trencsényi's paper in this volume.

between the Budapest-based Hungarian Carpathian Society (that geographically focused mainly on the Tatras) and the Transylvanian Carpathian Society brought to the forefront the cleavages inside the different ethnographies of the national within the emerging discipline. One of the most spectacular terrains of these cleavages was the way they perceived, used, and reconfigured Western models of the ethnographic museum. Positioning themselves and each other to „Western modernity“ in divergent forms, they imagined rather different immediate tasks for the new discipline. The different routes of interpreting the Western models split the emerging Hungarian ethnography into rivalling values and narratives towards the conceptions of the national, and signalled divergent answers of the alleged discipline of the national towards modernity, giving different answers to the *fin-de-siècle* question of whether the national and the modern could be harmonized.

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