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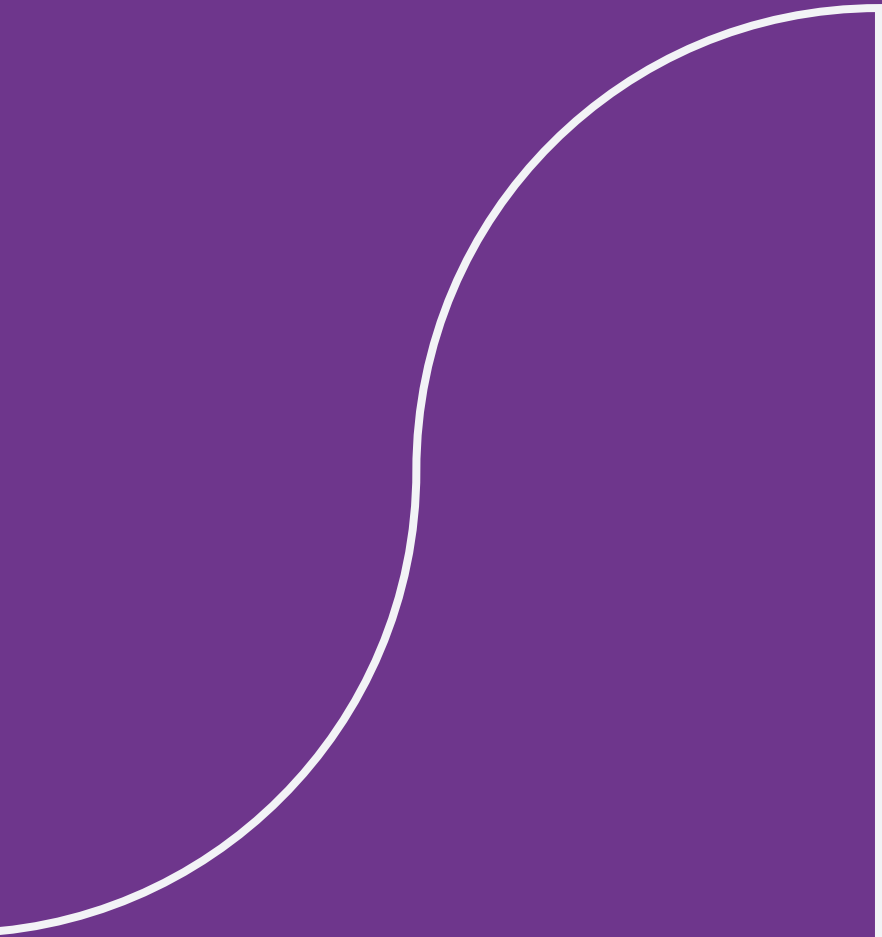
HERO / Heritage of Romanticism

Papers presented at the
HERO / Heritage of Romanticism
Conference,
held at the Petőfi Literary Museum,
Budapest, 15–16 November 2023

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Der Nationalheld, die Nation als Held

– DIE TRADITION DER LITERARISCHEN UND KULTURELLEN HELDENBILDUNG IN UNGARN IN DER FRÜHEN NEUZEIT

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In den letzten Jahren / Jahrzehnten beschäftigt sich die Forschung der Literatur und Kulturgeschichte der frühen Neuzeit immer wieder mit der Frage der kollektiven Erinnerung und Gedächtnis der Zeit, vor allem im Bezug mit den Themen der Heimat und Nation, Patriotismus und Identität. Betreffend die ungarische Kulturgeschichte der frühen Neuzeit können dabei einzelne Elemente des ethnischen und religiösen kollektiven Bewusstseins hervorgehoben werden, die auf dem Grenzgebiet zwischen dem Katholizismus und Islam entstanden sind und in der ungarischen Kulturgeschichte eine langanhaltende, identitätsstiftende Rolle spielten.

Die sog. „Türkenfurcht“, die ab dem 14. Jahrhundert vor dem Hintergrund der osmanischen Expansion auftritt und sich nach der Einnahme Konstantinopels 1453 bedeutend verstärkte,¹ beförderte die Herausbildung einer ideologischen Basis für eine Vielzahl von Alteritäts- und Identitätskonstruktionen in mehreren europäischen Literaturen. Der Humanist Enea Silvio Piccolomini

1 EBERMANN, Richard: Die Türkenfurcht. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der öffentlichen Meinung in Deutschland während der Reformationszeit. Phil. Diss. Halle-Wittenberg, Halle 1904. – KISSLING, Hans Joachim: *Türkenfurcht und Türkenhoffnung* im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert. In: *Südost-Forschungen* 23 (1964), 1–18. – SCHULZE, Winfried: Reich und Türkengefahr im späten 16. Jahrhundert. Studien zu den politischen und gesellschaftlichen Auswirkungen einer äußeren Bedrohung. München 1978. – Europa und die osmanische Expansion im ausgehenden Mittelalter. Hg. v. Franz-Reiner ERKENS. Berlin 1997 (Zeitschrift für historische Forschung; Beiheft 20). – MEUTHEN, Erich: Der Fall von Konstantinopel und der lateinische Westen. In: *Historische Zeitschrift* 237/1 (1983), 1–35. – DELUMEAU, Jean : *La peur en Occident (XIVe-XVIIIe siècles). Une cité assiégée*. Paris 1978, 262–272. – GÖLLNER, Carl: Die Türkenfrage in der öffentlichen Meinung Europas im 16. Jahrhundert (= *Turcica*. Bd. 3), București -Baden-Baden 1978 (Bibliotheca bibliographica Aureliana 70), 23–26. – HÖFERT, Almut: Den Feind beschreiben. „Türkengefahr“ und europäisches Wissen über das Osmanische Reich 1450–1600. Phil. Diss. Florenz 2001, Frankfurt am Main-New York 2003 (Campus Historische Studien 35).

(1405–1464) und spätere Papst Pius II. (1458–1464) benannte ein Jahr nach der Einnahme Konstantinopels auf dem Reichstag in Frankfurt die „Türkenfrage“ als eine gesamteuropäische Herausforderung und proklamierte als Gegenentwurf hierzu das Bild eines einheitlichen, christlichen Europas. Ich zitiere: „wenn wir die Wahrheit gestehen wollen, hat die Christenheit in vielen Jahrhunderten keine größere Schmach erlebt als jetzt. Denn in früheren Zeiten sind wir nur [...] in fremden Ländern geschlagen worden, jetzt aber wurden wir in Europa, also in unserem Vaterland, in unserem eigenen Haus, in unserem eigenen Wohnsitz, aufs schwerste getroffen“.²

Das Bild des heidnischen Feindes, der nun „unser Vaterland, unser eigenes Haus“, also die Festung des christlichen Europas bedrohte, nahm zunehmend radikalere Züge an. Das „wilde und gottlose türkische Volk“, das bis dahin als nur einer der ketzerischen Feinde behandelt wurde, wird besonders infolge der propagandistischen Bestrebungen der Reformation zur „Geißel Gottes“, zum „Erzfeind“ und „Verfolger des Christentums“, zum „barbarischen Volk der Apokalypse“.³ Dieses Osmanenbild war in zahlreichen Literaturen verbreitet und blieb bis ins ausgehende 17. Jahrhundert europaweit in den literarischen und kulturellen Diskursen dominant. Ungarn und die ostmitteleuropäischen Regionen, die dem osmanischen Vormarsch an exponiertester Stelle gegenüberstan-

2 „Neque, si verum fateri volumus, multis ante seculis maiorem ignominiam passa est quam modo Christiana societas. retroactis namque temporibus in Asia atque in Affrica, hoc est in alienis terris, vulnerati fuimus, nunc vero in Europa, id est in patria, in domo propria, in sede nostra percussi cesique sumus.“ PICCOLOMINI, Enea Silvio: Rede „Constantinopolitana clades“ in Frankfurt am 15. Okt. 1454. Pii II orationes politicae et ecclesiasticae. Hg. v. Johannes Dominicus MANSI. Bd. 1–3. Lucca 1755–1759, hier Bd. 1 (1755), 263–285, hier, 263. – Eine Neuedition der Rede mit Kommentar und umfangreicher Bibliographie jetzt in: Deutsche Reichstagsakten unter Kaiser Friedrich III. V/2: Reichsversammlung zu Frankfurt 1454. Bearb. v. Johannes HELMRATH unter Mitarbeit v. Gabriele ANNAS. München 2013 (Deutsche Reichstagsakten. Ältere Reihe XIX/2), 463–565, hier 495–496. – Zur neuen semantischen Codierung des „Europa“-Begriffs vor dem Hintergrund der osmanischen Bedrohung: MERTENS, Dieter: „Europa, id est patria, domus propria, sedes nostra ...“, zu Funktionen und Überlieferung lateinischer Türkenreden im 15. Jahrhundert. In: Europa und die osmanische Expansion im ausgehenden Mittelalter (wie Anm. 1), 39–57. – HÖFERT (wie Anm. 1), 62–68. – HELMRATH, Johannes: Enea Silvio Piccolomini (Pius II.) - Ein Humanist als Vater des Europagedankens? In: Themenportal Europäische Geschichte (2007), URL: <http://www.europa.clio-online.de/2007/Article=118>. (20.10.2013)

3 Középkori históriák oklevelekben (1001-1410) [Mittelalterliche Historien in Urkunden (1001-1410)]. Hg. v. Gyula KRISTÓ. Szeged 1992, 224, 244–245, 257, 260, 271. Vgl. FODOR, Pál: The View of the Turk in Hungary: the Apocalyptic Tradition and the Red Apple in Ottoman–Hungarian Context. In: Les traditions apocalyptiques au tournant de la chute de Constantinople. Hg. v. Benjamin LELLOUCH und Stéphane YERASIMOS. Paris 2000 (Varia Turcica 33), 99–131. – BOHNSTEDT, John W.: The Infidel Scourge of God. The Turkish Menace as Seen by German Pamphleteers of the Reformation Era. In: Transactions of the American Philosophical Society 58/9 (1968), 1–58. – BISAHA, Nancy: „New Barbarian“ or Worthy Adversary? Humanist Constructs of the Ottoman Turks in 15th Century Italy. In: Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe, Perception of Other. Hg. v. Michael FRASSETTO and David R. BLANKS. New York 1999, 185–205.

den, spielten in dieser Entwicklung eine besondere Rolle.⁴ Wie Martin Luther anmerkte: „... wir Deutschen gute Gesellen, saufen, fressen, schlagen die Fenster aus, reißen die Ofen ein, verspielen auf einen Abend hundert oder tausend, auch wohl mehr Gülden, und vergessen dieweil die Türken, der in dreissig Tagen mit einem Haufen leichter Pferde in Wittenberg sein kann, es brennen und belagern...“⁵ Dahingegen war die Türkengefahr in weiten Teilen Ostmitteleuropas, unter anderem auch in Ungarn, ein reales und schwerwiegendes Problem.

Diese militärische, politische aber auch religiöse und kulturelle Auseinandersetzung mit der Türkengefahr hat in Ungarn nicht nur das Feindbild stark und langfristig beeinflusst, sondern sie hat auch den Entwurf eines besonderen Selbstbildes befördert. Mein Vortrag soll also ausgehend von der Genese, Entwicklung und Wirkung der ‚Hetero-Images‘ der Osmanen vor allem die Entstehung und Veränderung des wichtigsten ungarischen Selbstbildes der Zeit, als das Bild der Nation als Held und Beschützer der europäischen Christenheit analysieren.

Der Kampf gegen die Osmanen erhielt also ab der zweiten Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts einen stark religiös-ideologischen Charakter. Durch das Auftreten Martin Luthers und der Reformatoren wurde die konkrete Türkenfurcht theologisch-metaphysisch überformt: Luther sah in den Türkennöten kein (oder nicht nur) ein militärisches, sondern vielmehr ein abstraktes, theologisches Problem. In seinen frühen Schriften⁶ riet er sogar vom Krieg gegen „den heidnischen Feind“ ab.⁷

Diese Auffassung trat ab dem Ende der 1520er Jahre in seinen Schriften zunehmend in den Hintergrund, doch die Position, der zufolge dieser Kampf mit einer durch das Schwert geleisteten Gegenwehr gegen das Strafgericht gleichzusetzen und somit zum Scheitern verurteilt war, blieb jedoch sowohl in

4 GROTHAUS, Maximilian: Der „Erbeindt christlichen Nahmens“. Studien zum Türken-Feindbild in der Kultur der Habsburgermonarchie zwischen 16. und 18. Jahrhundert. Bd. 1–2, Diss. Graz 1986. – JANKOVICS, József: The Image of Turks in Hungarian Renaissance Literature. In: Europa und die Türken in der Renaissance. Hg. v. Bodo GUTHMÜLLER und Wilhelm KÜHLMANN. Tübingen 2000 (Frühe Neuzeit 54), 267–273. – RATAJ, Tomáš: České země v stínu púlměsíce. Obraz Turka v raně novověké literatuře z českých zemí [Die böhmischen Länder im Schatten des Halbmonds. Das Türkenbild in der frühneuzeitlichen Literatur aus den böhmischen Ländern]. Praha 2002. – ĐUKIĆ, Davor: Sultanova djeca: predodžbe Turaka u hrvatskoj književnosti od 16. do 18. stoljeća [Die Kinder des Sultans. Die Wahrnehmung der Türken in der kroatischen Literatur zwischen dem 16. und dem 18. Jahrhundert]. Zadar 2003. – FORGÓ, András: Überlegungen zum Wandel des Osmanenbildes im Königreich Ungarn der Frühen Neuzeit. In: Repräsentationen der islamischen Welt im Europa der Frühen Neuzeit. Hg. v. Gabriele HAUG-MORITZ und Ludolf PELIZAEUS. Münster 2010, 75–94.

5 Zitiert nach EBERMANN (wie Anm. 1), 15.

6 wie den Erläuterungen zu den Thesen über die Kraft der Abflüsse („Resolutiones disputationum de indulgentiarum virtute“) von 1518

7 Vgl. KRISLING (wie Anm. 1), 11. – EHMANN (wie Anm. 11), 204–205.

Luthers und auch Melanchtons Argumentation weiterhin zentral.⁸ Hinter dieser Auffassung steht die Überzeugung Luthers, dass die Osmanen nicht oder nicht nur als eine weltliche Macht, sondern als eine Strafe, eine „Geißel oder Zornesrute Gottes“ (flagellum et virga Dei) für die Sünden der Christenheit angesehen werden sollen.

Neben den eindeutigen Parallelen der ‚Türkenpropaganda‘ können einige wesentliche Unterschiede zwischen der deutschen und der ungarischen Fremdbildkonstruktion aufgezeichnet werden, wobei der wichtigste ist, dass Luthers antikrieglerische Haltung in der ungarischen Literatur so gut wie gar nicht rezipiert wurde. Ganz im Gegenteil: Vor dem Hintergrund der kontinuierlich voranschreitenden osmanischen Expansion kam Piccolominis humanistischer Idee einer europäischen und christlichen Identität eine besondere Tragweite zu.⁹ Einige in diesem Kontext konstitutive mittelalterliche Topoi wurden in der ungarischen Literatur und Kultur wiederentdeckt und mit einer neuen, erweiterten Bedeutung versehen.

In diesem Sinne bildete sich nicht nur in Ungarn, sondern in mehreren Ländern Mitteleuropas (zB. in Polen oder auch in Kroatien) eine ideologisierte Selbstwahrnehmung in Bezug auf die Abwehr der Osmanen heraus, welche dann in im Zuge dieses Prozesses etwa ab der Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts verstärkt wurde: Das Volk wurde als Schild und Schutzmauer des Christentums (propugnaculum et antemurale Christianitatis) identifiziert.

In Ungarn betrachten sich erst der König, später das ganze Land als Vertreter der universalen bzw. europäischen christlichen Gemeinschaft, die durch den osmanischen Feind gefährdet waren. Dieser Gedanke wurde zuerst von Papst Johannes XXIII., später von dem polnischen König Wladislaw (Jagiello) III. ausformuliert, der nach seiner Berufung zum ungarischen König die Bedeutung der beiden Länder – Ungarn und Polen – in der Verteidigung gegen die Osmanen betont. Er nennt Ungarn „Mauer und Schild“ (murus et clipeus fidelium), das „zum Ruhme des Namen Gottes, zum Schutze des christlichen Glaubens“ dient.¹⁰

In der Folgezeit nahm die Vorstellung einer kollektiven, heldenhaften Aufopferung für das christliche Europa einen immer breiteren Raum in der ungarischen Literatur und Historiographie ein. Diesen Paradigmenwandel illustriert die zeitgenössische Schilderung der Schlacht bei Mohács aus der Feder des

8 GÖLLNER, *Türkenfrage* (wie Anm. 1), 176.

9 PICCOLOMINI, *Constantinopolitana clades* (wie Anm. 2).

10 Varga, J. János: *Europa und „die Vormauer des Christentums“*. In: Guthmüller, Bodo: *Europa und die Türken in der Renaissance*. Tübingen: Niemeyer 2000, 58. Vgl.: Terbe, Lajos: *Egy európai szállóige életrajza (Magyarország a kereszténység védőbástyája)*. In: *Egyetemes Philologiai Közöny*. 60 (1936), 307–346; Benda, Kálmán: *A végvári harcok ideológiája*. In: *Történelmi Szemle* 1 (1936), 16.

humanistischen Geschichtsschreibers István Brodarics (ca. 1490–1539), Bischof von Waitzen (ung. Vác) und Kanzler König Ludwigs II.: „Seitdem wir, geführt vom gnädigen Christus, Skythien verlassen und den Glauben von Christus angenommen haben, waren wir stets Schild und Bastei der anderen Christen“.¹¹

Im 15. Jahrhundert kam der Topos außerhalb Ungarns eher nur in diplomatischen Schriften zur Geltung. Die Niederlage bei Mohács fand zB. zwar einen enormen Widerhall in der zeitgenössischen Literatur und Berichterstattung, doch laut die Untersuchungen von Béla Pukánszky bezüglich der Auseinandersetzung mit Mohács in der deutschen Öffentlichkeit am Beispiel von Volksliedern und den Neuen Zeitungen, wird die Schlacht „nur“ als eine persönliche Tragödie des verstorbenen Königs interpretierten.¹² Die damals in der ungarischen Literatur immer öfter auftretende Vorstellung von der ungarischen Nation als „Schild und Schutzmauer des gesamten Christentums“, deren Untergang mit dem Untergang der gesamten europäischen Christenheit gleichgesetzt wurde, ist in diesen ausländischen Publikationen noch nicht zu finden.

Das Bild der *defensor Christianitatis*, als Held der Verteidigung des christlichen Europas, hat sich erst später, im Laufe der Türkenkriege, also im späten 16. und eher im 17. Jahrhundert in der europäischen Literatur ausgebreitet, und das europäische Fremdbild über Ungarn bestimmt. Das Topos hat in dieser Zeit weiterhin noch eine religiös-ideologische Funktion erfüllt, welche auf die ideologische Basis des Kampfes des christlichen Europas gegen die Türken basierte.

In den Zügen dieser Entwicklung wurde das Bild auch auf einzelne Städte, wie Eger und Szigetvár sowie auch auf einzelne Personen projiziert und hat die Entstehung der Großzahl von literarischen und kulturellen Helden mit sich gebracht.

Das wichtigste und wohl bekannteste Beispiel hierbei ist das in ganz Mitteleuropa verbreitete Heldenbild von Miklós Zrínyi. Bereits im Jahr 1587 wurde ein Album über den szigetvárer Held mit dem Titel *De Sigetho Hungariae propugnaculo* (Witenbergae, 1587) herausgegeben, was im 17. Jahrhundert von zahlreichen Werken im Bereich der Literatur und bildenden Kunst ebenso in Ungarn wie Mitteleuropa gefolgt wurde. In Ungarn sind davon der *Szigeti veszedelem Der Fall der Festung Szigetvár* (1647) und das Bild mit den Titel *Zrínyi Miklós szigetvári hős apoteózisa* (Ende d. 16. Jhts).

11 „az időtől fogva, amelyben a jóságos Krisztus isten vezetésével Szkiítiából kijöttünk és Krisztus hitét fölvevttük, a többi kereszténynek mindig pajza és bástyája voltunk“ (eigene Übersetzung). Zitiert nach FODOR, View of the Turk in Hungary (wie Anm. 3), 103.

12 PUKÁNSZKY, Béla: Mohács és az egykorú német közvélemény [Mohács und die öffentliche Meinung im damaligen Deutschland]. In: Mohácsi emlékönyv 1526. Hg. v. Imre LUKINICH. Budapest 1926, 277–294.

Die Szene des unbekanntenen ungarischen Malers zeigt Zrínyi im Kampfanzug, kniend vor dem Kreuz in zeitgemäßen Anzug, seine Waffen und das kaiserliche Adlerbanner werden der allegorischen Gattung entsprechend von Engeln getragen. Eine lateinische Inschrift auf einer weißen, geschlitzten Fahne weist darauf hin, dass es sich um eine authentische Darstellung von Miklós Zrínyi handelt, einem treuen Soldaten von Kaiser Miksa, der 1566 im 58. Lebensjahr zusammen mit mehreren ungarischen Adligen im Ruhm für Gott und den Kaiser bei der Verteidigung von Szigetvár starb, nachdem er 25.000 Feinde getötet hätte.

Das Topos der Nation als Held, als *defensor Christianitatis* hat im 19. Jahrhundert eine erneute Veränderung erfahren. Aus der Struktur, die zuvor auf der religiösen Opposition zweier Kulturen beruhte, bleibt nur noch die Rolle der Nation als Verteidiger oder als Schutzbastei übrig, wobei die unveränderte rethorische Rahmen das Einfügen einer beliebigen ‚schützende‘ Gemeinschaft ermöglichten. So wird zum Beispiel 1802 in der Rede des österreichischen Kaisers und ungarischen Königs Franz II. vor dem Reichstag Ungarn zur Schutzbastei der Monarchie.

Ab etwa die Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts bekam der Topos der heldenhaften Nation einen neuen, bis heute gültigen Referenzpunkt, wobei Ungarn als Schutzbastei des westlichen Europas aufgefasst wird.

So lobt zum Beispiel Petőfi die frühere Selbstaufopferung der Ungarn in einem Zeitungsartikel, wobei er die Rolle Ungarns bei der Verteidigung anstatt des Christentums, nun der europäischen Zivilisation hervorhebt: „...ha te nem mártírkodtal volna, magyar nemzet, most a török félhold vetne kisérteties fényt az európai műveltség romjaira”.¹³ Eine ähnliche Form bekommt der Topos in seinem Gedicht *Élet vagy halál!* (*Leben oder Tod!*), in dem er die Völker des Karpatenbeckens daran erinnert, dass die Ungarn sie jahrhundertlang vor den Türken beschützt hatten.¹⁴

Das Nachleben des Topos der heldenhaften Nation, als Bastei des Christentums bzw. des westlichen Europas reicht in der ungarischen Literatur und Kultur bis heute und bestimmt eine starke nationale Tradition, die die gesamte ungarische Geschichte – angefangen von den Türkenkriegen über 1848, Trianon und 1956 usw. – als eine zyklische Folge von allein durchgeführten Kämpfen eines meist sich selbst überlassenen Volkes interpretiert, die gesamte Nation in Heldenposition darstellt, und in Zusammenhang dessen auch eine große Anzahl von nationalen Einzelhelden produziert.

13 In: Márczius Tizenötödike (160), 1848. szept 17. Száraz, Orsolya: *A kereszténység védőbástyája*. In: *Studia Litteraria*, 51(1–2), 51–67.

14 Vgl. Terbe, Lajos: Egy európai szállóige életrajza: Magyarország a kereszténység védőbástyája. In: *Egyetemes Philológiai Közöny*, 1936, 297–351, hier 318.

Trotz der ungarischen Erfolgsgeschichte wird der Topos in der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts im europäischen Gedächtnis völlig in Vergessenheit geraten. Ein schönes Beispiel zeigt das Zitat von Tibor Déry aus sein Werk *A napok hordaléka*, in dem er den Untergang des Topos im (west)europäischen Bewusstsein parodiert:

– *Magyarország? – ismételték tünődve. – Ázsia?*

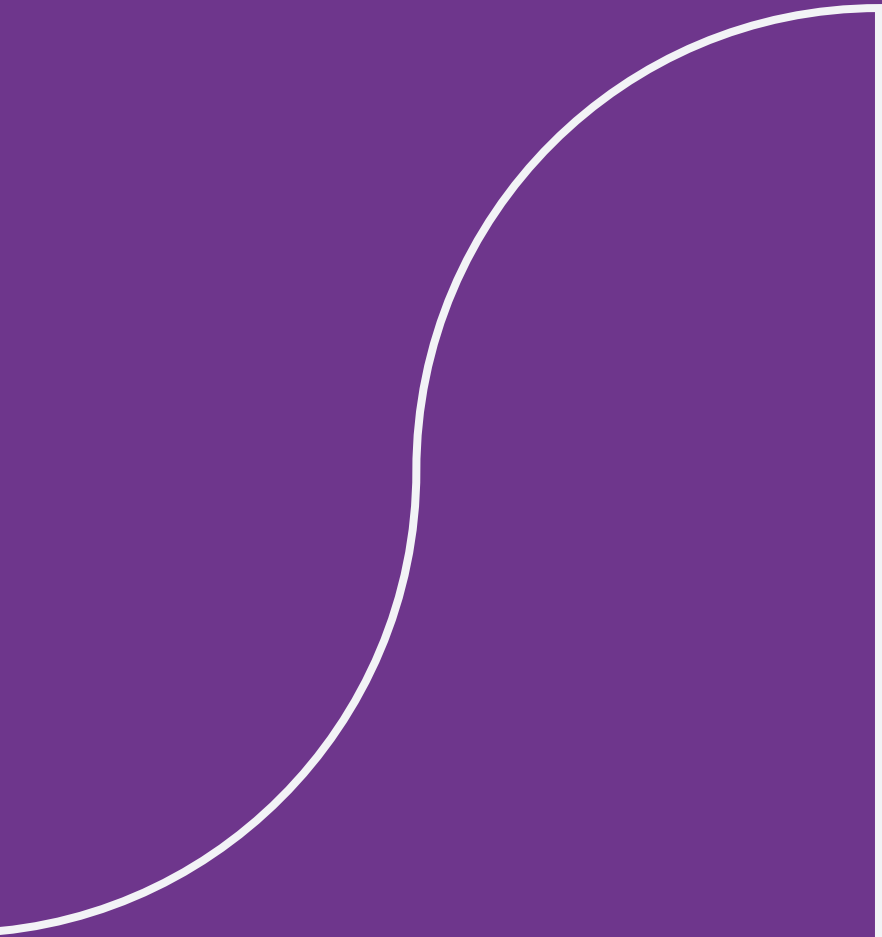
– *Onnét jöttünk – mondtam –, több mint ezer éve. De tudniuk illene, hogy hosszú évszázadokig mi voltunk az önök védőbástyája a török ellen. Ha mi nem vagyunk, Brigitte Bardot ma egy Champs-Élysees-i háremben sínylődne, mélyen lefátyolozva.*

– *Köszönjük – mondták.*¹⁵

Diese Veränderung, was Déry hier durch die ironische Darstellung der Diskrepanz zwischen das Fremdbildes des Landes und das Identitätsbild der Nation auffasst, ist in Ungarn allerdings noch immer nicht aktuell. Laut einer Umfrage der Gallup-Gruppe haben nämlich 1993 zwei Drittel und im Jahr 2000 71 % der Bevölkerung - unabhängig von Alter, Bildung oder Wohnort - der Aussage zugestimmt, dass „Magyarország volt ezer éven át a Nyugat védőbástyája, és ezt soha sem (most sem) hálálták meg nekünk“. (d.h. „Ungarn tausend Jahre lang die Bastei des Westens war und was uns nie (bis heute nicht) belohnt wurde“.¹⁶ Wie das sehr deutlich zeigt, aus dem Mittelalter stammendes Identitätsbild, die Heldenrolle der Nation als Bollwerks für die europäischen Gemeinschaft hat nicht nur eine permanente Popularität in der ungarischen Gesellschaft, sondern es wird auch zu einem wichtigen Bezugspunkt für die zeitgenössische Politik.

15 Déry, Tibor: *Hordalék Cannes-ból* (1971. május). In: D. T., *A napok hordaléka*. Hrg.: Réz Pál, Bp., Szépirodalmi, 1982, 136.

16 Vgl.: Száraz, Orsolya: *A kereszténység védőbástyája*. In: *Studia Litteraria*, 2012 / 51(1–2), 51–67, hier 67.



Creating a “Slovenian Petőfi”:

THE CANONIZATION OF FRANCE PREŠEREN

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and Literary Studies

In this paper,¹ I focus on France Prešeren (1800–1849), a major Slovenian Romantic writer who has unquestionably enjoyed the status of the Slovenian national poet since the beginning of the twentieth century. In the decades that followed his death, Prešeren was enthusiastically canonized as an “unsurpassable poetic genius” who has elevated Slovenian literature to a world-class level, enabling the emerging Slovenian nation to legitimize itself as a full member of the “assembly of nations”. From the perspective of our study, Prešeren is a typical cultural saint: starting with the translation of the poet’s bones within the cemetery in Kranj in 1852, culminating in the highly emotional unveiling of his monument in Ljubljana in 1905, and continuing up to the present day.

Since the end of the nineteenth century Prešeren has been unanimously recognized as a forefather or even founder of the Slovenian literary culture. Like his older colleague Valentin Vodnik (1758–1819), Prešeren was not really famous at the moment of his death. However, both poets had highly interesting afterlives, becoming subjects of intense veneration. Whereas Vodnik was enthusiastically canonized as “the first Slovenian poet,” Prešeren was praised as no less than a genius whose poetry is the ultimate expression of the national essence as well as a brilliant example of European literature. In contrast to Vodnik, whose cult seems to have slowly waned after 1889, when his statue was installed in Ljubljana, this has never happened to Prešeren. His cult reached an undeniable climax with the centenary of his birth and the monument campaign at the beginning of the twentieth century, but his presence in Slovenian cultural and political discourses has remained remarkable ever since. Even compared to other national poets in the region, such as Mickiewicz, Mácha, Petőfi, and Botev, Prešeren’s stature in the Slovenian cultural field seems somewhat unique.

1 This is an earlier version of a text that was later published as a chapter in the book *National Poets, Cultural Saints* by Marijan Dovič and Jón Karl Helgason (Brill, 2017).

The enormous extent of the secondary artistic and scholarly corpus related to Prešeren, the astonishing amount of memorials, the dense network of christenings (both of venues and of institutions) all over Slovenia as well as in the diaspora, and Prešeren's central position in school curricula clearly demonstrate his unrivalled stature as the national poet. At the same time, his canonization seems paradigmatic when it comes to cultural saints, especially those from the European semi-periphery. In many respects, an account of his canonization may elucidate the general social implications of cults of cultural saints in the last two centuries. As already suggested, cultural saints played an important role in nation-building in terms of social cohesion, forming the emerging community's common imagery, its political transformation, and the reorganization of social space and time. In Prešeren's case, all these features are clearly present.

Following the model of canonization we developed in the previous chapter, in this chapter we first focus on the potentials of Prešeren's *vita*. In the second step, we explore the factors relevant from the viewpoint of *cultus*. However, in contrast to the synchronous overview presented in the previous chapter, we observe the patterns of canonization chronologically, as they appeared throughout the posthumous advance of the poet's commemorative cult. Although Prešeren's ritual "afterlife" began in the early 1850s and picked up the pace after 1866, we pay special attention to the heated events around the centenary of his birth in 1900 and the unveiling of his Ljubljana monument in 1905. These events consolidated Prešeren's canonical position, which was only strengthened during the twentieth century and has continued to be an indispensable part of Slovenian culture ever since.

Examining the Threads of *Vita*

Let us begin with a brief biographical outline. France Prešeren was born in the small village of Vrba in Upper Carniola on 3 December 1800, as the third child in a large and reputable rural family. At the age of eight, the talented boy came under tutelage of his uncle, priest Jožef Prešeren, and in 1810 he started his primary education in Ribnica, which he continued in Ljubljana. After six years of secondary school in Ljubljana, he left for Vienna in 1822 to study theology and become a priest, as his relatives expected and desired. However, after experiencing the lively imperial capital, he decided to abandon theology. In spite of his family's disapproval, Prešeren started studying law instead, and became a doctor of law in 1828. His professional career after returning to Ljubljana was anything but brilliant. From 1834 to 1846, he worked as an assistant in the office of Blaž Crobath, and only shortly before his death in 1849, after being turned down five

times, did he succeed in becoming an independent lawyer in the town of Kranj in Upper Carniola, instead of Ljubljana. Since Prešeren had already fulfilled all the formal conditions for this status in 1832, when he passed the required exams in Klagenfurt, it is quite likely that the reason for the series of rejections were his well-known free-thinking views and controversial lifestyle.

Prešeren began to publish poetry both in Slovenian and in German in 1827, while he was still in Vienna. *Prešernoslovje* (Prešerenology), as the discipline devoted to the poet's life and opus was later named, usually distinguishes between three creative periods: the youthful (1824–1828), the mature (1828–1840), and the late period (post 1840). Prešeren's youthful period is marked by cheerful and light poetry of a pre-Romantic kind, often based on Anacreontics, whereas in its mature phase Prešeren's poetry became typically Romantic, introducing new themes such as lofty romantic love, the superior mission of poetry and the poet, and the emotional resignation and pessimism not dissimilar to *Weltschmerz*. Prešeren successfully united serious themes with demanding poetic forms, which was especially characteristic of his poetry from the 1830s on, when *Kranjska čbelica* (The Carniolan Bee, 1830–1833), a poetry almanac written in Slovenian, was issued in Ljubljana by Prešeren's friend, librarian and poet Miha Kastelic (1796–1868). In 1834, one of Prešeren's masterpieces, "Sonetni venec" (A Wreath of Sonnets), was published by the (predominantly German) weekly *Illyrisches Blatt*, and in 1836, his major work, the lyrical epic poem *Krst pri Savici* (The Baptism on the Savica), was printed in 600 copies.

This was followed by a set of unfortunate events in Prešeren's life. Between 1835 and 1840, three of his closest friends died: the theorist Matija Čop (1797–1835), the exiled Polish ethnologist Emil Korytko (1813–1839), and Prešeren's literary colleague Andrej Smole (1800–1840). Another blow was his unrequited love for Julija Primic (1816–1864), a wealthy young townswoman who married a nobleman in 1839. In contrast to this ideal "affair," which inspired many of Prešeren's most famous poems, the reality of his love life was a turbulent and often unhappy erotic relationship with Ana Jelovšek (1823–1875): from 1839 to 1845, Prešeren and Ana had three children born out of wedlock. After 1840, when the poet's life crisis seemed to be overcome, he abandoned high romantic themes in poetry, especially that of ideal love, and returned to more quotidian themes as well as to simpler forms. His views became more moderate, even humorous. After becoming a lawyer in Kranj in 1846, Prešeren gradually abolished his writing career. By the time his comprehensive collection *Poezije* (Poems) was printed in 1,200 copies in 1846, he stopped to write poetry. Despondence, despair, drinking, and finally severe illness (cirrhosis) were most probably responsible for Prešeren's early death in 1849.

Although it may seem so at first – and such an impression was amplified in the decades of hagiographic shuffling – it would be an exaggeration to say that Prešeren was overlooked or disregarded during his life. It is important to realize that throughout the two decades of his creative output, the Slovenian literary system was underdeveloped. Vital institutions such as publishing houses, critical circles, newspapers, and magazines hardly existed. A scant educated readership and a few poetry fans were the only readers of Prešeren's works, and in these circles the poet was known and appreciated. However, at such an early stage of the national movement, any large-scale engagement was unlikely; the proper time for a national poet had not yet come.

Nevertheless, in Prešeren's *vita* one can find several clues that affected his subsequent canonization. At the level of biography, a vast field of anecdotes (such as his alleged kindness towards children, which earned him the nickname "The Fig Doctor"), rumours, and legends with a considerable *aenigma* potential was available for cultivation. Whereas Prešeren's texts were constructing a new, artistic model of the poet-seer, his actual social life bore symptoms of "Bohemian" behaviour. Although a lawyer, he grew his hair long and kept his appearance somewhat untidy. In addition to his free-thinking political views, Prešeren was known for his conviviality, hard drinking, obscene versifications, passion for very young girls (which could be subject to legal prosecution nowadays), and provoking scandals in provincial Ljubljana. His conduct towards his mistress Ana and their children was anything but exemplary. Although Prešeren's ideal romance with Julija was magnified to mythical proportions,² a number of serious "flaws" at the level of *persona* was later either hushed up or magnified, but always manipulated according to the current context of canonization.³

2 The interpretation of this relationship has remained one of the central objectives of Prešeren scholars to this day. For a recent sociological demystification of the Juliet myth, see Močnik, *Julija Primic v slovenski književni vedi*. In 1850, the Scheuchenstuel family moved to Novo mesto. However, Julija's "outrageous" act of not responding to the love of the future national poet was not without consequences. According to popular rumours, reported by the nationalist writer Janez Trdina in his short story "Doktor Prežir" (1885), towards the end of her life Julija had to listen to Prešeren's serenade "Luna sije – kladvo bije" sung by the poet's ghost (or, more likely, naughty local pupils) nearby her Novo mesto manor (Trdina, *Zbrano delo VII*, 80–86).

3 Prešeren's contemporary Matevž Langus (1795–1855), the most important portrait painter in Ljubljana at the time, also produced the well-known oil portrait of Julija Primic (in 1833–1834). On this painting, Prešeren is visiting the painter and gazing at the image of his unattainable muse. Prešeren makes reference to this event in his excellent sonnet "Marsktéri romar gre v Rim, v Kompostelje" (see Prešeren, *Zbrano delo I*: 157), where the lyrical subject compares his inner urge to visit the painter's workshop with a drive of a Christian pilgrim to Rome or Santiago de Compostella. The sonnet has an acrostic "Matevžu Langusu" (To Matevž Langus). In Justin's visual adaptation, Langus himself is also present and appears to be portraying Prešeren. The drawing that the painter is producing in the top left corner was actually found in Langus' legacy and was for some time thought to depict Prešeren (which would make it the only authentic portrait of the poet). However, eventually it turned out that it is most probably a self-portrait of Langus.

On the other hand, Prešeren's openly nationalist actions that could count at the level of *acta* (i.e. those not related to literary texts) were remarkably scant, especially compared to the "deeds and merits" of more industrious national poets such as Bialik, Maironis, and even Jónas Hallgrímsson.⁴ Naturally, such actions were given an enormous emphasis later on. One of the most important ones seems to be the fact that Prešeren did not support the Illyrian movement, a contemporary cultural ideology that promoted the merging of the Slovenian culture and language with other Slavic idioms of the region. Favouring the autonomous development of Slovenian literature, Prešeren rejected his pro-Illyrian colleague, poet Stanko Vraz (1810–1851). Whereas Vraz was later interpreted almost as a traitor to the national cause, Prešeren was suitable for the role of *confessor*. Furthermore, a somewhat mythical status was ascribed to Prešeren's and Čop's engagement in the "Slovenian Alphabet War" of the 1830s. In this quarrel, for a typical example of the fetishism of language in cultural nationalism, Prešeren and Čop advocated the high-brow literature against the more modest model of national revival promoted by the famous Slovenian Vienna-based linguist Jernej Kopitar (1780–1844). Prešeren did little but make intelligent and humorous remarks in his poems that make his point of view clear; however, his artistic work as a whole testifies to the fact that he has deliberately chosen Slovenian as a vehicle of elaborate poetic expression. Prešeren's remaining nationalist deeds mostly fall under the category of praising and canonizing the (vernacular) tradition. In 1840, he co-edited the first posthumous collection of Slovenian poems, *Pésme Valentina Vodnika*, and in 1845 he published a memorial poem to Vodnik. As the tombstone episode demonstrates, the future national poet was a pioneer of his era in this respect as well.

Opera: Poetic Cult and the "European Level"

At the level of *opera*, the artistic corpus, things become even more interesting. Prešeren's systematic cultivation of language and literary repertoire was recognized as invaluable early on. Influenced by his erudite friend Čop, Prešeren took up the project of proving the aesthetic potential of the Slovenian language. He introduced a number of poetic forms from classical Latin, Renaissance Italian, and contemporary European romantic poetry: the sonnet, the wreath of sonnets, terza rima, ottava rima, the Spanish romance with assonance, the oriental ghazal,

4 See Abramovich, "Bialik, the Poet of the People"; and Tereskinas, "Gendering the Body". Comparatively on Prešeren and Jónas Hallgrímsson see Egilsson, "Nation and Elevation"; Juvan, "Romanticism and National Poets"; Helgason, "Relics and Rituals"; and Dović, "The Canonization".

the Nordic ballad, and a number of complicated forms from the Latin tradition. This transfer did not remain superficial; by performing it convincingly, Prešeren anchored the semiotic spaces of other cultures in the Slovenian cultural sphere.⁵ As Marko Juvan notes, Prešeren astutely fulfilled his mission of including “backwards” Slovenian literature in the emerging community of national literatures:

Prešeren, on his part, attempted imaginatively to join his native idiom to the historically shifting centers of the European literary system. His strategy, typical of a romantic national poet, was to render his utterly individual poetry as a modern classic: his composition was balanced and tectonic and he eruditely drew on the ancient, medieval, renaissance, baroque, classicist, and romantic European poetry, intertextually referring to their motifs, imagery, stylistic features, poetic genres, strophic and verse forms.⁶

The often repeated claim of Slovenian literary historians that Prešeren raised Slovenian literature to the European level therefore seems quite justified; naturally, it became one of the cornerstones of the canonization process.⁷ Granted, this “cultivation programme” never explicitly entered Prešeren’s poetry; however, its modified echoes can be traced in some of his self-referential poems. In fact, poetry’s national awakening and cohesive role is among the main topics of his lyrical opus. In his “Glosa” (Gloss), the lines on the poet’s tragic fate and life-long misery became a stereotypical self-descriptive figure of Slovenian writers, a manner of understanding poets and poetry. Such mythologized representation reaches its peak in “Pevcu” (To the Poet). The poet, whose position is depicted there through the imagery of the Promethean myth, is internally devastated and hopeless, his trauma being only partly compensated by his complete dedication to art:

*You'll know
The life of a poet, it brings too much woe
Either heav'n or hell through thy bosom must flow!*

*Anew
Recall your vocation, endure it with rue!⁸*

Although the pattern of martyrdom was inherent to Prešeren’s works, some interpretative ingenuity was required to relate the desolate poet’s suffering to the

5 Dovič, “Literary Repertoire,” 71–72.

6 Juvan, “Romanticism and National Poets,” 597.

7 See Kos, *Prešeren in evropska romantika*; Paternu, *France Prešeren, ein slowenischer Dichter*; and Juvan, “Literary Self-Referentiality”.

8 Prešeren, *Poems*, 152; translated by Tom Priestly and Henry Cooper.

national cause. Only a handful of Prešeren's texts were useful for such a task. Especially in *The Baptism on the Savica*, Prešeren skilfully uses the historically insufficiently documented tale of the ancient Slovenians living in independence and glory (referring to the early medieval state of Carantania), attempting to create a simulacrum of heroic national history. To fully understand this layer of the poem, which comes closest to the Slovenian national epic, we should briefly recall the first poetic attempt with a similar tendency – Valentin Vodnik's "Ilirija oživljena" (Illyricum Revived). Vodnik's ode was written in 1811, during the short period when the central Slovenian lands were not subordinated to the Habsburg Empire, but were under French jurisdiction as a part of a new administrative entity called the Illyrian Provinces (1809–1813). In his typically frisky rhymed amphibrachs, Vodnik recalls the great past of the (Roman) Illyricum and equates its ancient population with contemporary Slovenians, foretelling a great future for them. According to Vodnik, the Illyrians were a superior community:

*Prepared for the seaways
Illyrian were men,
when galleys of Romans
were still but a plan.*⁹

At the end of the ode, Ancient Corinth is compared to the future Illyricum: just as the famous Greek city was once known as the "Hellenic eye," the new Illyricum would become "the ring of Europe". It is quite possible that Vodnik did not consider his construction very seriously; however, his ode remains an interesting early attempt to articulate the Slovenian national idea.¹⁰

As evidenced in the work of Prešeren's contemporary Jakob Zupan (1785–1852), another story was gaining relevance at that time: the Illyrian story was joined by the Carantanian one. But if Zupan's naive poetic treatment of history was meant to strengthen the local, Carniolan identity, Prešeren's strategy was different. In his introduction to the *The Baptism*, written in iambic terza rima, Prešeren evokes the early feudal state of Carantania (existing from the seventh to the ninth century) and the old, heroic and pagan times of Slovenian sovereignty. Historically, this model is more credible than Vodnik's. Prešeren skilfully uses the background of the Christianization of Slavs to narrate a myth which evokes the power of Slavic ancestors and celebrates the alleged democratic rule of Carantania. With the advent of Christianity, the situation has changed

⁹ Vodnik, *Zbrano delo*, 92; translated by Jernej Habjan.

¹⁰ See Dovič, "Early Literary Representations," 199–200.

dramatically, notes the pagan army leader Črtomir¹¹ in his last speech to the desperate comrades:

*Old pillars of Slovenedom are cast down,
And all our laws on ancient habit based;
All bow before Bavarian Teasel's crown,
The sons of Slavdom 'neath his yoke are placed,
And haughtily the aliens strut and frown
Within our homeland, by bright fortune graced.¹²*

Similar ideas are characteristic of Prešeren's "Wreath of Sonnets". Here, along with his declaration of love to Julija Primic (the addressee of the wreath's acrostic), the national idea is central. Slovenian history is depicted in the middle of the cycle, in the seventh and the eighth sonnet. The idea is simple: after the glorious age of King Samo, ruler of the tribal alliance of Alpine Slavs in the seventh century, everything the Slovenians experienced in the course of history was unpleasant and depressing: constant subjugation to foreign rulers, destructive internal quarrels, medieval peasant uprisings suppressed in blood, merciless Turkish invasions, and so on. However, the poet's forecast for the future seems brighter:

*On Slovenes will the sun shine clear and strong,
Much gentler stars gleam from the firmament,
And songs of more repute will then be sung.¹³*

In *The Baptism* and "Wreath," Prešeren brilliantly invokes the myth of the ancient Slovenians living in independence and glory. His main source on the Christianization of the Carantanians was *Die Ehre deß Hertzogthums Crain* (The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola) written in 1689 by the polymath Johann Weichard von Valvasor (1641–1693) – a source which, as we know today, is not

11 After the loss of all his men in a battle against a stronger enemy narrated in the introduction to *The Baptism*, Črtomir himself gradually gives in to baptism under the influence of his beloved Bogomila (whose name literally means "dear to the God"), a former pagan priestess who converts to Christianity in the hope to save Črtomir's life (by vowing to chastity). Arguably, this central part of the poem has remained the most controversial interpretative riddle of Prešeren's opus. Is it really only a "metric exercise" aimed to calm the Carniolan clerics ("metrische Aufgabe . . . , mit deren Lösung der Zweck in Verbindung stand, mir die Gunst der Geistlichkeit zu erwerben"), as Prešeren wrote in a private letter to his Czech colleague František L. Čelakovský on 22 August 1936 (Prešeren, *Zbrano delo* II: 190)?

12 Id., *Poems*, 115–119; translated by Tom Priestly and Henry Cooper.

13 Ibid., 83.

particularly reliable.¹⁴ Prešeren modified the original context of Valvasor's work and coupled the scant data with his own lively poetic imagination. His creation thus acquired a potential ideological charge: nationalists no longer had to create "Slovenianness" as something new because they were able to simply recuperate what was once already there but was later unjustly taken away. Prešeren achieved this through a convincing fictional presentation of the heroic battle that marked the end of the glorious period.

It is therefore no surprise that the verses like "Most of this world belongs to Slavdom's races" or "On Slovenes will the sun shine clear and strong"¹⁵ gradually came to serve as popular nationalist slogans. Utilized in the form of "mantras," they played a pivotal role in the canonization of Prešeren. Likewise, it is no wonder that Prešeren's "Zdravljica" (A Toast), an extremely popular drinking song, later became the national anthem of the independent Republic of Slovenia. Even if its closing strophes are cosmopolitan and pacifist, it evokes the glorious past in an openly nationalist manner:

*Henceforth, as were our forebears',
May Slovenes' homes be truly free
Let their hands
Iron bands
Constrict, who still oppress our lands!*

...

*Close linked be Slava's every child,
That again
We may reign
And honour, riches now regain!¹⁶*

A Prelude to Canonization: The Tombstones

Like elsewhere in Europe, the notion of cultural greats along with the practice of their veneration was developed gradually in the Slovenian ethnic territory. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, there were no monuments dedicated

14 Valvasor's text should not be viewed in terms of nationalism: his work is closer to the patriotism of the province of Carniola. See Grdina, *Karantanski mit*, 21.

15 Prešeren, *Poems*, 115, 83, translated by Tom Priestly and Henry Cooper. In the second case, the poetic translation differs significantly from the literal one, namely "The weather will clear up for Carniolans."

16 Prešeren, *Poems*, 159; translated by Tom Priestly and Henry Cooper.

to artists or intellectuals in the area, except for their graves.¹⁷ However, in 1839 and 1840, Prešeren was involved in certain events that may signal the advent of a new epoch. This was when several tombstones at St. Christopher's Cemetery in Ljubljana (today's Navje memorial park)¹⁸ were either newly erected or renovated and modified, including the ones of Vodnik, Čop, and playwright Anton Tomaž Linhart (1756–1795). A detail related to the tombstone inscription for Vodnik may be particularly instructive in this respect.¹⁹ The original tombstone with the Latin inscription (*Valentino Vodnik Slavico-Carniolo*) from 1819 was turned around and equipped with a new, Slovenian inscription, chosen by Prešeren, which included the last strophe of Vodnik's celebrated poem "Moj spominik" (My Monument):

*No daughter, no son
Thereafter shall dwell,
Enough is the memory
My songs sing me well.*²⁰

Although the symbolic effect of the change of language is obvious, the question of durability and remembrance – paraphrased from Horace's "Exegi monumentum aere perennius" (I've raised a monument, more permanent than bronze) – is also raised in a specific way in Vodnik's famous lines. It is indicative that Prešeren, himself quite concerned with the issue of the "Slovenian Parnassus" in his poetry, was involved in this rewriting.

Yet, the 1840 action lacked large-scale support; it was based on the endeavours of a small intellectual circle. The proper "monumental" era of Slovenian cultural nationalism had yet to begin. The political atmosphere in the monarchy changed after the 1848 "spring of nations," when the stifling grip of censorship was loosened. One of the signals of imminent changes was the fundraising for Prešeren's tombstone in the local churchyard. When the poet died in Kranj on 8 February 1849, relatively few people attended the funeral, and his tomb was soon in a very poor condition, as Lovro Toman (1827–1870) reported in 1851. The young Toman, himself a poet and later a very successful politician, was one

¹⁷ See Žitko, "Spomeniki 19. stoletja," 24–25. For the development of memorials in Slovenia, see also Žitko, *Po sledeh časa*, and Čopič, *Javni spomeniki*.

¹⁸ Navje, today a memorial park of "national importance," is a relatively late and only partly successful attempt to establish the Slovenian version of the Pantheon. The former cemetery with graves of several cultural greats was redesigned by the architects Jože Plečnik and Ivo Spinčič in 1937–1938.

¹⁹ There is no truly reliable account of these events, but the one given by art historian Emilijan Cevc seems quite convincing (see Cevc, "Matevž Langus"; see also Jezernik, "Valentin Vodnik," 20–21).

²⁰ Vodnik, *Zbrano delo*, 129. If not stated otherwise, the translations from Slovenian to English in this chapter are by Marijan Dovič.

of the strongest voices of the new generation of nationalists responsible for future monuments.²¹ Toman's colleague Janez Bleiweis (1809–1891), the editor of the most important national newspaper at the time, *Kmetijske in rokodelske novice* (Agricultural and Handicraft News, 1843–1902), who was subsequently labelled the “father of the nation,” already led a campaign for the new Prešeren tombstone. In fact, a committee was in action only a week after Prešeren's burial, on 17 February 1849.²²

This three-year campaign (1849–1852) can be seen as pioneering in establishing a pattern for all subsequent “national” fundraising in Slovenia. The pattern consisted of three indispensable elements: remembrance rituals, media coverage, and institutional support. Festive anniversary gatherings in Upper Carniola sprang from requiems held on 8 February, the day of Prešeren's death, and were eventually complemented by readings, concerts, festivities, and other cultural and socializing events that transferred some of their income to the funds for the monument. In particular, the commemorative ceremony known as *béseda* (“word”), which included an oration and a varied artistic programme, became popular and widespread. The first one dedicated to Prešeren was held on 11 March 1849, at the Theater of the Estates in Ljubljana. In terms of media support, Bleiweis' *Novice* in particular was perpetually publishing emotional appeals to “real patriots” zealous for the glory of the homeland. This weekly and a number of other Slovenian print media provided extensive and enthusiastic coverage of related events, published lists of donors, and intensely promoted the inter-regional character of the campaign with the aim to include the entire Slovenian ethnic territory. Not only Carniolans but also Slovenians from Styria, Carinthia, and the Littoral were repeatedly summoned to contribute, no matter how small the donation. At the level of institutional support, the activities of Slovensko društvo (The Slovenian Association, established in 1848) in Ljubljana were soon backed by the quickly spreading network of public reading societies (Slovenian: *čitalnice*) in the early 1860s and by the publishing activities of Slovenska Matica (1864–).²³

21 Quite interestingly, Toman's fiancée Josipina Turnograjska recalled an intimate ritual at Prešeren's grave in a private note from 1851. Upon visiting Prešeren's forsaken tomb, Josipina wreathed a flower garland while Toman wrote verses on parchment; they left the offerings at the grave. Josipina's report was published in *Dom in svet* in 1899, at the time when the campaign for the Prešeren monument in Ljubljana was at its height.

22 See Gspan, “Prešernov grob,” 33–34, 41–42.

23 In the Slavic world in particular, the “Matica” societies (the name has been associated with “treasure case,” “mother,” and “queen bee”) were established to coordinate scholarly enterprises and publish key works in the context of national revival. Besides the “Matica,” the reading societies, which included venues for gathering, were instrumental for the advancement of the national consciousness in the Slovenian territories, especially in border regions (see Perenič, “The Reading Societies Network”).

In the initial phase, the movement lacked the necessary financial strength. The poet's fame in the early 1850s has not yet reached the necessary mobilizing potential, and the collected sum of patriotic florins for Prešeren was not a great success.²⁴ There was scarcely enough for a relatively simple tombstone in Kranj.²⁵ The solemnity performed for the occasion on 3 July 1852 included the translation of the poet's bones into a new, more centrally positioned grave in the Kranj cemetery; the ritual was not focused on the poet's relics, though.²⁶ Original verses praising Prešeren's genius were set to music and sung by choirs, and commemorative speeches were delivered. All in all, however, the event was still performed on a comparatively small scale.²⁷ Interestingly, as early as 1850, during the campaign for Prešeren's tombstone, it was again Toman who launched in Bleiweis' *Novice* the idea of a different kind of a monument to Prešeren. The poet, Toman pondered, should "stand not in seclusion but in the midst of Slovenians as a speaking glorifier and awakening herald on a square or a street".²⁸ Among other options, such as building a monument in Vrba, Prešeren's birthplace, in Kranj, where he died, or at Lake Bohinj, the main venue of *The Baptism*, Toman seriously considered and even favoured the idea of building a monument in the centre of Ljubljana.²⁹ Typically, he already had a vision of its formal and material features: a combination of rock and white marble with a bust (or at least a "laurelled lyre") on top. On one side, the inscription would read "To France Prešeren, poet, born ... and died ..."; on the other side, it would simply read "Slovenia": a daring suggestion, one may say, that a non-existing political entity would collectively set up a material one. In reality, the idea proved to be far too radical for the 1850s, and Toman's prophetic thoughts were only realized fifty-five years later.

Vodnik, the "First Slovenian Poet"

In the 1850s and 1860s, it became clear that the national movement could benefit from a proper set of "great men" (to employ Toman's standard expression)

24 This is confirmed by the fact that fundraising for the Croatian governor Josip Jelačić, which took place in about the same period, was more successful (see Gspan, "Prešernov grob," 39–40).

25 A total of 280 donors gathered 626 florins, which is less than one percent of the sum that was needed and actually gathered half a century later to cover the costs of the Prešeren monument in Ljubljana.

26 The translation of Prešeren's relics was not even included in the ceremony, but was performed prior to it. In contrast, the translations of the remains of Mickiewicz, Mácha, Jónas Hallgrímsson, and other cultural saints who were reburied at later stages of canonization displayed traits of relic veneration and resembled Christian saintly cults. See Koropeckyj, "Adam Mickiewicz"; Pynsent, "Mácha"; and Chapter Five.

27 See Gspan, "Prešernov grob," 44–45; Žargi, "Železarna na Dvoru".

28 Toman, "O Prešernovim spominku," 61.

29 All these locations were at some point actually marked by memorials to Prešeren.

suitable for veneration and commemoration. Various intellectuals were considered for the role, including the polymath Johann Weichard Valvasor, mathematician Jurij Vega (1754–1802), bishop Anton Martin Slomšek (1800–1862), and linguist Jernej Kopitar. But in accord with the agenda of cultural nationalism, the advantage was given to men of letters. In the eyes of ideologues of the political grouping of so-called Old Slovenians, a proper “national poet” would particularly accelerate the mobilization of the masses. However, it was much less clear which poet would win this prestigious designation. Would it be Vodnik, “the leader,” as his last name literally suggests? Prešeren, the “gentle swan” of love poetry, as the poet was called by an early reviewer? Or perhaps Prešeren’s enormously popular contemporary, the “sharp-sighted eagle” Janez Vesel (a.k.a. Jovan Koseski, 1798–1884), whose openly nationalist poems were awaited with enthusiasm and recited by heart?

It seems that the centenary of Vodnik’s birth in 1858 was the first lever for such a mobilization. In his suggestive appeal of 7 November 1857, it was again Lovro Toman who recalled the fall of 1849, when a group of patriots from mountainous Upper Carniola were allegedly sitting in the Podnartovec Inn near Kropa and toasting to Vodnik, the “poet of the summits”. Ambiguously invoking the legacy of this spirited occasion, Toman proposed the erection of a marble monument in front of the house where Vodnik was born in the Šiška neighbourhood of Ljubljana.³⁰ “The nation that respects and celebrates its glorious men only celebrates itself,” claimed Toman in his ideologically potent and highly poetic style.³¹ What was the monument to look like? According to Toman’s vision, it was to be a four-sided column with inscriptions (including the final strophe of “My Monument” and the dedication “To Vodnik – Slovenia”) with Vodnik’s image on top. Toman’s appeal was echoed in the following issues of *Novice*. Etbin H. Costa (1832–1875), another upcoming patriot and future mayor of Ljubljana, announced the preparations for an ambitious publication on Vodnik, and Ivan Kuk (1823–1864) advocated the idea of setting up the monument in the centre of Ljubljana. Instead of marble it ought to be made of cast iron, ruminated another amateur designer of monuments, and the house in Šiška ought to remain content with a black marble plaque with gilded engraving.³²

Had this project actually been realized in 1858, it would have been the first “national” monument in the public space. Considerable efforts were invested in

30 The house, bought by Vodnik’s grandfather Jurij in 1730, was in the hands of the Vodnik family until 1864. At the end of the 1970s, the Municipality of Ljubljana–Šiška started the process of buying the house and turning it into a museum; between 1982 and 1984, the house was renovated according to its mid-nineteenth-century appearance.

31 Toman, “Vodnikov stoletni rojstni dan,” 354.

32 Kuk, “O spominu,” 367.

the campaign by the *Novice* establishment: the frontpage of the first issue in 1858 featured an appeal to Slovenian compatriots “from the rapid Mura and Drava to the blue mighty Adriatic” to each donate “his own gift to the altar of common glory”.³³ However, during the 1850s, the finances of the national movement were still modest. Adding to this the time pressure, it comes as no surprise that the fundraising for Vodnik’s centenary in February 1858 failed to finance a marble statue. Despite the efforts, in the end the plaque with the inscription “to the first Slovenian poet,” placed on the Šiška house in January 1858, was the only major material outcome of the campaign.³⁴ Nevertheless, this achievement was quite remarkable; for the first time, the word “Slovenian” was publically exhibited in the durable form of marble engraving.³⁵

Besides its lasting and symbolically provocative material results, the commemorative aspect of Vodnik’s centenary might be significant also for demonstrating for the first time that the Slovenian “cause” could win widespread support. In contrast to the moderate success of the installation of Prešeren’s tombstone in 1852, the centennial commemoration of Vodnik on the eve of Candlemas (2 February 1858) was quite spectacular. Crowds attended in a convivial and enthusiastic atmosphere full of loud cheering, and a feast took place in the courtyards and ground-floor rooms. Separated from the masses, the nascent national elite gathered on the upper floor, in the actual room where Vodnik was born, keeping vigil until three in the morning, when Toman performed a remarkable ritual “communion” in a small circle by drinking a toast and breaking the glass.³⁶ A few days later, a solemn commemoration orchestrated by Toman in the Ljubljana theatre introduced another distinctive ritual: a woman allegorizing Slovenia placed a laurel wreath upon the newly produced plaster bust of Vodnik, uttering Toman’s pathetic verses “and Slovenia round your head / is wrapping the glory wreath.” A moment of moving silence was followed by an outburst of people exclaiming “Živio!” (“Hail!”). To conclude the set of rituals properly, a Catholic

33 Trstenjak, “Novoletnica,” 1

34 Toman, “O Vodnikovem godu,” 29.

35 Two weeks before the festivity, Toman reported in *Novice* that the plaque was being made, called for additional contributions from “faithful patriots,” and published a letter by Urša Vodnik, the owner of the building, who allowed the formal (legal) registration of the plaque “in order to keep this monument bound to the house forever” (“O Vodnikovem godu,” 29).

36 See Malavašič, “Slovesnosti,” 66.

mass was celebrated at the Franciscan church the next morning.³⁷

Although Vodnik's centenary failed to produce the monument, it was a great success in mobilizing and enrapturing larger audiences. The 1859 publication of Costa's *Vodnik-Album*, written partly Slovenian and partly in German, was an important achievement of the developing national philology.³⁸ The cult of Vodnik, regularly connected with Candlemas, was boosted in the form of Vodnik ceremonies (*vodnikovanje*) during the 1860s, when reading societies were already operating all over the country, and it was even possible to buy a statuette for private idolatry. Vodnik's poems were the first to earn the honour of a posthumous edition at the national publishing association, Slovenian Matica. In this edition, published in 1869 by Fran Levstik (1831–1887), Vodnik himself was transformed from the “first Carniolan” poet to the “first Slovenian” poet, and the same happened to the addressee of his famous poem “Pesma na moje rojake” (Poem to my Compatriots): “Krajnz!” (“Carniolan”) simply became “Slovenč!” (“Slovenian”).³⁹

Despite Toman's death, the idea of a monument to Vodnik was not forgotten during the 1870s. Toman's enthusiastic statement from 1850, according to which “[e]very monument erected by a nation to its greats is erected to the nation itself,” seemed to outlive its utterer.⁴⁰ The fundraising for the Ljubljana monument took quite a long time, and it was sped up only after 1882, when Josip Vošnjak (1834–1911), a successful liberal politician and writer, took over the monument committee. Although media backup was now no longer limited to Novice, the sum gathered by the nationwide fundraising did not suffice, and the Municipality of Ljubljana, which was already controlled by the Slovenian nationalist faction in the 1880s, had to contribute some of the money.⁴¹ In early 1887, the young sculptor Alojzij Gangl (1859–1935) was commissioned to model

37 Ibid., 68. This detailed account of the ceremony was published promptly in *Novice* (10 and 17 February) and later reprinted in Costa's *Vodnikov spomenik* (The monument to Vodnik). A lucid and ironic analysis of this symptomatic and sometimes hilarious report was proposed by Rastko Močnik, who not only emphasized that the ideological discourse of the Old Slovenians, focused on language and literature, attempted to “bind a multitude of addressees into a nation” (Močnik, *Raziskave za sociologijo književnosti*, 211), but also revealed how this discourse sought to open up a specific position of enunciation in an attempt to present a particular group of “non-selected leaders” as a group of national representatives.

38 In the introductory chapter, the only section published both in Slovenian and in German, Costa asserts that he was “publishing this work in honour of our nation and in solemn memory of one of its champions” (Costa, “Predgovor,” x). This is followed by a miscellanea of dozens of articles on Vodnik's life and work, commemorative (or new) poems, various reports, and so on, in either Slovenian or German.

39 See Jezernik, “Valentin Vodnik,” 20–21.

40 Toman, “O Prešernovim spominku,” 61.

41 Etbin H. Costa, the mayor of Ljubljana from 1864 to 1869, was succeeded during the 1870s by German-oriented mayors (Jožef Supan, Karl Deschmann, and Anton Laschan). In 1882, the Slovenian-oriented Peter Grasselli became mayor, and from 1896 to 1910 the city was headed by the liberal Ivan Hribar, a fervent supporter of Slovenian monuments.

a statue. The ceremonies, scheduled for the seventieth anniversary of Vodnik's death, were supposed to become "a great national festivity where the first major national monument dedicated to the first Slovenian poet and awakener ... will be unveiled".⁴²

After a full three decades of fundraising, the monument was unveiled in the centre of Ljubljana on 30 June 1889. The event was accompanied by processions, concerts, indoor and outdoor banquets, and parties that attracted an incredible crowd of some 10,000 attendants. According to an extensive report in the literary monthly *Ljubljanski zvon*, published only a day after (on 1 July), the ceremonies began on the eve of 28 June with a band and choir concert on the lawn of the reading society. The next day started with a mass and continued with a walking pilgrimage to Vodnik's grave; the on-site ritual included choral singing and wreath-laying. In the evening, a new theatre production and a concert followed. The principal feast day, 30 June, started off with a solemn mass. Back at the lavishly ornamented Valvasor Square (triumphal arches had been constructed on both sides), where the monument was waiting under a veil, the central ceremony commenced at noon. After an oration, gunshots from the Ljubljana Castle announced the unveiling, and the national societies laid wreaths under the monument. A celebratory cantata was performed by a mixed choir of over 300 singers. Vošnjak, the monument committee's president, symbolically handed over the monument to the protection of the Municipality of Ljubljana. The ceremony was rounded off with a demonstration of loyalty to the Austro-Hungarian monarch.

In his comprehensive festive talk, high school principal Fran Wiesthaler (1849–1927) emphasized the Slovenian character of the monument, which "celebrates a Slovenian name, being a work of a Slovenian mind and mostly also of a Slovenian hand, set up by the entire Slovenian nation".⁴³ In newly produced adulatory poetry, the monument was connected to the issue of mastering of "our own" land. While assuring the nation's perennial loyalty – more enduring than marble and bronze – to its genius Vodnik, the equation *genius – monuments – nation – (territory)* was timidly, but symptomatically introduced between the lines.⁴⁴

From a broader perspective, the Vodnik festivities were not extraordinary; in fact, they employed typical elements of the contemporary pan-European cult of cultural saints. As already seen, such cults often produced tensions in bi- and multilingual communities. In ethnically Slovenian provinces, especially in Carniola but also in Styria, the monument movement had a strong nationalist dimension. After 1848, monuments were becoming a significant bone of contention

42 Gustin, "Ganglov' Vodnik," 59.

43 Wiesthaler, "Slavnostni govor," 392.

44 See Funtek, "Vodniku"; Cimperman, "O slovesnem odkritju spomenika Valentinu Vodniku".

between the increasingly separated Slovenian community and a small German community in Ljubljana. On the one hand, the city was decorated with several monarchic monuments, for instance, the 1860 and 1882 monuments to the popular Count Joseph Radetzky (1766–1858), successful Austrian army leader married to a Carniolan countess, or the 1908 monument to the Emperor Franz Joseph (1830–1916). Whereas their predominantly top-down orchestrated installation did not provoke too much emotion, monuments with national connotations certainly became a contentious issue. The Germans in Ljubljana tried to block campaigns for Slovenian monuments and at the same time to set up their own monuments: in 1886, three years before the monument to Vodnik, they managed to erect a monument to the German noble politician and poet Anton Alexander von Auersperg, also known as Anastasius Grün (1806–1876). In the increasingly heated atmosphere, this act provoked anti-German demonstrations, and the monument itself was later often desecrated.⁴⁵

In any case, the Vodnik monument, its size and location, and especially the success of the 1889 unveiling ceremonies were clear signs of the growing power of the Slovenian national movement. The ability of the societies and the media to trigger such a large-scale mobilization grew hand in hand with increasing political power, especially at the local and regional levels. After all, the Vodnik events were only the tip of the iceberg. The year 1889 was still to witness considerable advances in the symbolic conquest of the national territory. In August, more or less the same postulators organized ceremonies for Fran Levstik in Velike Lašče, producing a pyramid in the village centre and a placing tablet on the façade of the house where Levstik was born in the nearby village Dolnje Retje, placed. The rituals included typical elements, too, such as marching bands, a mass, a procession, an oration, unveilings (at two locations), recitations of celebratory poetry, and – to add a touch of rural flavour – fireworks and bonfires. The fact that Levstik was celebrated, mainly as a poet and purifier of the language, in such a way only two years after his death was another demonstration of the rising national power. In November, a new tombstone was erected on the grave of Fran Erjavec (1834–1887) in the city of Gorizia, at the westernmost border of the Slovenian ethnic territory.⁴⁶ Things that seemed hardly possible in the mid-century were now becoming routine. After its faint beginnings in 1872, Pisateljsko podporno društvo (Writers' Support Association) was re-established and reorganized in 1885. Under Vošnjak's direction the association became almost obsessed with

45 See Kos, *Glejte ga*, 11–16; Žitko, “Spomeniki,” 25–26. These four monuments were either removed or actually physically destroyed after the collapse of the monarchy in 1918 (see Kos, *Glejte ga*, 15–16).

46 For details on the commemorations for Levstik and Erjavec, see anonymous announcements and reports in *Ljubljanski zvon* (see volume 9 [1889], 504, 569–571, 704, 762–763).

memorial tablets and monuments. Instead of its declared mission to help living authors and advance Slovenian literary activities, the society directed its energy to installing marble plaques and organizing rituals devoted to dead authors.⁴⁷

The Prešeren Centenary and the Monument to the National Genius

At the turn of the century, the setting of plaques⁴⁸ and tombstones with the aid of public donations⁴⁹ was in full swing. However, the 1905 installation of a Prešeren monument in the centre of Ljubljana was definitely the breakthrough for the national movement. The question is, of course, how Prešeren, this gentle poet of love, disillusion, and despair whose poetry was difficult to understand, a poet with little appeal to the masses and with a biographical record that was far from faultless – how this poet could become the idol of the masses, the unquestioned *national poet*, beating all his rivals.⁵⁰

To answer this question, one should first note that Prešeren's ascent to the "national Parnassus" was far from straightforward. During the 1850s, the majority of patriots, especially those from the *Novice* circle, laid their bet on Koseski, but from the 1860s on, Prešeren's poetry became increasingly more acclaimed among intellectuals. In literary criticism, the turning point for the reevaluation was Josip Stritar's (1836–1923) new, posthumous edition of Prešeren's poetry in 1866, armed with a highly suggestive essay, in which one can find the following statement:

Every nation has a man whom it imagines with a holy, pure nimbus above his head. What Shakespeare is to Englishmen, Racine to Frenchmen, Dante to Italians, Goethe to Germans, Pushkin to Russians, and Mickiewicz to Poles – this is Prešeren to Slovenians If the nations were to be assembled on Judgment Day to demonstrate how they had managed their talents and how everyone of them had participated in universal, human culture, the small

47 In many cases, the masses only reacted to bottom-up local initiatives. The shared enthusiasm for plaques and monuments can only be explained with reference to the convivial dimension of the accompanying programmes with their marching bands, processions, choral singing, amateur performances, gymnastics societies (*Sokolci*), and parties with food, drinking, and dancing.

48 Some sixty Slovenian notables were "immortalized" with plaques and monuments by the end of the First World War, when the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy collapsed (see Žvanut, *Rojstna hiša Valentina Vodnika*, 35–36).

49 Besides Prešeren's tombstone (1852), it is also worth mentioning those for the poet Simon Jenko in Kranj (1873), the journalist Anton Tomšič in Maribor (1875), the novelist Josip Jurčič in Ljubljana (1881), and the writer Fran Erjavec in Gorizia (1889).

50 This question was already posed by Prešeren scholars. Following Boris Paternu, Močnik gives it yet another twist on the back cover of his book: "In other words, how could Prešeren's poetry eventually convince the entire nation if it was not even able to convince a single Slovenian woman?" (Močnik, *Julija Primic*).

Slovenian nation could prove itself confidently among others with one small book, Prešeren's *Poems*.⁵¹

As testified by myriad of subsequent variations and derivations, this simple formula worked. While Koseski's fame was waning, commemorative ceremonies for Prešeren were blossoming along with the Vodnik cult.⁵² In 1872, a crowd of some 6,000 people, including the newly founded Association of Slovenian Writers, made a pilgrimage to Vrba in Upper Carniola. As a new patron saint of Slovenian writers, Prešeren posthumously received a memorial plaque on the house where he was born. According to Vošnjak's memoirs, it was "the magnificent manifestation of the Slovenian intellectuals devoted to their most ingenious poet".⁵³ Not far from Vrba, the charming lake resort of Bled, one of the venues of Prešeren's *Baptism on the Savica*, was the next location for the expansive management of remembrance. A pyramid was set up close to the lakeshore in 1883 with an engraving of a widely quoted verse from Prešeren's masterpiece.

It comes as no surprise that the installation of the Vodnik monument in 1889 also triggered the idea of erecting a monument for the greatest Slovenian genius, as Prešeren was now ritually referred to. The idea was promoted by students at the Ljubljana high school, who were prohibited by the school authorities to place a wreath under the statue of Vodnik; they decided to donate the money they had collected for the Prešeren statue instead. The initiative was taken over by the Writers' Support Association and immediately supported by leading intellectuals. In his 1890 Vienna memorial lecture, the renowned scholar Matija Murko suggested that Prešeren deserved a greater monument than Vodnik. With such a monument the nation could "demonstrate that it respects its worthy men and that, resting upon them, it wants to gain more rights and more credit". Such a monument would be a "new sign of the spiritual unity of our dismembered nation". This nation, Murko passionately concluded, was always faithful to its ruler and its state, but it was also "a firm barrier that separates the German nation from the Adriatic".⁵⁴

To account for this symptomatic investment into "literary matters," it should be noted that the possibilities for *en masse* expression of the Slovenian national consciousness were limited after the banning of the nationalist movement of open-air meetings ("Taborsko gibanje," 1868–1871), which included gatherings of up to 30,000 people. It seems that the transition of the Slovenian national movement to the phase of mass participation (phase C in Hroch's schema, which we mentioned in Chapter Three) was in fact channelled through the monument

51 Stritar, "Preširmove poezije," 48.

52 For the reasons for the decline of Koseski's fame, see Levec, "Ob stoletnici," 193.

53 Vošnjak, *Spomini*, 398.

54 Murko, "Fr. Prešeren," 86–87.

discourse, which was – erroneously – perceived as relatively unthreatening by the authorities in Vienna that tried to cope with growing ethnic tensions within the empire. From this perspective, it seems natural that during the 1890s the postulators of the Prešeren monument were the most prominent cultural and political figures of the time; these more or less liberal public figures included Ivan Tavčar (1851–1923), Josip Stritar, Simon Gregorčič (1844–1906), and the charismatic Ljubljana mayor Ivan Hribar (1851–1941), the committee president and the largest individual donor. Given the scale of the project, fundraising was again quite a task. Advertisements, appeals, and circulars came out regularly, and countless commemorative ceremonies were performed throughout Slovenian territories. In spite of these efforts, the initial plan to build the monument in 1900 failed, and the centennial festive celebrations in a number of towns passed without the desired unveiling.

Let us scroll through the main events of the centenary year. On 7 March, the commemoration ceremony took place in Vienna, which included the presentation of a new marble bust. On 17 September, Kranj hosted a set of ceremonies centred around the placing of a plaque on the façade of the house where Prešeren died. After a mass and a ritual visit to the poet's grave, which included the placing of laurels on the tombstone, an oration by the novelist Janko Kersnik, and choral singing, the crowd and the various associations with banners, arranged in a semi-circle, gathered at the Prešeren house. At eleven in the morning, the mayor of Kranj had the honour of unveiling the new plaque. The inscription reads: "In this house, France Prešeren, the champion of Slovenian poets, dwelled and died. Erected by the Kranj reading society on 16 September 1900." The banquet at noon, at which the Kranj elite joined by a distinguished delegation from Ljubljana (including mayor Hribar) rejoiced in cheerful toasting and choral singing, was followed by the public feasting in the park and dancing at the house of the reading society. All in all, according to anonymous newspaper reports, this was a "super-successful national festivity".⁵⁵

Of course, the main ceremonies, scheduled for early December, were reserved for Ljubljana. Responding to media appeals, citizens decorated the town with national and city flags, and the eve of 1 December started off with a torchlight procession to the recently built Slovenian Cultural Centre (Slovenian: *Narodni dom*; literally "National home"). The next day, the same venue witnessed an elite celebration (with a dress code that raised objections) which, along with the standard commemorative repertory, also presented two *tableaux vivants*. According to Anton Aškerc (1856–1912), himself a distinguished poet and editor of *Ljubljanski zvon*, the "apotheosis of Prešeren" (utilizing the poet's bust) enrap-

55 Anon., "Prešerenova slavnost v Kranju," 2. *Slovenski narod* 33.214, 18 September 1900.

tured the audience.⁵⁶ Prešeren's actual birthday, 3 December, was declared a special school day: instead of regular lessons, students were given a strong dose of indoctrination to Prešeren. This triggered the more systematic introduction of the poet's cult to the education system. The handful of preserved anonymous reports on school celebrations is truly interesting.⁵⁷ At the Ljubljana high school, students gathered in the largest room, which was decorated for the occasion with a laurelled Prešeren portrait, where they sang and recited enthusiastically, and then set off to the cemetery to place a laurel on the grave of Matija Čop. The distinguished literary scholar Fran Levce (1846–1916) was present there, and at the same time mayor Hribar's attendance marked the ceremonies at the girls' high school, where the students and the assembly of "ladies of the nation" jointly gathered around the Prešeren effigy, wrapped in the national flag. The set of ceremonies undoubtedly culminated in an emotional *tableau* described by a fervid anonymous reporter as follows: "The Moon is Shining . . .", echoes gently, and in the magic light the *live picture* appears: Slovenian womenfolk wreathing Prešeren".⁵⁸

As usual, media coverage was exhaustive: both major national dailies, the liberal *Slovenski narod* and the conservative *Slovenec*, for instance, devoted a full front page to the Prešeren centenary. However, around 1900 the "liberal" and "clerical" approaches to Prešeren began to differ significantly, which became particularly obvious in the literary magazines of both political fractions. Whereas the right-wing *Dom in svet* in principle supported the Prešeren cause, it kept observing the canonization project from a distance, criticizing now and then the decisions of the monument committee, new editions of Prešeren's poetry, and so on. For them, there was something uncomfortable within the dubious legacy of this *Freigeist*. Even if continuously emphasizing that "Prešeren has never parted from Christianity *in principle*," the clerical ideologist Evgen Lampe (1874–1918) would obviously rather see the masses celebrating Prešeren's contemporary, bishop Anton Martin Slomšek, the "greatest Slovenian: orator, educator, politician, and – saint".⁵⁹

56 Aškerc, "Praznovanje Prešernovega jubileja," 6.

57 In his 1900 survey, Josip Tomišek wrote that Prešeren's role in Slovenian schools increased after the 1860s, but suggested that the often "poor material" in school textbooks should be replaced by Prešeren's poetry (Tomišek, "Prešeren v šoli," 873). In a footnote to Tomišek's text, the editor, Anton Aškerc, suggested that every high-school graduate should be able to recite "A Toast" by heart at the very least (*ibid.*, 872).

58 *Slovenski narod*, 4 December, 1900, 2. "The Moon is Shining . . ." is the opening verse of Prešeren's serenade "Pod oknam" (Beneath the Window). Its musical adaptation by Jurij Flajšman, published already in 1848, was extremely popular and most widely sung.

59 Lampe, "Prešeren – Slomšek," 707. Much later, on 19 September 1999, Slomšek was actually beatified by Pope John Paul II. He now enjoys the official status of a "blessed" (*beatus*) and is in the process of being canonized by the Roman Catholic Church.

However, whereas the right wing was somewhat hesitant to give full support to the Prešeren cult, the “liberal” press spared no effort to disseminate it and take as much symbolic credit along the way as possible. The 1900 issues of *Ljubljanski zvon*, especially the thematic *Prešernov album* (Prešeren Album), include dozens of articles focusing on Prešeren, his biography, physical appearance, works, foreign reception, critical editions, and so on. The *Prešeren Album* itself, scheduled to come out along with the December ceremonies, was a quality product of national philology; in contrast to the Vodnik centennial album of 1859, it was completely in Slovenian. Within a miscellanea of scholarly articles, celebratory odes with rich intertextual referencing, self-referential overviews of the “cultus,” and minute reports on Prešeren’s status in other cultures, a specific genre seems to occupy a prominent position: a sort of *hagiographic fiction*, one might say, combining biographic accounts, Prešeren’s verses, oral legends, and imagination.⁶⁰

Another constant concern of the liberal media was the international reception, the “worlding” of Prešeren: scholars were scrupulously reporting on new translations, recapitulating foreign articles and reviews, reprinting telegrams and greetings, and so on. This self-legitimizing activity was aimed at convincing the domestic audience of Prešeren’s growing international fame as well as at consolidating the symbolic capital of Prešeren advocates in the local cultural field. In fact, there were quite a few centennial commemorations outside Slovenia, in the cities where small Slovenian communities were active: they took place at least in Prague, Vienna, Graz, Zagreb, and Sarajevo. Especially striking seems to be the one held in Sarajevo on 8 December. According to the report in *Ljubljanski zvon*, amid an astonishing pan-Slavic mishmash (with Slovenians, Croatians, and even a few Czechs attending the ceremony), the following *tableau vivant* appeared:

Girls in Slovenian and Croatian folk costumes gathered around Prešeren’s image. One of them lifted the wreath above the poet’s image. At this moment, the sound of ‘Lijepa naša domovina’ (Our Beautiful Homeland), played by tamburas, resounded... This live picture was improvised by the association’s friend Mr. Terezinski, the son of the brotherly Polish nation.⁶¹

By merging Slovenian and Croatian nationalist symbolism (“Our beautiful homeland” later became the Croatian national anthem), this event indicates how the commemoration of one and the same cultural saint can easily shift from the

60 Through the centuries, the *vitae* of Christian saints were an extremely popular reading, and the hagiographic tradition in the vernacular was deeply rooted in Catholic Slovenia (see Smolik, “Pregled slovenskega hagiografskega slovstva”). The major biographical novels on Prešeren that were written in the later decades – such as Anton Slodnjak’s *Neiztrobnjeno srce* (The Uncorrupted Heart, 1938) and Ilka Vašče’s *Roman o Prešernu* (A Novel about Prešeren, 1937) – followed the pattern to a certain degree.

61 Milaković, “Prešernova svečanost v Sarajevu,” 146.

national to a broader context, in this case the Slavic one.⁶²

A pressing problem of the commemorative cult – which as a rule has to employ an image at the very core of the ritual – was also the absence of an accurate image of Prešeren. The poet's actual appearance has always remained an *aenigma*, as the 1850 portrait by Franz Goldenstein, which was accepted as the most authentic one, was painted “by memory” a year after Prešeren's death. As so often in both secular and religious cults, the countless images that do exist were modelled on vague notions and were thus closer to saintly icons than to realistic depictions.⁶³ The strong desire to reveal Prešeren's “actual appearance” was revived at the turn of the century and culminated in a striking suggestion by Josip Vošnjak. Concerned with the realism of the sculpture, which was still being executed, he proposed “*opening Prešeren's grave* and having his head, which must still be preserved, thoroughly measured by an artist.”⁶⁴ Based on a wax mask, Prešeren's actual image could be reliably reconstructed; at the same time, the length of his body could be determined. Although the idea was recycled a few decades later, when the remains of the Czech national poet Karel Hynek Mácha were manipulated,⁶⁵ Vošnjak's suggestion was never put into action, and the poet's bones were able to rest in peace after the 1852 reburial.

As the 1900 centenary festivities went by, the fundraising for the Prešeren monument continued. The campaign addressed the rich and the poor equally: after all, everybody “should settle his debt to our greatest poet,” as the organizers stressed, wagging their fingers at those who didn't show enough fervour. Picking up on Toman's rhetoric, they argued that the monument should be built by the nation itself – for the nation. “Every conscious patriot will gladly open up his purse and put his obolus on the sacrificial altar of the homeland – for his Prešeren,” declared the committee in 1903.⁶⁶ The time even came for the ladies to shoulder their share of the task. Up until then, they had merely been an ornament of (misogynous) men's business, but now they actively took part in collecting funds. The two large Ljubljana festivities were a success: the one from 1903 was attended by some 8,000 people, and the one from 1905 was even larger. While increasing tensions between Slovenians and Germans, they also triggered new quarrels between the two factions of the Slovenian national movement.

62 The communities addressed by a commemoration can be either local and regional or national and even trans-national: see Rigney, “Embodied Communities,” 89–94; Verdery, “The Political Lives,” 28–29.

63 A referential collection of images was compiled by France Kidrič and published in 1949 as *Prešeren Album*. Quite recently, extensive monographs were published that analyse hundreds of Prešeren-related portraits, sculptures, and illustrations: Mušič, *Prešeren v upodobitvah*; Globočnik, *Pesnikova podoba*; Globočnik, *Prešeren in likovna umetnost*.

64 Vošnjak, “Za Prešernov spomenik,” 136.

65 See also Škerlj, “K. H. Mácha v antropološki luči,” 7.

66 Kos, *Glejte ga*, 116.

An overview of the monument discourse in the media at the time corroborates the close association of the monument campaign with the struggle of Slovenians to become masters of their own territory. In its proclamation of 20 June 1903, the monument board reflected: "Will not the monument be public evidence, a visible expression of the Slovenian character of our lovely city of Ljubljana?"⁶⁷ As a genuine Slovenian genius, Prešeren was associated with the semiotic organization of Ljubljana as a city that should by all means "remain Slovenian". On 9 September 1905, a month before the unveiling, Josip Stritar made his final appeal to his compatriots, in which he varied the well-known Toman pattern, adding to it his suggestive notion of a world literature: "By venerating and glorifying its superior men, its honour at the face of the world, the nation only glorifies itself – in this way, it proves that it is worthy of them." In doing so, he alluded to the Schiller commemorations that were taking place at the same time, and equated Prešeren's relevance to the Slovenians with Schiller's relevance to the Germans; "What Schiller is to them, this is to us our Prešeren, and even more".⁶⁸

If this were so, there would be no doubt that Prešeren should occupy the "most beautiful" spot in the city of Ljubljana. Interestingly, the exact position of the Prešeren monument was not decided until the very last moment. While the sculptor Ivan Zajec (1869–1952) was creating the monument in Vienna under the enormous pressure of the committee eager to supply amateur art criticism at any time, several locations in the centre of Ljubljana were considered. Finally, it was the renowned architect Max Fabiani (1865–1962) who managed to impose his vision of placing the monument on the Square of the Virgin Mary, the location that he viewed as the natural centre of the city. In order to acquire the place for the monument, two of the buildings that had already been damaged in the 1895 earthquake had to be pulled down in May 1905.⁶⁹

Finally, on 10 September, the day of the unveiling came. The minutely designed set of rites followed by banquets, lectures, performances, festivities, and dances were a great success, especially given the fact that at the turn of the century the number of Slovenian speakers had not yet reached a million and a half. An astonishingly large crowd of some 20,000 people attended the ceremonies, many coming from far away or from abroad, utilizing the enhanced railway network. Once more, the city centre, especially the monument square, was decorated, with flags and images of Prešeren exhibited in shop windows. Starting at the National home, the procession included as many as one hundred twen-

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid., 121.

69 Ibid., 96–103.

ty-seven national associations (thirty-four carrying special banners). Once more, the selected route implied the tendency to symbolically appropriate the centre of the city and its landmarks. In his oration before the unveiling, Ivan Tavčar, a prominent writer, liberal leader, and yet another future mayor of Ljubljana, praised Prešeren's works as a gospel for Slovenians and a blessing for the Slovenian lands. "This is the earth where France Prešeren has left deep traces, and it has been impregnated with his spirit from the river Soča to the river Drava, from Mount Triglav to Mount Učka," exclaimed Tavčar. Ljubljana, the centre of Slovenia, "burning for all that is advantageous and honourable to the Slovenian name," proudly accepted this "glittering monument," set up by the nation itself, "the guardian of the Slovenian character of these lands." The descendants should protect the monument, their "sacred heritage," like a "combat squad driving back all assaults on the fatherland from either north or south".⁷⁰

The unveiling that followed Tavčar's enthusiastic speech was spectacular: in the dazzling sun, beneath a nude bronze muse with a laurel sprig in her hand, a bronze figure of France Prešeren, three-and-a-half metres tall, overlooking the Square of the Virgin Mary, was revealed.⁷¹ This highly emotional moment orchestrated with nine gunshots from Ljubljana Castle, a spontaneous singing of the pan-Slavic anthem *Hej, Slovani!* (Hey, Slavs!), and vociferous cheering was followed by a set of speeches and other events. Whereas orators from other Slavic countries provided the pan-Slavic dimension, mayor Hribar emphasized once more the Slovenian character of Ljubljana and its major monument. "The Slovenian, once despised and oppressed, is now lifting up his head, knowing that he is the master here," said Hribar at the opening of his speech, adding a topographical dimension to the established equation of Prešeren's poetry with a language and a nation: it was by Prešeren's merit that Ljubljana had evolved from an "insignificant provincial capital" into an "important cultural centre".⁷²

From the Monument to the National Anthem

Indeed, as a durable sign of ethnicity imposed upon Ljubljana, the Prešeren monument became (and has remained ever since) an undisputed central point

70 Zbašnik, "Odkritje Prešernovega spomenika," 636–638. Zbašnik's unsigned report contains a verbatim record of Tavčar's ceremonial speech.

71 The entire construction, from the pedestal to the fingers of the muse, is about nine metres tall (see the description of the monument in Gangl, *Slava Prešernu*, 52)

72 Kos, *Glejte ga*, 141–142.

of the capital and a symbolic heart of the new national community.⁷³ In many respects, Ljubljana can serve as a paradigmatic example of how the actual battle for the semiotic nationalization of the city was fought through the occupation of public spaces given to statues of “great men of literature”. Through this logic, the Carniolan capital would finally become a spiritual metropolis of “Slovenedom,” densely sown with appropriate symbols, memorials, and christenings. Yet, as a counterpart of such lasting materialities, the ritualized dimension of commemorative practices – especially those dedicated to Vodnik and later Prešeren – may have been even a stronger driving force in the mobilization of masses. Through the dynamic interaction of various parameters of the *cultus*, the cultural saints had come to occupy the very core of the Slovenian national movement – the movement that since the mid-nineteenth century has obstinately invoked its subservience to literature and language as it is.⁷⁴

The great success of the unveiling of the Prešeren monument, resting to a considerable degree upon the democratic structure of its stakeholders, was somewhat marred by the severe political rift that followed. Although the statue had been paid for by the “entire Slovenian nation,” the “liberals” were taking the credit, as the right-wing press complained. In this respect, the peculiar dispute over the naked muse, launched immediately by the Ljubljana bishop Anton Bonaventura Jeglič, as well as the unexpected criticism of the socialists, should be read as stages of the contest over the symbolic capital rather than as plain moral or political clashes. The quantity of the symbolic capital unleashed – which may have taken even the event directors by surprise – was obviously too great to simply be ceded. On the other hand, the loud controversies in the periods that followed the period of a naive unity of the national movement indicated that the question of the division of the conquered powers was coming to the fore: the link leading from the monument pedestal and the oratory platforms to the deputy chambers, city halls, and all kinds of concessions and privileges was becoming visible, as such protagonists of commemorative cults as Costa, Tavčar, Hribar, and others were becoming mayors or otherwise influential figures in the political life of the community.

In any case, Prešeren was now firmly in the saddle: the quarrels over the

73 The monument to Vodnik never gained such a central role. However, during the Yugoslav monarchy, Vodnik was revived as a visionary of the new South Slavic state. In 1929, this resulted in another interesting monument in Ljubljana, dedicated to Napoleon and his founding of the Illyrian Provinces (1809–1813), with an engraving quoting verses from Vodnik’s above-mentioned ode “Ilirija oživljena” (see Jezernik, “Valentin Vodnik,” 32–36). As Božidar Jezernik points out, this complex usage of Vodnik’s legacy represented the “ceremonial, ritual part of the de-Germanization of Slovenian history” (ibid., 36).

74 In this respect, the ritual veneration of Vodnik and Prešeren should be observed as a set of political rites. For political rites as tools for the construction and display of power, see Bell, *Rituals*, 129

interpretation and appropriation of his legacy only strengthened his canonical position. At the same time, they indicated that the *opera*, characterized by high interpretative and receptive complexity, may be of greater longevity because they invite extremely divergent ideological appropriations.⁷⁵ The Prešeren cult remained alive after 1905, aligned more or less with the traditional memorial days of 3 December and 8 February and utilizing the ever expanding network of memory sites. As a hyper-canonized cultural figure, Prešeren increasingly gained official ratification with a growing incorporation into scholarship and education. This position only strengthened after 1918, when the new South Slavic monarchy was established, where Slovenians enjoyed a lot more cultural autonomy than in the now crumbled Austro-Hungarian Empire. At the University of Ljubljana, which was established in 1919, Slovenian literary studies could prosper, and the rapidly evolving field of Prešeren studies began to produce astonishing amounts of scholarly texts.⁷⁶ The final years of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia witnessed the institutionalization of Prešeren's childhood-home in Vrba, which was turned into a museum in 1939.

At the moment when the first nationalist wave of genuine enthusiasm may have faded into more ossified forms of veneration, the adoption of Prešeren by the Slovenian communists provided a fresh impulse. According to Boris Ziherl, one of the leading ideologists of the post-war years (and another in the long row of authors of monographs on Prešeren), the Slovenian communists “consecrated the resolution of their first congress with a verse by Prešeren”.⁷⁷ Even when a number of possible candidates with straight leftist views were available, the Slovenian communists (who in general retained a surprisingly high level of nationalism) were wise enough to stick to Prešeren and – again with certain interpretative ingenuity – to inaugurate him as a forerunner of the revolution. One of the Slovenian artisan brigades bore Prešeren's name,⁷⁸ and towards the end of the Second World War the Slovenian National Liberation Council declared Prešeren's day of death, 8 February, a national cultural holiday, which has been celebrated ever since. In the decades of communist rule, the Prešeren

75 Besides Prešeren and to some extent Jónas Hallgrímsson, the examples of Mácha and Eminescu confirm such a line of thinking (see also Egilsson, “Nation and Elevation”; Pynsent, “Mácha”; Mihăilescu, “Mihai Eminescu”). On the other hand, the less contradictory opuses of Tollens or Conscience in the Low Countries have resulted in a surprisingly quick decay of their cults.

76 Among its many achievements, the 1938 monograph (*Prešeren II. Biografija 1800–1838*) by France Kidrič may be particularly important.

77 Ziherl, *Prešeren – pesnik in mislec*, 70.

78 Fourteen out of the nineteen “Slovenian national liberation brigades” were christened after a patron. In six cases, such a patron was a “national hero” killed during the war, and two brigades bore the names of leaders of early-modern peasant uprisings (Matija Gubec and Ivan Gradnik). The remaining five were, strikingly, dedicated to literary greats: Prešeren, Levstik, Gregorčič, Cankar, and Kosovel. Obviously, the communists adhered to the widespread linking of (national) liberation with (national) literature.

cult reached full official status and was enriched with a further development of memory sites, christenings, and rituals. Since 1947, so-called “Prešeren awards” have been granted for exceptional achievements in culture. Marking a symbolic break with the Catholic tradition, the monument square formerly dedicated to the Virgin Mary was renamed after Prešeren in the anniversary year of 1949. Following the 1950 establishment of the professional Prešeren theatre in the historic centre of Kranj, a large monument was installed in front of it in 1952.

In the following decades, the number of Prešeren streets, squares, and all sorts of institutions (schools, preschools, cultural societies, arts centres, vocal ensembles, a mountain lodge, a theatre, and a high school) both in Slovenia and in the diaspora became virtually uncountable.

As shown on the first map, the entire Slovenian territory is nowadays densely dotted with Prešeren memorials. In this respect, Prešeren definitely surpasses any other figure from either culture or politics: four large outdoor monuments, four outdoor busts, two musealized houses, over forty institutions named after him, and over seventy locations (mainly streets). As the next map demonstrates, a number of units can also be found outside Slovenia. Most of them are the institutions, connected to the activities of the Slovenian diaspora.⁷⁹

Since Slovenia became an independent state in 1991, very little has changed regarding Prešeren – except that his “A Toast” was declared the national anthem⁸⁰ and that his image appeared on the new currency.⁸¹

In December 2000, another monument with a bronze replica of the 1865 bust by Franc Ksaver Zajec was unveiled in Vrba.⁸² In January 2011, the government declared the Vrba dwelling, the nearby St Mark’s Church, and the village linden tree monuments of national significance. 8 February remains a major national holiday, a day off work, and the “Prešeren award,” now rid of its ideological supervision, still represents the most prestigious cultural recognition. In the school system, Prešeren remains the key literary author to be studied at all

79 The data were gathered and analysed using GIS-mapping in the framework of the project “The Space of Slovenian Literary Culture” (2011–2014), led by Marko Juvan at the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts. The project mapped and analysed over three hundred notable individuals. The maps were produced by Jerneja Fridl and Jaka Ortar. See Dovič, “Memorials in the Slovenian Literary Culture”.

80 In fact, it was already adopted as an anthem in September 1989 by the Socialist Republic of Slovenia, shortly before the breakup of Yugoslavia.

81 In 1992, Prešeren’s portrait by Rudi Španzel appeared on the new Slovenian thousand-tolar banknote. Since the adoption of the euro in 2007, the obverse of two-euro coins bears a silhouette portrait of Prešeren by Božidar Jakac and the verse from “A Toast” that opens the national anthem: “God’s blessing on all nations”. For a larger collection of banknotes bearing portraits of writers, see the SPIN database (<http://ernie.spinnet.eu/>).

82 The bust by Zajec is the first known sculpture of Prešeren. Seemingly lost, the plaster original was found in 1991, when it was restored and used to make four bronze casts.

levels of education, although the reception of his poetry presents serious difficulties (due to its semantic and syntactic complexity as well as its erudite intertextuality).⁸³ The indoctrination commences in preschool: children who have just learned to speak draw portraits of Prešeren, are told anecdotes about the “fig doctor,” and discuss the “greatest Slovenian poet” and his unattainable Juliet.

To be sure, the veneration of the national cultural patron does not cause mass euphoria any more, but it remains vivid in many respects. Besides institutionalized promotion and official commemorations (spanning from the national ceremony with a presidential speech to local ceremonies in every town and every school in Slovenia), 8 February still stimulates a number of bottom-up projects. One of such recent developments is called “In Prešeren’s Footsteps,” a pilgrim route paying homage to Prešeren-related locations in Ljubljana.⁸⁴ The holiday also makes room for convivial activities such as a large ethnographic fair in Kranj and the Prešeren hike in the distant Prekmurje region. At the same time, “Prešeren” remains an inviting signifier for new christenings. In 2011, a new variety of flower was registered, the “Prešeren rose,” whose breeding even involved the distinguished literary historian Matjaž Kmecl.

In the meantime, Prešeren’s poetic opus has remained in the firm grip of both *Textpflege* and *Sinnpflege*, as Jan and Aleida Assmann would call the institutionalized handling of texts.⁸⁵ In both respects, the minute critical editions of *Zbrano delo* (Collected Works), initiated in socialist Slovenia, are a culmination of such efforts. After a number of plain reprints, anthologies, and early critical editions by the leading Prešeren scholars, the definitive edition of Prešeren by Janko Kos was published in two volumes in 1965. Keen interest in Prešeren not only made him a privileged object of literary scholarship – “Prešerenology” initiated many other developments in the humanities and social sciences. Prešeren’s textual legacy continues to trigger new waves of procreative output, including parody and de-sacralization. His biography, contaminated as it is with legends, has stimulated numerous biographical novels, plays, and even some movies. The overview by Štefka Bulovec hardly requires additional comment: her bibliography of Prešeren’s “secondary corpus” prior to 1970 extends on no less than 606 pages with 6,574 entries altogether.⁸⁶ In Slovenian culture, there is no equivalent to such a procreative outburst; but even in a broader context it seems quite remarkable. *The Baptism* has remained a key text of Slovenian literature in modernism and postmodernism, and its controversies continue to invite

83 To be sure, this has always been the case, as demonstrated in a recent exhaustive monograph on Prešeren in Slovenian schools: Zoran Božič, *Slovenska literatura v šoli in Prešeren*.

84 Like on the popular Catholic Way of the Cross, pilgrims stop at the stations to recite, sing, and orate.

85 See Jan and Aleida Assmann, “Kanon und Zensur”.

86 See Bulovec, *Prešernova bibliografija*.

further exploration and interpretation.⁸⁷ Prešeren's legacy has come to serve as a typical pre-text of countless new literary and non-literary products, and most likely Prešeren remains the most frequent and common literary reference in essays, magazine articles, but also blogs and web comments.⁸⁸

The "Slovenian Cultural Syndrome"

Such an outstanding stature of Prešeren in Slovenian culture, which seems to have very few equals even in the European context, obviously raises many questions. To answer them, we should remind the reader of Josip Stritar's 1866 essay. The intention of Prešeren's most influential postulator is obvious: he argues that, due to Prešeren, Slovenian culture and literature are aesthetically equivalent to those of larger nations. Stritar's argumentation has been repeated time and time again, becoming canonical itself. Since then, the implication that the nation can be endorsed and legitimized through poetry has been recycled endlessly and has become part of the very notion of Slovenian history up to the present day. In fact, Stritar's essay had introduced a series of texts that led to the sociological theory of the "Slovenian cultural syndrome".

Svobodne besede (Free Words), a 1976 book by literary sociologist Dimitrij Rupel, gives this thesis one of its most rigid articulations. Echoing somewhat Thomas Luckmann's ideas about invisible religion, Rupel argues that because of the lack of other institutions, Slovenian literature took upon itself the task of national emancipation. Not only was the literature of the time therefore a simple sphere of social production, but it also tended to perform functions that actually should have been performed by other social spheres, such as law, politics, education, and science – spheres that were, of course, present, but strongly Germanized. Rupel's thesis was not really new: it articulated a common belief that has been shared by Slovenian intellectuals ever since the mid-nineteenth century. Before Rupel, Slovenian comparatist and philosopher Dušan Pirjevec presented similar ideas in his 1969 essay *Vprašanje o poeziji* (The Question of Poetry): "In all of us the idea is present in one way or another that without

87 See the works of Andrej Blatnik, Branko Gradišnik, Dominik Smole, and Dimitrij Rupel, as well as the notorious Neue Slowenische Kunst group (see Juvan, "Transgressing the Romantic Legacy?" 247–253). An interesting recent interpretation of *The Baptism* by the classical philologist Marko Marinčič complements the sizable collection of monographs dedicated to this complex and elusive work of art. In recent decades, literary historians Janko Kos, Boris Paternu, and Marko Juvan in particular have written extensively on the subject.

88 In recent years, "A Toast" sparked a heated discussion. Boris Pahor, a well-known Slovenian novelist and Nobel Prize nominee, raised the question if it is patriotic enough to remain the national anthem.

Prešeren and his poetry we as a nation would have a different fate, that we would be grounded much less solidly, or even nonexistent.”⁸⁹

Moreover, this is also how Slovenian poetry understood itself. Starting with Prešeren’s vision of Orpheus awakening, in a distant future, Slovenia with his singing, poetry’s role in the national awakening became and remained a topos of Slovenian poetry deeply into the twentieth century.⁹⁰ With some reluctance, Pirjevec basically subscribes to the traditional assumption that poetry was “the centre of our culture, the only organ of our consciousness, our self-grounding and legitimatization”.⁹¹ This is the point from which Rupel is able to articulate his thesis. A nation without a state is reduced to a movement, and because it is dominated it can only be a “suppressed” movement: as such, its interests can only be pursued through art, and especially through vernacular literature. Yet, literature (or poetry) as an instrument of national struggle cannot really be congruent with its real essence, it cannot be, in Pirjevec’s words, “poetry as such”.

The obstinate syndrome-thesis has already been subjected to scrutiny. Its main point – that literature is the only possible ground for national emancipation because the time has not yet come for real politics – had already been formulated in the nineteenth century. Since then, it was employed extensively by Slovenian artists, scholars, and politicians. In 1967, the thesis was labelled “an ideological fossil” by Močnik, who was interested in tracing ideological operations that helped the emerging Slovenian economic and political elite to legitimate itself. Močnik did not fail to observe that in this way the bourgeois ideology successfully subordinated the producers of literature. Literature provided “great men” and, through the glorification of national greats, nationality, already class-represented, was established. Literature as a kind of a civil religion imposed itself on Slovenian bourgeois thinking as an authentic focal point. This was achieved through an ideology in which language is the glue of a national community. Literature was indispensable for the nationalist movement in this phase, but, according to Močnik, this connection castrated the artistic dimensions of literature.

By analysing the ideological and rhetorical mechanisms of the thesis, Močnik reveals how politics used literary strategies to establish the nation while suppressing both the class dimension of its project and its autopoietic feature of lifting itself with its bootstraps. As our analysis demonstrates, the key instrument of the appropriation of literature by the national movement was the canonization of its national poets. We have seen that their glory was in fact a construction

89 Pirjevec, *Vprašanje o poeziji*, 55.

90 In part, such an attitude can be followed back to Prešeren’s predecessors Vodnik and Feliks Anton Dev (1732–1786).

91 *Ibid.*, 58.

of a fairly broad alliance of numerous social agents. From this perspective, the syndrome thesis needs to be rethought. The great self-confidence of literature – the position that it alone can “change the world,” that it can give ground to a national movement, that, ultimately, “Slovenians” would not exist without literature – is exaggerated. Taking into account cultural, political, and economic contexts, it becomes perfectly evident that poetry itself never had enough strength to disseminate its (political) ideas in its environment, partly also because of the underdeveloped national institutions, media system, and book market.

Things were only to change when literature was adopted and appropriated by the emerging Slovenian nationalist middle class in the second half of the nineteenth century, a time accompanied by the rapid evolution of the media system (after the revolutions of 1848, which slightly loosened the firm grip of the *Vormärz* censorship), exponentially increasing the number of Slovenian newspapers, magazines, and publishing houses. The emerging political and economic elite, which had a strong need for legitimation, took upon itself the national emancipation project, using poetry as a means of achieving this political aim. The conquest of Ljubljana with the means of two monuments illustrates this most manifestly.⁹² Thus, the thesis about the “Slovenian cultural syndrome” requires a correction: the rise of the nation was made possible not by poetry itself, but by the rise of poetry (literature) politically instrumentalized by the ever stronger nationalist middle class, which already dominated the Slovenian public discourse through the emerging mass media. The “Slovenian cultural syndrome” thesis is therefore a kind of amphibian: it is simultaneously valid and invalid.

There is another feature of the thesis that awakens scepticism, namely the purported uniqueness which makes the “syndrome” appear utterly Slovenian.⁹³ Can it really be a specifically Slovenian phenomenon? In the context of East-Central Europe, the Slovenian situation proves to resemble that of several other cultures. Marcel Cornis-Pope and John Neubauer, for instance, state that most cultures in the area show “striking similarities, indeed, structural interrelations, between the emergence of nineteenth-century nationalism and the birth of national literatures and literary studies”.⁹⁴ In fact, these similarities even reach beyond the region: research in cultural nationalism has proven that a similar in-depth matrix was characteristic of Europe. As observed by Gellner, Hobsbawm, and Anderson, it was the nationalisms that “invented” nations and not the other

92 According to Hroch, the Slovenian national movement advanced to the phase B around 1840, which roughly coincides with the *Novice* activities, and then to phase C around 1890, which coincides with the “monument movement”. See Hroch, “From National Movement,” 8.

93 This was recently criticized in Juvan, “Slovenski kulturni sindrom”; Dovič, “Pirjevec,” 22–28; and Juvan, *Prešernovska struktura*, 297–346.

94 Cornis-Pope and Neubauer, “General Introduction,” 7.

way around; or to paraphrase Anne-Marie Thiesse, national identities are not natural facts, but social constructions. As demonstrated by Leerssen, among the hotspots of this construction were linguistic concerns and the production of national literature.⁹⁵ In the previous chapters, we have argued that the veneration of cultural saints was a vital feature of this process all over Europe. However, the emphasis on literature was even more intense in communities that had no “robust self-image” and which “wanted to further their national identity,” to quote Cornis-Pope and Neubauer once more.⁹⁶ In other words, the cults of national poets and cultural saints were more important in the national movements of the European semi-periphery than anywhere else in Europe. From this perspective, the “syndrome” should be viewed as another shared feature of those national movements that were unable to build their identity on other elements.⁹⁷

The case of Prešeren’s canonization seems to fit this explanation utterly. The astonishing investment in language and literature, resulting in the intense veneration of their utmost masters, makes Slovenian cultural nationalism rather typical. Nevertheless, even in the context of dominated or peripheral literary cultures, Prešeren’s stature in the Slovenian culture seems to be elevated to a degree which is highly uncommon.⁹⁸ At this point, we could speculate upon one singular *effectus* of the “syndrome” thesis that might, after all, turn out specifically Slovenian. For the aptness of the self-descriptive “syndrome” narrative may be more remarkable in the Slovenian literary culture than anywhere else in Europe. Is it possible that under the gravity of this ultimate mantra, other possible candidates for veneration, both in cultural and political respect, were underestimated? Could this, for instance, explain the fact that the ingenious nineteenth-century national leaders like Toman or Bleiweis were almost forgotten, and that even general Rudolf Maister (1874–1934), highly esteemed as a “saviour” of the northern Slovenian border in 1918–1919, is defeated by Prešeren in number of memory sites?⁹⁹ In any case, the “syndrome” narrative continues to function up to the present – at least as part of the ritual orations of 8 February. In critical moments, Prešeren can still be evoked to remind corrupted politicians that, to quote the established dramatist Dušan Jovanović, it is the “Prešeren

95 See Leerssen, *National Thought in Europe*.

96 Cornis-Pope and Neubauer, “General Introduction,” 8.

97 In *Le création des identités nationales*, Anne-Marie Thiesse emphasizes the founding ancestors, history, heroes, language, monuments, landscape, and folklore.

98 The issue of comparing statures of cultural saints in different cultures is highly ambiguous. Perhaps the stature of Hristo Botev in Bulgaria could be seen as a match, but it should be taken into account that Botev was more than a national poet; he was a proper hero and martyr who died for national liberation.

99 Only recently, both Maister and Slomšek have been commemorated in more monuments than Prešeren. But in terms of all memory sites Prešeren has no match (see Dovič, “Memorials in the Slovenian Literary Culture”).

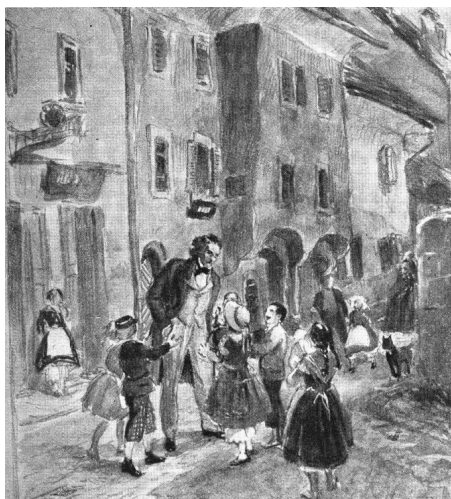
people” they are ruling.¹⁰⁰ At other occasions, however, the designation “the poet” might serve as a title that needs no additional naming but which, beyond that function, remains a mere empty word subject to most diverse appropriations and manipulations. As seen, these appropriations reveal much more about the postulators themselves than about Prešeren.

100 Jovanović’s speech was delivered as part of the “Protestival” in Ljubljana on 7 February 2013. The demonstrations started under the Prešeren monument and continued with a procession of “white masks” that were symbolically burnt in front of the parliament. In numerous speeches, Prešeren was repeatedly evoked as a kind of ethical measure against the corruption of Slovenian political elites.



→ Prešeren as portrayed a year after his death by Franz Goldenstein, oil on canvas, 1850

→ Ivan Vavpotič, *The Fig Doctor*, coloured drawing, 1932





← Elko Justin, Prešeren with Julija's portrait in painter's atelier, ink, 1937



← Hinko Smrekar, Črtomir's last address to his pagan soldiers, ink wash, 1938

- ← The tombstone for Valentin Vodnik after the 1840 rearrangements
- ↓ Prešeren's tombstone at the Kranj cemetery, a postcard, 1852





↑ The plaque on Vodnik's house in Ljubljana, 1858

→ The Vodnik monument in Ljubljana, 1889

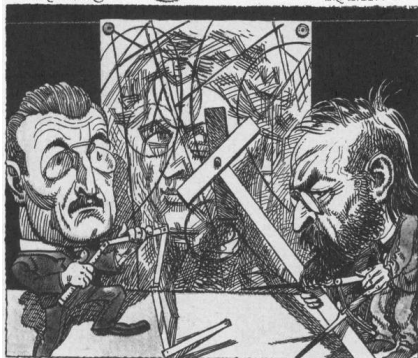
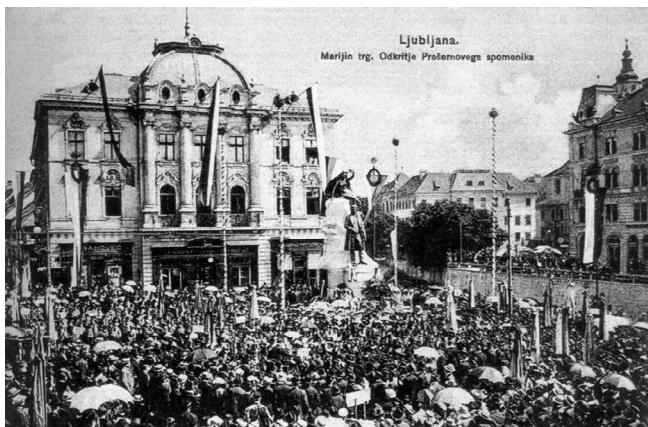


- ↑ A Prešeren postcard by Matija Jama, depicting the projected monument in Ljubljana, the Kranj tombstone, and the Vrba dwelling, 1899
- The plaque on Prešeren's house in Kranj (today the Prešeren Memorial Museum), 1900



↑ “Glory to Prešeren!” tableau vivant representing the poet and his “genius,” a postcard, 1899

→ The only photograph of Anton Martin Slomšek (beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1999), 1862



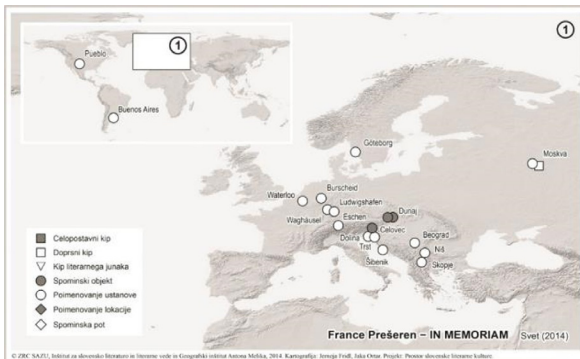
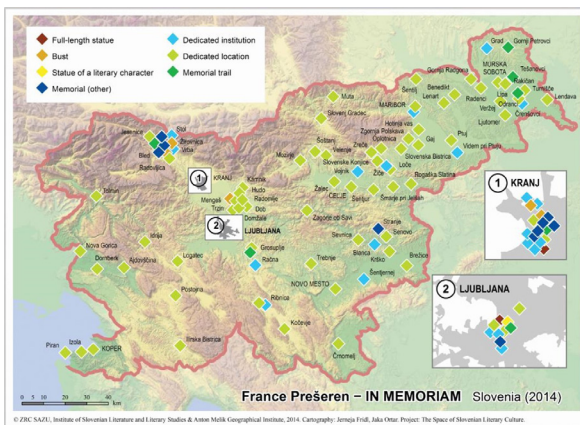
- ↑ The unveiling of a monument to France Prešeren in Ljubljana, 1905, a postcard
- ← Hinko Smrekar, *Our Prešerenologists*, a caricature drawing of four distinguished scholars arguing for their interpretation of Prešeren's works, 1926



← The Prešeren monument in Kranj, 1952

↓ Map 1: Memorials to France Prešeren in Slovenia

Map 2: Memorials to France Prešeren outside Slovenia





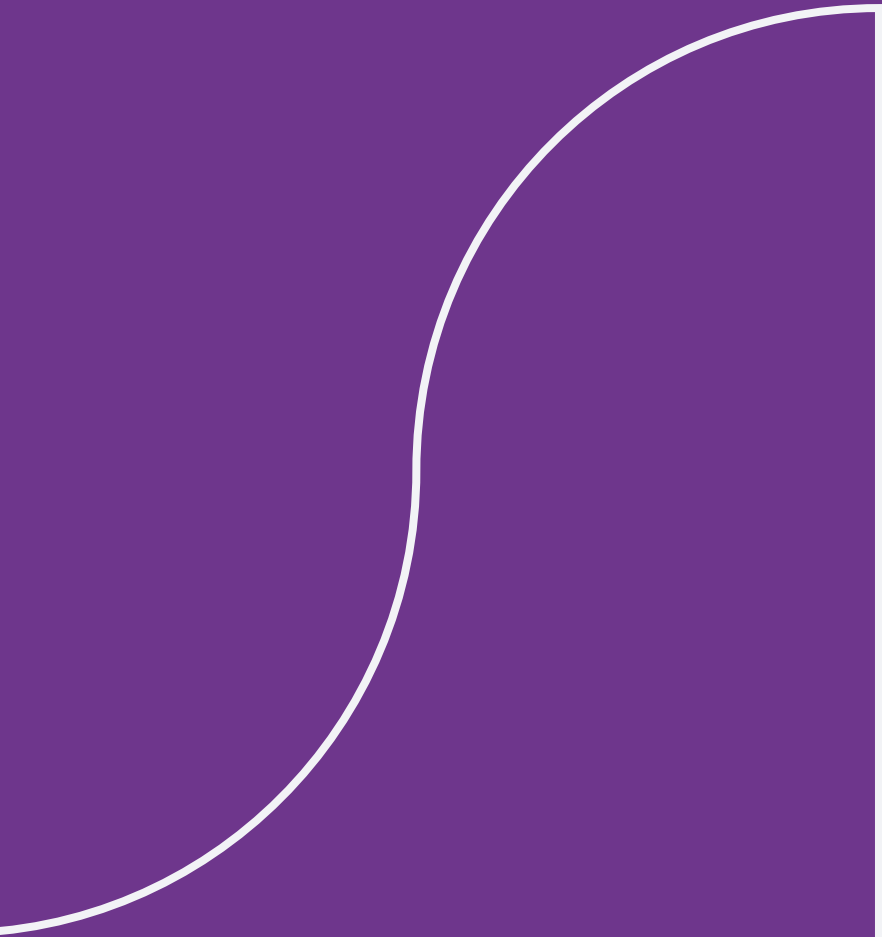
The obverse of the thousand-tolar banknote (1992–2006) and the reverse of the two-euro coin (2007–)



A portrait of Prešeren by a three-year old girl, 2013



Hinko Smrekar, *The Weather Will Clear Up for Carniolans*, an allegorical depiction of Prešeren's "prophecy" in the *Wreath of Sonnets*, after 1932



Unstable Contours:

PETŐFI'S MULTIPLE ROLES

ZSUZSA KALLA

Petőfi Literary Museum

The 200th anniversary of Petőfi's birth provides an opportunity to examine the present cult of Petőfi in the 21st century. The picture has changed spectacularly since the last two round dates – the 150th anniversaries of Petőfi's birth and death in 1973 and 1999 respectively.

The first slide shows two representations of Petőfi made while he was still alive. One is an illustration for a poem by Soma Orlai Petrich, the poet's friend. It depicts a revelling Petőfi writing drinking songs among the seminarists of Eger. The other is a caricature, also drawn by a friend, in which the poet can be seen as a hiker setting off to a mine. Between the two there is a contemporary graphic artwork. The portraits by those who knew him present an untraditional and for us unusual image of Petőfi, whereas the image in the middle is more familiar. The face, which is like a mask and is enclosed in squares and triangles made by facial recognition systems, breaks up the banal, clichéd Petőfi brand in both a technical and symbolic sense.

Although you will often hear it said that Petőfi is Hungary's "national poet", the youthful revolutionary of 1848 familiar to all, if we were to summarise the lessons of the commemorative year as the waves of celebrations slowly ebb away it turns out that the public, clearly canonised Petőfi figure uniting Hungarians has disappeared. Instead, a variety of Petőfis with profiles that are significantly different from one another fill the space of celebrations. Of course, as a specialist of museum collections, I am personally interested in documenting contemporary phenomena, i.e. in asking what scientific criteria and tools should be used to archive this event of Hungarian cultural memory.

Why is the cult of Petőfi "eternal", why is it protean instead of being exhausted, and why is it able to absorb ever new content? In the opening speech of the 2023 Book Week, which is the largest celebration of books in Hungary, István Margócsy emphasised that although Petőfi left behind an exceptional oeuvre and was a special historical figure, "he was not the greatest Hungarian poet, because there is no such notion as the greatest. He is invincible but there are

many other poets of a similar quality in Hungarian literature.” At a conference marking the anniversary, he said,

portrayals of Petőfi cannot shake off the ritual of the cult, because great narratives require a cult-like commitment; and, when creating the overall portrait and defining the broader historical outline, even if they strive to adhere to strictly professional demands and methodological requirements when defining individual phenomena, they cannot escape the system of gestures to justify and not prove the cult.

In the last few decades of the 20th century during which great narratives lost their overall validity and need for universality, though not easily, specialists attained autonomy which enabled research into Petőfi to revive and become varied, and which allowed cult rituals to recede into the background.

We may add that developments in the media have significantly transformed the nature and appearance of the rituals of cultic celebrations. Today what matters more is not a speech at a statue but whether it is broadcast. The hero does not appear on posters but on screens and on Facebook. Instead of the 19th-century's trinity of poet-revolutionary-soldier and the 20th-century's championing of the intellectual of ordinary roots rebelling against existing society, in the 21st century, groups connected to local communities and certain biographical elements have become active; Petőfi has appeared as a “rocker”, “pop star”, and “influencer”, as well as a symbol of youth and revolt in general.

Petőfi's traditional cult, the image of his “heroism”, was clearly formed by his own writings about himself. His great, generalizing, oratorical rhetoric, and a personality who protects the nation both from internal traitors or outside foes made him suitable for this role. Even as a private man, he sets himself the aim of a life devoted to a higher purpose and the double criterion of moral purity and integrity.

At the time when souls were bought and paid for at a high price and subservient bowing was a well-established way of getting ahead, I avoided the market fair and wouldn't even nod my head to anyone, but stood upright, and went hungry and cold. There could be more ornate and grandiose lutes and quills than mine, but more immaculate there are none, for never did I hire out even a sound of my lute or a stroke of my quill. I sang and wrote what the god of my soul inspired me to write and sing, and the god of my soul is liberty. Posterity may judge me a poor poet, but it would also say that I was a man of strict morality - in a word, a republican - because the main slogan of a republic is not 'down with the king!' but 'integrity!' It is not a shattered crown but an incorruptibility and undeviating honesty which are the basis of a republic [...]

Heroes, through the desire to be like them, are the most powerful means of conveying an ideal and a set of values that define the way of life, and their role in the development of the personality can be decisive. We have no reason to presume that Petőfi would not have met the above self-description within the understandable framework of self-promotion. His contemporaries saw him as a stubborn and resolute, an often unnecessarily hard rather than “compliant” character.

Petőfi’s violent death at a young age, similar to Byron’s, and the lack of a corpse and burial played an important role in his cult. In honouring his memory in 1973, a nation mourned for its freedom fighters lying in distant battlefields, in unmarked mass graves, the heroes of the 1849 national fight for freedom and the unburied victims of the 1956 Hungarian uprising. In both respects it mourned for the loss of a whole generation: the dead, the missing, and the young who were forced to emigrate.

In 2023, what was new was the number of commemorations in the provinces and their importance and role. Monuments or plaques were unveiled and commemorative exhibitions and conferences or other events were held primarily in towns which appear in Petőfi’s biography and where the cult of the poet is alive, belonging to the everyday identity of the local community.

The town of Kiskőrös is the best example, and is perhaps the centre of the Petőfi cult. Although at least four places compete for the title of Petőfi’s birthplace, it is beyond doubt that Sándor Petrovics was baptised into the Slovak Lutheran congregation of Kiskőrös – although, to emphasise his Magyarization, the poet publicly named the purely Hungarian Catholic Kiskunfélegyháza as his place of birth. It is known that he spent the first six months of his life in the building rented by his father, a butcher, which today is the Petőfi Museum. The house started to become dilapidated in the 19th century and became a memorial place as a result of the Petőfi cult. Then from the 20th century it was turned into a museum and filled with memorial objects – as Goethe’s birthplace in Frankfurt was rebuilt as the Frankfurter Goethe-Haus, part of the Deutsches Romantik-Museum (including the exhibition *The Young Goethe in Frankfurt am Main, 1749 – 1775*). And in the 21st century, one may visit the Statue Park of Translators, the János Vitéz (John the Valiant) Visitors’ Centre, and a contemporary art collection. This year the Slovak Folk House, which displays objects associated with the poet and his extended family, was named Folk House of the Year in conjunction with the museum. The new permanent exhibition opened in 2022, and in November 2023 it won the award for Exhibition of the Year with its concept presenting the birth of the poet’s oeuvre. 2023 was made very special by holding the central celebration of March the 15th and the Prime Minister’s commemoration there instead of in the usual locations in Budapest. The speech

in front of the Petőfi Museum ended with the sentence: “There is a bit of Petőfi in every Hungarian!”

A new image of the poet is one of the striking changes in the last decade and in the commemorative year. The new Petőfi character, drawn by professional and amateur graphic artists, and also presented on stage, differs from the traditional one and has appeared in popular media aimed mainly at Generations Z and Alpha. This phenomenon could be examined mostly in relation to the “celeb” cult with the toolkit of media anthropology. What literary history may add is to examine the elements with which the poet, who was excellent in dealing with the public and the press, was able to arouse interest specifically in his person at the same time as in his poetry – for perhaps the first time in Hungarian literature. He did this by constantly changed his public image with the help of his published texts, to the extent that surprise and continuous change actually became his trademarks. Petőfi was the first to consciously use his portraits published as illustrations in the press, as he writes in his *Travel Letters*: “Well, how nice it is when you are painted by Barabás and editors send it to some of the places all over the Hungarian homeland and the amazed public cries out: So he is like this?!”

I will now illustrate with a few examples some aspects of Petőfi’s repertoire of roles that appear online, in musicals, and prose performances.

A marginalised figure, living on the periphery and leading an “irregular” life

Petőfi’s well-known alter egos are outlaws, shepherds, and horse-herders: shepherds living outside civilisation, highwaymen overstepping the boundaries of the law, bandits who have gone astray, and residents of wayside inns. The heroes of his role poems with their often provocative use of language move in a tragic world or in the sphere of Robin Hood’s craftiness and quick-wittedness. The success of Pilvaker (the rap, slam, and poetry festival financed by Red Bull as a social marketing campaign and held on 15 March every year between 2012 and 2022) showed the still living tradition of this part of the poet’s oeuvre. Participants competed in the genre of contemporary popular poetry with the prompt “what would Petőfi write today?”

An easy-going, laid-back, cool, urban guy

Another of Petőfi’s spheres of activity is as an editor in the capital who moves self-confidently in literary circles and writes about the pleasures and irritations in a large city in a reserved manner. He dresses unusually, indeed showily

and distinguishes himself with rough and often rude jokes among his friends. This figure mostly appears in applied graphic art and memes as well as amateur and professional illustrations.

The traveller, the ironic observer

Still one of Petőfi's most read genres is his travelogue series including rhetorical, entertaining feuilletons with exclusively personal observations, whose main attraction is an irony resembling Heine's.

An eighteen-month project by the Pictorial Collective, a documentary photographic group, responds to this aspect and uses the fact that there is a street named after Petőfi in almost every village and town in Hungary. The exhibition *The People of Petőfi Streets – a subjective photographic view of Hungarian society* presents photographs of residents of those streets celebrating the anniversary. It features a poem by Petőfi as its motto:

*Blue woodlands of the past, they spread behind,
In front are future's sowings, green, aligned. [...]
And crest-fallen, roam the bare
Present, which is forever there.*

A selection of the photos has been acquired by the Petőfi Irodalmi Múzeum (Petőfi Literary Museum) in Budapest.

Intimacy – the private Petőfi, theatre of private life

Petőfi was the first author to publicly share information about himself which was not part of his role as a poet or as an editor but entirely private, his personal opinions and tastes. Such are the descriptions of his love life, wedding, and honeymoon – he radically transgressed the boundaries of his era, supplying intrigue for his contemporary readers and critics similar to today's celebrity culture. His play with these boundaries is shown by the quote from the *Travel Letters*:

Now be content with little, my dear friend. However much I intend I cannot write more because my wife incessantly puts her arms round me or I embrace her... which is all the same, because the end result is that I cannot write. We are on our own that is why we embrace one another... we lack the ill-manner of those who cannot keep their hands off each other as newlyweds usually do. Oh, how hideous, oh, how wicked it is to market happiness!

During the anniversary year, several well-known and talented actors made good use of that particularly modern modality in Petőfi's prose and correspondence, in which character emerges in narratives primarily based on close human relations (such as friendship and love).

The gender reassignment of the hero

Finally, the fact that Petőfi is often “only” Júlia Szendrey's husband has been a peculiar and growing trend since the 2010s. Szendrey later matured into a writer in her own right, and her diaries written before her marriage at 19, her writings reedited by her husband and shared with the public, and the popularity of her recently published, self-confident poems and diaries written during her second marriage compete for the general public's attention with the poet's own works. Szendrey statues are unveiled all over the world, theatre performances presenting her life and writing have been staged and a multitude of exhibitions have been held.

No doubt Petőfi supported his wife's literary ambitions, but only in the circle permitted to women's publishing:

George Sand is the wonder of the new world and I stand amazed, perhaps I adore but don't like her. She cuts open society as a butcher does the rumen of a cow to show the whole ugliness of its insides and shouts: it cannot remain thus! ... oh, it's a daring, glorious and great job, but does not suit a woman, only a man. When reading her novels I am always disturbed to think they were written by a woman and, peevishly, I put down the book. If a woman is hard-working, all right, let her cook in the kitchen, weed in the garden, it's nice if she dirties her hands there – but let her leave the stables to men.

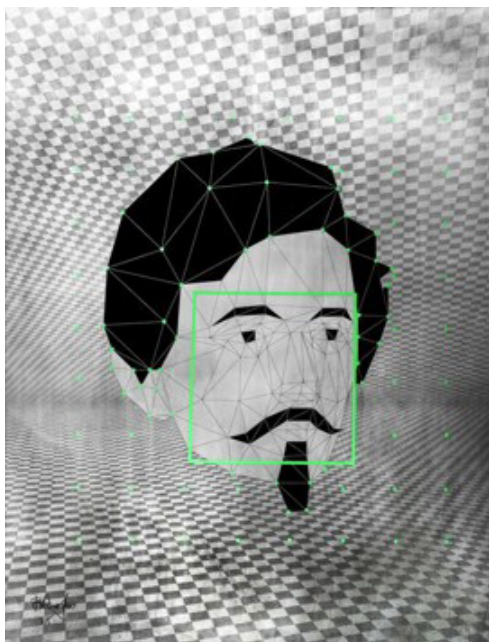
Finally, I'd like to draw your attention to an object of art, *Petőfi Pixel*, created by visitors to this very museum during a contemporary performance. The idea of “we will together make the Petőfi of our time” at the exhibition *Fiery Hungarian Writers and Poets* was illustrated by painter János Brückner, with visitors colouring in the small squares which made up the picture. This unusual attitude, interpreting the practice of inclusion in a museum's life ironically well, indicates in how many different ways Petőfi's figure can be interpreted in the space of the present.



↑ Soma Orlai Petrics, *Petőfi among the novices in Eger*, pencil drawing, 1844

↓ Zsigmond Törökfalvi Pap, *Petőfi's Caricature from Nagybánya*, 1846





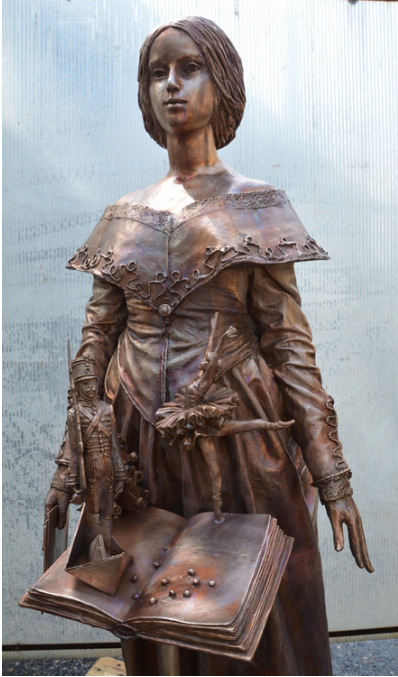
↑ János Brückner, *Petőfi*, paper, mixed technique, 2015

↓ Petőfi's Birthplace in Kiskőrös



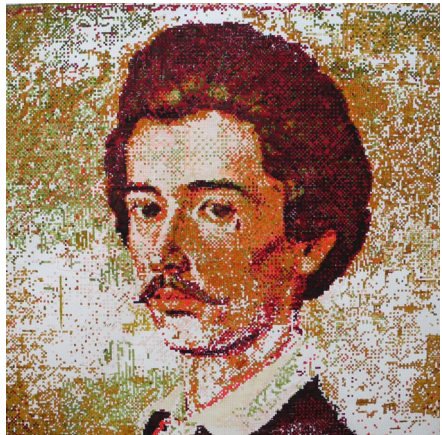


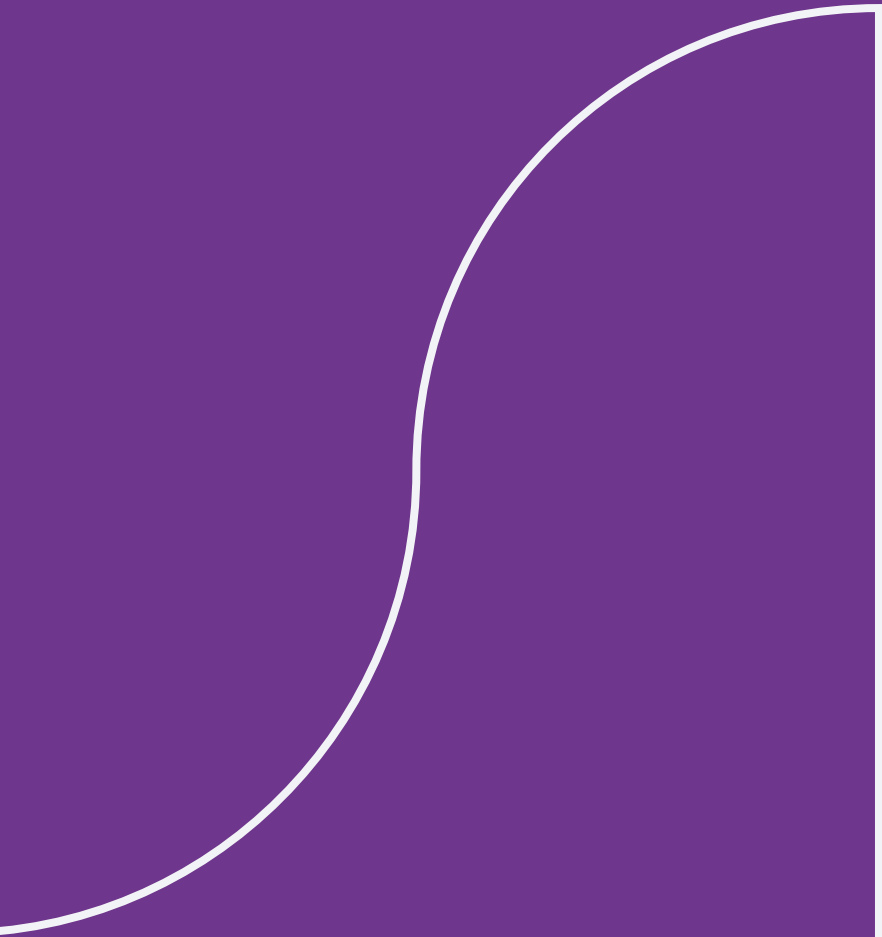
Poster advertising of Red Bull Pilvaker – *The revolution of words*



↑ Life-size bronze statue of Julia Szendrey in Copenhagen by Sándor Kligl, 2018.

↓ János Brückner, *Petőfi Pixel*, paper, mixed technique, 2015.





From Monuments to Memorial Museums:

THE SPREAD OF THE PETŐFI CULT, 1860 TO 1960

CSILLA E. CSORBA

Petőfi Literary Museum

The intellectual roots of the Petőfi Museum of Literature, which is about to celebrate its 70th anniversary, reach back to the 1860s. At that time, thanks to Thomas Carlyle (who had been in close communication with Johann Wolfgang von Goethe), the cult of the hero and the “great man” theory of history were spreading throughout Europe. Faith in poets and artists of the bourgeoisie, which was seeking its own identity and references in its mother tongue, poetry and culture, helped dismantle the walls raised by politics. “In homogenous national memory as well as in the birth of the bourgeois nation, cultic personalities and ideas imply cohesive power, a sense of identity, and the basis of its relations of the new social stratum.”¹ The poet Sándor Petőfi became the mythical hero of the struggle for Hungarian national independence and bourgeois transformation.

As the Czech writer, translator, and diplomat Jiri Gruša writes in his essay ‘Heroes’ (paraphrasing Robert Musil): “A hero needs disaster and misfortune in order to prove himself. Adversity and hero belong together like illness and fever.” From his own experience, he states: “Heroes, symbolic figures, starry crowns, and saints play an important and ultimately unifying role in our European diversity. They create identifications and define spaces.” At the same time, the identification of a symbolic space outlines the different manners of a people’s, a nation’s, historical narrative. The Museum Niederösterreich’s 2005 exhibition *Lauter Hellden*, which presented European diversity in Austria, showed several examples of

1 Katalin Keserű, *A kultusz köztes helye. Kazinczy magyarországi kultusza [Cults between Cultures: the Cult of Kazinczy in Hungary]* in Zsuzsa Kalla (ed.), *Tények és legendák - Tárgyak és ereklyék [Facts and Legends; Objects and Relics]* (proceedings of the joint conference of the Petőfi Literary Museum and the Research Group of Cult History at the Institute of Literary Studies of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences). Budapest: Petőfi Irodalmi Múzeum, 35—45: 35.

similarities and differences. While the hosts, Austrian historians, referred to their nation as sceptical about the fluctuation of history, they defined Hungarians as a nation which

[...] as a country thinks deeply in historical categories and continuities: above all, probably because this adherence to history and tradition alone often ensured progress or survival, and the national catastrophes and traumas could be overcome or exaggerated with a grand historical narrative.

Using Pierre Nora's concept, in the Hungarian collective history of memory the 1848—1849 War of Independence has become the most important “place of memory” in society; the fact that celebrating the 15th of March rapidly became a tradition played a key role. The 15th of March was already celebrated in the spring of 1849, the year following the triumphant revolution: that was, in fact, the start of the memorial cult of the revolution and the War of Independence.

It was the 15th of March. It was then that he [Petőfi] wrote his poem ‘Rise up, Hungarians!’ I am a witness to this day: and I can say that the hour when Petőfi recited his fiery poem in the middle of the market cheered by the young Hungary presented a turning-point in the history of Hungary.

Thus wrote Petőfi's great friend, the writer Mór Jókai, forty years later; his personal testimony played an important role in the institutionalisation of the cult of Petőfi.

Some of Petőfi's poetry became known among a wide circle of people in his own era, so it is not surprising that his death at a young age or his presumed disappearance engaged broad public attention for years. The national conscience, reverence, as well as the hope for resurrection (revival), and the sooner or later accepted fact of Petőfi's death that grew into a national symbol started the process of his national heroization. The initiating local communities and then the nation itself wants to show a tangible sign that it does not forget. A priest's discovery of Petőfi's birth certificate in Kiskőrös in 1857 produced a sublime awareness of the birthplace, and in 1861 residents of Kiskőrös proposed that a statue be erected there. The statue adorned with attributes was made possible by public contributions, and the house where the poet was born was marked with a plaque in the threatening Bach era.

In 1860, Ede Reményi, solo violinist to Queen Victoria, returned from England to Hungary; after successful performances in Pest, he conquered the provinces. Reményi offered the proceeds from these concerts for a Petőfi statue to be erected in the capital. Following his call, a collection was launched, and

the resulting statue of Petőfi (designed by Miklós Izsó and sculpted by Adolf Huszár) was unveiled on 15 October 1882. A movement to erect a statue at the place where Petőfi died developed ahead of the 50th anniversary of the revolution. The monument (by Miklós Köllő) was erected on a hill chosen to be a place of pilgrimage in Segesvár (today Sighișoara, Romania) on 31 July 1897 – but history intervened and, due to a series of atrocities, the monument was smuggled out in 1916. Since 1922, it has lived on as a scene of communal celebration in Kiskunfélegyháza.

István Margócsy's study of the immensity of the Petőfi cult cites as evidence of the century-and-a-half-long cultic attitude to the poet the statues, plaques, and pillars that were erected all over Hungary in the first half of the twentieth century, which by a symbolic occupation of space become part of the national ritual celebrations on 15 March and/or 31 July every year. There are more statues of Petőfi than of anyone else, and there are streets named after the poet in most Hungarian places. It is interesting to note as a national characteristic that the most popular street name in Britain is "High Street" and in Germany "Hauptstrasse". Since the erection of the first monument, the dilemma confronting sculptors is what posture the poet should adopt and how to express his Hungarianness, popular trend, love of the family, youthfulness, and revolutionary spirit. "The cult holds a mirror to an era and one can see how it constructs its own image of Petőfi," as Zsuzsa Kalla said in a recent interview. By 2023 the changing requirements for a monument indicate that one should be able to sit down by the statue to take a selfie; sculptor Dávid Tóth's soon-to-be-unveiled Petőfi monument sitting on a quill was created by taking this need into consideration.

After the Compromise of 1867, the authorities, growing in confidence, thought that it was now permissible to publicly articulate democratic traditions of independence. In fact, the official inclusion of national heritage in the political-social discourse tends to neutralise its anti-regime radicalism. The institutionalisation of Petőfi's cult that took place within a few decades is an emblematic example of the process. The Petőfi Society was established in 1876. The Rules of the Society recorded the facilitation of the Petőfi cult, the development and promotion of Hungarian literature, aesthetics, and criticism, as well as guarding the traditions of Hungary's great poets. The writer Mór Jókai served as its president until his death in 1904. With the help of the Society of Hungarian Writers and Artists, the poet's birthplace in Kiskőrös was purchased by public subscription, which opened the way to marking further literary memorial places and then to establishing a museum.

Several European (especially German) examples provided a point of reference for the prehistory of the Hungarian museology of literature. The Hungarian press reported on writers' memorial places and literary celebrations in

Europe from the end of the 1850s. In 1859, the 100th anniversaries of the births of Robert Burns and then of Friedrich Schiller proved to be exemplary. Also in 1859, celebrations for the centenary of the birth of language reformer and literary figure Ferenc Kazinczy were held in eighteen towns, uniting the nation. “Schiller’s memory was rendered immortal with a number of reverential facts since his death. The houses he lived in various places in Germany are objects of excellent care,” wrote the *Vasárnapi Újság* [*Sunday News*] in 1863.

We have heard complaints about how we don't sufficiently honour the memory of our prominent men, and in this respect we are often compared to other educated nations. By way of example, people cite the British, who preserve the residence of their great poet Shakespeare with sacred reverence to this day, and the French, who left the drawing room of Béranger, the greatest people's poet, as it was in his glorified life; they mention the Germans, the numerous houses of Goethe, Schiller and so on. [...] In our country this kind of reverence has not appeared for a long time [...] Yet, a few heartening initiatives can be seen here, too. The nation has purchased Kazinczy's house and estate [...] Petőfi's birthplace and residential home in Kiskőrös and Szabadszállás have been marked; in Szalonta János Arany's portrait has been acquired for the Council Hall where he wielded his pen as town clerk and a vineyard has been named after him.²

The idea of establishing a Petőfi Museum, a Petőfi House, was born in the public consciousness in the 1870s. The Petőfi Society, founded in 1876, immediately began collecting feverishly. It acquired manuscripts, objects, and artwork for a future archive. The relics were housed in apartments and then in a building donated by the capital. In seeking a solution, they cited as a reference the accommodation of the Goethe collection set up by Boldizsár Elischer in Budapest:

Budapest, in fact the building of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, already has a Goethe Room – but we have no Vörösmarty Room, nor an Arany, nor a Petőfi Room [...] there is no museum where future generations might make a pilgrimage with holy devotion and enthusiasm.

Pilgrimage and devotion corresponded to the atmosphere of the time. Schiller’s birthplace in Marbach, which began operating as a museum in 1859, and his house in Weimar, which became a memorial museum in 1847, were respected as national shrines. The establishment of the Petőfi Museum was accelerated

2 *Vasárnapi Újság* [*Sunday News*], János Arany’s former apartment in Nagykőrös, 19 April 1863, 140.

towards the end of the century by a large-scale series of national events on the 50th anniversary of the poet's death. Encouraged by the positive response, Mór Jókai, on behalf of the Society, turned to minister Gyula Wlassics, who gave a careful answer with respect to supporting the cause. The press espoused the idea. "The movement to create a Petőfi House in Budapest has just started," declared *Vasárnapi Újság*.

The Goethe House in Frankfurt came to my mind. How much closer you get to a poet if you look at the furniture, the small objects, the tiny traces that seem insignificant among which a great mind lived its life.

The Petőfi Society obtained a significant sum for the Petőfi House by holding large-scale events and publishing Petőfi's poems in a special edition. In parallel with the Petőfi Society's collection of manuscripts, books, pictures, and sculptures, gradually amounting to several thousand items, private collectors Béla Kreith and Lajos Ernst were also putting together their own national shrines, including works by and about Petőfi. Kreith exhibited his collection, while Lajos Ernst intended to present his own acquisitions in cooperation with the Petőfi House-to-be. The amount from donations was increasing and members of the Society had grand plans.

The capital promised to let them have a plot of land for which different Petőfi Museums were imagined. Mór Jókai envisaged a hall built in Greek style "as the Theseus Temple behind the Petőfi statue in Pest". The joint design in Hungarian Art Nouveau by Géza Márkus, Marcell Komor, and Dezső Jakab also seemed to have a chance. Aristocratic and upper-class women set about collecting the donations – however the amount was not sufficient to construct a new building. Then there came a potential rescue: purchase of the palatial building in neo-Gothic style belonging to Mór Jókai's son-in-law, the artist Árpád Feszty, who was in financial trouble. The deeds of the property, acquired from public contributions, were transferred to the Petőfi Society on 29 January 1907. Located in a bohemian artists' quarter at some distance from the city centre, the plan for the reconstruction was approved on 9 July 1907.

The Schiller Museum opened in 1903 and the Petőfi House opened in 1909. It was difficult to call the neo-Gothic interior spaces serving the formerly popular painter's whims, the ornate panelled walls with the enormous prop-like fireplace, a museum. Architects Péter and László Vágó transformed the private villa into a public building with an emphatic entrance adjoining the façade. Minor changes were allowed within the villa, though several of the interior spaces were opened up thus ensuring that visitors were able to go round the exhibition. "It cannot properly be called a museum," one journalist enthused.

At least, Petőfi cannot be imagined in the stale, lifeless air of a museum. His house was furnished with gentle tact so that as little atmosphere of inventories as possible could be detected. We could have hardly expected anything more pleasing than, for example, the 'room in Kiskőrös' with its beehive oven, old, tattered furniture, and modest equipment. And it has the very bed in which Petőfi was born [...] one could say that this collection of relics presents a living illustration of his poems, our greatest national treasure.

The succession of spaces with 300 pictures and 60 manuscripts were to represent the national genius embodied in Petőfi, but also provided an opportunity to promote the Society itself.

At first, the significance of the building, considered by large swathes of the population to be almost sacred, was seen by many people as an opportunity to experience Petőfi's narrative. "We can get really close to one of the greatest people who ever lived, who was turned into an extract by countless books and essays." A living, constantly increasing collection and communal space were established where each object could tell its story. The Petőfi House can be interpreted potentially as a place of memory, since those who operated it laid the foundations of modern literary museology with authentic objects, collecting, and exhibitions, as well as a demand for a high number of visitors. They also sought to address contemporary writers.

From the mid-1920s, the role of the museum was much diminished, due to the destruction of the First World War, moral crisis, and the financial difficulties of the Petőfi Society, originally predestined for the role of the custodian of national consensus; thereafter it was managed by the capital. The Petőfi statue on the bank of the Danube functioned as the symbolic space of Petőfi's cult: demonstrations and wreath-laying by the political left and right appropriating the poet's name proved the dynamics for remembrance. The 1930s presented the management of the House with the troubles of paying the bills, and the monotonous sequence of recitations and wreath-laying.

The Second World War decimated the Petőfi Society, which strongly swung to the right; the building was hit by a bomb and the collection was gravely damaged. Despite the difficulties and the political-ideological transformation, something had to be done with Petőfi, since the centenary of the 1848 revolution and of the poet's death was approaching.

News in 1947 gave cause for some optimism. The Petőfi Society reassembled, and sculptor Béni Ferenczy was commissioned to make a new Petőfi statue; the capital took over the Petőfi House and undertook to completely reconstruct the building and its museum for the centenary of the War of Independence. Ar-

chitect Gyula Kaesz was commissioned to work out the plans of reconstruction. According to the plans,

the Feszty studio [...] is reconstructed completely. The main entrance is moved to Kmetty Street [...] the replica of the room in Kiskőrös is furnished opposite the entrance, [...] the collection is going to be exhibited in the rooms upstairs in a chronological sequence according to episodes of Petőfi's oeuvre.

1948 marked the 100th anniversary of the bourgeois revolution and its celebration provided an opportunity for the new authorities to spread their messages widely. The centenary began at the poet's birthplace in Kiskőrös. "Hungarian democracy could not have found a better place to hold the first centenary celebration," it was reported; the President of the Republic, Zoltán Tildy, Mátyás Rákosi, and other members of the government and of the Writers' Association were all there.

Neither time nor disposition were left for redesigning and forming a new image of the Petőfi House in Budapest. The necessary repairs were carried out in a rush within three weeks and the new Petőfi exhibition opened on 14 March 1948. Minister of the Interior László Rajk and Minister of Defence Péter Veres were present at the opening ceremony. Following writer György Böllöni's introduction, Mayor József Bognár delivered an inaugural speech: "Petőfi was the poet of oppressed millions because he expressed what the people wanted in their hearts and souls," he emphasised. According to a review by an art historian, the new Petőfi Museum presented a modern example of "monographic exhibitions" with the professionalism of its collection of objects and their selection and the clarity of their arrangement. The exhibition both in its contents and image praised the work of the employees of the Budapest History Museum.

Later the Petőfi Society gradually changed: the majority of its old members resigned and new members were present at events. To prove their legitimacy and to utilise the heritage, the ideologists of the totalitarian dictatorship, formed in 1948, appropriated the national holiday and Petőfi's name. An exhibition presenting the significance of the March revolution, which opened in 1948, had to be replaced by one commemorating Petőfi's death in the summer of 1949 – and that time the party's ideological instruction did not fail to appear. "The exhibition displays many interesting Petőfi relics. We can see the room in Kiskőrös with its beaten earth floor where the great Hungarian poet was born. [...] Mátyás Rákosi's words address us from a wall: 'Ours is the historic task to fulfil and accomplish all that the heroes of the 1848 revolution led by Kossuth, Petőfi, and Táncsis fought for,'" one journalist recorded.

The Petőfi Society wound itself up in 1952. In 1954, the Sándor Petőfi Museum of Literature was established based on the heritage of the Petőfi House, and from then on was declared to be a collecting centre for Hungarian literature as a whole. It found its permanent home in the Károlyi Mansion in 1957, which ensured a dignified frame for museologically processing and exhibiting classical Hungarian literature.

This brief review of the past 150 years outlines the process unfolding in space and time which resulted in the birth and institutionalisation of Petőfi's cult.

Returning to Jiri Gruša's words, quoted in my introduction, which interpreted our nations' cults of heroes in European dimensions: "It seems almost logical to me to call a 'bridge saint' a hero in this context – because, let's not forget, to build bridges is heroic."



↑ Violinist Ede Reményi (1828-1898) launched a fundraising for the statue of Petőfi

↓ Statue of Petőfi according to the design by Miklós Izsó. Drawing in the Vasárnapi Ujság of 5 January 1873





↑ Adolf Huszár in his studio with a statue of Petőfi, designed after a maquette by Miklós Izsó. Drawing in the *Vasárnapi Újság*, 15 October 1882

↓ In 1959 the first Petőfi exhibition opens in the Károlyi Palace



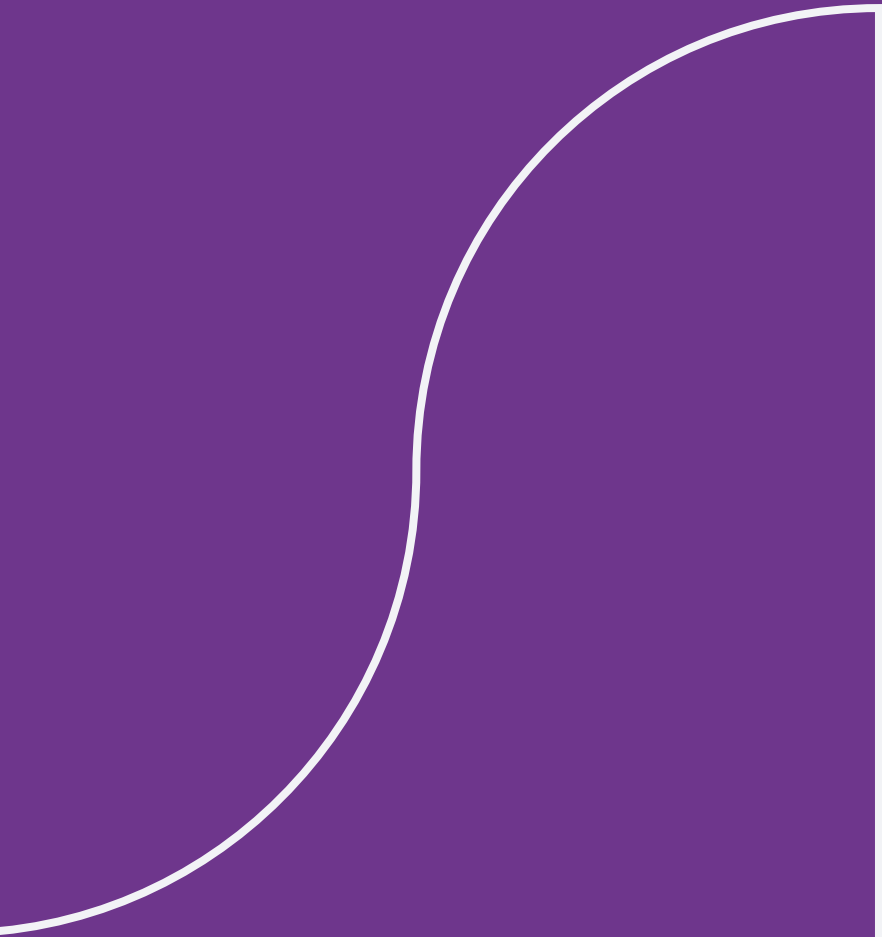


↑ Members of the Petőfi Society with Mór Jókai in the middle

← Petőfi House with a rebuilt entrance based on the plans of the Vágó brothers. The ceremonial opening of the Petőfi House took place on 7 November 1909, creating a new spatial emphasis - a memorial site, a museum of relics - among the studio houses.

↓ Model by sculptor Dávid Tóth in 2023 as Petőfi sits on a goose feather





Romantic Resonances:

POLITICAL PLASTICITY IN THE ROMANTIC ERA: ROMANTIC COSMOPOLITANISM AND NATIONALISM

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I. Introduction

a) *A personal note*

First of all, I would like to thank you for the invitation to give a lecture at this conference about a topic that it is so dear to me: Romanticism. Even more wonderful is to be able to do this at this beautiful venue that has become the shrine of cultural heritage, but one that sees as its task not only to preserve but also to keep alive this heritage by critical re-appraisal in the form of exhibitions and conferences like ours.

Twenty years ago when I left Hungary, the last project in which I was involved was called *Ideologies of Romanticism*. Now, two decades later, I am still fascinated by the complexities of Romanticism, still interested to study the intricate ways in which arts intersect with each other and with societal trends.

In the past two decades I examined the role of music and opera in nation-building, and how the Romantic musical and literary heritage interacted with the political thought of its age, nationalism. I have published on how audiences were transformed into political publics by opera, and how music had the ability to create not only imagined communities (Anderson, 1983) but also embodied communities, disseminate political messages and shape nationalism. Today, I wish to nuance this story.

Instead of focusing exclusively on nationalism, I also wish to address the concept of cosmopolitanism. More precisely, I want to consider the complex dynamic relationship between nationalism and cosmopolitanism in the Romantic era.

b) Heroic music and political interpretations

I am sure that many people have recognized the composers and will also be familiar with the captivating historical context of these pieces:

1) Beethoven's *3rd symphony* (1804), Originally "Bonaparte", later renamed "Sinfonia Eroica" – it is considered the first truly romantic symphony.

2) Chopin's *Polonaise in A-flat major, Op. 53*. (1842), which became to be known as the "Heroic" Polonaise, despite Chopin's protests to bestow any kind of descriptive monikers on his music.

3) Liszt's *Funérailles* (1849) – which has a section that is closely related to Chopin's Heroic Polonaise.

What do these pieces have in common? They are incredibly turbulent (written in turbulent times), difficult to perform, taxing for the musicians (demands commitment, stamina, and a stroke of genius to perform them well).

They are all political, they promote heroism, and their reception and afterlife has been intertwined with politics.

But what does this heroism mean? Is this heroism located in the field of national or universal? Or both?

My aim today is to shift attention to the plasticity of the space between the national and the cosmopolitan, and to argue that for Romantic Heroes – whether fictional or real-life ones – the space of belonging was layered and shifting. Romantic cosmopolitanism and the plasticity of belonging have been relatively neglected areas of research, and it could open up new ways of understanding the Romantic heritage.

c) Romantic nationalism and Romantic cosmopolitanism – State of the Art

In the past few decades, the cultural and political heritage of Romanticism has received significant critical attention in the fields of cultural history, and to a somewhat lesser degree also in nationalism studies. The colossal project led by Joep Leerssen at the University of Amsterdam *ERNIE, the Encyclopedia of Romantic Nationalism in Europe* is probably one of the most prominent examples of a scholarly effort for understanding Romantic networks and practices in a comparative and transnational framework.

Such endeavors had an important role in focusing attention to the role of culture in nation-building processes, nuancing and hopefully changing the per-

spective on nationalism, that previously was limited to mainly social and economic histories, and challenging the essentialist single-country approaches to nation-building. These were important steps towards leaving behind methodological nationalism and revealing new critical ways to understanding the constructions of European national canons and national identities. My own work investigating the political role of music and opera in nation-building processes has been part of this school of thought.

In this talk today, however, I would like to argue for a critical re-examination of this academic tradition that revolved around nationalism and shift the focus towards cosmopolitanism, an aspect of Romanticism that has not received much attention even though it has been a vital constitutive part of the Romantic era, as I will hopefully highlight it through my case study centered on Franz Liszt, and more precisely on Liszt's biography of Chopin.

By no means do I wish to suggest that we've been all wrong in our assessment of the 19th century as the age of nation-building in which Romanticism certainly played a major role. Instead I want to emphasize the importance of cosmopolitanism in shaping Romantic art and also Romantic nationalism. Although at first sight it might seem like a contradiction in terms to juxtapose nationalism and cosmopolitanism, hopefully I will be able to make a convincing argument for their co-existence and co-dependence in the period of Romanticism.

One of the most persistent heritages of Romanticism is nationalism. One of the problems with this heritage is that the political thought of Romanticism has been viewed through the lens of nationalism.

No doubt, Romantic ideals of nationhood and their artistic articulations have played a significant political role, as compellingly argued by recent scholarship. But the understanding of Romantic political thought has been influenced and tainted – if I may use this word – by the canonization of Romanticism by successive generations. This is one of the Romantic resonances to which I alluded in my title: the aesthetics and artistic production of Romanticism has been resonating with its contemporary and successive publics, but today the resonances are louder than their Romantic source.

My main theses are: that cosmopolitanism and nationalism were not mutually exclusive concepts in the Romantic era; that Romantic ideas of nationhood intersected and were closely related to the ideals of cosmopolitanism. I argue that Romantic nationalism was a practical application of cosmopolitanism, one of its offshoots, and should not be regarded as its alternative.

II. Cosmopolitanism

Cosmopolitanism is an elusive term with several variants, such as ethical, political, cultural, or practical cosmopolitanism. This variety and elasticity challenges critics to give a precise definition of cosmopolitanism and to pinpoint its essence due to its range of manifestations.

There was a revived interest in cosmopolitanism in the last decade of the 20th and the first decade of the 21st centuries in philosophy and political theory. Authors such as Martha Nussbaum, Jacques Derrida, Kwame Anthony Appiah, Gerard Delanty, Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins, or Steven Vertovec, to name a few often quoted names, published seminal works on cosmopolitanism. These essays and books have two main features in common: 1) they were prompted by attention to the hybridization of culture in the latest wave of globalization; and 2) most of these authors argue that patriotism or loyalty to the local does not exclude commitments to cosmopolitanism. This conclusion would have not surprised the thinkers of Antiquity or the Enlightenment – two eras in which cosmopolitanism has been a main area of interest.

Cosmopolitanism became a derogatory term, defined either as the lack of something (usually of patriotism, commitment to local communities and causes) or as the excess of something (usually of individualism, elitist detachment, cultural and economic opulence).

Another aspect of cosmopolitanism is its oppositional nature: it has been defined in opposition to an existing order. When Diogenes the Cynic (c. 412-323) declared himself “a citizen of the world” he meant to assert his individual freedom, his liberation from the local community. This Cynic tradition gave cosmopolitanism the critical potential to relativize the individual’s identity, even if no other alternative is available. The Cynics were questioning the strict rules of the Greek polis with its sharp demarcations between citizens and non-citizens. “It was this distinction between inside and outside that cosmopolitanism challenged.” (Delanty, 21)

The Stoics emphasized cosmopolitanism as a way to revitalize the political community. Unlike the Cynics, the Stoics believed that humans are social and were meant to live in a society which needs to be based on new moral values of civic engagement and strong emotions of belonging. Zeno of Citium (333-264 BC) claimed that civic obligation should not be imposed but ought “to derive from deep subjective feelings of belonging” (Delanty, 22). From its earliest forms in Antiquity cosmopolitanism meant a political and moral reorientation that challenged the narrow exclusivist ideas of patriotism and belonging, but it did not completely reject the importance and the function of local organized political communities.

From the beginning the local and the universal were intertwined without prioritizing one or the other, rather emphasizing this very entanglement. Instead of celebrating the fixity of identity and the solidifying effects of roots, it envisions belonging as an open process that can shift in and out of the local and in between localities.

The historical context of the Stoics is important: it came into being in an age when the classical Greek polis was in decline and the empire of Alexander the Great was expanding and spreading Greek culture eastwards to Persia and India. However, cosmopolitanism's links with empires is not what became defining in the later stages of its development.

The modern notion of cosmopolitanism originates from the 18th century, the age of the Enlightenment and it became strongly intertwined with the idea of republicanism and confederation or federation.

In the seventeenth century, in the aftermath of religious wars and warring states, several intellectuals revived the concept of cosmopolitanism in order to secure peace and create a more stable world order. These treaties in which the idea of a world state or a cosmopolitan world played a central role were in fact peace plans.

The inter-state reality of the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 was the greatest impediment to political designs that advocated a federal unity of Europe; but it was these ideas that were revived in the 20th century and resonated with the ideological architects of the European Union.

Johannes Althusius “*Politica Methodice Digesta, Atque Exemplis Sacris et Profanis Illustrata*” (1603), Abbé Charles de Saint-Pierre “*Project for Making Peace Perpetual in Europe*” (1713), David Hume “*Idea of Perfect Commonwealth*” (1752), American federalists James Madison and Alexander Hamilton, the *Federalist Papers* (1787-88), Immanuel Kant “*Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose*” (1784) and “*Perpetual Peace*” (1795) – the works of these authors were not just abstract fantasies or desperate attempts by a few idealists to achieve peace, but laid down the foundations of international law, especially in the writings of Grotius (Hugo de Groot). International law theory together with social contract theory and the philosophy of natural law have become the main foundations of modern political theory.

Kant pleaded for republicanism and a cosmopolitan order as a way to achieve a perpetual peace. In his view republics were less likely to go to war against each other. But he did not think it was realistic for a world republican government to emerge. For Kant and most Enlightenment thinkers, cosmopolitanism meant surpassing the class-based and autocratic ancien régime. Cosmopolitanism was considered a condition *sine qua non* for the establishment of a *Republic of Letters*, an ideal space for the free circulation of ideas which would lead to the improvement of the human condition.

Romanticism is not particularly remembered by its contribution to cosmopolitanism; instead it came to be known as the age of nationalism. However, this is a quite one-sided view of the heritage of Romanticism. Romanticism drew on the theories of the Enlightenment and amalgamated them with new ideas about individual and collective freedom.

In the field of Romantic research, especially music history, as Dana Gooley noted, the lack of discourse on cosmopolitanism does not mean the absence of it in the Romantic era (Gooley, 525). Music and musicians circulated through cosmopolitan networks and were disseminated via live performances or in print in cosmopolitan settings. Despite its use for nationalist purposes and the increasingly nationally inclined public, cosmopolitan musical practices still belonged to the mainstream and the practice of music was not subordinated in most cases to nationalist tastes.

There were parallel repertoires for multiple publics which occasionally overlapped. In what ways did they overlap? This sphere of overlap needs more attention. Music was indeed shaping national publics (by establishing a national repertoire, emergence of national artists, performative nature of music that was creating embodied communities) as I have argued in the past, but with the same means it was also creating a cosmopolitan repertoire, a sphere in which art was circulating without regard for national borders.

What is worth exploring is the liminal space between nationalism and cosmopolitanism, the dynamics between the two, the spaces of negotiation and contention.

As Ryan Minor contended, cosmopolitanism should not be explored as the good alternative to bad nationalism, and should not follow the same rhetoric of heroism as previous attempts to create national cultural heroes, but instead it should open up the criticism to a more nuanced understanding of Romanticism. (Minor, 534).

In the next section I will try to discuss and illustrate this tension between Romantic cosmopolitanism and nationalism through Liszt's biography of Chopin.

Liszt's Chopin

Liszt's Chopin biography first appeared in 1851 in installments in the Parisian journal *La France musicale*. The following year, Liszt made some changes and published the biography as a book, first in Paris with the firm of Escudier, later in Brussels with Schott, and then in Leipzig with Breitkopf & Härtel. A revised longer version of the Chopin biography appeared in 1879 from Breitkopf & Härtel at the same time they were publishing Chopin's collected works. However, Liszt himself was not involved in this edition; this later version of Liszt's *Chopin* was

edited and rewritten by his co-author, Princess Carolyn von Sayn-Wittgenstein.

Liszt's *Chopin* extended a relatively new tradition of musical biographies. Unlike its sister arts, secular music (including opera) was necessarily contemporary, and the lives and works of earlier composers were not remembered until Forkel's famous *Johann Sebastian Bach: His Life, Art, and Work* appeared in 1802, subtitled in the original German *Für patriotische Verehrer echter musikalischer Kunst* (for patriotic devotees of genuine musical art). Forkel's biography of Bach is pioneering not only in a musical sense, but also as a project of German cultural nationalism. This work was seminal for the rediscovery of Bach's music, which in the course of fifty years had become all but forgotten. The next famous musical biography was Stendhal's *Vie de Rossini* (1824), which is more a survey of music and opera history than a life story. Chronologically the next biography is *Mozart* (1828), by the Danish diplomat and music historian Georg Nikolaus von Nissen, followed by the equally well known but less accurate and therefore discredited biography of Beethoven published by his secretary Anton Schindler in 1840. This is the literary context that preceded Liszt's *Chopin*, and probably he was familiar with these biographies, all of which had a significant impact on the cultural memory and popular images of their subjects.

During Chopin's lifetime, Liszt promoted his friend's music by playing his works at public concerts, and after his death, he undoubtedly helped to immortalize Chopin with his biography. However, he also defined *how* Chopin should be remembered: he contextualized and explained *why* Chopin's music was worth remembering, and selected *what* elements were most likely to be canonized by future generations. Liszt's Chopin is an archetype of the Romantic composer, purged from all the classicist elements that characterized Chopin's music and personality.

Liszt began working on the biography in November 1849, two weeks after Chopin's death and soon after the execution of Liszt's other friend, Count Lajos Batthyány, the prime minister of the new Hungarian government. Batthyány was shot by a firing squad, and his thirteen generals, the leaders of the brutally crushed Hungarian War of Independence, were hanged in Arad on 6 October by Austrian authorities under the command of General Haynau, who was notorious as 'the hyena of Brescia.' Liszt remembered this 'cruellest month of the year' in his musical elegy *Funérailles*, which was subtitled 'October 1849.' Legend had it for a long while that Liszt wrote the *Funérailles* in remembrance of Chopin, as a musical elegy. He denied these claims, insisting that the piece was dedicated to the memory of his friends who had suffered brutal retaliations after the failed Hungarian revolution. Nonetheless, some of its passages evoke Chopin's *Pola-naise héroïque*, op. 53, which lends credence to the assumption that he also had

Chopin in mind.¹

Though estranged from Chopin for years, Liszt championed him in his prose, through the biography, and in his music. In the early 1850s he composed a number of pieces that were saturated with allusions to what Liszt considered Polish elements in music.² His continuous preoccupation with Polish themes and Chopinesque forms in the period when he was also working on his Chopin biography could be seen as a musical and literary reflection on what he and Chopin shared: a multifaceted artistic and national identity. He ‘translated’ these Polish characteristics into the Hungarian-style *verbunkos*; as Shay Loya argues in his outstanding book on Liszt’s *Transcultural Modernism and the Hungarian-Gypsy Tradition*, Liszt used the ‘*verbunkos*’ idiom to transform culturally what Liszt perceived to be Polish in Chopin’s music.³

Outside Poland, Chopin was well known in France, thanks to the *Gazette musicale*, and held up as a symbol of French clarity and refinement against the German convoluted style.⁴

He was assimilated and domesticated in England in a simplified form to fit the contemporary taste of drawing-room musical practices, where ‘[i]t was in the ‘simple’ pieces that the ‘real’ Chopin was sought and found.’⁵ Many English critics regarded the pieces characterized by technical difficulties and complex thematic developments as examples of the ‘inartistic violence’ typical of the Polish folk music that had inspired it.⁶ In Germany his reception started during his lifetime with supporters such as Schumann and Liszt, but because of his association with the French salon and his avoidance of public concerts, Chopin’s oeuvre was regarded as inferior to the German musical tradition. Liszt’s biography and the later editions of his collected works published by Breitkopf & Härtel changed this image and facilitated Chopin’s entry into the canon of ‘classical music.’⁷

Liszt can be seen as a cultural mediator, a ‘translator’ of Chopin’s music for future generations, someone who promotes ‘inter- or transcultural processes such

1 Hamilton, Kenneth, ed. 2011. *The Cambridge Companion to Liszt*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (71–72).

2 Loya, Shay 2011. Liszt’s *Transcultural Modernism and the Hungarian-Gypsy Tradition*. Rochester: University of Rochester Press (210).

3 Idem, 201.

4 Idem, 284–85.

5 Carew, Derek 1992. ‘Victorian attitudes to Chopin.’ In: Jim Samson (ed.), *Chopin*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (229).

6 Ibidem.

7 Samson, Jim 1997 (286–87).

as comparison, exchange, transfer or acculturation.⁸ A cultural mediator could be defined as a public intellectual or artist whose appeal and influence crosses national boundaries. As an influential figure in his own time with a cosmopolitan outlook and life experience, Liszt was well prepared for his role as a mediator between French and German, and between Eastern and Western European traditions while at the same time contributing to the creation of resilient stereotypes about Chopin and disseminating them through a variety of cultural channels of communication: in music, in public concerts, and in his various writings, including the biography.

Liszt was on one hand arguing for the memorialization of Chopin as a great musician in the universal canon of Art, and on the other hand, was advocating for the memorialization of the idea of the national artist and through him the nation. This biography deserves attention not because it provides us with useful information about the life of Chopin, but rather because it serves as a document about Liszt's political and artistic views and his ideas about the relationship between the artist and the nation.

When Chopin died in 1849 Liszt was inspired to write a book about the fellow composer he admired in order to memorialize him for posterity. Like every act of memorialization, this 23-page biography is a mediated image of its subject and tells us more about its writer who remembers, the focalizer, than about the person who is being remembered, the focalized. Therefore it is not surprising that Alan Walker, who wrote the most complete Liszt biography and also authored a biography of Chopin, contends that Liszt's *Chopin* is "useless" (Walker, 367). Nonetheless, Liszt's biography of Chopin is very useful as a cultural historical document that conveys valuable information about the complex relationship between politics and art.

Music became a favorite topic in 19th-century literature and criticism, but despite the growing body of scholarship on music in literature, there are still unexplored territories. As Christopher Wiley has noted, the ideologies underlying musical biographies have not been fully explored, although 'the study of biography yields many unique insights given the genre's uneasy positioning between fact and fiction' (Wiley, 2018). Examining the biography from a cultural-critical perspective makes it possible to re-evaluate Liszt's intellectual and literary achievements, which, as noted by Michael Saffle, have not been sufficiently explored in biographies of Liszt (Saffle, 93).

The argument I want to make today is that Liszt aimed to create a flexible sphere for the artists of his generation, especially for Chopin and himself, for whom the national and the cosmopolitan were places of transition rather

8 Keller, Thomas 2007. 'Mediator.' In: Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen (eds.), *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters*. Amsterdam – New York: Rodopi (357).

than of fixed residence. The term *national* should be understood here as a dynamic and creative process, as aesthetic production rather than the expression or projection of some static essence. This act of creation was especially important for people without an independent state, like the Poles and Hungarians in the 19th century.

Liszt's main political message is not national exceptionalism but transnational egalitarianism. Liszt presents national culture not as an isolated location, but as a transnational narrative space where the particular and universal are negotiated, articulated, and mutually transformed. Liszt's biography of his friend and fellow artist is an anti-essentialist evocation of national cultures as constitutive elements of a transnational cultural space.

This cosmopolitan nationalism was inspired by ideas of liberalism and advocated national self-determination as both a political and cultural project with local and universal significance. The determination of cultural communities to become political collectives and for political communities to distinguish and promote themselves as cultural collectives was considered the *sine qua non* for their long-term survival. Art and politics were intertwined in this mission to create a community. Artists served both as insiders and outsiders in nation-building projects, and in their role as both participants/creators and observers/critics of culture they were seen as being in the best position to represent a community.

In this biography Chopin's art is treated as a political project and nationalism as an artistic project, which were both important for Liszt, albeit not strongly interconnected for Chopin. Liszt did not seek to retrieve the real Chopin, but instead aimed to construct the *idea* of Chopin as a *national composer*.

'However much Chopin may be mourned by his fellow artists, as well as by those who knew him, we doubt whether the time has yet come for him, whose loss we feel so keenly, to hold the high rank that will probably be his in the future.'⁹ These opening words of Franz Liszt's biography of Chopin immediately set the tone for what follows and explain one of its main motivations, namely rescuing Chopin's legacy from the threat of oblivion. Liszt acts as a paraclete, an intercessor who is positioned to safeguard Chopin's work and enshrine the reputation of the dead genius. According to Liszt, despite his immense talent and numerous accomplishments, Chopin had yet to arrive in the Pantheon of artistic immortality, and a fellow artist needed to come to his rescue. As an unsolicited guardian of Chopin's legacy, Liszt elevates himself to the position of an authority who not only speaks *about*, but also speaks *for* his fellow musician and former good friend.

The mutual relation between the artist and the nation is a familiar trope of nine-

9 Liszt, Franz. *Chopin* 2010. Trans. Meirion Hughes. Manchester: Manchester University Press (59).

teenth-century musical biography, which Liszt complemented with the Romantic idea of the musician as a divinely inspired genius of the people.

The musician can represent the spirit of the nation directly, since music was considered supreme among the sister arts and the musician was the highest priest, the bard of the nation. According to Liszt, 'the most noble and traditional feelings of historic Poland are embedded' in Chopin's polonaises, and Chopin released 'the poetic *unknown* that was only hinted at in the original themes of the mazurkas.'¹⁰ Liszt appreciated the *grand national* spirit embedded in Chopin's close-knit, small-scale national dances reinterpreted with the innovative spirit of a genius.

Liszt's biography can be seen as a vindication of Chopin from the expectations of his compatriots, such as his friend the poet Stefan Witwicki, who in one of his letters urged Chopin to write a national opera:

You must really become the creator of Polish opera: I am profoundly convinced that you could do it, and that as a Polish national composer you will open up an unbelievably rich field for your talent, in which you will achieve extraordinary fame. Would that you might keep before your eyes this one thing: national feeling, national feeling and again national feeling, an almost meaningless expression for ordinary writers, but not for a talent such as yours.¹¹

Joseph Elsner, Chopin's musical mentor and the composer of the first Polish national operas, also pressed Chopin to write for the stage:

I would like to live to see an opera of your composition, which would not only increase your fame but benefit the art of music in general, especially if the subject of such an opera were drawn from Polish national history. [...] As the critic of your Mazurkas stated, only an opera can show your talent in a true light and win for it eternal life. 'A piano-work,' says Urban [a German critic] 'is to a vocal or other instrumental composition as an engraving is to a painted picture.'¹²

Chopin responded to these demands in a letter to a Polish friend by expressing confidence in his position as an artist in the Parisian arena: 'you should realize that I have already an enormous reputation among the artists.'¹³

In his biography, Liszt portrays Chopin not only as a great musician but also as an ideally Polish genius who represents and at the same time transcends his nationality. In the period of Romanticism, this condition of simultaneously belonging to and transcending a national community was regarded as a necessary condition for the production of great art. Liszt and his contemporaries were seeking to revitalize art through individual interpretations of authentic local

10 Liszt, Franz 2010 (66, 78).

11 Chopin, Fryderyk 1962 (Stefan Witwicki to Chopin, 6 July 1831).

12 Idem (Joseph Elsner to Chopin, 14 September 1834).

13 Idem (Chopin to Titus Woyciechowski, 12 December, 1831).

culture, and to elevate popular art by using the methods of high art.

Liszt was acting as a self-appointed paraclete not only with respect to Chopin, but also regarding the legacy of a group of avant-garde musicians of his time. Rescuing Chopin's heritage also implied protecting the heritage of a whole generation 'of the future' whose art was endangered by the 'reactionaries whose invariable custom is to strike at the living through the dead.'¹⁴

Finally Liszt also declared himself a spokesman for national music generally, and for Polish music in particular: 'Chopin was the poet of his country [...] Chopin will be ranked among the foremost musicians who thus individualized in themselves the poetic sense of a whole nation.'¹⁵ Liszt viewed Chopin as a national composer not simply because he integrated the traditional dance music of his country of birth; he was 'an essentially Polish poet, because he used form to express the manner of feeling prevalent in his country, and because these feelings are found in all the forms in which he composed.'¹⁶ Liszt proposed calling for subscriptions to erect monuments for artists like Chopin who 'added distinction to their nation or epoch.'¹⁷ His biography of the Polish composer can be seen as such a (literary) monument.

Liszt's biography reflects three intertwined agendas – a personal, an artistic, and a political one – which together reveal the biographer's attitudes towards his former friend. More importantly, they illuminate Liszt's own artistic and political ideas, which affected not only the formation of the classical canon but also the image of Chopin in the cultural memory of later generations. His biography can be read as a personal tribute to a friend, as an artistic plea for the canonization of progressive Romantic music, and last but not least, as a political appeal for recognition of the Polish and Hungarian nations and cultures as part of the European tradition.

Liszt mentions three main reasons why Chopin's canonical position had not yet been secured. Firstly, this was because Chopin devoted his entire career to a single instrument: the piano. Though he perfected the art of piano playing, posterity tends to remember those composers who made their mark in more than one genre and composed large works like operas or symphonies that became popular among the public. Chopin's small-scale piano pieces were played for Polish-oriented salons in Paris, but were never open to or intended for a large public, as were many of Liszt's concerts or opera performances. Chopin played not for the masses but for an appreciative audience of the cultivated few. This

14 Liszt 2010 (59).

15 Idem, 113.

16 Ibidem.

17 Idem, 137.

argument by Liszt is unconvincing because piano music was extremely popular among the public in that time, and was published and purchased widely by amateurs whose skills were not sufficient to play the complex music, nonetheless they regarded the music as a “souvenir” of their concert experiences. (Deaville, 256, 259, 261) Therefore it was not likely that Chopin’s reputation would be damaged by the fact that he wrote mainly for piano only.

The second reason for worry was the innovative nature of Chopin’s art, which risked becoming incomprehensible to those whose ears were ‘enslaved by habit.’¹⁸ Therefore, his particular genius required an intermediary to make his art accessible to present and future generations of music lovers. Innovation is a sign of artistic greatness, but it can backfire on musicians, since their art relies on momentary recognition, and unless their works are performed regularly, they can easily be forgotten. Verbal reflections on music could help bridge this gap between new tones and old listening habits. Liszt’s biography would take on this role.

But how popular was Chopin’s music in his own time? According to Liszt’s biographer Alan Walker, not all of Chopin’s contemporaries realized the importance and originality of his music, and some were outright hostile.¹⁹ The Irish composer John Field, who is credited with the invention of the Nocturne, a genre popularized by Chopin, called the Polish musician ‘a sick-room talent (*un talent de chambre de malade*).’²⁰ His music was also disparaged by the music critics Ludwig Rellstab, the founder of the journal *Iris im Gebiete der Tonkunst* (*Iris in the Realm of Music*) published in Berlin from 1830 to 1841, and by James William Davison, a journalist and music critic for *The Times* who wrote that Chopin’s works present ‘a motley surface of ranting hyperbole and excruciating cacophony.’²¹ However, other leading music journals like the French *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* and the German *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* or Schumann’s *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* recognized Chopin’s talent and promoted his music. According to Jim Samson, Chopin’s music sold well despite the criticism and the infrequent concerts, and the composer managed to earn a living by selling his works in print.²² However as James Deaville argues, Liszt’s “marketing” of Chopin has most probably increased its demand among music lovers (Deaville, 270).

18 Idem, 59.

19 Walker, Alan 2003. *Liszt Ferenc, A Virtuóz Évek 1811-1847*, vol. 1. Trans. Judit Rác. Budapest: Editio Musica Budapest (201).

20 de Valera, Terry 1982. ‘John Field, 1782-1837,’ *Dublin Historical Record* 35:4 (135).

21 Walker, Alan 2003 (201).

22 Samson, Jim. *Chopin*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1997 (90).

Finally, the third element mentioned by Liszt that could imperil Chopin's heritage is music's non-conceptual nature. Liszt argues that although music is one of the most direct art forms, in which emotion is conveyed without 'the intermediation of thought and reflection,'²³ it does require the intervention of connoisseurs, especially when it is unconventional. In such cases a fellow artist needs to translate the work for average listeners by providing insights into the composer's creative mind. This last argument is not supported by historical evidence. Not intellectual interpretation, but regular performance has kept music in publication and eventually preserved it as part of the canon. (Deaville, 271)

Liszt and Chopin shared many interests but were also radically different in many respects. They both spoke and wrote in French, both sought to renew musical language (albeit in different ways), and both were transnational artists with both national and cosmopolitan views. Both lived in Paris, the cultural center of nineteenth-century Europe, and yet both were also committed to the political liberation and cultural emancipation of their countries of birth, Poland and Hungary (at a time when Poland was absent from the map of Europe and Hungary was suffering domination by the Austrian Habsburgs).

The fixity and fluidity of identity are equally present in Liszt's biography. Fixity is present when Liszt essentializes Chopin's Polishness by reducing national identity to a certain kind of 'feeling' and Chopin's music to the 'expression' of this feeling: '[Chopin] neither studied nor strove to be a national musician and it is possible that he would be shocked to be regarded as one. [...] [T]he ideal, the real and truly existing ideal of his people, flowed from his pen.'²⁴ Fluidity is acknowledged when Liszt describes culture as transferable and identity as being created with culture: 'Artists will emerge whose works will be marked by an originality drawn from differences of national character, race and climate.'²⁵ Producing and understanding difference in art is a dynamic creative process, not simply a reproduction of certain given (local) patterns. National difference is *produced* by art and not *replicated*. Therefore art and specifically music plays a role in the production of national differences by means of (re)inventing national styles.

Chopin's patriotism in the early 1830s was becoming more moderate by the time Liszt began to feel an intense patriotism towards his own country of birth. 'Chopin was, in his own words, "no revolutionary," and he refused to use his talent in any directly political way.'²⁶ It was not Chopin himself, but the reception of his

23 Liszt, Franz 2010 (59).

24 Liszt 2010, 112–13.

25 Idem, 113.

26 Samson, Jim 1997 (134).

music in Poland, that had made him a 'national' composer even prior to 1830.²⁷ Liszt was born in the western part of Hungary in a German-speaking family, and by the time he met Chopin he had lived most of his life in France and was more attached to French, his adopted language and culture, than to German. Nonetheless, he never forgot his Hungarian homeland: 'he was an habitual visitor to the Hungarian Embassy as well as frequenting the Austro-Hungarian colony in[Paris].'²⁸

Liszt's Hungarian connections were reinforced in 1838 by a natural disaster: Pest and Buda were flooded by the Danube, and Liszt gave a benefit concert in Vienna for the victims of the flood. Hungary took this occasion to reach out to Liszt, and started referring to him as one of the greatest Hungarians of their time despite the fact that Liszt did not speak a word of Hungarian. From then onwards, Liszt himself became more and more interested in Hungarian politics and in the promotion of Hungarian culture. The *Hungarian Rhapsodies*, the *Hungarian Fantasy*, the *Rákóczy March*, and many *verbunkos*-themed pieces express his Hungarian self-identification musically. His symphonic poem *Hungaria* was a musical reply to an ode dedicated to him in 1840 by the poet Mihály Vörösmarty (1800-1855). Unlike Chopin, who never questioned his own Polishness, Liszt was in search of what he called a 'homeland of the ideal.'²⁹ His moves from place to place can be understood in terms of this shifting ideal, which changed from music (Weimar) to Catholicism (Rome) to an emotional attachment to the idea of nationhood which he resisted until he was in his sixties (Budapest).

In 1839 a group of Hungarian aristocrats sought to bestow a title of nobility on the composer. A group of his admirers, led by the Count Festetics, launched a media campaign in the *Pesther Tageblatt* (Pest Daily News) and in the Hungarian-language magazines *Társalkodó* (Conversation) and *Budai-Pesti Rajzolatok* (Sketches from Buda and Pest) to raise public support for this 'noble' cause. Liszt, whose political sympathies at that time were socialist, was surprised by the prospect of joining the ranks of the Hungarian nobility; but he admitted nonetheless (in a letter to Marie d'Agoult) that the thought pleased him. He asked her to design a coat of arms for him in case the Habsburg Emperor Ferdinand V should approve Festetics's request. In fact the appeal was rejected by the Emperor, which did not particularly affect Liszt, who by that time was giving concerts

27 Chechlinska, Zofia 1992. 'Chopin reception in nineteenth-century Poland.' In: Jim Samson (ed.), *Chopin*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (208).

28 Gut, Serge 1994. 'Nationalism and Supranationalism in Liszt.' *The Liszt Society Journal* 19 (29).

29 Cited by Serge Gut 1994 (31-32).

in London, and never lamented the vain prospect of becoming a nobleman.³⁰

At the end of a public concert in Pest on 4 January 1840 Liszt was offered a sword by Count Festetics, and Liszt gave an acceptance speech in French that his friend Baron Antal Augusz translated into Hungarian for the public. Liszt was clearly moved by this act of generosity and promised to champion the cause of Hungary with his music: in previous centuries the country had been defended with the swords of brave patriots, but now Hungary needed new soldiers, not soldiers with weapons but artists and intellectuals who would serve the cultural emancipation of the nation. However, if the country were unjustly wronged, then swords like his should again be drawn from their sheaths to fight for 'the truth, the King, and the homeland.' His speech was received with such enthusiasm by the public that more than five thousand people followed Liszt and his host, Count Festetics, out onto the streets of Pest with torches and brass music.³¹ His speech was translated into Hungarian and appeared on 16 January in the journal *Századunk* (Our Century).

Liszt never identified himself with one single country, though he felt most at home in the French language. He called his own life 'three-forked' (*trifurquée*), and from 1861 he divided his time among three cultural centers: Weimar, Budapest, and Rome. Serge Gut sees him as a true 'cultural mediator' who in both active and passive ways promoted cultural traditions across European borders: in France he publicized the musical oeuvre of Mozart and Beethoven, while in Germany he extolled French musicians like Hector Berlioz or Camille Saint-Saëns.³² From 1840 onwards, he also supported the cause of Hungarian music and the national idea, but he was never involved directly in Hungarian politics.

Liszt's concept of Hungarian nationhood was not ethnocentric, but inclusive and open. He proudly called himself a 'Gypsy spirit' and associated himself more with the freedom-loving nomads than with any established European nation.³³ Locality was for him an artistic topos rather than a geographical place. Liszt's thinking was cosmopolitan and supranational in spite of embracing what he perceived as a national style in his compositions. His generosity towards the national cause can be seen as one of his many charitable initiatives. He raised funds with his concerts and donated large sums for the erection of statues of Beethoven and Bellini, and he also endorsed the causes of oppressed nations.

Chopin's nationalism is no less ambiguous. He was definitely more attached to his Polish heritage and more deeply rooted in Polish culture and language

30 Walker, Alan 2003 (335–36).

31 Idem, 337–39.

32 Gut, Serge 2008 (436).

33 Cf. Liszt, Franz 1881.

than Liszt was in Hungarian. Chopin left Poland as an adult, while Liszt had begun touring Europe at the age of twelve. Chopin never questioned his own national identity, and wherever he settled in Europe he always kept in touch with Polish émigré society. His closest friends in Paris were mostly Poles. However, Chopin did not see himself as a Polish *national composer*. He rather saw himself as a Polish national who was also a composer. Chopin's letters contain many references to the Poles he encountered and the Polish company he entertained, but whenever his audiences or friends tried to frame him as a Polish national composer, he demurred. He did refer to 'our national music' as something to which he aspired, but this aspiration was never intertwined with a specific Polish political agenda.

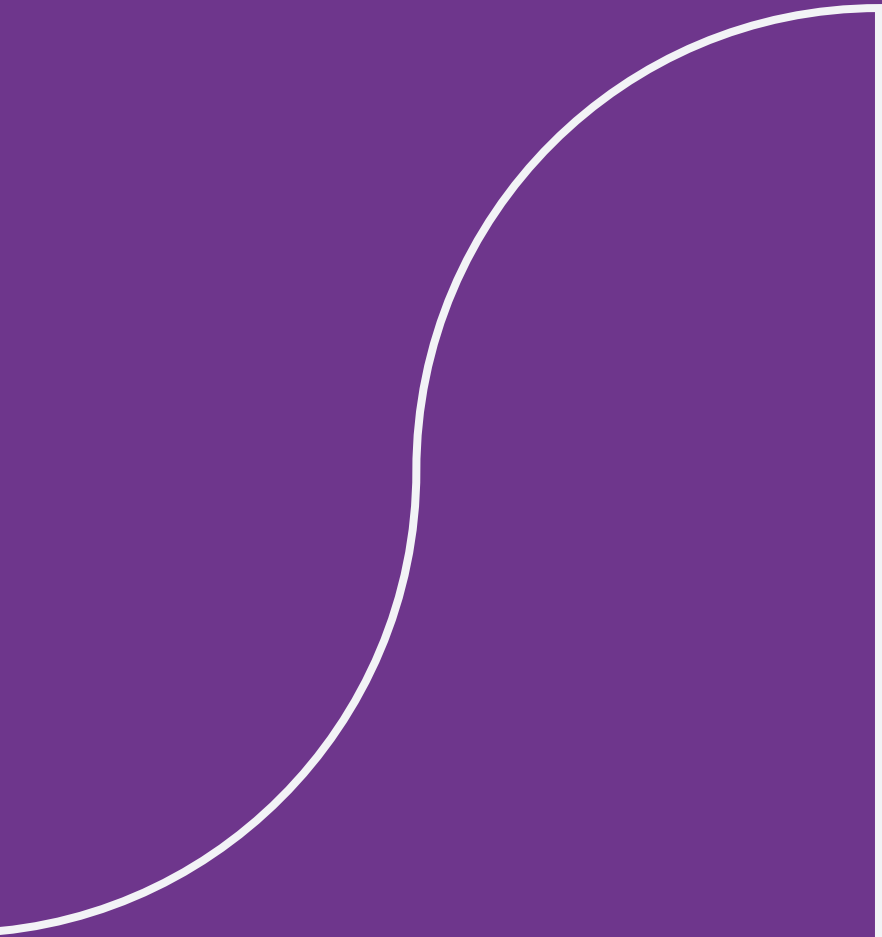
Chopin was canonized as a Polish national icon after his death by late nineteenth-century scholars. As Jolanta T. Pekacz notes, many Polish biographies about Chopin's life appropriated him for Polish culture and presented his artistic and biographic *self* as a fixed and coherent identity that needed to be discovered and revealed by the writers of Chopin's life.³⁴ The Polishness of Chopin was presented as immutable – as against the result of artistic production, as understood by Liszt – , and there was little or no room in these biographies for any transformation of the individual into other cultural *selves*.

CONCLUSION

The examples of Liszt and Chopin illustrate the extent to which “national” or “romantic” elements in music cannot be fully understood without considering the cosmopolitan contexts that shape their meaning. The lives of Chopin and Liszt were international and multicultural, and their music reflects the ways in which this cosmopolitan quality shaped their experience as much as their commitment to French or Polish or Hungarian norms and values. Nationalism and cosmopolitanism are not mutually exclusive commitments; they interact and shape each other in ways that deserve further attention.

For the past two centuries national heroes were made and unmade, national canons with a nationalistic purpose in mind, constructed and deconstructed, rejected: the 19th century was making national heroes, the second half the 20th century was unmaking national heroes. Now in the 21st century it is time to examine not only at the myth but at history, and it is also time to reflect – as Cosmin suggested yesterday –, on the ideologies that were driving the decanonization processes, in order to create a more open national canon.

34 Pekacz, Jolanta T. 2016. 'Chopin's Biography as a Cultural Discourse.' In: Pekacz (ed.), *Musical Biography: Towards New Paradigms*. Abingdon: Routledge (50).



Literary Fame, Authorship and Institutionalisation:

THE CULT OF LITERARY CELEBRITY IN NINETEENTH CENTURY SCOTLAND AND HUNGARY

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In her groundbreaking book about the cultural memory of Walter Scott (*The Afterlives of Walter Scott: Memory on the Move*, 2012), Ann Rigney makes a short comment on the shifting of the custodianship of Walter Scott's memory away from a public, social memory culture in the direction of memory professionals. (225) By the time of the bicentenary of 1971, 'the chief stakeholders in Scott's memory and curators of the celebrations would be professional heritage makers: academics, archivists, and librarians' (210), who generally write for 'each other'.¹ This comment calls our attention to not just to historical change, but also to the 'popular versus professionalised' dichotomy and the regulation of access to or custodianship of cultural memory. In looking at the afterlives of the twin stars of nineteenth-century literature, Scott and Burns, both acquiring a status as [national] 'figures of collective memory' (and also touching upon Hungarian twin stars Mór Jókai (1825—1904) and Sándor Petőfi (1823—1849)), a range of questions about the nature of agency of the creators of commemorations, and participatory commemoration might emerge, and the emergence of potentially unifying force of digital tools which might read to content co-creation and the engendering of cultural memory.

The memorialisation of Scott

Scott's memorialisation started in his lifetime (1771—1832), through his own willed act of building his own pseudo-gothic country house (1814—1824) as a

1 And later: 'the custodianship of Scott's memory has passed into the hands of professionals who generally write for each other'.

real-life symbol of what his work stood for: the nineteenth-century reimagining or aesthetic and political fashioning of the Middle Ages – an architect of Abbotsford and of his own fame through building Abbotsford. His immortality was already claimed at his funeral in 1832, which was made a public holiday; his Abbotsford country house had already opened to visitors by 1833. In 1840, Edinburgh's neo-Gothic Scott memorial was erected, which was seen as a popular feast, 'all classes vying with each other in expressions of sympathy [...] universal and harmonious tribute' (173); when it was finished in 1846, crowds gathered on the hillside, many brought there by train, while officials representing the city' (top down). The next major commemoration of Scott in 1871 was organised by a coalition of well-heeled admirers and a large number of Victorian worthies, a top-down, 'centralised' affair, with no free day off from work (178) and a centenary banquet, also involving the London Caledonian Society, symbolising the fact that Scott was a reconciler and amalgamator in the literary negotiation of the Union. For Glasgow, the emphasis was on prosperity. Transnational celebrations abroad (for example in Boston in 1871) utilised Scott as an overarching unifier of the imperial English-speaking Union. Public performances of memory (festivals, marches, or displays), thus functioned on a city-national-transnational level, while assumptions about the English-speaking 'race' were based on a shared appreciation of cultural values rather than common origins. The shift towards a much more formal appreciation could already be perceived.

Scott functioned as a communal site of memory until the early twentieth century, when his work, memory, and celebrity status virtually disappeared. By 1914, there were no new critical editions, and theatrical adaptations had dried up. Scott gradually became relegated to juvenile fiction, turning from the 'Great Unknown' to the 'Great Unread'. When it came to the 1932 celebration (still a cultural icon but no longer popular), the operation was scaled down: the Edinburgh celebration focused on the city authorities as celebrants (rather than admirers and British men of letters), the procession on 21 September headed by the Prince of Wales. Schoolchildren's *tableaux vivants* were organised by educationalists rather than reflections of earlier, 'spontaneous if orchestrated enthusiasm.' (Rigney 210). The bicentenary celebration of 1971 showed a decline: it was managed by heritage professionals, academics, activists, and librarians (210), who hosted an Edinburgh Castle reception rather than a civic banquet, without mass participation.

The twin celebrity of Scottish literature, Robert Burns (1759–1796), enjoyed national charismatic cult status in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. 1799 saw the first pilgrimage, and ceremonial Burns suppers started in 1801,

in a quasi-Masonic format.² In 1805 there was already a board outside his cottage, in 1838 a visitor book, a small museum in Alloway (Statford 1847, Burns when?) much of the cult was based on Shakespeare (humble origins and national rural landscapes). In 1815, Burns's remains were reburied at a more elegant location, and in 1823 a monument was erected, funded by public donations. Publicly staged commemorations followed, such as the 1844 Burns Festival in Alloway. The 1859 celebrations were spectacular, with an emphasis on global fellowship, egalitarianism, and love for Burns's poetry, with telegrams being used for simultaneous celebrations – think of an early version of Live Aid. Burns was established as the embodiment of the Scottish democratic idea and formula, with a social consensus on celebrating his cult, turning him into a nineteenth-century secular saint (Rigney 178², 183). Particularly important are the outdoor public processions, with flags, triumphal arches, and characters from Burns songs, created by civic authorities, often hand in hand with property owners, shopkeepers, and owners of public works. Global Burns in North America spread (New York 1880, Chicago 1906, San Francisco 1908), and he was seen, like Scott, as a unifying figure, here of Scottishness. Burns's reputation in literary scholarship suffered a decline after the 1930s, when he was seen as a labouring poet with a limited vocabulary, thus unfit for a modernist agenda, while in the 1970s and 1980s, he did not fit with the agenda of forgotten/marginalised poets revival. In the 1980s, Burns and Scott were equally marginal for literary scholars: Scott (too lengthy) and Burns (language too hard). To sum up, by the 1990s, neither Scott nor Burns were critically considered: Scott was neither read nor taught; Burns was not taught but his work was read and the social cult (e.g. of Burns suppers) survived in a highly ritualised form and with reference to about ten regularly recited poems.

https://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/robertburns/burns_night_running_order.shtml
<https://www.houseandgarden.co.uk/article/burns-night-2023-supper-order-traditions>

The change in Scott's reputation came at the hands of heritage professionals, who, I would suggest, relied on the new perspectives evolving within the heritage industry and on the immense potential of digital developments. The term "literary heritage" is not used in the definition of the UN Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), which defines tangible and intangible heritage, yet literature is intrinsically related to "representations, expressions, knowledge [...] that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage." (Art. 2 UN ICH).

2 See Rigney in *Representations*, Summer 2011.

The Unesco Creative Cities Network, launched in 2004, set out to promote co-operation among cities which have recognised culture and creativity as strategic drivers of sustainable development (Cities of film, literature *etc.*). Edinburgh was the first city to achieve the status of the “City of Literature” of which we currently have 53 (still continuing to mentor new applicants). In 2014, they launched the *Great Scott!* project, and covered the floors, walls, and windows of Edinburgh’s Waverley Station – the only railway station in the world named after a novel, which also marked the 200th anniversary of the publication of the book. It was intended as a major publicity event and outreach, attempting to reconnect citizens with literary heritage, hoping to transform them into readers. This, specifically Scott-focused event, part of the City of Literature organisation’s publicity campaign, can be matched with a scholarly project run by Edinburgh University called the Palimpsest Project (Litlong.org).

<https://eadh.org/projects/palimpsest-project>

Though not focusing on Scott in particular, data mining and digital mapping of Edinburgh in textual references offer a large amount of digital analysis of a city marked by the Scott monument, Waverley station, and many other literary monuments. Texts taken from already digitised books, infrastructure was created, consisting of gazetteer (over 10,000 place names, the identification of literature (33,277 books in total) and textual analysis, thus building a macroscope of the city. Visualisation tools: website and application.

Burns

The best way to understand heritage professionals’ contribution to the commemoration of Burns is to consider the AHRC-funded project ‘Inventing tradition and securing memory 1796—1909’ in Glasgow, which over the last fifteen years has systemically developed digital resources to promote Burns studies. Two resources need to be considered here:

1. Memorials:

<https://www.robertburnsmemorials.arts.gla.ac.uk/>

2. Burns-related objects:

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/critical/research/researchcentresandnetworks/robert-burnsstudies/ourresearch/burns/burnsianaprivatedomesticburns-relatedobjects/>

These digital developments reflect their moment of creation, but their potential for future development is enormous as their very existence offers further scope

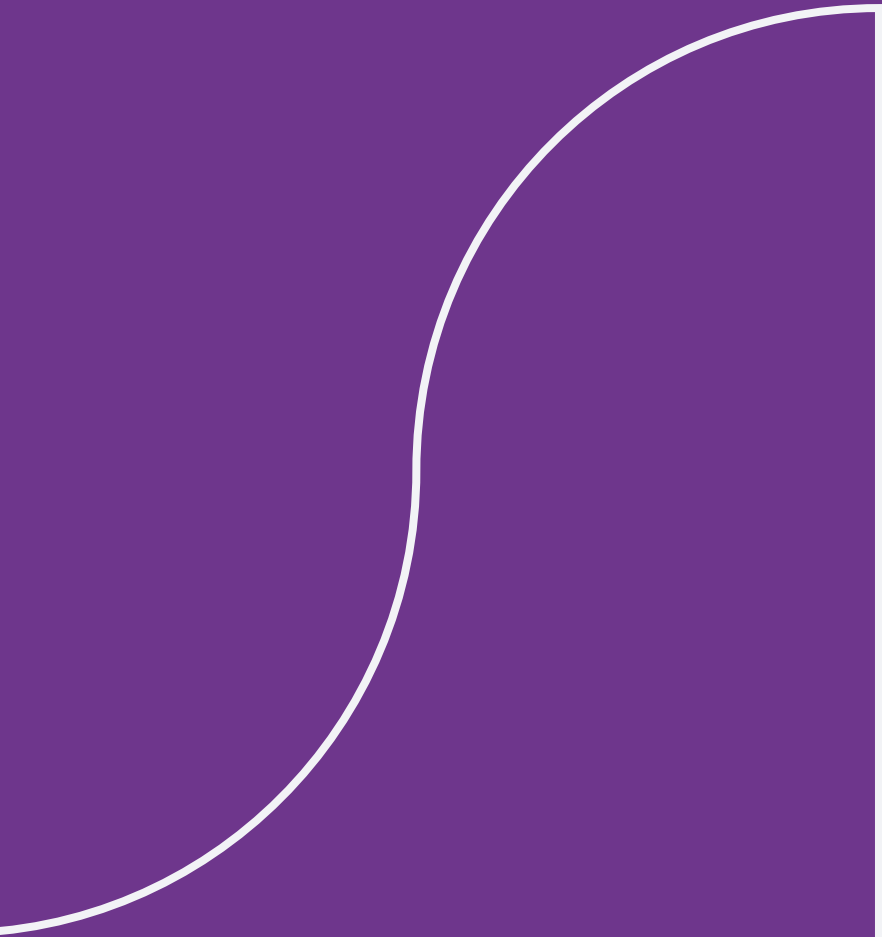
for citizen involvement and citizen science, as they might be developed virtual learning environments.

Petőfi

Petőfi's consolidation in cultural memory can be traced from the late 1860s onwards, marked by the 1882 statue in Budapest funded by public donations (by then 11 years in the making). The decades crucial to the commemoration fell in 1870—1900, with the institutional establishment of modern history (Tortenelemi Tarsulat, Szazadok, 1870), with commemorations starting in 1876; 1880 Kiskőrös house opened; 1899 pilgrimage to the Segesvar battlefield. Petőfi's cult had multifarious uses, from national supremacy to (revolutionary) political resistance. Jókai's appreciation shows a multimodal variety as he moved from the Great Read in the nineteenth century to Great Watched by the 1960s and 1970s, while in the 21st century, he is arguably far less read than honoured by the reading public.

It is worth pausing for a second for a comparative look at the two sets of cultural practices. What strikes the Hungarian observer is the proliferation of author houses as tools of cultural memory, which were given a boost under state socialism and have been under the aegis of PIM since 2008, thus formally in the hands of the professional custodians of cultural memory. It is also arguable that a good measure of their significance and legitimacy is gained by the school curriculum's "great author" approach and school excursions. Author houses do exist in Scotland, although are far fewer³ in number (proportionately) and apart from a few stellar ones (Scott, Burns) they inspire no particular public awareness. As I have demonstrated, the nature of cultural custodianship in Scotland is currently on the cusp of change: we are currently witnessing a move towards the exploration of the power and the potential of the digital to expand notions of access, community participation, and even, potentially, co-creation – a co-creation of digital content which can lead to the co-creation of cultural memory. It is to be hoped that a reflexive look at the cultural environment in which houses were reconfigured or the digital platforms were created will encourage conscious steps towards conceiving a twenty-first-century understanding of author houses and exploring the potential of entering into a memory dynamic with their potential visitors; and it is also to be hoped that developing digital tools in the direction of co-creation or crowd-sourced co-creation will bring readers closer to these revered but largely unread novelists.

3 <https://blog.historicenvironment.scot/2019/07/guide-imagined-scotland/>



Around Romantic Europe in Six Iconic Objects

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Introduction

I'd like to start by thanking the Petőfi Literary Museum for inviting me to this splendid conference. It's been a long time in the planning. Back in 2016 in Rome a group of us hatched a plan to collaborate as ERA (European Romanticisms in Association) on a project called *DREAM* or *Dreaming Romantic Europe*. I am going to begin by talking a bit about the project, before drawing on some of its findings to explore our conference theme.

DREAM was funded by the UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) in 2018, and, had it not been for COVID-19, we would have run a project workshop at the Petőfi Literary Museum. But, better late than never, and here at long last I am. Core to the project was the online digital resource we have been working on together with many museums and scholars across Europe including the Petőfi. It's called RÊVE (Romantic Europe: The Virtual Exhibition), and it was born, as its name implies, of the EU dream of thinking transnationally – in this instance, about the cultural phenomenon we know by the shorthand term 'Romanticism'. RÊVE would invite scholars and curators from across Europe to contribute iconic objects to a virtual exhibition devoted to Romanticism. Underpinning this were two ideas. The first was to explore, expand, and contextualise concepts of what was 'Romantic' within Europe more widely. The second was to reconsider Romanticism in terms of how it was materialised for contemporaries and those who came later.

As of now, RÊVE contains more than 150 exhibits contributed by some 120 scholars and featuring objects from around 50 collections, private and public. It also contains a number of contemporary creative responses to Romantic objects and places, ranging from calligraphy through musical miniatures, poems, prose, video, and artworks. There are two virtual walk-in exhibitions: *Romanticism in 45 Objects* and another, due to be released in January 2024, entitled *Romanticism in*

100 Objects. RÊVE is being used across the world in teaching at post-graduate level; and regularly achieves around 4000 hits a month. The project's design and findings are theorised in a special issue of the journal *Romanticism on the Net*, due to be issued in January 2024.

A myriorama

As I am sure you can see, it was in the very nature of the project that we were not at all sure what we would achieve. Built into it was the idea of the myriorama, a game that first emerged in Britain during the Regency period. It consists of multiple cards showing people, buildings, and landscape features which can be placed in different sequences to produce different stories. (In the early 19th century, Jean-Pierre Brès, a French children's writer, published an early version which he described as a polyoptic picture (*tableau polyoptique*), and John Clark of London took up the idea and designed a set of cards he called a myriorama; his second myriorama was this one, an "Italian landscape", produced in 1824.) Every new object added to RÊVE has changed the stories that it is possible to tell from the collection as a whole. This is why RÊVE also issues individual named collections or 'virtual vitrines' that tell different stories through combining exhibits differently. In fact, we are due to release three new collections in the coming months: Romantic Organisms and Mechanisms, Romantic Empires and Colonies, and Romantic Collectors.

Despite this productive instability, three major effects of putting together RÊVE have become apparent.

1. It increased the span of Romanticism – from Britain in the 1780s out westward as late as the 1860s – and began to track the ways in which Romanticism developed by contagion across borders.

2. The focus on material objects felt to be iconic of Romanticism resulted in an emphasis not only on the ways that Romanticism itself was constructed through materialities for contemporaries, but by and for those who came after, right up to the present day.

Romantic writers remembered as material heritage

This brings me to our central preoccupation here – the Romantic writer conceived as 'heritage'. I am taking heritage to mean materialities conceived as heritage, whether the sort of objects that are conventionally put in a museum, or the sorts of places that are reconceived as museums. For the remainder of my

time on this podium, I propose to raid RÊVE to set up a new myriomatic landscape. I am going to take you on a tour of Europe in six iconic objects associated with the making of the writer as Romantic hero. Taking a picturesquely zig-zag itinerary, we will visit Scotland, with a garden folly dedicated to Ossian and a souvenir wooden binding of a poem by Sir Walter Scott, take off for Switzerland to view a trapdoor in a farmhouse briefly rented by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and to admire George Gordon, Lord Byron's disputed autograph at the Castle of Chillon, cross the Alps into Italy to visit Vittorio Alfieri's tomb in the Basilica of Santa Croce, and then press on eastwards in pursuit of William Shakespeare's chair. We catch up with Sandor Petőfi in the end – in the shape of a bust erected not in Hungary but in Shanghai at the heart of The People's Republic of China. Along the way I will be considering how the concept of the national poet was constructed and maintained through a variety of Europe-wide private and public practices. Superficially, these practices are very different – ranging from fabrication, tourism, heritage-making, memorialisation, and collecting. But, as I shall show, all are variations on the theme of localising the author within a landscape in relation to readers, both as individuals and as 'imagined communities', and thus (to invoke Benedict Andersen's useful formulation) as nations.

1. Ossian's Hall. Scotland, 1783

If you turn off the Old Military Road close to Dunkeld in Scotland, pull on some boots and climb up through the woodland through the glen of the Braan, you come across this folly overlooking a small but dramatic waterfall. This is 'Ossian's Hall'. In the second half of the eighteenth century, the Scottish Highlands began to attract tourists. Roads were so poor, however, that for many visitors it was enough to make a tour from fifteen miles north of Perth to the pretty cathedral town of Dunkeld. Much of the land here was owned by John Murray, future 3rd Duke of Atholl. In the 1750s, he had developed a pleasure park with magnificent trees in the glen of the Braan, complete with a 'hermitage', which became a stop on this tour. In 1783, twenty years after the craze for the bogus Highland bard Ossian and his verses began to sweep across Europe (arriving in Hungarian translation by 1833), the building was renamed. Ossian's supposed grave was some seventeen miles away, so this folly became Ossian's Hall, while nearby topographical features became Ossian's Cave and Ossian's Seat. A visit became de *rigueur* for Romantic tourists. In 1803, Dorothy Wordsworth described her experience:

The waterfall, which we came to see, warned us by a loud roaring that we must expect it; we were first, however, conducted into a small apartment,

where the gardener desired us to look at a painting of the figure of Ossian, which... disappeared, parting in the middle, flying asunder as if by the touch of magic, and lo! we are at the entrance of a splendid room, which was almost dizzy and alive with waterfalls, that tumbled in all directions—the great cascade, which was opposite to the window that faced us, being reflected in innumerable mirrors upon the ceiling and against the walls. We both laughed heartily...

Setting aside whether the whole thing was in good taste or not, it was plainly designed to enhance the landscape by animating it with the figure and works of Ossian, Celtic bard of misty landscapes, long-ago battles, and unhappy loves, a part-translation, part-fabrication by James MacPherson (1736—1796) which was described with customary acerbity and acuteness by Samuel Johnson (1709—1784) as ‘another proof of Scotch conspiracy in national falsehood’.¹ Atholl’s folly was designed to materialise a lost national writer, and, with him, a lost national past. (400 words)

2. A Mauchline binding. Scotland, 1873

Jumping forward a hundred years or so and travelling south to the border between Scotland and England, we reach Abbotsford, a globally famous literary tourist destination as the home of Walter Scott (1771—1832). This is an edition of Sir Walter Scott’s *Marmion* printed and published in Edinburgh in 1873. *Marmion*, originally published in 1808, was set during the conflict between England and Scotland that culminated in the Battle of Flodden (1513); at the end of the nineteenth century, it was still one of the most celebrated works of British Romantic poetry, and its author’s reputation as a national treasure was riding as high as that of Shakespeare.

This binding was made by Smiths of Mauchline in Ayrshire. On the front is an image of Abbotsford; on the reverse is an image of Melrose Abbey, a nearby tourist location also associated with Scott and his works. The cover bears the inscription, ‘From the Banks of the Tweed’, which implied that the binding was made from wood harvested from the area. It was, in fact, designed as a tourist souvenir, and indeed, it bears an inscription written by its first, French, owner: ‘Sarah M Shafter Souvenir de Abbotsford.’² It provides anecdotal evidence of the ways in which a mass-produced book could be transformed into a Romantic

1 See Wikipedia entry on this.

2 That a French woman was at Abbotsford in the 1870s is not surprising; Abbotsford had opened as a tourist destination in 1833, and by the 1870s was welcoming a steady influx of visitors.

relic. It establishes an explicit circuit between print and place, national author and cosmopolitan reader, through co-locating them at Abbotsford.

Although the mass-market appeal of this book is a long way away from the aristocratic creation of Ossian's Hall, there are continuities between the two, not least because they are both designed to enhance the read text with a sense of place animated by the author. They are both designed to make a national writer at home in a native landscape. There are, however, some Romantic writers of national import who came to be characterised within exilic landscapes, as the next two objects exemplify. (368 words)

3. *Rousseau's trapdoor. Switzerland, 1765*

This trapdoor, set in the floor in the corner of a first-floor bedroom in the sole farmhouse on the Île St Pierre in the Lac de Biemme, Switzerland, achieved celebrity in the last decade of the eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth through its association with Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712—1778), and in particular with two posthumously published autobiographical works: the latter part of the *Confessions* (first published in 1789) and the volume of essays entitled *Les Rêveries du Promeneur Solitaire* (composed between 1776 and 1778, published in 1782). The latter dealt in part with Rousseau's six-week stay in the farmhouse in the summer of 1765 before he was expelled as a political undesirable and departed for England. This trapdoor was said to be how Rousseau had avoided unwanted fans. It came to epitomise the writer's notorious disinclination towards surveillance and his preference for the delights of his own reveries. The trapdoor concentrated the newly fashionable experience of visiting the home of a now-dead author; it suggested that the reason why tourists do not find Rousseau at home is that he has hastily and characteristically popped out to avoid them. The trapdoor thus describes in miniature the emerging phenomenon of Romantic-period literary tourism: the desire to supplement reading by visiting the scenes described by the author. By this time, Rousseau's body has been moved to the Pantheon in Paris, where he was canonized as the father of the French revolution, and, by extension, of the modern French nation; the remote location of this farmhouse thus encapsulated the exilic, prophetic nature of revolutionary thinking. (266 words)

4. *Byron's autograph. Switzerland, 1817*

The fame of this inscription by Lord Byron (1788—1824) in the dungeon of the Castle of Chillon also speaks powerfully of the cultural glamour of revolutionary exile as well as of catching a poet in the very act of writing (although its

authenticity has been a matter of controversy and criticism from the outset). As enthusiastic readers of Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Julie, ou La Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761), Lord Byron and Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792—1822) had sailed around Lake Geneva from 22 to 30 June 1816, visiting settings made famous by the novel, including Chillon Castle at the eastern end of Lake Geneva (or Leman), on Tuesday, June 25, 1816. This visit inspired Byron's radical poem *The Prisoner of Chillon*, composed in Ouchy two days later on the subject of François Bonnivard (1493—1570), a famous political prisoner held there by the Duke of Savoy between 1530 and 1536. Byron would return to Chillon with his friend John Cam Hobhouse (1786—1869) on 18 September 1816, on the first day of their Alpine tour. Louis Simond, who visited Chillon a full year after Byron, on 4 August 1817, was the first to record the presence of Byron's autograph in the castle's souterrain, or dungeon, carved into the southern side of the third column, 1.45 meters from the lower edge of the shaft. None of the members of the Byron-Shelley circle, and no traveller who visited the castle before Simond, mentions it. It was only on returning to Chillon in August 1828 that Hobhouse noted, with telling amusement, that 'the woman who showed Chillon pointed out to us "Monsieur Lord Byron's" name'. So far, scholars have been unable to definitively prove or disprove the autograph's authenticity, but most agree that Byron's celebrity, coupled with the immediate popularity of *The Prisoner of Chillon*, published in late 1816, would have led the castle's gaolers or guides to inscribe the author's name to boost the site's appeal.

Nineteenth-century tourists preferred to believe that the inscription was real, and sometimes even embroidered the myth. The notoriously unreliable Alexandre Dumas (1802—1870), for instance, claimed that Byron engraved his name on the column alone, and at night. In 1842, Victor Hugo (1802—1885) added that Byron did this using an old ivory-handled awl ('un vieux poinçon à manche d'ivoire') found in the very chamber of the Duke of Savoy. John Ruskin in 1833, and Nikolai Gogol in 1836 carved their names on the same pillar, presumably in homage and emulation. Dorothy Wordsworth, Maria Edgeworth, Charles Dickens, Matthew Arnold, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Mark Twain, and William Dean Howells are only a few of the nineteenth-century literary personalities who remarked on the inscription in their journals, letters and travel-writings. That inscription transformed Chillon into one of European Romanticism's most important sites from 1816 onwards, a site that spoke powerfully of Romantic revolution. (465 words)

5. Alfieri's tomb. Italy, 1810

Nineteenth-century tourists were generally on their way over the Alps to Italy, our next destination. So far, I've been looking at ways in which poets have been located in domestic and quasi-domestic spaces. My next example describes an equally strong urge within the period, to make the writer properly 'at home' within a national pantheon. When poet and playwright Vittorio Alfieri (1749—1803) died, Louise of Stolberg-Gedern, the Countess of Albany and his last flame, commissioned Antonio Canova (1757—1822) to produce a monumental tomb in marble. After devouring the poet's works, Canova devised a tomb 'as solemn and majestic as I could make it, so that the nature of my work should match the loftiness of the great poet's pen'.³ A figure of Italy weeps before a tomb adorned with a medallion showing the bust of Alfieri in profile. Masks at the sides allude to the art of tragedy, the laurel wreath and lyre to poetry. The whole depicts Alfieri as of national importance, a status confirmed by the positioning within the Basilica Santa Croce, Florence, between the tombs of Michelangelo and Machiavelli. The tomb inaugurated Santa Croce as the resting place of the great men of the past, a place to serve as a source of inspiration for posterity. This idea was first formulated by Ugo Foscolo (1778—1827) in his poem *Dei Sepolcri* (*On Sepulchres*) of 1807, written in defiance of a Napoleonic prohibition of funeral monuments. Romantic authors across Europe would variously interpret the tombs of Santa Croce not only as metaphors for the nature of artistic fame but for the state of the nation of Italy; see, for example, Germaine de Staël's novel *Corinne, or Italy* (1807), Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (Canto IV 1818), and the Irish novelist Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan's *Italy* (1821). (299 words)

6. Shakespeare's chair. Poland, 1809

Thus far I have been talking about various ways of locating the author in the service of nation-making narratives. I want now to travel eastwards to show you an object that evidences Romantic practices of translocation in the service of nation-making – Shakespeare's chair. This chair is part of the original collections of the Princes Czartoryski Museum (as of December 2016 part of the Polish National Museum). As you can see, it is, puzzlingly, an eighteenth-century chair. It has lion claws for feet, metal snakes for arms and its back is expensively ornamented with a golden lyre. Above this, the Latin inscription reads 'William Shakespeare's Chair'. Opening a hinged door in the back reveals the remains

3 See Santa Croce website.

of a much older chair. The story of how this relic travelled from Stratford-upon-Avon to Kraców describes in brief Shakespeare's usefulness as a national poet beyond Britain.

'Shakespeare's chair' was shown in the kitchen of Shakespeare's Birthplace from the 1780s. Samuel Ireland's *Picturesque Views on the Upper, or Warwickshire Avon* (1795) included an engraving of 'the kitchen of Shakespeare's House' depicting the chair *in situ*. The American Washington Irving wrote of visiting in 1815: 'mine hostess privately assured me, that, though built of solid oak, such was the fervent zeal of devotees, that the chair had to be new bottomed at least once in three years. It is worthy of notice also in the history of this extraordinary chair, that [...] though sold some years since to a northern princess, yet, strange to tell, it has found its way back to the old chimney corner [...]' (Irving, pp. 34—35). The original chair was indeed long since gone. In the summer of 1790, the Polish Princess Izabela Dorota Czartoryska née Flemming (1746—1835), aristocrat, patron, writer, landscape gardener, and art collector, showed up in Stratford as part of her tour through England and Scotland. She acquired what was left of 'Shakespeare's chair' for the then extraordinary sum of £300, took it back to Poland and installed it in her English-style landscape garden at Puławy, one of the most important intellectual and political meeting places of the period. Here it served as one of the treasures of a wide-ranging collection that would eventually become the first Polish museum.

The idea of making some sort of museum in Poland modelled on the British Museum had been proposed as early as 1775 (*Treasures*, p.8), but by 1795, after the erasure of Poland from the map of Europe, this dream had become impracticable. The two collections the Princess made in the 1790s were fundamentally Romantic in their dual sense of pathos and nation. The first gathered up memorabilia of Polish notables, including of the freedom fighter Tadeusz Kościuszko (1746—1817), displaying them in 'The Temple of Memory' 'to support the free spirit in the time of bondage and promote the knowledge of history as a signpost for the nation's liberation' (*Treasures*, p.8). Shakespeare's chair was part of the collections of the Gothic House (1809), devoted to European events and figures of note. It was shown along with branches from the site of Troy, a fragment of rock from Stonehenge, bricks from the Bastille, a lock of Napoleon's hair from St Helena, chairs that had belonged to Rousseau and Voltaire, Newton's death mask, relics of Abelard and Héloïse, and Captain Cook's cutlass. An inscription on the key identified the Princess with Dido who, fleeing Tyre, saved its treasures (*Treasures*, p. 17). A chair that had begun by certifying Shakespeare as a locus for Romantic British nationalism ended up describing Shakespeare first as internationalist Enlightenment museum treasure and then, as the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth went from being one of the larger European states to

being partitioned between Prussia, Russia, and Austria in 1794, a fantasy-patron of the Romantic possibility of Polish nation-making. After all, by 1801 the Princess's country home was in Russian territory. (678 words)

Some concluding thoughts, or, Petőfi's bust, China, 2017

Each object I have featured in this very rapid tour of RÊVE serves to describe not just the Romantic past, but subsequent and ongoing investment in that Romantic past. They evidence, in fact, practices of heritage-making at different stages of cultural investment: some, like Ossian's Hall, the edition of *Marmion*, or Byron's autograph seem to be in decay; some, like Alfieri's tomb, are still at the height of their power. I could equally have picked objects from within RÊVE that are still embryonic as heritage; they might have included Erdélyi's travelling-chest, held in a private collection. Although this account of Romantic heritage-making turns out, perhaps unsurprisingly, to be an account of Romantic nation-making, there is a caveat. Such objects can change their national meanings under the pressure of geographical relocation; the story of Shakespeare's chair serves as paradigm. Or I might look ever farther eastwards and cite the story of how Sándor Petőfi's bust came to be (re)-installed in the World Literary Giant Square, Shanghai, China in 2017. In 2014 this park saw the installation of the World Literary Giant Square, populated by larger-than-life-size figures of Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe, Pushkin, Dickens, Hugo, Balzac, Gorky, Tolstoy, and Tagore. Sándor Petőfi (1823—1849) came both early and late to this select literary party: this bust was first installed within the park in 2007, and then reinstalled in 2017 just round the corner from the rest of the World Literary Giants. The gathering is designed to honour Lu Xun (1881—1936), regarded as the father of modern Chinese literature, long memorialised by a mausoleum and museum devoted to him, and now promoted by proximity to World Literary Giant status himself. As freedom fighter, founder of Hungarian national literature, and poet admired and translated by Lu Xun, Petőfi has been co-opted to certify Lu Xun's status, and by extension China's ambitious and surprisingly Romantic version of its own nationhood.⁴

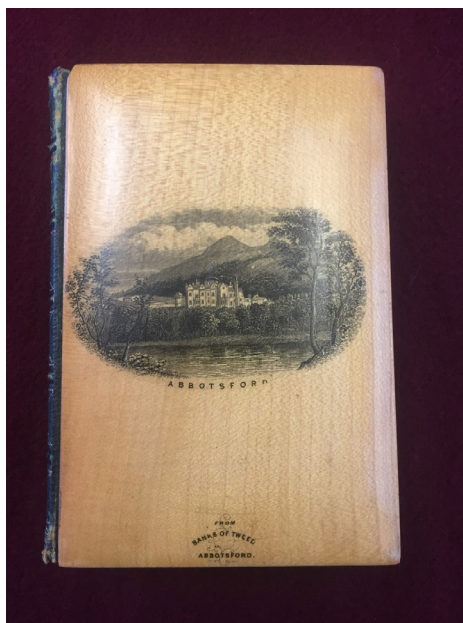
⁴ See Emily Mae Graf. Since 1987, a bronze bust of Lu Xun (one of Petőfi's translators) has been on display in Petőfi's hometown of Kiskőrös.



↑ Myriorama. A collection of many thousand landscapes designed by Mr. Clark 16 hand-coloured aquatints mounted on thin strips of card, 200 x 70mm, Samuel Leigh, 1824

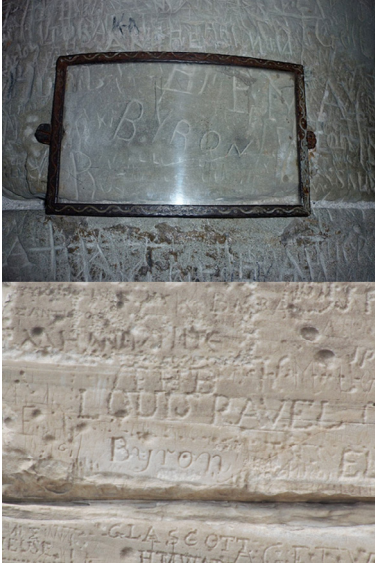
↓ Ossian's Hall, 1783
<https://www.euromanticism.org/ossians-hall/>





↑ A Mauchline binding, 1873
<https://www.euromanticism.org/a-mauchline-binding/>

↓ Rousseau's trapdoor, 1765
<https://www.euromanticism.org/rousseau-s-trapdoor/>



↑ Lord Byron's Autograph at the Castle of Chillon
<https://www.euromanticism.org/lord-byrons-autograph-at-the-castle-of-chillon/>

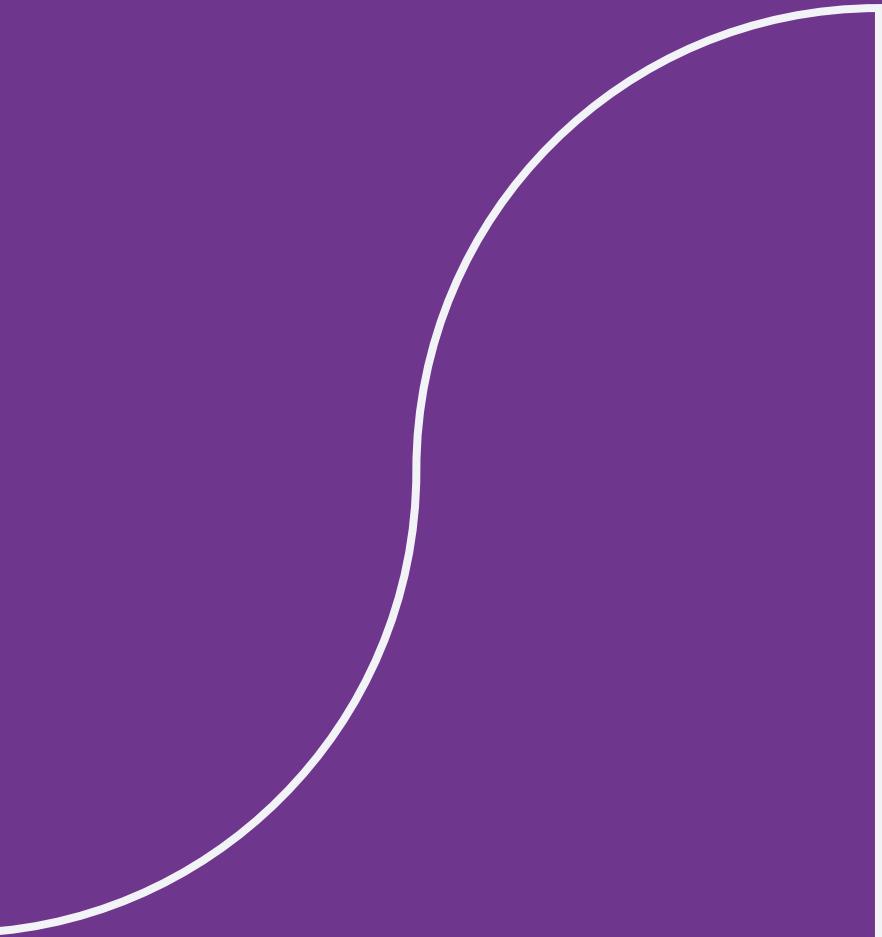
↓ Basilica of Santa Croce, Florence
<https://www.euromanticism.org/basilica-of-santa-croce-florence/#more-472>



↑ Shakespeare's Chair and the Polish Princess
<https://www.euromanticism.org/shakespeares-chair-and-the-polish-princess/>

↑↑ Petőfi statue in Lu Xun Park, Shanghai, pre-dating all the statues there except that of Lu Xun himself, 2017

↓ János Erdélyi's Travelling Boks
<https://www.euromanticism.org/janos-erdelyis-travelling-box/>



The Hero in Comparison:

THE SCOTTISH PETŐFI AND THE HUNGARIAN BURNS

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“I am well aware that in these days Hero-worship, the thing I call Hero-worship, professes to have gone out, and finally ceased” –admits Thomas Carlyle (1795—1881) in the opening lecture of his series *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (published in 1841).¹ Then, of course, he sets out to prove that this cannot be so, that there is a universal human need for the reverence of “Great Men” even in the conditions of modernity – in the age of “Dilettantism, Scepticism, Triviality,” of “copy-rights and copy-wrongs,” as he memorably puts it. “The unbelieving French believe in their Voltaire. [...] He is properly their god,” he says – and in a sense, he really means it. Earlier in the same lecture, he had decided to focus on “the thing a man does practically believe,” with or without an accepted creed, and to treat it as religion. So, he discovers writers’ “relics” and “beatification,” calling Shakespeare and Dante the “Saints of Poetry” who were “*canonized*” by later ages. All this anticipates the study of literary cults today by authors such as Péter Dávidházi, in *The Romantic Cult of Shakespeare*, or Marijan Dović and Jón Karl Helgason, who reference Carlyle on the very first pages of their monograph.²

Carlyle’s scope is both transhistorical and transdisciplinary: he discusses the Norse God Odin, Islam, Protestantism, the effects of print culture, Rousseau, Cromwell and much else. In the present paper I wish to focus on the Scottish poet Robert Burns (1759—1796), the “hero as man of letters” with whom he first intended to close his survey, only to change his mind and end with “The Hero as

1 On Heroes, Hero-worship, and the Heroic in History, by Thomas Carlyle (gutenberg.org)

2 Péter Dávidházi, *The Romantic Cult of Shakespeare: Literary Reception in Anthropological Perspective* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, London: Macmillan Press Ltd, New York: St. Martin’s Press, Inc., 1998). Marijan Dović and Jón Karl Helgason, *National Poets, Cultural Saints: Canonization and Commemorative Cults of Writers in Europe* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016). See also, Jón Karl Helgason and Marijan Dović, eds, *Great Immortality. Studies on European Cultural Sainthood* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2019).

King.”³ In the second half of my paper I will move on to look at how the figure of Burns became entwined with the nineteenth-century creation of the Poet-Hero Sándor Petőfi (1823—1849), and the kinds of cultural work that were performed by the comparison. The institution of the Hungarian national poet will emerge in this view as a function of a new world literary order, defined by transnational circulation and print capitalism. In such conditions, Petőfi’s originality was often asserted by way of his comparability to other – already well-established and culturally more central – “originals,” such as Burns, Byron, or Béranger. Perceiving Petőfi through the lens of famous foreign poets highlighted a range of different, and often contradictory, aspects of his oeuvre, while obscuring others. Applied more rigorously, the comparison enabled reflection on the importance of socio-cultural milieu in the making of the national poet, in line with the increasingly positivistic stance of nineteenth-century literary scholarship. However, the ubiquity of the Burns comparison did not make everyone happy. As we shall see, the poet’s friend, János Arany already voiced his reservations in the 1850s, calling attention to the commercial logic behind it. But before turning to Petőfi as Hero, let me say something about what interests me in Carlyle’s narrative and why Burns came to represent such an important and problematic chapter in it.

Carlyle is writing after his three-volume history *The French Revolution* (1837), an event which is also regularly evoked in his lecture series. Occasionally, he even puts it in the plural, reminding his audience that the momentous promise (or threat) first made in 1789 and repeated in 1830 was not yet fulfilled. For Carlyle, it really all started with Protestantism, its “second act” was English Puritanism, and the French Revolution the third, “whereby all sovereignties earthly and spiritual were, as might seem, abolished or made sure of abolition”. Or, in an even more telescoped version:

invent Writing, Democracy is inevitable. Writing brings Printing; brings universal, every-day extempore Printing, as we see at present. Whoever can speak, speaking now to the whole nation, becomes a power, a branch of government, with inalienable weight in law-making, in all acts of authority. It matters not what rank he has, what revenues or garnitures;

3 According to Chris Vanden Bossche, this change of tack is central to Carlyle’s development as a thinker: “With *On Heroes and Hero-Worship*, Carlyle shifted the locus of authority from the realm of literature to the realm of politics, a shift manifested in a last-minute change in the order of the lectures. He initially planned to end the series with a lecture on Burns, but [...] he altered his plan and decided to conclude with a lecture on Cromwell and Napoleon (CL, 12:103, 115, 128). In addition to demonstrating the importance he would give to the hero as king, this change indicates that, as Carlyle himself admitted, the lectures were ‘not so much historic as didactic’ (CL 12:94). We must read them not as a history of authority, but as a history of Carlyle’s own attempt to envision a new form of authority.” Chris Vanden Bossche, *Carlyle and the Search for Authority* (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1991), 97–98.

the requisite thing is, that he have a tongue which others will listen to; this and nothing more is requisite. The nation is governed by all that has tongue in the nation: Democracy is virtually there.

Yet Carlyle maintains that in spite of this grand march towards democracy, mankind is still unable to do without some form of hero-worship; moreover, he wants to convince us that this is ultimately a good thing. His overall argument is characterised by an interesting double movement. The first part consists of his survey and comparative analysis of how heroes emerge in specific cultural-historical and even media environments. We may learn a lot from Carlyle here. Critics have called attention to his sensitivity to the role of different media and to his awareness of “the importance of *sight* to all forms of human worship.”⁴ Indeed, a fairly consistent visual language runs through his discussion of heroes. In a striking passage in the first lecture, tradition is defined as an “enormous *camera-obscura* magnifier”, and the imagery of projection is used again and again to emphasise how light is refracted, coloured and shaped by what Carlyle calls the “cut-glass of the National Mind.” Thus, while he posits a transcendental light as the ultimate source of true heroism, he implies that the actual form it takes depends upon the specific cultural apparatus that receives it and secures its transmission as a recognisable image. In an important sense, Carlyle implies, heroes are created by their communities and offer each spectator “a multiplex image of his own dreams.”⁵

The second movement kicks in whenever Carlyle wants to say that, however culturally determined, such images still reveal a deep truth about mankind – or perhaps, *the* deep truth: our craving for a transcendental source of light to make us aware, again and again, of the sense of wonder at the heart of all human existence. This conviction leads Carlyle to redefine idolatry as, at bottom, proof of a universal need for truth, which is only pernicious when the idol is no longer believed in: when “Souls are no longer filled with their Fetish; but only pretend

4 Richard Salmon, “Thomas Carlyle and the Idolatry of the Man of Letters,” *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 7(2002):1, 1–22, 6. doi:10.3366/jvc.2002.7.1.1.

5 The phrase is used by Carlyle in a striking passage where he applies the language of German transcendental idealism to Norse myth: “This light, kindled in the great dark vortex of the Norse Mind, dark but living, waiting only for light; this is to me the centre of the whole. How such light will then shine out, and with wondrous thousand-fold expansion spread itself, in forms and colors, depends not on it, so much as on the National Mind recipient of it. The colors and forms of your light will be those of the cut-glass it has to shine through.—Curious to think how, for every man, any the truest fact is modelled by the nature of the man! I said, The earnest man, speaking to his brother men, must always have stated what seemed to him a fact, a real Appearance of Nature. But the way in which such Appearance or fact shaped itself,—what sort of fact it became for him,—was and is modified by his own laws of thinking; deep, subtle, but universal, ever-operating laws. The world of Nature, for every man, is the Fantasy of Himself. This world is the multiplex ‘Image of his own Dream.’”

to be filled, and would fain make themselves feel that they are filled.” Otherwise idolatry is not only acceptable but beneficent.⁶ Thus, even if it is a misconception to think that Shakespeare was somehow divine, it is still *right* that we should think so: “Of this Shakspeare [sic] of ours, perhaps the opinion one sometimes hears a little idolatrously expressed is, in fact, the right one”.⁷ In his plenary lecture, Professor Müller-Funk cited Novalis’s aphorism about the giant and the dwarf: “If you see a giant, first look at the position of the Sun, and see if the giant is not the shadow of a dwarf.”⁸ In his lectures, Carlyle constantly raises the possibility of unmasking heroism as an effect of cultural projection, only to take it back at every turn. For him the important thing is not that giants may be produced by a trick of the light, but that people are somehow capable of seeing giants – moreover, that they seem to want to see them.⁹ This human need is palpable not just in ancient myth but, Carlyle argues, even in modern societies, the failings of which ultimately boil down to failures of hero-worship. In his view, social hierarchy is indispensable and should be grounded in what he calls “heroarchy”: the reverence of Great Men. We are not far from Max Weber’s conception of the “charismatic leader” discussed by Professor Leerssen.

For such reversals, Carlyle has been named a chief ideologue of an establishment that exercised power by forms of visibility to the detriment of others, and required obedience even as its projections were known to be false.¹⁰ However, this is complicated by the fact that Carlyle’s favourite heroes were idoloclasts such as Mahomet, Martin Luther, or John Knox, who became heroes by the very act of unmasking false idols.¹¹ Critique is built-into Carlyle’s narrative as much as re-enchantment, and his strongest argument in favour of hero-worship is, in fact, revolution. As the first lecture makes clear, revolutions come about whenever the discrepancy between true and apparent value becomes intolerable in a given society. He explains this with an economic metaphor, comparing human dignitaries to bank-notes which represent the “real” value of gold:

6 Carlyle’s rehabilitation of idolatry is also discussed in Salmon (2002).

7 “But call it worship, call it what you will, is it not a right glorious thing, and set of things, this that Shakspeare [sic] has brought us? For myself, I feel that there is actually a kind of sacredness in the fact of such a man being sent into this Earth.”

8 „Siehst du einen Riesen, achte auf den Stand der Sonne, ob es nicht der Schatten eines Zwerges ist.“

9 Carlyle perhaps follows Vico’s narrative when he connects this ability to the earliest stages of human culture (in his discussion of Norse mythology). The related image of the so-called “Brocken spectre” (in which the magnified figure of the spectator is projected onto the surrounding mist) is a recurrent motif in Coleridge’s explorations of idealism, e.g. in his late poem “Constancy to an Ideal Object”: “The enamoured rustic worships its fair hues, / Nor knows he makes the shadow, he pursues!”.

10 Nicholas Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look: A Counterhistory of Visuality* (Duke UP, 2011).

11 Cf. Salmon (2002).

We can do with some forged false notes; with a good many even; but not with all, or the most of them forged! No: there have to come revolutions then; cries of Democracy, Liberty and Equality, and I know not what.

In most societies, there is a certain amount of forged money in circulation. But when the majority of notes are like that, economies break down and it will be necessary to issue new money. This is revolution, which exposes the illegitimacy of the old order to re-establish society's broken connection with reality. However, Carlyle's figure may be followed even further, for the new order will also need its own currency – revolution is when false heroes are toppled and new heroes are born, even in the name of Equality.

Petőfi and Burns both became faces on bank-notes, and in their respective national imaginaries they still stand for the revolutionary moment described above. Importantly, Carlyle associates Burns not with Scottish national feeling but with egalitarianism, and describes the affinity of the “heaven-taught ploughman” with Rousseau and revolutionary ideas. In fact, he might have come across his economic metaphor in Burns, in one of his famous songs popular with British Chartists at the time (and with German revolutionaries in 1848):

*Is there, at honest Poverty
That hings his head, & a' that?
A coward slave, we pass him by,
We dare be poor for a' that!
For a' that, & a' that,
Our toils obscure, & a' that;
The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
The Man's the gowd for a' that.*

Petőfi's “National Song” became inextricably linked with the Revolution of 1848 and the idea of modern Hungary. Burns's song, in turn, was sung at the inauguration of the Scottish Parliament in 1999, when First Minister Donald Dewar clarified its political message: “At the heart of that song is a very Scottish conviction: that honesty and simple dignity are priceless virtues, not imparted by rank or birth or privilege but part of the soul. / Burns believed that sense and worth ultimately prevail.”¹² Almost 150 years earlier, Lajos Kossuth (1802—1894) left a note in the guest book at Burns's birthplace in Alloway, a site already sacred to the poet's memory: “Louis Kossuth in Exile, / To Robert Burns in Immortality. / “The man o' independent mind / Is king of men for a' that.” Coming

¹² <https://books.openedition.org/pus/10187?lang=en>.

from the former governor-president of Hungary who announced the deposition of the House of Habsburg, this brief note was itself a declaration of independence – at least, of the mind – and a recognition of Burns as a fellow fighter against kingship and hereditary privilege.

Burns could have meant a logical end-point for Carlyle's narrative, as the Hero who managed to wrest the Truth away from Semblance once again, inaugurating a new era of universal brotherhood, particularly through his Songs (a medium associated with spiritual depth in "The Hero as Poet"). But Carlyle decided otherwise, and concluded his survey with "The Hero as King". He did so not only because of his reservations about democracy and how it could turn into another (perhaps worse) form of hero-worship. He felt that the heroism of Burns was fatally compromised by the cultural milieu in which it appeared, making him ultimately a fallen Hero or "Half-Hero" – and not the only one.¹³ Carlyle provides a detailed analysis of the conditions that prevent modern heroes from fulfilling their potential. He speaks of the disorganised state of society, an "inorganic Chaos" stemming from scepticism, Utilitarianism and pure economic calculation; the "clanking World-machine" of industrial Britain. But at the heart of it all is the chaos of modern print capitalism. Carlyle claims that the spread of mass printing has changed the course of history and how heroism works. The hero as man of letters belongs to a completely new era, ruled by market conditions and the proliferation of false heroes, quacks, or "Simulacra".

The diagnosis recalls the opening of Byron's *Don Juan* (1819–1824) with the author's desperate search for a hero at a time of over-production, "When every year and month sends forth a new one." Only in Carlyle's tragic version, "the true one" became indistinguishable from all the rest. The tragedy of Burns, as Carlyle sees it, was that he had to express the truth in such conditions, when he could be mistaken for an insubstantial simulacrum – what is more, he almost believed himself to be one. Burns rose among the "artificial pasteboard figures and productions" of the Enlightenment, which did not believe in heroes:

*Like a little well in the rocky desert places, – like a sudden splendor [sic]
of Heaven in the artificial Vauxhall! People knew not what to make of it.
They took it for a piece of the Vauxhall fire-work; alas, it let itself be so taken,
though struggling half-blindly, as in bitterness of death, against that!*

Carlyle's imagery of light, which he associated with all of his heroes, is finally turned against itself as real and artificial lights become fatally confused. The pre-

13 "To the strongest man, only with infinite struggle and confusion was it possible to work himself half loose; and lead as it were, in an enchanted, most tragical way, a spiritual death-in-life, and be a Half-Hero!"

dicament is clear: how could a true Hero be recognised in an age which knows exactly how heroes are made, knows how to project and reproduce their image for the entertainment of “the National Mind”, and therefore can no longer believe in them? Carlyle does not know the answer, but hints that a complete reorganisation of the literary sphere could be necessary, gesturing towards the German example and his beloved Goethe. Meanwhile, the chapter on Burns is left as a cautionary tale against the distorting conditions of this “poor Paper-age,” which instead of magnifying heroes, diminishes them.

It is time to leave behind Carlyle and think of Sándor Petőfi, who had been linked to Burns from the second half of the nineteenth century well into the twentieth century. Scholarship has shown how masterfully Petőfi employed the print culture of the age to establish and control his literary image. Whether people loved him or hated him, he made sure that everyone recognised him as an original. So why the need for setting him so often next to Burns? What is a Hero in comparison? The parallel itself had an impeccable romantic pedigree: it was established by Heinrich Heine (1797—1856), who read Petőfi’s poems in German and wrote to the translator Károly Kertbeny in 1849: “Petőfi is a poet who can only be compared to Burns and Béranger”.¹⁴ It seems that this remark started to circulate as soon as Heine made it and fellow-poet Mihály Tompa (1817—1868) in a letter of 1858 suggested that Petőfi himself was aware of it. Tompa wrote:

*I’ve heard Burns being mentioned by Petőfi in 1846 or 47 in Beje; that is, Sándor told me the following anecdote [...]: some of his poems were read out to Heine, who cried out: ah! this is a great poet like Burns or Béranger!*¹⁵

The story is apocryphal: Heine wrote his letter to Petőfi’s translator years after the dates “remembered” by Tompa. While it is possible that he made an earlier, spoken remark, which could have reached Petőfi’s ears, it is more likely that Tompa’s memory played a trick on him, authorising, as it were, Heine’s comparison by making Petőfi formally accept it.¹⁶ If this is the case, then this is already an instance of the myth-making that proliferated around the poet’s figure in the 1850s, after his death.

14 “Petőfi ist ein Dichter, dem nur Burns und Béranger zu vergleichen” –Kertbeny: *Silbuetten* I. 240 (1861).

15 „Burns Róbertet ösmerem német fordításból, Szemerénél olvastam, iszonyú kis félújjnyi füzetben; Petőfitől is hallám emlegetni 1846-ban vagy 47-ben Bejében; nevezetesen ezt az anecdotát beszélte Sándor a mint Murányba mentünk, Beje és Otrókács közt: költeményeimből olvastak Heinének, ki így kiáltott fel: ah! ez nagy költő, mint Burns vagy Béranger!” (Hamva, okt. 25. 1858).

16 Tolnai Vilmos: „Burns Róbert «Szombat esteje» irodalmunkban”, *Budapesti Szemle*, 192. köt. 551 szám (1923) 222-229; 222.

The Hungarian Burns – the Scottish Petőfi. What did this double trope yield, if not positive evidence, in the second half of the nineteenth century? Among other things, it seems to have worked as a pair of scissors, cutting both poets to size, eliminating aspects of their life and poetry that did not fit into the spaces of the double portrait. Something of this can already be seen in Heine's letter. After comparing Petőfi to Burns, he described the Hungarian poet as follows:

he is so healthy and primitive, in the midst of a society full of sickly and reflexive mannerisms, that I couldn't find anyone from Germany who would be comparable to him; even I myself possess only a few of these natural tones; however, my impression is that his spirit is not too deep, and he lacks any Hamlet-like traits, fortunately both for himself and for his countrymen.

It is understandable if Hungarian writers tended to remember only the first part of these comments. Heine characterises Petőfi in terms of the *naïve* poet: healthy, primitive, unreflective, natural – the opposite of Hamlet and the Germans. It seems that he thought Burns to have shared the same qualities: naiveté is the common denominator to which the richly diverse work of both poets is reduced. Since then, Burns scholarship has gone out of its way to prove that the myth of the “heaven-taught ploughman” was just that, a myth, even if it was manipulated and partly created by Burns himself.¹⁷ As Murray Pittock writes, “the ‘heaven-taught ploughman became a world poet because his identity and expression was far more varied and complex than it appears, or that – and this is key – he wanted it to appear.”¹⁸ In the hands of Hungarian scholars, the myth of Petőfi's simplicity has received similar treatment and gave way to the multifaceted Petőfis we can see today at this exhibition.¹⁹

The Burns who entered Hungarian letters after 1850 was by-and-large the official Victorian version: a Burns sanitized of political radicalism, his amorous (and obscene) verse censored, his life pathologized and generally pitied²⁰ – in other words, a writer largely irrelevant to contemporary concerns, who could be safely memorialized in Britain and throughout the colonies. Evidence suggests

17 See esp. Nigel Leask, *Robert Burns and Pastoral: Poetry and Improvement in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Oxford: OUP, 2010), 1-14 (Introduction: The ‘Heaven-Taught Ploughman’); Kenneth Simpson, “Robert Burns: ‘Heaven-taught ploughman?’, in Kenneth Simpson, ed., *Burns Now* (Edinburgh: Canongate Academic, 1994), 70–91.

18 Murray Pittock, ed., *Robert Burns in Global Culture*, 21.

19 See esp. the works of István Margócsi; Sándor Hites, “Rocking the Cradle: Making Petőfi a National Poet,” *Arcadia*, 52(2017):1, 29–50.

20 Cf. Andrew Noble's Introduction to *The Canongate Burns*, esp. xlvii–lxxxviii. Andrew Noble and Patrick Scott Hogg, eds, *The Canongate Burns*, Introduced by Andrew Noble. Canongate Classics 104 (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2001).

that it is sometimes useful for a Poet-Hero to be bland, especially when he is already a national institution. As Carlyle recognized, a Poet was not just a bringer of light, but “a real, marketable, tangibly useful possession,” with the power to hold people together. He observes this in connection with Shakespeare, but it has some relevance for Burns too:

England, before long, this Island of ours, will hold but a small fraction of the English: in America, in New Holland, east and west to the very Antipodes, there will be a Saxondom covering great spaces of the Globe. And now, what is it that can keep all these together into virtually one Nation, so that they do not fall out and fight, but live at peace, in brotherlike intercourse, helping one another?

To hold all these people together, Shakespeare had to be turned into something like a compromise: without sharp edges. Carlyle was not a Caledonian patriot, but for Scottish people around the globe, the poems and especially the songs of Burns came to possess a comparable power: they spoke to an ideal Scottishness, without any of the frictions actual Scots had to grapple with.

The English-language Tauchnitz edition of Burns's poetry (Leipzig 1845), which was owned by both Petőfi and the poet János Arany, introduced it as something that “displays, and as it were embalms, the peculiar manners of his country,” suggesting that “it may be considered as a monument, not to his name only, but to the expiring genius of an ancient and once independent nation”.²¹ The Petőfi to whom this Burns was compared was just as safely embalmed in “immortal memory” by the end of the nineteenth century. In 1897, a long comparative essay on Burns and Petőfi admitted that “Petőfi is not the poet for this age, or for other similarly calm periods”: “Most of his subjects ... have become history. [...] They are [...] for remembrance, for keeping the memory.”²² In both Petőfi and Burns, the critic discovers immortal youth, authenticity, nature, deep feeling and “honest poverty”; above all, they are perceived as poets who expressed and memorialized their country's spirit. When critics do highlight a difference, it is usually to Petőfi's advantage. József Lévy (a prominent Burns translator) might be the only exception who considered Petőfi too radical compared to the “gentle” Burns. But he still congratulates Petőfi on his better morals and greater constancy in love.²³ Another writer, comparing their landscapes,

21 *The Poetical Works of Robert Burns. With the Life and Portrait of the Author* (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1845), v.

22 Imre Sándor, “Petőfi és Burns”, in: *Irodalmi tanulmányok*, 1-2, Kiadja a Kisfaludy-Társaság (Budapest: Franklin Társulat, Magyar Irod. Intézet és Könyvnyomda, 1897), II, 297–361; 151; 153.

23 *Burns Róbert Költeményei*, ford. Lévy József, kiadja a Kisfaludy-Társaság (Budapest: Franklin-Társulat, Magyar Irod. Intézet és Könyvnyomda, 1892).

remarks that “the fancy of the Scottish poet is not so rich, and there is more caution in the leaps of his imagination than in our poet’s,”²⁴ and it would surely interest some Scottish readers that on at least one occasion Burns was found “not so passionate.”²⁵

Burns seemed easy to know for nineteenth-century Hungarians, because Petőfi seemed easy to know. However, to the poet János Arany (1817—1882), who did know Petőfi, and who from the 1850s repeatedly returned to Burns to read, translate, and adapt his works, the logic of such comparisons was deeply worrying. In 1858 he wrote to his friend about a new edition of Petőfi and its planned advertisement:

*Emich [the bookseller] is advertising Petőfi's new poems – for years, the public has expected it like the Messiah – and he still thinks it necessary to commend the book by using my name. To commend Petőfi with my name! [...] Now these dunces say that I called Petőfi the Hungarian Burns and they think that this is a recommendation for Petőfi. As if the Hungarian public knew Burns better than Petőfi, or as if Petőfi needed to borrow some light from Burns's name.*²⁶

Arany is entangled here in complications that have to do with the print culture and commercialism that also troubled Carlyle. We can sense his touchiness about the use of his own name, even in connection with Petőfi, in a public advertisement. He is also offended on Petőfi's behalf, who is assumed to be in need of the reflected glory from a foreign celebrity. If the public was waiting for his poems like the Messiah, then such an advertisement amounted to sacrilege. Arany rejects the parallel between Petőfi and Burns because he sees it as needless marketing device: the Hungarian public knows its Petőfi much better than its Burns, so what is the point in dressing Petőfi up in the Scottish poet's garb? Nevertheless, he could be aware that the comparison was already circulating

24 Hartmann János: *Petőfi-tanulmányok* (Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1910), 74.

25 Dedinszky.

26 „Nem képzelheted, mily rossz nekem az egy idő óta, ha nevemet nyilvánosan emlegetik. Te a mellőzetésről panaszkodol: engem az ellenkező öl meg. Emich Petőfi újabb verseit hirdeti – mit a közönség évek óta úgy vár, mint a Messiást – és mégis szükségesnek látja nevemmel ajánlani. Petőfit az én nevemmel! A Vojtina-féle ostobaság közt (emlékszel-e még? hisz feleltél is rá) volt egy sor: *Burns Róbert, a skótok Petőfije*. Ezzel én koránt sem azt akartam mondani, hogy a két költő egyforma nagy; csak annyit, hogy mint nálunk Petőfi, úgy a skótoknál Burns rendes tanpályafutás nélkül is jó költő tudott lenni; aztán még van hasonlat a népies eredetben, geniusban stb. Most e szamarak azt mondják, hogy én *Petőfit* neveztem a *magyar Burns*-nek s azt hiszik hogy ez Petőfire ajánlat. Mintha a magyar közönség jobban ismerné Burns-ot mint Petőfit, vagy mintha Petőfinek szüksége volna a Burns nevével kölcsönözni fényt. A *Szépírodalmi Közlöny* pedig neki esik köztem és P. közt parallelát vonni, de a mi így sükerül!...” (Nagykörös, 1858. szept. 29).

thanks to the translator Károly Kertbeny (1824—1882), who mentioned it in at least three separate German publications, while protesting that Petőfi was “a talent of universal significance” and essentially incomparable (he compared him to Catullus, Theocritus, and Hafiz, among others). Such all-round worlding of an author made him look respectable enough, but nothing new, and left precious little to the poems themselves.

For Arany, the parallel pointed to the unequal status of the world poet and the local poet, regardless of their merits. And it was especially *embarrassing* as it was based on one of Arany’s own poems written in 1850, which explicitly referred to Burns as “the Scottish Petőfi.” The poem, “Vojtina’s Letters to His Brother” (“*Vojtina levelei öccséhez*”), is sarcastic through and through, so Arany is rightly annoyed when it is taken at face value. The poem’s speaker (named after an amateur versifier) addresses a younger brother or cousin who has just become a published author without proper education, or, it seems, without any talent. The elder poet goes on to advise him, teaching his brother how to churn out as many pieces with as little trouble as possible. Burns “the Scottish Petőfi” is mentioned in this context as one of the aspiring poet’s possible inspirations, together with other authors who lacked formal education or came from the lower classes. Petőfi himself is alluded to as the son of a butcher, and Shakespeare gets a mention for his deer-stealing and for stacking chairs in the Globe.²⁷ The implied point is that lower-class origins, or the lack of a formal education, are not sufficient to make someone a poet.

The tag “Scottish Petőfi” feels homely and somehow mock-provincial in Arany’s passage (an effect he also used elsewhere). This is quite a feat because all the while he is channelling the cosmopolitan celebrity Lord Byron, and his satire *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809). I can only give here a taste of the most relevant section, a call to arms for all untutored poets:

*Hear, then, ye happy sons of needless trade!
Swains! quit the plough, resign the useless spade!
Lo! Burns and BLOOMFIELD, nay, a greater far,
GIFFORD was born beneath an adverse star,
Forsook the labours of a servile state,
Stemmed the rude storm, and triumphed over Fate:
Then why no more? if Phoebus smiled on you,*

27 ‘S mivel hallottad volt, vagy olvasád / A Kisfaludy kalamárisát, / Shakespeare hogyan lopott egy őzbakot, / Vagy színpadon széket hogyan rakott, / Burns Róbert a skótok Petőfije, / Költő mikép lón, paraszt létire, / Mikép ama német csizmadia, / S a kiskunsnági mészáros fia, / Ki mindenütt forgott húsz éveig / Csak ott nem, hol a tudóst nevelik: / Tehát, egy istenverte pillanatban, / „Író leszek!” kiáltál fel magadban.)

BLOOMFIELD! *why not on brother Nathan too?*
Him too the Mania, not the Muse, has seized;
Not inspiration, but a mind diseased:
And now no Boor can seek his last abode,
No common be inclosed without an ode.
 [...]
 Ye tuneful cobblers! still your notes prolong,
Compose at once a slipper and a song...

Arany's poem has a number of similarities with Byron's, but here he appropriates it (I think) to convey that for Vojtina's benighted brother, even the most celebrated examples are only needed as an excuse for not making any effort in writing. Arany employs the lens of irony to minimize the stature of the greatest cultural heroes, which is quite an effective way of reinforcing the sense of their true greatness. Note how cosily Petőfi sits next to Burns and Shakespeare in these lines, as the figure best-known, but still not known well enough, by speaker and addressee. Far be it from Arany to suggest that there is no place for lower-class poets in literature (Byron, on the other hand, was not so sure). But, as he explained in later writings, he regarded simplicity a poetic device that needed to be learnt, like any other, through careful study and imitation.²⁸ One of his most important proofs that Petőfi was a genius was his preternatural ability to *learn fast*.²⁹

From the 1850s, Arany and his circle criticised those Hungarian poets who took Petőfi as their model to produce aesthetically unambitious 'popular' poetry. But the situation was difficult: after 1849, there was a literary vacuum in which earlier positions had to be rethought.³⁰ One of Arany's responses, which was also taken up by people around him, was to embark on a programme of literary translation. There are a number of pointers to suggest that, in addition to this, translation fulfilled a commemorative function in Arany's small circle. His younger friend Károly Szász was known to have spoken to Petőfi, and "Petőfi gave him an English dictionary and the poems of Thomas Moore [1759—1852]; in this

28 The point is developed in Arany's review of the French poet Millien's 1860 volume *La Moisson (The Harvest)*, see AJÓM XI: Prózai művek 2. 1860-1882, s. alá rend. Németh G. Béla (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1968).

29 *Széptani Jegyzetek*.

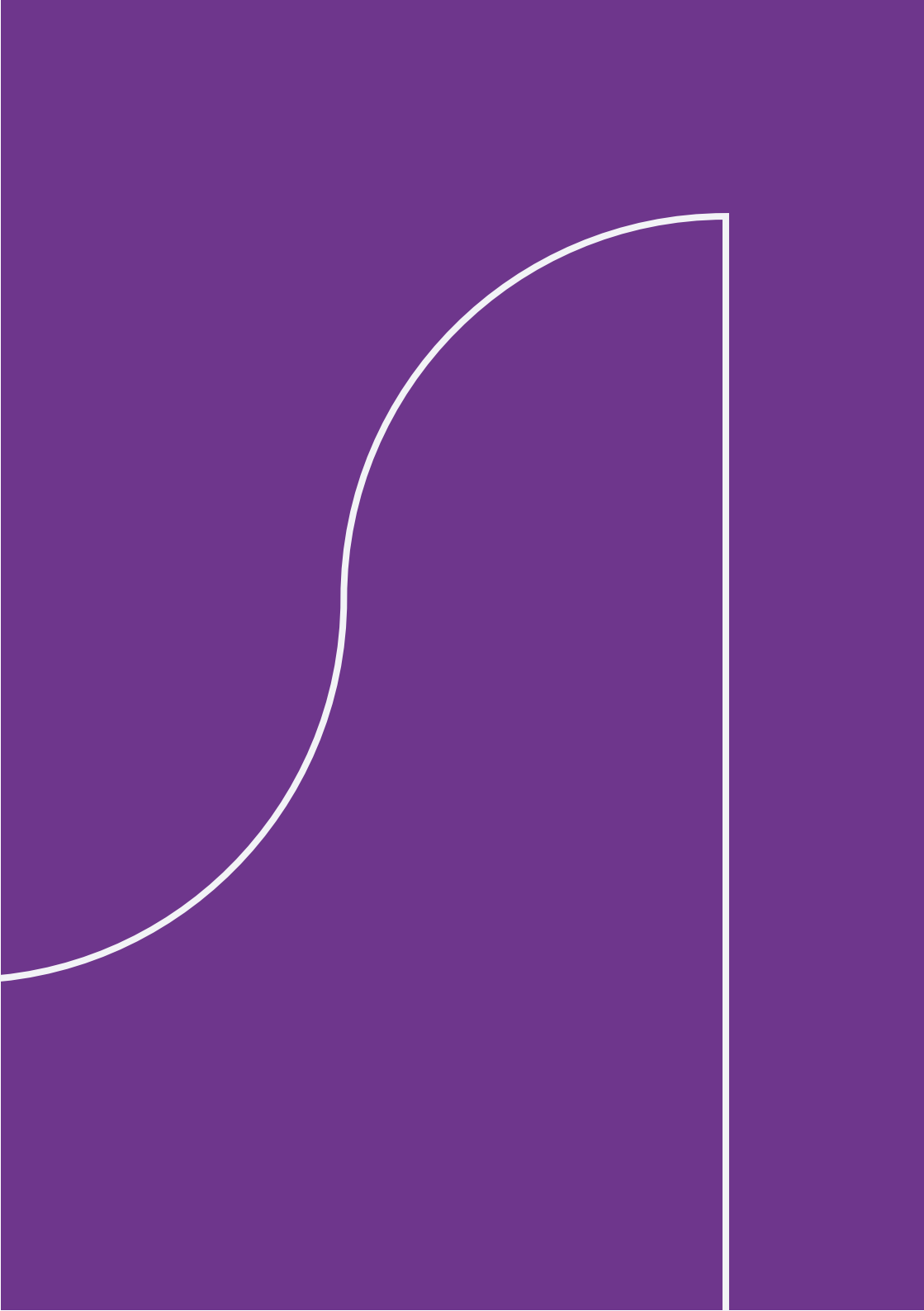
30 Tarjányi Eszter, "Irodalmi viaskodások. Arany János és az 1850-es évek költői csoportosulásai," *ITK* 2004, CVIII/3, 292—333.

manner, the future translator received his tools from Petőfi's hands".³¹ Another story suggestive of Petőfi's early cultic authority concerns a copy of Béranger (1780—1857), which was passed around and signed consecutively by Petőfi (the original owner), Arany, Tompa, Lévy, and Szász (it later became a 'relic' of the Kisfaludy Society).³² Three of these poets also translated poems by Robert Burns (as well as by Béranger and Moore) – perhaps as a form of continuing Petőfi's legacy through engaging with the poets associated with him.

To come back to my original question: world literary comparisons (as the one with Burns) served multiple functions in the national poet's nineteenth-century institution. Comparison could be a means of cutting down to size, eliminating unwanted characteristics, of neutralization, or patriotic self-congratulation. The medium of world literature could be a magnifying glass, or could make the national poet look small in comparison – fuelling the double irony in Arany's poem. Finally, world literature could become an occasion of ritual engagement, to keep in touch with Petőfi's spirit through the foreign poets closest to him.

31 Voinovich Géza: „Szász Károly élete és munkássága. 1829—1905”: „Látta Vörösmartyt, beszélt vele Petőfi, angol szótárt is adott neki s Moore költeményeit; ezzel mintegy az ő kezéből kapta eszközeit a jövődő műfordító.” Szász Károly, *Költemények és műfordítások*, Szász Károly művei, Centenárium Kiadás (Révai Irodalmi Intézet Kiadása, 1930), ii.

32 Voinovich, i.m.: “Neve ott van a Kisfaludy-Társaság ereklyéi között őrzött Béranger-kötetben, mely a bejegyzések tanúsága szerint kézzől-kézre vándorolt: Petőfi adta Aranyknak, Arany Tompának, Tompa Lévyknak, Lévy Szásznak, Szász Károly a Kisfaludy-Társaságnak.” (Szász Károly, *Költemények és műfordítások*, iii—iv).



In the mainstream

PETŐFI AND HIS EUROPEAN CONTEMPORARIES

EMESE ASZTALOS

Petőfi Literary Museum

In this lecture, I would like to present some aspects of Petőfi's contemporary presence in a broadly understood European culture. In the spirit of the nineteenth-century *Gesamtkunst*, I intend to show not just manuscripts, but also visual art and music.

First of all, it is undoubtedly true that Petőfi is a very special Hungarian phenomenon – by the second day of the conference you must be practically convinced of this – we could honestly say that his character, life, and works have expanded into a whole universe. Legends, rituals, and sacred rites are connected with his name (he is often portrayed as resembling Jesus). In fact, you see his name everywhere in Hungary: there are streets and squares named after him in every Hungarian city, town, and village.

On the other hand, it is also a remarkable phenomenon in the history of Hungarian literature that his writings, as well as his life and personality, entered mainstream contemporary European culture during his lifetime.

The fact that the young Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), who at the beginning of his career had musical ambitions, set five of Petőfi's poems to music (from German translations, of course) is perhaps one of the most surprising details from this perspective.

We must assume that it was not the rudimentary Petőfi translations that captured Nietzsche's imagination, but the larger-than-life, wildly romantic image of Petőfi himself, which was then – and perhaps still is today – the symbol of the entire Hungarian nation. For the young Nietzsche, this Petőfi persona could easily be associated with one of his favorite composers, Franz/Ferenc Liszt (1811–1886) and his Hungarian Rhapsodies. Without discussing Nietzsche's inspiration any further, this philological fact alone allows us to observe Petőfi's influence throughout Europe, especially if we add a closely related fact. In the 1860s, when Nietzsche was composing songs from Petőfi's writings in Bonn, the poems were simultaneously being folklorized in Transylvania, the easternmost corner of Europe. Hungarian folk-music culture, which is still alive today, uses

many of Petőfi's poems as folk songs – thus there are many people who without even realizing it know Petőfi's poems off by heart.

If we listen to these two sets of songs, the different atmosphere of the melodies could perhaps convey the diverse impact of Petőfi's life and work.

However, it was not Nietzsche himself who finally elevated Petőfi's poetry to the level of European Romantic music, but Nietzsche's hero, Liszt, who also composed a piece based on one of Petőfi's poems: *Hungary's God* (*Ungarns Gott/ A magyarok Istene*, 1881?). A special feature of the manuscript is that for the first time in his life, Liszt, who only learned to speak Hungarian in his later years, wrote the title and text of the piece in Hungarian, and in later versions of the manuscript he consistently wrote his name in the Hungarian spelling.

When I evoke the atmosphere of Romantic songs, we cannot ignore Heinrich Heine (1797—1856), because his poems were the most popular among the composers of that time. There are also numerous parallels and similarities between Petőfi and Heine.

Above all, both Heine and Petőfi are associated with a real literary paradigm shift: they created a new epoch in literature, transforming the expressions of folklore, folk poetry, and the vernacular into artistic forms. In so doing, they legitimized not only the aspirations of folk poetry, but also the use of colloquial language or new mock epics in their own national literature. Both broke new ground with their presence in the literary sphere: they used the new public media of literature, the press, and the new technical possibilities. In addition, they could consciously use their images to sell their new literary products, as we shall see later.

As we know, Petőfi always carried Heine's *Buch der Lieder* with him on his pilgrimages – the book that had validated the aesthetic elevation of the folk song to a literary form. In other words, like Heine, Petőfi succeeded in transforming the genre of the folk song into art.

Petőfi had been experimenting with Heine's voice since he was a young student. One indication of this is his translation sketches in the margins of his mathematics textbook, which can be seen in the collection of the Petőfi Literary Museum. Both poets are considered to have been so successful in their artistic pursuits because they came from the margins of society, and one might assume that Heine's Jewish ancestry or Petőfi's non-noble descent may have helped them discover fresh perspectives. It seems that the new social conditions helped to create new poetic personalities.

These similarities in their careers culminate in a fascinating episode.

In the late 1840s, Károly Kertbeny (1824—1882) – as a translator, promoter of literary life, and advocate of Hungarian culture in western Europe – showed his Petőfi translations to Heine. According to Kertbeny's recollections, Heine

expressed his approval of the poems. We can assume that Heine, like Nietzsche, was able to appreciate a much more comprehensive picture of the Hungarians, who were yet spared the damaging impact of civilization and were closer to nature. Besides this hypothesis, it is noteworthy that Kertbeny received permission from Heine to dedicate his published translations of Petőfi to him. The cultural and artistic significance of this gesture is an important philological fact, even though historical analysis now questions Kertbeny's real achievement as a translator and cultural figure.

As noted above, Petőfi was not just a poet, but also a cultural force and an icon in Hungary. This is the reason why his name has become a concept, like those of Byron or Liszt. Of course, "Petőfism" is not as broad as Byronism or Lisztomania – but nevertheless, the main features and qualities of his character could also be abstracted into emblematic meanings such as freedom, youth, or independence. It is worth taking a brief look at the process of the creation of romantic authorship through a symbolic portrait of Petőfi.

This visual aspect of the Petőfi phenomenon or "Petőfism" is quite well-researched in Hungary. There are some scholarly conclusions about the process that shaped his image (not only by Petőfi himself but also by many other hands), the myth-creation process, the production of self as cultural production.

Petőfi was not merely the first self-made poet in Hungary who earned his living by writing, editing, and publishing, but also a pioneer who became a true literary celebrity. His portraits emphasized, and thus improved, the representation of the poet as displayed in his writings. With regard to the fresh and new poetic discourse of his time, his fresh literary voice required new visual effects or at least new attributes in his portraits.

It appears that there are some parallels between Byron's and Petőfi's profiles: both have built their own images, and this construction could also be considered a work of art, a creative exploration of the self.

It can be argued that Petőfi's poetic and political fame is evidenced by the great explosion of images depicting him during his lifetime. As a result of this visual success, after his death, in his flourishing cult, his portrait could be easily treated as a visual object. This is reminiscent of portraits of Byron (1788–1824), which had one of the strongest visual and cultural impacts on Europe among literary figures of the nineteenth century. His visual representations could be easily modified because they could be separated from his works and literary discourses, so they could function perfectly without any connection to the poet or his works. Through Byron, Hungarian portraitists could refer to general, essential elements, such as the value of the Romantic poet or the image of a star. To illustrate this, consider the cover of the first Hungarian biography of Byron and the translations of his poems published in 1842. It is an obvious reproduc-

tion of the oil painting by George Sanders (1774—1846), which was created with the collaboration of Byron himself. It is one of the most effective images of Byron: it conveys the complex meanings of the romantic wanderer, the pilgrim in the stormy landscape, the admirer of the Orient, the freedom fighter of the national liberation movement, etc. It consists of the most Byronic elements, the curly hair (in reference to Apollo, the god of poetry) and the open shirt-collar.

The open shirt-collar is one of the most important elements of Hungarian Romanticism. This feature had been adopted and used by Hungarian painters since the 1830s, so it finally lost its traces and associations with Byron and took the name of “Petőfi-collar”.

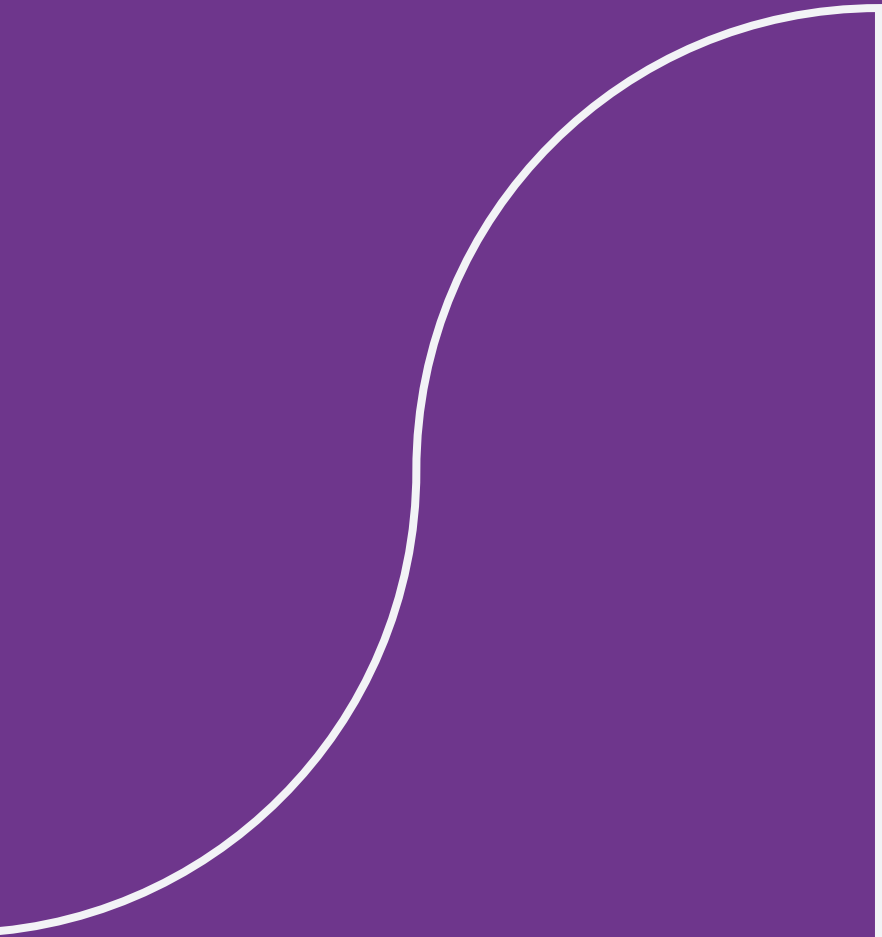
The re-named Byron collar did not fit into the conventional dress code of the time. In the rather feudalistic and traditional Hungarian society, the neck without tie or scarf, with an open collar, deliberately emphasized the artistic and political views of Petőfi. The open collar of his shirt became a brand, a visual trademark, which completed the gestures of his political and artistic radicalism. If we consider the entirety of the major iconic representations of Petőfi (made during his lifetime), it becomes clear that they don't represent the poet himself, but rather suggest an idea, a concept – one we might call “the Romantic Author”.

In addition to the open shirt-collar, what other parallels might we draw between the two authors?

One such important connection, in addition to their important roles and their deaths in wars of independence (Greek and Hungarian), could be the legends surrounding them (which they themselves helped shape). Petőfi's disappearance after his death, the rumours about his unpublished poems, could be related to the myths surrounding Byron's death or his burnt memoirs.

The obsessive campaign to collect relics and cultic objects of these national heroes (for example locks of hair and pieces of fabric from their furniture) is equally remarkable, even though their social origins and identities were quite different. They were depicted with similar attributes, even though Byron was proud of his noble ancestry and Petőfi consistently emphasized his non-aristocratic roots. We might also observe that visual Byronism was becoming increasingly independent of its origins.

In summary, these examples should make it possible to place Petőfi in a world literary perspective. It is a rare coincidence that a poet was so successful in making Hungarian literature coincide with European movements. This chronological simultaneity remains unique in Hungarian literature. A detailed study is still pending, not least because the relevant documents are located in various European collections, and the subject is definitely worthy of further research.



Pan Tadeusz Museum in Wrocław:

ROMANTIC CONTENT IN A 21ST CENTURY INSTITUTION

DOBROMIŁA JANKOWSKA

Pan Tadeusz Museum – Ossoliński National Institute

Ossolinski National Institute/Ossolineum

Józef Maksymilian Ossolinski (1748—1826), a writer, collector, and scholar, was a member of many learned institutions, such as the Warsaw Scientific Society, the Wilno Academy, the Cracow Academy, the Royal Societies of Prague and Göttingen, the Imperial-Royal Society of Vienna, and a *doctor honoris causa* of the Jagiellonian University (Cracow). With the foundation act of the Ossolinski National Institute (or Ossolineum) in June 1817 he handed over to the Polish nation valuable collections of books, manuscripts, and museum pieces, and at the same time he defined the character of the Institute's activity, which was to save the cultural heritage of a nation devoid of its statehood by drawing on the resources of Polish literature and museum collections.

Initially, the Institute was to consist of two branches: the Library and the Publishing House. However, as a result of an agreement between Ossolinski and Prince Henryk Lubomirski (1777—1850), who decided to hand over his own museum collections to the Institute, a third section was created in 1824 under the name of the Lubomirski Museum. The post of the literary curator – the Institute's highest authority – was to become a hereditary function of the Lubomirski family. From the very beginning, the Institute served Polish science and education and cultivated patriotic traditions. During the years of national bondage, the Ossolineum published *Monumenta Poloniae Historica* (1864—1893), a critical edition of Samuel Bogumił Linde's *Słownik Języka Polskiego* (*Dictionary of the Polish Language*) and numerous other works from the fields of history, literary science, and the history of culture, important for Polish sciences.

In the period of the Second Republic (1918—1939), the Institute developed dynamically. It published scientific works as well as *belles lettres* and became one

of the leading publishing houses of the independent Poland. During that time the Ossolineum was enriched by many new collections, including those of the Lubomirski family of Kruszyna, the Potocki family of Raj, and the Jabłonowski family of Bursztyn, as well as by numerous bequests made by Polish scholars.

During the Second World War the printed collections of the Library doubled as many private collections were stored there for safety, including those of the Baworowski and Dzieduszycki families as well as numerous donations and deposits made by the civilian population.

After the war, Lwów was incorporated into the Soviet Union. Only a part of the Ossolineum collection was transferred from Lwów to Wrocław. These collections were made accessible to the public as early as September 1947. Funding for the Institute's upkeep in the new historical circumstances, after the nationalisation in 1945 of all landed estates, came from the state treasury. In 1953, the Ossolineum Library and Publishing House were transformed into branches of the newly created Polish Academy of Sciences. The Ossolineum collections constituted a scholarly workshop for the Wrocław humanities as they emerged after the war. However, the bulk of the collections remained in Lwów, including autographs, diplomas, drawings and prints, photographs, numismatic objects, medals, seals, periodicals, and a part of the manuscript collections. At present a report is being prepared on the losses sustained by the Ossolineum Library as a result of the transfer of national borders after the Second World War. These losses are estimated at about 60 per cent. Efforts are being made to recover the Ossolineum collections.

In 1990 the post of director of the Ossolineum was assumed by Dr Adolf Juzwenko, who undertook efforts to reactivate the Foundation – the original status of the Institute. On 5 January 1995, the Parliament of the Republic of Poland passed the act on “the foundation – the Ossoliński National Institute (Official Gazette 1995, no. 23, item 121)”. On the strength of this act patronage over the Institute was assumed by the President of the Republic of Poland and direct supervision was performed by the Board of Curators.

For almost two hundred years of the Institute's activity, the collections handed over by the Founder to the Polish nation have constantly been enlarged, mainly through donations, exchange, and purchase. Altogether, the Ossolineum collections of nineteenth- and twentieth-century books and periodicals, old books, manuscripts, prints, maps, and numismatic objects comprise at present around 1,800,000 items. It is a constantly growing stock. Each year approximately 10,000 books and 5,000 units of periodicals are added to it. Special collections grow by several hundred items yearly.

Currently the Ossolineum consists of four parts, namely: The Library, The Publishing House, Princes' Lubomirski Museum, and the Pan Tadeusz Muse-

um (which I represent). It is currently managed by another historian, Dr Łukasz Kaminski, and employs over 200 people.

The Pan Tadeusz Museum – Branch of the Ossolinski National Institute

The Pan Tadeusz Museum is the latest and the most modern part of the Ossolineum, exhibiting the Institute's rich historical and literary collections. It was opened to the public in May 2016 in one of the most beautiful tenement houses in Wrocław – “Under the Golden Sun” (Rynek 6).

This unique, modern museum tells the story of an extraordinary book – perhaps the last one known by heart (in fragments) by nearly all Poles: the only existing manuscript of Adam Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz* (1834), accompanied by several hundred other authentic manuscripts, old prints, etchings, paintings, sculptures, and daily objects, and complemented by over a hundred applications and multimedia presentations to stimulate a conversation about Polish culture and the history of the struggle to be an independent country. Exhibitions dedicated to “witnesses of history” – Jan Nowak-Jeziorański (1914—2005) and Władysław Bartoszewski (1922—2015), as well as the museum's rich educational and art programme expand the perspective and offer a chance to enter a real dialogue with the most interesting themes in contemporary culture.

The manuscript of *Pan Tadeusz* introduces us to Adam Mickiewicz's poetic vision of early nineteenth-century Polish gentry and to the fascinating background of Polish and European Romanticism and the tumultuous history of Europe in those times. We take our guests on a journey during which they will learn about key inspirations, the history of the poem's composition, the world depicted in Mickiewicz's epic, and its reception. We also present the manuscript of *Pan Tadeusz* – the most precious object in Ossolineum's collection and one of the most valuable treasures of Polish culture.

Mission: Poland is an exhibition about the Romantic idea of freedom transferred to the context of the Second World War and post-war era. Using the examples of Jan Nowak-Jeziorański and Władysław Bartoszewski's biographies, we present the story of a generation which grew up in a country free after 123 years of partition, but which in 1939 had to face the necessity to fight for independence and, later, for the sovereignty of Poland in modern Europe. Both witnesses of history have donated to the Ossolineum priceless collections of documents about their lives and the events they participated in, as well as artworks and archives.

Pan Tadeusz Różewicz is the third permanent exhibition, opened in October 2021. It is a bridge between the literary and historical parts of the museum, for example the content and context of the Mickiewicz's work and the *Mission: Poland* display. It tells the story of another twentieth-century hero who also fought in the Second World War, but who, when it ended, refrained from political engagement. Tadeusz Różewicz (1921—2014) wanted to give voice to an anonymous person, at the same time being an astute observer and commentator of reality, and a great poet. The exhibition presents a selection of objects from the collection given to the Ossoliński National Institute, including precious manuscripts, documents, everyday artifacts, and an impressive library. There are also artworks on loan from other institutions and private individuals, and photographs.

Opened thanks to the support of the Norwegian and EEA funds from Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway, as well as Polish funds, but also thanks to the citizens of Wrocław, as of June 2023 the Pan Tadeusz Museum had been visited by over 300,000 people. In 2019 it received a special commendation from the European Museum of the Year Award.

The Pan Tadeusz Museum is adjusted to the needs of people with disabilities:

- There are no architectural barriers in the building. Every site is accessible by lift.
- Wheelchair-users can access multimedia displays, and the objects displayed in cabinets are clearly visible.
- Throughout the entire exhibition leads a path for visitors with visual impairments.
- In every room of the main exhibition, there are 3D reliefs for selected objects and maps for visually impaired visitors.
- Induction loops are installed next to the ticket offices and in the cloakroom.
- There is a reduced ticket price for visitors with disabilities.
- Entry for the guardians of visitors with disabilities is free.

The Manuscript exhibition – where the romantic period is the key **About *Pan Tadeusz***

Pan Tadeusz is the last major work written by Adam Mickiewicz (1798—1855), and the most well known and perhaps most significant piece by Poland's great Romantic poet, writer, philosopher, and visionary.

The epic poem's full title in English is *Sir Thaddeus, or the Last Lithuanian Foray: a Nobleman's Tale from the Years of 1811 and 1812 in Twelve Books of Verse*

(Polish original: *Pan Tadeusz, czyli ostatni zajazd na Litwie. Historia szlachecka z roku 1811 i 1812 we dwunastu księgach wierszem*). Published in June 1834 in Paris, *Pan Tadeusz* is widely considered the last great epic poem in European literature.

Drawing on traditions of the epic poem, historical novel, poetic novel, and descriptive poem, Mickiewicz created a national epic that is unique in world literature. Using means ranging from lyricism to pathos, irony and realism, the author re-created the world of the Lithuanian gentry on the eve of the arrival of Napoleonic armies. The colorful Sarmatians depicted in the epic, often in conflict and conspiring against each other, are united by patriotic bonds reborn in shared hope for Poland's future and for the rapid restitution of its independence after decades of occupation.

A verdict about this great masterpiece of Slavic poetry was written by Zygmunt Krasiński (1812—1859), one of Mickiewicz's great successors in Polish literature:

No European nation of our day has an epic like Pan Tadeusz. In it, Don Quixote has been fused with the Iliad. The poet stood on the threshold between a vanishing generation and our own. Before they died, he had seen them; but now they are no more. That is precisely the epic point of view. Mickiewicz has performed his task with a masterful touch; granting immortality to a dead generation, which now will never pass away. [...] Pan Tadeusz is a true epic. No more can be said nor needs to be said. (From a letter by Krasiński quoted by Kallenbach in Adam Mickiewicz, Kraków, 1897)

Krasiński's judgment remains the view of posterity. Georg Brandes (1842—1927), the influential Danish critic and scholar of European literature, formulated principles of a new realism and naturalism in which literature should be an organ "of the great thoughts of liberty and the progress of humanity". Brandes's literary goals were shared by authors such as the Norwegian realist playwright Henrik Ibsen (1828—1906), whose estimation of Mickiewicz's masterpiece echoes Krasiński's: "In *Pan Tadeusz*," Brandes wrote, "Poland possesses the only successful epic our century has produced."

The first translation of the poem was made in 1859 in Vilnius by the Belarusian writer-dramatist Vintsent Dunin-Martsinkevich (1808—1884). (Pressure from Russian authorities permitted him to publish only the first two chapters.) Maude Ashurst Biggs (1856—1933) published the first English translation, *Master Thaddeus*, in 1885 in London.

Pan Tadeusz is recognized as Poland's national epic and has been compulsory reading in Polish schools for generations. Numerous productions have brought

Pan Tadeusz to the big and small screen. Ryszard Ordyński's 1928 film was the largest Polish cinema production of the interwar period (and has been recently rereleased); Adam Hanuszkiewicz created a television mini-series (1970—1971); Andrzej Wajda's screen version from the year 2000 generated significant attention and recognition around the world.

The Manuscript exhibition

Pride and joy of Ossoliński collection

Pan Tadeusz was mainly written in Paris, where Mickiewicz happened to be since spring 1832. He stayed at Carrefour l'Observatoire hosted by his friend, the November Uprising insurgent Ignacy Domeyko (1802—1889). There, at Domeyko's house, the poet started to work on his epic poem. As he wrote in the letter to Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz at the end of May 1833;

I am in the process of writing some great village poems in which I attempt to keep a memory of our old customs and somehow picture our life in the countryside: hunting, merriments, battles, forays etc. The scene takes place in Lithuania around 1812 when old tales were still heard and traces of village life were still vivid. I have managed to complete half of it already, but, ample though that is, there is still much to be done.

In spring 1833 Mickiewicz re-wrote Books I—III and the beginning of Book IV in a notebook with marble-patterned cover. The length of the poem might already have exceeded the poet's expectations. In October 1833 Mickiewicz moved to the house at Rue Saint Nicolaus d'Antin 73, where he continued to work frantically on his masterpiece. As he wrote in a letter of 14 February 1834 to Antoni Edward Odyniec, he had just finished twelve ample poems. The title kept changing as he worked: from *Szlachcic* [Nobleman] to *Żegota* and then to *Szlachcic Żegota* [Nobleman Żegota] to, finally, *Pan Tadeusz*. The full title of the final version, *Pan Tadeusz czyli ostatni zajazd na Litwie. Historia szlachecka z 1811 i 1812 we dwunastu księgach wierszem, przez Adama Mickiewicza* [Pan Tadeusz, or the Last Foray in Lithuania: A History of the Nobility in the Years 1811 and 1812 in Twelve Books of Verse by Adam Mickiewicz] appeared as late as the end of June 1834, when two pocket-size volumes were issued with the first print of the poem.

According to the agreement from 1833 with the publisher Aleksander Jełowicki (1804—1877), the first print run of *Pan Tadeusz* numbered 3000 issues, and a single volume cost 12 francs. Before books became available in the bookstores of Paris, a decent part of the stock had been smuggled to Poland. Museum

story authors' attempt to deconstruct the epic poem aims to involve visitors in a dialogue. Interpretations conducted on multiple levels reflect itself in the titles and content values of particular rooms. The character of museum story was also determined by Under the Golden Sun tenement Baroque architecture which influenced the division of the display into ten parts over two floors.

3. The Epoch

A large screen in the main part of the room shows the history of the Polish Republic, its collapse and blighting its hopes for soon regain of freedom. The displayed images illustrate the most important events from the Confederacy of Bar, through partitions, attempts to save the statehood, Napoleonic Wars, the November Uprising, and the Great Emigration. All these incidents crowd in the mind of the poet, whose portrait is placed in the middle of the history panorama. Mickiewicz created the world of *Pan Tadeusz* being both witness and messenger of historical tradition.

The manuscript itself was supposed to be protected with custom-made chest ordered by Professor Stanisław Tarnowski (1837—1917), and hand-carved in ivory-encrusted ebony by an excellent woodcarver from Kraków, Jan Brzostowski, in 1873. The chest can be found in the cabinet on the right.

The text of the poem includes such great Polish individuals as Tadeusz Kosciuszko (1746—1817), Tadeusz Rejtan (1742—1780), and general Henryk Dabrowski (1755—1818). The linchpin of the represented world is the Napoleonic Legend. Napoleon Bonaparte (1769—1821), the great absent one, circles over the heads of “our white eagles” and brings with him hope of independence. Events as interpreted by the poet do not comprise a lecture on Polish history at the turn of 18th and 19th centuries, but themselves become part of Polish historical tradition, something that has shaped Polish thoughts about the past and future of Poland for over ten decades. Cabinet collections of portraits of great Poles, the Constitution of May 3, miniatures with Napoleon's family, and examples of uniforms and weapons illustrate the events depicted in *Pan Tadeusz*.

The bottom right corner of the “Panorama of History” shows an image of count Józef Maksymilian Ossolinski (1748—1826), founder of the Institute (1817), a man to whom Poles owe one of their most important library and museum collections. His approach to the importance of writing as a vehicle of tradition enabled the rescue of all what could have been rescued during the occupation: Polish thought and art.

The Salon – Romantic Concerts

The Baroque-style interior of the most representative room in the Under the Golden Sun tenement house became a salon based on the political and artistic model of a European salon from the turn of 18th and 19th centuries. Romantic salons used to have their own unique culturally active character. Frequent visitors included political elites, great writers, composers, painters, sculptors, and journalists. Salons were places where poetry was read and piano and violin chamber-music concerts took place. They promoted and consolidated artists' range. It was not unusual for an author, composer or painter to find their patron there. On numerous occasions, the modest salons of Vilnius and Kaunas and the great ones of St Petersburg, Moscow, Weimar, Rome, and Paris hosted Adam Mickiewicz, who was often asked to improvise – and he was a master of that art. Everyone listening to his words was entranced in a state of almost hypnotic ecstasy.

The main idea of the narration conducted for the Salon is the presentation of art from the Romantic period: painting, sculpture, music; showing the Romantic synesthesia of arts which is so vivid in the poem. *Pan Tadeusz* is a great Romantic landscape, after all. Mickiewicz used words to paint images of nature, endless forests, dangerous atmospheric phenomena, amazing objects appearing in the sky; facing the power of which human remains fearful and vulnerable. All of the above was pictured in Romantic proportions: the vast immensity of nature and human's senses. Nature lingers in tremendous beauty. People are almost invisible in the dangerous and beautiful infinite wilderness. Our salon introduces a collection of Romantic painting: historical, religious, portrait, and landscape, as well as sculpture. Multimedia posts play flagship music pieces from the epoch that are reflected in the poem, granting us an insight into Adam Mickiewicz's musical preferences.

Mickiewicz – the life

Getting to know how the author's life intertwined with his art enables a deeper understanding of the poem. Authors of the display decided that introducing the most important moments from Adam Mickiewicz's life which shaped him as a poet and led to writing *Pan Tadeusz* was essential. The background set of those images reveals a man of great diligence aiming towards literary perfection.

Adam Bernard Mickiewicz, born 24 December 1798, in Zaosie; son of Mikołaj Mickiewicz, attorney, and Barbara of Majewski; died November 26, 1855 in Constantinople (Istanbul). The era that he happened to live in was rich in events crucial for Europe. As a teenager, Mickiewicz witnessed Napoleonic troops mar-

ching on Russia and the retreat of La Grande Armée from Moscow and experienced the political effects of the Congress of Vienna. Accused of conspiracy in the Philomath court case (1817), he was found guilty and sentenced to exile in Russia. He left Vilnius on 24 October 1824, never to return to Lithuania. He lived in exile until May 1829, when he managed to leave Russia for western Europe. As a mature man, Mickiewicz witnessed the collapse of the November Uprising (1830—1831), shared the fate of emigrant insurgents in France, and experienced the Springtime of Nations revolutions of 1848. The Crimean War (1853—1856) was where he placed his last hopes for the disintegration of the Russian empire. His life between political events which kept shaking up Europe was full of great literary accomplishments, travel, art and music fascinations, mystical religious experiences, romances, and friendships, journalistic and political work, lectures in Lausanne and at the Collège de France, and scholarly research. He conducted ample correspondence till the very end of his days. He tried to take care of his relatives as much as he could, even if his family life was very complicated.

Images of Mickiewicz's creative life have been shown in several synthetic frames: love, religion, home, politics, creative passion, friends. The mobile set is displayed on the vertical screens with the use of synchronized animation. Memorabilia in the cabinets, as well as portraits of the poet's family and friends, enrich the short biography on material level. Expanded multimedia information allows one to track Mickiewicz's travels and get to know his closest friends.

Library and the Manuscript rooms

The Library is a world of creativity, imagination, and tradition, a message containing all the major cultural, literary, and academic works, a pantheon of great ancestors whose work is a constant source of inspiration for all authors. *Pan Tadeusz* is a great dialogue with the European literary tradition. Citing, quoting, and processing threads and scenes from works by Homer and Virgil, Ariosto, Goethe, and Walter Scott, is how Mickiewicz conducts the dialogue with readers regarding not only the sources of Romantic tradition, but also the very foundations of European culture. The Library introduces visitors to the most vibrant text of culture, works that shaped the knowledge and creative workshop of Mickiewicz as a poet. Visitors have the opportunity to peruse reprints of these works which were bound and covered with the greatest care in order to look like originals. Visitors can also play with multimedia presentations by putting the marked covers on the table in specific order: engravings, drawings, books of maps, astrolabes, miniatures, and paintings.

The ascetic interior of The Manuscript room allows one to focus on the main piece of the exhibition. Behind a glass wall lies one of the most valuable manuscripts of Polish literature: that of *Pan Tadeusz* by Adam Mickiewicz. Consisting of a marble-patterned notebook which includes the fair copy of Books I—III and the beginning of Book IV, and 91 loose pages bearing the rough and fair copy of Books IV—XII, collected in one volume item is known as “the Dzików manuscript”, because in years 1929—1939. The framework has been paired with the rough copy of the Epilogue. A marble-patterned notebook containing the fair copy of Books I—III and the beginning of Book IV was removed from the red goatskin cover made in 1940 by Aleksander Semkowicz, leaving the unbound pages in the cover. This modest fascicle filled with fine letters for better use of space is the very heart of the museum.

(The manuscript includes: a paperback fascicle containing 48 pages and fragments of fair copy of Books I—III and a part of Book IV; an album containing 91 pages of the fair copy of Book IV—XII and the rough copy of Books X, XI, and XII with Epilogue. 31.5 cm x 27 cm (album); 21 cm x 15.5 cm (notebook) Manuscripts Department, 6932/II.)

The Nobility and the House

What makes the epic exceptional is its representation of Old-Polish culture which was so different from other European countries'. The Polish nobility is the collective protagonist of the epic. Regarding the time in which *Pan Tadeusz* was written (1832—1834), that world was already a thing of the past; but Mickiewicz, as a witness of that culture, conveyed in the text the world he remembered – a world discovered by means of anecdotes he had heard and of Old Polish literature. The Old Polish traditions were shown in an outstandingly poetic manner not only out of respect for those customs, but also, above all, as an expression of objection to foreign social systems, administrative orders of occupants, as a specific cultural rebellion. That tradition, which in the 1750s one could refer to as a sign of obscurantism and a lack of openness to new values and necessary changes, changes its context. Considering the loss of national independence, Mickiewicz shaped an important identity-forming message. The poet used the most characteristic elements of aristocratic life at the turn of the century to reproduce the world of the First Polish Republic.

One feature of Old Polish culture was the clear division between the worlds of men and women, reflected even at a domestic level: part of every home was dedicated to men and another to women. The two worlds could meet in certain representative rooms: around the dining table and (married couples only!) in the

bedchamber. Men used to spend their time watching over the household, hunting, gathering in the Sejmik (local parliament), conducting business, fighting, and traveling. Men's responsibilities also included managing the assets and taking care of the women: sisters, wives, daughters, and unmarried distant relatives.

In The House room, items that introduce women's world are gathered: appliances used in household which was ruled by women. The main item on display, the table, also constitutes an important element of the epic's construction. It was a place where guests and house members of Soplicowo gathered for their meals, marriages were performed, hunts and forays were organized. Nobility gathered around the inn table to conspire. The table, which brought people together and was related to customs of dining, served a unique role in Old Polish culture. Around the 1750s rich households of the nobility prided themselves on their expensive porcelain and silver, sometimes even on their gold or gold-decorated tableware, valuable flatware, and artisanal glassware. Special focus and attention was paid to covering the tables with white, embroidered tablecloths. The meal, prepared in accordance with the time of the day, season, or special circumstances, consisted of numerous, and often elaborate, dishes of meat or fish, followed by so called "wet" (*i.e.* dessert). Drinks included wine, beer, and sometimes home-made root mead. The custom of drinking coffee, brewed in a rather unique way, had become increasingly popular since the end of the 17th century. Feasting used to be an exceptionally important element of Old Polish culture. Side cabinets display items of women's clothing, scarves, fans, and paraphernalia from the women's desk and dressing table, as well as books.

Educational programme

- different levels of education
- divided into the nineteenth and twentieth century
- adapted to the school curriculum
- lessons and adapted workshops during one meeting (45 minutes each)
- groups of up to 30 students, but divided to max 15
- led by trained educators
- in two different rooms: a museum room and a workshop room
- in Polish, English, German, and Ukrainian
- also suitable for students with disabilities (adapted)
- additional help; educational films:
<https://www.youtube.com/c/MuzeumPanaTadeuszaOssolineum>
- the title is often a quote from Pan Tadeusz

For preschools:

- a lesson about freedom and independence
- a lesson about the musical sounds of the romantic salon
- a lesson about plants and herbs in the garden, as described in the poem
- artistic workshop: ceramics, marble covers, typography, photography

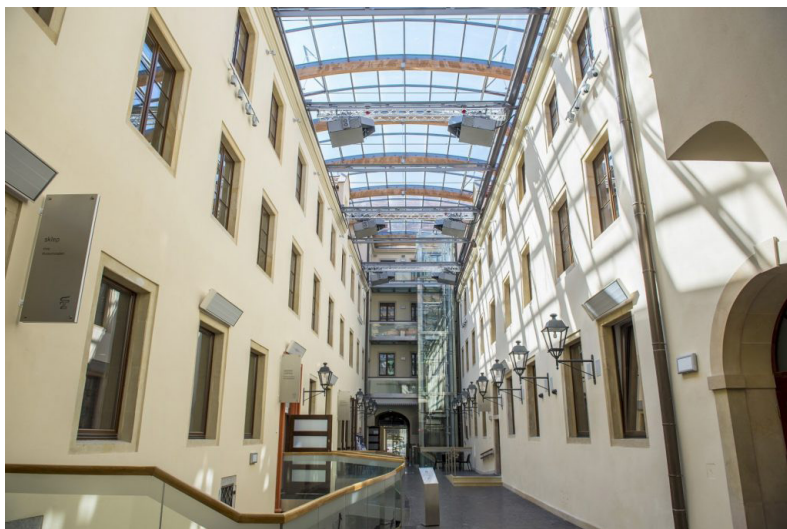
Primary and secondary schools:

- *Pan Tadeusz* and the Romantic period: six different levels, up to the final year of high school and leaving exam
- subjects change every year, with only one or two staying the same; this year we have the anniversary of the January Uprising of 1863 and a special lesson on patriotic women called “A Black Dress”

Temporary exhibitions

- interventions in the permanent exhibition
- connecting Romanticism with contemporary art
- curated by a historian and contemporary art specialist
- narrative, not only objects

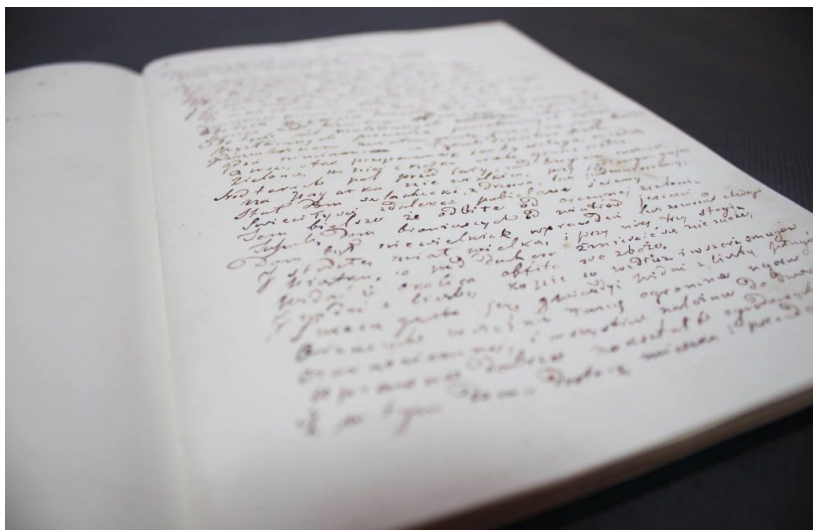
The “Printers and Romances” exhibition accompanied the Year of Polish Romanticism, *i.e.* the bicentenary of the publication by Józef Zawadzki’s printing house in Vilnius of Adam Mickiewicz’s volume with the famous Ballads and Romances. Zawadzki’s company released works in the spirit of the Enlightenment, with ambitions to explore and describe the world. In 1822, he also published a literary bomb – Mickiewicz’s debut. The historical artifacts presented in the exhibition are juxtaposed with works by contemporary artist Piotr Bosacki (b. 1977). The dilemma between feeling and believing and the eye and the glass featured in the Romantic ballad proves to be surprisingly current.



↑ Pan Tadeusz Museum is the latest and the most modern part of the Ossolineum

↓ The manuscript was protected with a custom-made chest hand-carved in ivory encrusted ebony by Jan Brzostowski in 1873.





↑ The manuscript of „Pan Tadeusz” is the most precious object in Ossolineum's collection

↓ The Baroque style interior of the most representative room in the Under the Golden Sun tenement.



NOVEMBER 15. szerda / Wednesday

10.00–10.10 Köszöntő
/ Welcoming remarks

SZEREPEK / ROLES

10.10–10.50 ONLINE plenáris előadás
// Plenary lecture
Joep Leerssen (University of Amsterdam)

A költő és a nemzet – Romantikus szerepminták
/ *The poet and the nation: Romantic role models*

10.50–11.10 **Cosmin Borza**
(Romanian Academy, Cluj-Napoca)

A „nemzeti költő” a posztkanonikus korban
– *Egy kelet-közép-európai esettanulmány*
/ *The “National Poet” in the Post-canonical Age:
An East-Central European Case Study*

11.10–11.30 **Levente Szabó T.**
(Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca)

*A magyar nemzeti irodalmi hős mint fogyasztási
cikk – A nacionalista irodalmi konsumerizmus és
az európai protekcionista mozgalmak az 1840-
es és 1860-as évek között*
/ *Consuming the Hungarian National Literary
Hero: Nationalist Literary Consumerism and the
European Protectionist Movements in the
1840s-1860s*

11.30–11.40 Hozzászólások / Q&A
11.40–12.00 Kávészünet / Coffee break

HEROIZMUS / HEROISM

12.00–12.40
Plenáris előadás // Plenary lecture
Wolfgang Müller-Funk
(University of Vienna)

*Romantikus (anti)heroizmus ironia és túlzás
között / Romantische (Anti-)Heroik zwischen
Ironie und Überhöhung*

12.40–13.00 **Brigitta Pesti**
(University Vienna)

*A nemzeti hős, a nemzet mint hős – Az irodalmi
és kulturális hősképzés hagyománya Magyar-*

országon a kora újkorban
/ *Der Nationalheld, die Nation als Held.
Die Tradition der literarischen und kulturellen
Heldenbildung in Ungarn in der frühen Neuzeit*

13.00–13.20 **Andrea Seidler**
(University of Vienna)

*Tudományos mobilitás – Magyar tudósok
tanulmányútjai a Habsburg Birodalmon belül
és kívül a 18. században*
/ *Gelehrtenmobilität. Bildungsreisen ungarischer
Gelehrter innerhalb und außerhalb des
Habsburger Reiches im 18. Jahrhundert*

13.20–13.30 Hozzászólások / Q&A

13.30–14.30 Ebédészünet / Lunch break

KULTUSZOK / CULTS

14.30–15.10

Plenáris előadás // Plenary lecture
Marijan Dović (ZRC SAZU, Ljubljana)

A „szlovén Petőfi” megteremtése
– *France Prešeren kanonizációja*
/ *Creating a “Slovenian Petőfi”:
The Canonization of France Prešeren*

15.10–15.30 **Csilla E. Csorba**
(Petőfi Literary Museum, Budapest)

*A költőemlékművektől a költőházakig –
A Petőfi-kultusz térfoglalása 1860 és 1960 között*
/ *Von Dichterdenkmäler zu Dichterhäuser.
Raumansprüche des Petőfi-Kultes in der
Zeitabschnitt von 1860 bis 1960*

15.30–15.50 **Zsuzsa Kalla**
(Petőfi Literary Museum, Budapest)

Homályos kontúrok – Petőfi szerepei
/ *Instabile Konturen. Petőfis Rollen*

15.50–16.00 Hozzászólások / Q&A

17.30–18.30 Csörsz Rumen István
zenés előadása és zártkörű vacsora
/ Rumen István Csörsz's musical
performance and dinner by
invitation only

NOVEMBER 16. csütörtök / Thursday

REZO- NANCIÁK / RESONANCES

10.00-10.40 Plenáris előadás

// Plenary lecture

Krisztina Lajosi

(University of Amsterdam)

*Romantikus rezonanciák és a nacionalizmus
/ Romantic Resonances and Nationalism*

10.40-11.00 **Nóra Veszprémi**

(Masaryk University, Brno)

*Művész-hősök az osztrák-magyar nemzeti
múzeumokban
/ Artist-Heroes in the National Museums
of Austria-Hungary*

11.00-11.20 **Zsuzsa Varga**

(University of Glasgow)

*Irodalmi hírnév, szerzőség és intézményesülés
– Az irodalmi hírességek kultusza a 19. századi
Skóciában és Magyarországon
/ Literary fame, authorship and
institutionalisation: The cult of literary celebrity
in 19th century Scotland and Hungary*

11.20-11.40 **Sándor Hites**

(HUN-REN BTK ITI, Budapest)

*A világirodalom mint hőskultusz – Goethe és
Thomas Carlyle
/ World-literature as Hero-worship:
Goethe meets Thomas Carlyle*

11.40-11.50 Hozzászólások / Q&A

11.50-13.30 Ebédszünet / Lunch break

VÁNDORLÁS / WANDERING

13.30-14.10 Plenáris előadás

// Plenary lecture

Nicola J. Watson

(The Open University, UK)

*Zarándoklat a romantikus Európában kilenc
tárgy körül
/ A pilgrimage around Romantic Europe in nine
objects*

14.10-14.30 **Veronika Ruttkay**

(Károli Gáspár University, Budapest)

*A hős hasonlóságok tükrében – A skót Petőfi
és a magyar Burns
/ The Hero in Comparison:
The Scottish Petőfi and the Hungarian Burns*

14.30-14.50 **Emese Asztalos**

(Petőfi Literary Museum, Budapest)

*A főszórványban – Petőfi és európai kortársai
/ In the mainstream: Petőfi and his European
Contemporaries*

14.50-15.10 **Dobromiła Jankowska**

(Pan Tadeusz Museum / Ossolinski
National Institute, Wrocław)

*A wrocławai Pan Tadeusz Múzeum – Romantikus
tartalom egy 21. századi intézményben
/ Pan Tadeusz Museum in Wrocław:
Romantic content in a 21st century institution*

15.10-15.20 Hozzászólások / Q&A

15.20-15.30 Zárás / Closing

15.30-16.00 Kávészünet / Coffee break

16.00-17.30 Kiállításvezetés a

Költő lenni vagy nem lenni:

*Kiállítás Petőfi Sándor születésének
200. évfordulójára című tárlaton*

*/ A visit to the bicentenary Petőfi-
exhibition To Be or Not to Be a Poet*

18.00 Zártkörű vacsora

/ Dinner by invitation only

