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THE SOCIAL SPACES OF FEMALE INTELLECTUAL
CAREERS IN THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY
PEST-BUDA

Master's Thesis

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Hereby I declare that I worked out this thesis independently, using only the listed resources and literature, and I did not present it to obtain another academic degree.

Prague, 3 June, 2016.

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ABSTRACT

The Social Spaces of Female Intellectual Careers in the Mid-Nineteenth Century Pest-Buda

I examine three Hungarian female intellectual careers of the 19th century in the context of the urban and also the rural lifestyle. I focus on the role of Pest-Buda in the professions of female writers, editors and actresses. Therefore, the subjects of the three case studies are the representatives of these professions: Júlia Szendrey (1828 – 1868) as poet, writer and translator, Emília Kánya (1828 – 1905) as the first female editor of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Kornélia Prielle (1826 – 1906) as successful actress who experienced significant alterations in the assessment of her profession. My main research questions are the following: What was the role of the countryside and Pest-Buda in the female intellectual careers in the 19th century? How did the intellectual women use the urban space in Pest-Buda? What was the role of the first female intellectual professions (writer, editor, and actress) in the urban society? The main sources of the research are the so-called ego-documents (autobiographies, memoirs, diaries, correspondences) as well as press products which were mediums of the contemporary debates about the female roles and professions. My primary goal is to reconsider the questions about the female use of space in the context of their professions. The case studies highlighted that not the female and male spaces were necessarily separated, but the meanings of the same spaces were different for women and men. Whereas Pest-Buda was the outstanding node for the female writers and editors, several strategies of the actresses were connected to the smaller towns of the countryside. The assessment of the female intellectual professions was mainly dependent on their relation to the traditional female roles, on their social utility as well as on the personal social networks.

Keywords:

intellectual career, woman, female writer, female editor, actress, urban space, city, countryside, perception (of the space), Budapest

Sociální prostory ženských intelektuálních kariér v Budíně a Pešti v polovině 19. století

Diplomová práce se zabývá třemi ženskými intelektuálními kariérami v Uhrách 19. století ve vztahu k městskému a venkovskému životnímu stylu. Zaměřuje se na úlohu Budína a Pešti v kariéře spisovatelek, redaktorek a hereček. Tyto profese zastupují postavy tří případových studií: Júlia Szendrey (1828–1868), básnířka, spisovatelka a překladatelka; Emília Kánya (1828–1905), první ženská redaktorka v Rakousku-Uhersku; Kornélia Prielle (1826–1906), úspěšná herečka, která byla svědkyní významné proměny v hodnocení své profese. Práce si klade tyto výzkumné otázky: Jakou roli hrál venkov a dvojměstí Budín-Pešť v intelektuálních profesních drahách žen v 19. století? Jak intelektuálky užívaly budapešťský městský prostor? Jakou roli zaujímaly první ženské intelektuální profese (spisovatelka, redaktorka, herečka) v městské společnosti? Studie se opírá zejména o ego-dokumenty (autobiografie, paměti, deníky, korespondence) a dobové tiskoviny, které sloužily jako média pro dobové diskuse o ženských rolích a profesích. Hlavním cílem bylo přehodnotit otázku užívání prostoru ženami ve vztahu k jejich profesi. Případové studie mj. ukazují, že ženské a mužské prostory nebyly nutně oddělené, nýbrž že totožné prostory měly pro muže a ženy jiný význam. Zatímco Budín a Pešť byly důležitým bodem pro ženské spisovatelky a redaktorky, strategie hereček se vázaly k menším městům na venkově. Hodnocení ženských intelektuálních profesí ze strany společnosti se odvíjelo od jejich vztahu k tradičním ženským rolím, společenské užitečnosti a osobních společenských vazeb.

Klíčová slova: intelektuální kariéra, žena, spisovatelka, editorka, herečka, městský prostor, město, venkov, vnímání (prostoru), Budapešť

Introduction

The cultural practises are dependent on spatial conditions. Although nowadays the centralisation of the Hungarian cultural life in the capital city, Budapest seems evident, at the beginning of the 19th century and previously it was organised from the countryside by wide range of correspondences. However, from the 1840s the members of the Hungarian intelligentsia moved to the city, because it became the main requirement of the participation in the cultural life. Whereas earlier the letters replaced the personal connections, from the middle of the century the social events and the power of the urban media determined the dominance of the city and the transformations of the cultural patterns.

Where could the intellectual women find their way among these conditions? The female presence in the social life of the city became more and more significant from the 1830s. Some approaches considered the women as the main characters of the contemporary social life.¹ They had important role in the institutionalization of the ball season, the theatre and concert life, the bath life, the excursion-, picnic- and garden culture of the city.² The main Hungarian political characters of the period also emphasized the significance of the female participation in the social life, mostly because they regarded it as part of the nation building.

Although the abovementioned public activities were welcomed, the female endeavours towards the paid intellectual professions caused astonishment. The preferred period of the researches on female professionalism is after the 1880s when the tertiary education became opened for women and more profession became available for them. However, the examination of the earlier decades could show the first female intellectual activities which was regarded by the society as professions and provoked very different reactions. I analyze the careers and life practises of a woman writer, Júlia Szendrey (1828 – 1868), the first female editor of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Emília Kánya (1828 – 1905) and a successful, independent actress, Kornélia Prielle (1826 – 1906). I focus on their impressions about their environment, their image about the countryside and about the city as well as the role of Pest-Buda in their life.

All of the ladies were born at the end of the 1820s. They married with their first husbands in the September of 1847 which had serious consequences on their residency. Júlia Szendrey

¹ László Ferenc, *A nők mint a reformkori társas élet főszereplői*, in Fábri Anna–Várkonyi Gábor (eds.), *A nők világa. Művelődés- és társadalomtörténeti tanulmányok*, Budapest 2007, 161 – 170.

² László Ferenc, *A nők* cit., 163.

lived in Szatmár County at the Eastern parts of the country. As she became the wife of the most celebrated and appreciated Hungarian poet, Sándor Petőfi, she moved to Pest-Buda, to the city which provided the background to the successful career of her husband.³ Their love marriage was admired in the city as the relatively rich girl did not obey to her father and married with the poor poet without dowry. I examine the significance of the life style change which was the consequence of this marriage in her life in the context of her experiences at the countryside and her imagination about the city. I also analyze the bourgeois flat of the young couple in Pest-Buda and their mentality towards the urban media. Júlia Szendrey started her independent writer and poet career in 1857 and participated in the debates about female writers.

Emília Kánya was born in Pest-Buda, but after her marriage she had to move to the southern part of the country as young wife. Later she moved back to her beloved hometown. After she divorced, she started to edit a journal and she became the first female editor in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. I explore the city representations and the expression of her urban identity in her autobiography. In addition, I compare the perception of the city in her text and in another significant autobiography of the period which was written by Frigyes Podmaniczky, the famous municipal politician and writer. Their reflections on the transformation of the city highlight the differences between each Budapest-narrative from gender point of view.

Kornélia Prielle started her actress career as a teenage girl in Szatmár County. As she continuously was the member of different barnstormer companies, she travelled a lot especially at the Eastern parts of Hungary, in the so-called Partium region and in Transylvania. As she became popular as the actress of the countryside, she had a very complicated way until her membership in the National Theatre. I examine especially the modifications in her public image and her mobility between the countryside and the city.

The goal of the three case studies is to clarify the role of Pest-Buda in the different cultural activities and intellectual professions of women in the 19th century. Although all of them experienced the rural and the urban life in different life periods, the mobility between these had crucial role in their careers. Budapest as metropolis emerged in 1873 when Buda, Óbuda and Pest, the three previously separate towns were unified. Although the often mentioned, grandiose development of the city started in the following years, the data about the former

³ Margócsy István, *The Liberal Petőfi*, in Gerő András (ed.) *Hungarian Liberals*, Budapest 1999, 158 – 171.

growth in the number of inhabitants show the earlier significance of Pest-Buda as attractive cultural and economical centre. Whereas 107000 people lived in the city in 1841, the number continuously increased in the next decades: in 1851 178000, in 1857 187000 and in 1869 280000 citizens were counted.⁴ What all of these means that in the life of Júlia Szendrey who studied between 1840 and 1844 in Pest-Buda, became permanent city dweller from 1847, and died in 1868, the number of the inhabitants multiplied with more than two and half times. In the other two cases this rate was bigger as Emília Kánya and also Prielle Kornélia lived until the beginning of the 20th century. Although the urban historians regularly prefer the period after the unification of Budapest, I focus especially on the previous decades in my thesis. The resources of the research are mainly ego-documents (correspondences, diaries and memoirs) which are accessible in distinct manuscript archives in Budapest as well as press products which were the mediums of the contemporary debates about the female roles and professions.

Methodological Considerations

This chapter discusses the methodological background of my writing. During my researches I have met with many inspiring ideas with several science fields such as urban history, gender history and microhistory. Although these were considerably thought-provoking for me, I do not categorize my work into these categories as my research questions were basically social historical. I followed three main questions: What was the role of the countryside and Pest-Buda in the female intellectual careers in the 19th century? How did the intellectual women use the urban space in Pest-Buda? What was the role of the first female intellectual professions (writer, editor, and actress) in the urban society?

Nowadays more and more articles try to rethink the classical opposition of the private and public sphere on the field of literary-, art- and social history.⁵ These reconsiderations have strong gender dimension. According to the traditional perspective of historians, the nineteenth century women were confined to the protected private spaces, whereas the public space was seen as the empire of men. The ordinary life, however, was not equal with the concept of separated spheres; in fact, there were everyday practices which connected men to the private

⁴ Vörös Károly, *Főváros születik*, in Vörös Károly (ed.), *Hétköznapok a polgári Magyarországon*, Budapest 1997, 143 – 170.

⁵ Nesci, Catherine, *Le flâneur et les flâneuses. Les femmes et la ville à l'époque romantique*, Grenoble 2007. Wolff, Janet, *The Invisible Flâneuse: Women and the Literature of Modernity*, in "Theory, Culture & Society", 1985, 2, 37 – 46.

sphere as well as women to the public spaces. Therefore, in the last two decades several critics were conceived about the overused concept of separated spheres. The weaknesses of the theory are the following: it oversimplifies the examination of the metropolitan environment because of the strict and artificial terms such as the sharp distinction of the public and private as male and female spheres.⁶ According to Alex Hughes the categories of the model are „cultural constructions rather than accurate descriptions of socio-spatial reality.”⁷

The urban historians and gender history scholars started to be interested in the intersections instead of the classical binaries (public/private, outside/inside, male/female, and work/home). Recently they emphasize the significance of multiple identities as well as the blurring of spatial boundaries.⁸ The research directions of the urban historians became more multifaceted and diversified due to the change of scale. Besides the city biographies and the impact of the urbanization on the economical-social transformations of the cities, they started to investigate the urban experiences and personal emotions of the city dwellers.⁹ The main goal of the cultural historical, anthropological and microhistorical approaches in the urban history is to understand how was the urban environment perceived by the citizens, how were their acts and choices influenced by the contemporary norms and alternative strategies.¹⁰ The relationship between the individual and the each community became important as well as the examination of the ego-documents which provide distinct narrations about the city.¹¹ Therefore, the gender approach of the urban history means the investigation of the female and male experiences, perceptions and narrations about the city.

The main point of the contradiction in connection with gendered spaces was summarized by Jessica Ellen Sewell who distinguished the imagined, experienced and built landscapes.¹² She argued that the gendered landscapes are often imagined landscapes. For instance, at the turn of the nineteenth century the department stores were imagined as entirely female-gendered spaces; however, on the historical photographs of these spaces, several male workers are

⁶ Hughes, Alex, *The City and the Female Autograph*, in Michael Sheringham (ed.), *Parisian Fields*, London 1996, 115.

⁷ Hughes, Alex, *The City* cit., 115.

⁸ Jarvis, Helen – Kantor, Paula – Cloke, Jonathan, *Cities and Gender*. London, New York, 2009, 10.

⁹ Bácskai Vera, *Várostartörténet*, in Bódy Zsombor – Ö. Kovács József (eds.), *Bevezetés a társadalomtörténetbe. Hagyományok, irányzatok, módszerek*, Budapest 2006, 245 – 259.

¹⁰ Bácskai Vera, *Várostartörténet* cit., 256.

¹¹ Bácskai Vera, *Várostartörténet* cit., 256.

¹² Sewell, Jessica Ellen, *Women and the everyday city: public space in San Francisco, 1890 – 1915*, Minneapolis 2011.

visible.¹³ The experienced landscape is the built landscape as the walkers experienced it during the daily use. The presence or absence of women or men can instantly re-signify the gendered meaning of a space.¹⁴ The built landscape is the built environment and its spatial elements, which included pavement, buildings and store windows.¹⁵ Through the interaction of the three types of landscapes not only the dominant, but also the subverted or resisted practices are comprehensible. This useful model shows that the experienced landscapes could be totally different than the imagined landscapes.

The recognition of the countless dimensions of the public space is important especially in the case of the middle-class woman. The female presence was common and significant for instance in museums, parks, theatres, salons, shops and streets. Therefore, the new reconsiderations argue for a more liberal, non-masculinist definition of the public space on the field of literary-, art- and social history. For instance, in 2014 a new book was published with the following title: *Women, Femininity and Public Space in European Visual Culture, 1789 – 1914*.¹⁶ Its main intention was to discuss the abovementioned problem by the examination of contemporary spatial practices of women based on visual sources, instead of focusing exclusively on theories which automatically exclude the opportunity of the female presence at such places.

Similar interest reveals in the flourishing investigation of the so-called *flaneuse* who is a female stroller figure in the urban space.¹⁷ The phenomenon of the so-called *flanerie*, the aimless but deep walk in the city and the figures of the strollers or *flaneurs* became important especially in the works of Edgar Allen Poe, Charles Baudelaire and in the *Arcades Project* of Walter Benjamin.¹⁸ The *flaneur*, the spectator stroller in the metropolis in the 19th century was conceived invariably as an adult male. As the main activities of the *flaneur* are strolling and

¹³ Sewell, Jessica Ellen, *Women and the everyday city* cit., 11.

¹⁴ Sewell, Jessica Ellen, *Women and the everyday city* cit., 12.

¹⁵ Sewell, Jessica Ellen, *Women and the everyday city: public space in San Francisco, 1890 – 1915*, Minneapolis 2011, 5 – 6.

¹⁶ Balducci, Temma – Jensen, Heather Belnap (ed.), *Women, Femininity and Public Space in European Visual Culture, 1789 – 1914*, Farnham 2014.

¹⁷ Deborah, Parsons, *Streetwalking the Metropolis: Women, the city and modernity*, Oxford 2000. Dreyer, Elfriede – McDowall, Estelle *Imagining the flaneur as a woman*, in „Communicatio: South African Journal for Communication Theory and Research“, 38/1, 30 – 44. Gleber, Anke, *Female flaneurie and the Symphony of the City*, in Katharina von Ankum (ed.): *Women in the metropolis: Gender and modernity in Weimar culture*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1999, 67 – 88. Nesci, Catherine, *Le flaneur et les flaneuses. Les femmes et la ville à l'époque romantique*, Grenoble 2007.

¹⁸ Baudelaire, Charles, *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, London 1995. Benjamin, Walter, Paris, *Capital of the Nineteenth Century*, in Walter Benjamin (ed.), *Reflections. Essays, aphorisms, autobiographical writings*, New York 1986, 147 – 162.

attentively looking in the cities, the idea of a female or child *flâneur* was hardly imaginable for a long time in the context of this period.¹⁹ However, recently more and more attempts are looking for the traces of the *female flâneurs* not only in 20th and 21th century environment,²⁰ but also in the 19th century.²¹

All of these considerations are connected to the interpretation of the notion of space. Foucault stressed that the space is not an empty framework, but a constructional place saturated with qualities. It can be regarded as an autonomic social entity.²² Whereas Heidegger argued that space is the consequence of demarcation between places,²³ Michel de Certeau pointed out that the space is “practised place” which is “transformed into a space by walkers.”²⁴ Therefore, the everyday life is in the centre of the research interests. The term refers to “those ordinary, taken for granted, habitual thoughts, activities and settings that are close and familiar to all of us, but which are rarely measured by governments or scholars or endowed any particular significance.”²⁵ Based on these theories two keywords become important for my approach: *everyday life practises* and the *perception of the city*.

As the people have key role in the construction of cityscapes and the cities also could have similarly determining role in the life of people, I put the emphasis on this interference. My assumption is that the personal knowledge about the environment have significant role in intellectual careers. The examination of the mentality towards the countryside and the city and the choices between them could give new aspects to the investigation of each female intellectual career.

The topic of the women workers as intellectual workers is not in detailed researched in the context of the 1840s – 1870s. The book of Deborah Simonton which investigated the history

¹⁹ Dennis, Richard, *Cities in modernity. Representations and Productions of Metropolitan Space, 1840 – 1930*. Cambridge – New York 2008, 144 – 178. Gleber, Anke, *Female flâneurie and the Symphony of the City*, in Katharina von Ankum (ed.): *Women in the metropolis: Gender and modernity in Weimar culture*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1999, 69.

²⁰ Van Nes, Akkelies – My Nguyen, Tra, *Gender differences in the Urban environment. The flâneur and the flâneuse of the 21st century*, in Daniel Koch, Lars Marcus and Jesper Steen (eds.), *Proceedings of the 7th International Space Syntax Symposium*. Stockholm 2009, 122.

²¹ Horváth Györgyi, *Köszalónők a régi Budapesten. Nagyvárosi térhasználat és női művészlét (Kafka Margit: Állomások)*, in Virág Varga – Zoltán Zsávolya (eds.), *Nő, tükör, írás. Értelmezések a 20. század első felének női irodalmából*, Budapest 2009, 162 – 190.

²² Foucault, Michel, *Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias*, in Neil Leach (ed.): *Rethinking Architecture: a reader in cultural theory*. New York 1997, 330 – 336.

²³ Heidegger, Martin, *Bauen Wohnen Denken*, in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*. Pfullingen, Günther Neske 1954, 157.

²⁴ De Certeau, Michel, *Walking in the City*, in Doring, Simon (ed.), *The Cultural Studies Reader*. London – New York 1999, 91 – 110.

²⁵ Jarvis, Helen – Kantor, Paula – Cloke, Jonathan, *Cities and Gender*. London, New York 2009, 13.

of the European women's work from 1700 to the present, analysed the role of woman workers in the household, in the rural industry, in the guild model, in selling and serving, in agriculture, in commerce, in public services, but she did not pay attention to the intellectual workers in 19th century context.²⁶ Although she mentioned the "white blouse" female workers in the 20th century block and she referred back to the last decades of the 19th century, she rather focused on the workers of offices and shops than on the women who implemented artistic or intellectual works. The investigation of the female work is flourishing especially regarding the Early Modern period. For instance, Natalie Zemon Davis wrote a book about three women who had "sure expertise" in the 17th century.²⁷ The story of the Jewish merchant, the Catholic mystic visionary and the Protestant painter and naturalist embodied the "women's version of an artisanal-commercial style."²⁸

In the 19th century new alternatives opened for the women who want to or who had to work. However, the majority of each female intellectual career is unexplored. As this kind of work started to become more widespread only after the 1880s, the detailed interpretations about the female intellectual workers of the earlier decades are still missing. In the thesis I concentrate only on intellectual works which could provide relatively independent livelihood for women and which were in the crossfire of the contemporary social debates about the female roles. However, my main focus is the influence of the city and the countryside on the chosen careers of Júlia Szendrey as writer, Emília Kánya as editor and Kornélia Prielle as actress. I consider the method of case studies as a tool which helps to avoid the oversimplifications and make a more clear and multifaceted image about the life of 19th century middle class, intellectual women who are surrounded by stereotypes until today.

²⁶ Simonton, Deborah, *A History of European Women's Work. 1700 to the present*. London, 1998.

²⁷ Davis, Natalie Zemon, *Women on the Margins, Three Seventeenth Century Lives*. London, 2003, 203.

²⁸ Davis, Natalie Zemon, *Women on the Margins* cit., 203.

The mental map of Júlia Szendrey in Szatmár County

The opposition of the urban and rural spaces in her correspondence

In this chapter I examine the mental map of Júlia Szendrey in order to understand the role of the countryside and the city in her career. My analysis based on especially her correspondence with her best friend, Mária Térey between 1845 and 1848. These letters offer great opportunity to investigate the relation system between village, town and city. At the same time I also use her diary notes during my examination. My main questions are the following: How did she imagine Pest-Buda and the big European cities? What kind of connections were between the experienced and the imagined spaces in her texts? How were her choices in the private and public life influenced by her mental map?

In the Hungarian historiography especially Gábor Gyáni and Árpád Tóth used the expression of mental map. Gyáni considered it related to the private and public spheres of Budapest which rapidly became a major European metropolis in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He explained the characteristics of the mental maps of the “natives” by the huge spatial expansion and social diversity.²⁹ Árpád Tóth used the expression related to the settlement network. In that sense the personal knowledge, experience and opinion of the individual about the settlement network around him/her is explored. According to Árpád Tóth a significant part of the bourgeoisie lived in a network which cambered over the cities and they did their strategic decisions in this framework.³⁰ As a result, we can suppose that the contemporary citizens had substantive image about the city network.

Kevin Lynch is one of the most quoted authors related to the perception of cities. Although he is not historian, but urban planner, his theory about the mental mapping is inevitable if one writes about cityscapes and city representations. Lynch directed a five-year study on how people perceive their cities with his teaching college, György Képes who was a Hungarian-born painter, designer and art theorist. Their common research was published in 1960 as Lynch's book: *The Image of the City*.³¹ Lynch used three disparate cities as examples (Boston, Jersey City and Los Angeles) and argued that users understood their surroundings in

²⁹ Gyáni Gábor, *Az utca és a szalon. Társadalmi térhasználat Budapesten 1870 – 1940*, Budapest 1998, 55.

³⁰ Tóth Árpád, *Tér és társadalom – ahogyan a pozsonyi polgárok láthatták (Városhálózat és társadalmi mobilitás alulnézetből)*, in H. Németh István, Szívós Erika, Tóth Árpád (eds.), *A város és társadalmi. Tanulmányok Bácskai Vera tiszteletére*, Budapest 2011, 166.

³¹ Lynch, Kevin, *The Image of the City*, Cambridge 1960.

consistent and predictable ways. He introduced two keywords: "imageability" and „legibility.”³² According to the definition of imageability, it means the quality in a physical object, which gives it a high probability of evoking a strong image in any given observer. The legibility (or clarity) is a visual quality which is crucial in city setting: “just as this printed page, if it is legible, can be visually grasped as a related pattern of recognizable symbols.”³³ Therefore, a legible city would be one whose elements (paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks) are easily identifiable and are easily grouped into an overall pattern. In the book the moving elements of the city (particularly the people) are concerned as important as the static physical parts. Although he focused only on the effects of physical, perceptible objects and he did not deal with the social meaning of an area, its function and its history.

In my approach one of his most important statements: “There is not one single, comprehensive image of the environment, there seemed to be sets of images which more or less overlapped and interrelated. They are typically arranged in a series of levels.”³⁴ These remarks pointed out two extremely important advantages of the theory. On one hand, it is able to emphasize that the image construction of any given city/town depends on several aspects such as gender, age, etc. On the other hand, it gives opportunity to play with the distinct scales. Although the notion of the mental map is concerned most of the times within the scale of the city, it could be useable at regional and national level as well. “When the environment is conceiving at a national or international level, then the whole city itself may become a node.”³⁵ – was emphasized by Lynch. Therefore, his text gives the opportunity to use the notion of mental map in diverse ways and at different scales.

Although Lynch is regarded as the inventor of the mental mapping and I got inspiration from his text, my approach is considerably far from his work, and closer to the research direction of the abovementioned Árpád Tóth. In my writing the *mental map* expression is not static, but dynamic and changeable notion. It means the individual knowledge and imaginations about the environment, not only the physical space. The mental map can influence the personal choices and life strategies. As the opinion about the broader or closer surroundings can be changing in the life of the same person, it can have determining role in the careers as well. In this chapter I examine the distinct types of nodes on the mental map of Júlia Szendrey.

³² Lynch, Kevin, *The Image of the City*, Cambridge 1960, 9 – 10.

³³ Lynch, Kevin, *The Image of the City* cit., 3.

³⁴ Lynch, Kevin, *The Image of the City* cit., 85.

³⁵ Lynch, Kevin, *The Image of the City* cit., 72.

She was born in 1828 in Keszthely which situated on the Western shore of Lake Balaton, in Zala County.³⁶ (Map.1.)³⁷ The father, Ignác Szendrey was the bailiff of the aristocrat Festetics family.³⁸ This family had Croatian origin, but they lived from the 17th century in Hungary and they became one of the most significant counts (later princes). The centre of their estates was Keszthely and its surroundings. Ignác Szendrey – who was a law-ranking nobleman³⁹ – and his family lived in the outskirts of Keszthely, called Újmajor which was belonging to the Festetics-estate.

In 1830 the Szendrey family moved to the Eastern part of Hungary, because the father became the bailiff of Károlyi Count who was the member of another old noble family. The centre of the Károlyi-estate was in Szatmár County, in Nagykároly. Nevertheless, Ignác Szendrey as employee moved to a nearby, small village, Erdőd. His family lived there in a castle which had beautiful green environment and a lake with a small island. (Today the mentioned territories, the former Eastern-Hungary belong to Romania. The contemporary name of *Nagykároly* and *Erdőd* are *Carei* and *Ardud*.)

Ignác Szendrey was an agricultural expert, he wrote agricultural articles in Latin.⁴⁰ Although his profession afterwards could be also interpreted as intellectual profession,⁴¹ he considered himself always in feudal framework and he was unsatisfied with his social status. Therefore, he assumed the rising of the family from the expectant good marriages of his daughters. He had three children: the oldest was Júlia, the middle child was a boy, Gyula, and the youngest child was Mária. In order to achieve the desired social status and good marriages, he paid special attention to the education of the children. In 1838, when Júlia was 10 years old, he

³⁶ About the life conditions and stratification of the nobility in Zala county: Benda Gyula, *Zala megyei nemesség életviszonyai a XVIII. században*, in Hofer Tamás (ed.), *Történelmi antropológia*, Budapest 1984, 313 – 327.

³⁷ In the appendix I attached three maps related to the lives of the analyzed three ladies which show the exact locations of the important towns in each case. In the cases of those settlements which belong to other countries today, I indicate the contemporary foreign names of towns and villages in parentheses at first mention.

³⁹ About the social stratification of the nobility in Hungary (Slav terms are also included): Kósa László, *“Hét szilvafa árnyékában” A nemesség alsó rétegének élete és mentalitása a rendi társadalom utolsó évtizedeiben Magyarországon*. Budapest 2001, 20 – 27. In English: Kosáry Domokos, *Culture and society in Eighteenth Century Hungary*, Budapest 1987, 31.

⁴⁰ About his agricultural articles: Lukács Gábor – Tóth Éva, *Szendrey Ignác, a Festeticsek ispánja*, in Szirácsik Éva (ed.), *Élet a birtokon*. Salgótarján 2013, 57 – 68.

⁴¹ The bailiff is considered as one of the first intellectual professions in Hungary. The education of the agricultural experts started due to György Festetics in Keszthely: Vörös Károly, *A modern értelmiség kezdetei Magyarországon*, in Vörös Boldizsár (ed.), *Hétköznapiak a polgári Magyarországon*, Budapest, 1997, 32 – 33.

sent her to study to a country town, Mezőberény⁴² where a girl seminary was conducted by a noblewoman, Franciska Wenckheim who was the wife of Vince Festetich.

Júlia Szendrey spent two years in that institution. Then she studied in another girl seminary in Pest-Buda between 1840 and 1844. This institution was even more prestigious. The students were high-ranking, noble girls such as the daughters of Baron Miklós Wesselényi, the Transylvanian aristocrat and politician or Antónia Kölcsey, the relative of the famous poet Ferenc Kölcsey who was also representative at the Diet of Pozsony (in German Pressburg, today Bratislava in Slovakia). Therefore, one part of the girls came from the countryside, mostly with noble origin and the other part was constituted by urban girls whose parents lived in Pest-Buda. They participated in the education during the days, but they went home each day such as Mária Csapó who later edited journals for shorter periods and wrote memoirs as Mrs. Vachott. However, the girls from the countryside spent the whole year, even the Christmas in the company of each other. The best friend of Júlia Szendrey was Mária Térey whose father was the employee of Károlyi Count, but he was also the direct supervisor of Ignác Szendrey and they lived in Nagykároly. The leader of the institution, Lilla Tünczer was mentioned several times in the diaries of the contemporaries.⁴³ She was active participant in the cultural network of Pest-Buda and her students really loved her as their later texts proved. The girls studied especially German and French language, literature, music, painting, dance, etiquette and the rules of the social life. Therefore, they were prepared to the participation in elite, accomplished and rich companies.

In 1844 Ignác Szendrey brought her daughter back to the castle of Erdőd. It seems that his endeavour was to find the most appropriate, noble husband for his daughter in Szatmár County. From that year she was an active participant of the social life of the countryside. Júlia often visited her best friend and main pen-pal, Mária Térey in Nagykároly which was the shire-town of the county and most of the balls were held there. The two girls – who have already experienced the urban life in Pest-Buda – lived in an interesting border situation. On

⁴² In juridical sense Mezőberény was village, but its municipal organization and the number of population showed urban patterns. (in 1811: 6857, 1869: 10915, 1900: 12875 inhabitants).

⁴³ Mária Térey and Júlia Szendrey also mentioned her several times in their later correspondance. For instance, Mária Térey told about her three-week stay in Pest in the 29th of November in 1845: “My three weeks in Pest was one of the most pleasant, I brought a lot of gently greetings from Tünczer for you...” Mikes Lajos, Dernői Kocsis László (eds.), *Szendrey Julia ismeretlen naplója, levelei és haláloságán tett vallomása. Bethlen Margit grófnő előszavával*, Budapest 1930, 347.

the one hand, they enjoyed the vivid ball seasons; on the other hand they felt emptiness in the customs of the local social life. They missed the cultural goods from Pest-Buda. The position of Júlia Szendrey was more problematic: she had to go to Nagykároly if she wanted to participate in the social life of the county. Therefore, she lived in a sort of imitated nobiliary environment. She was the queen of the balls of the countryside; she had everything at home which was needed for a gentle girl (piano, French course, etc.) Anyway, she was unsatisfied as she discerned the differences between the urban and rural life in the relation of the county (differences between Nagykároly and Erdőd) and in the relation of country-wide (differences between Pest and the countryside).

During my mental map analysis I use two main categories: the experienced and the imagined space. Naturally there are also intersections between them. These analytical tools could be useful for me because of two reasons. As the articles of gender studies often emphasized, the women had no right to move freely in the public spaces based on their own mood. There were strong limits related to their use of space. Therefore, my assumption is that the imagination had highlighted role in the construction of mental maps. The source of the imagination could be various things which were available for women such as travelogues, novels, newspapers, magazines or just the own fantasy. In the case of Júlia Szendrey the imagination had specifically significant role. That was the part of her self-analysis in her diary. She has already indicated this in her first notes of 1846: “the reality was almost alien for me, although my God shared so much goods with me, I could not enjoy it because of my spacy imaginings.”⁴⁴ In her diary she always wrote about her self-reflections, whereas her correspondence was full of humorous descriptions of the daily life. As a result, in her letters I can examine the experienced life practices of the countryside which formed her mental map. Her diary items give opportunity to analyse her imagination about the world outside of Szatmár County. I consider these aspects as the part of her mental map as well. Consequently, I investigate the connections between the experienced and the imagined spaces in her texts.

Although from 1844 until 1847 the continuous home of Júlia Szendrey was the abovementioned small village, Erdőd, she relatively often travelled to the nearby towns. I construct her mental map through the examination of the purposes of her trips. The functions

⁴⁴ Mikes Lajos, Dernői Kocsis László (eds.), *Szendrey Julia ismeretlen naplója, levelei és haláloságán tett vallomása. Bethlen Margit grófnő előszavával*, Budapest 1930, 263.

of the countryside as well as the city in her career become more understandable through the ordinary life and the local practices.

There were two specifically outstanding towns on the mental map of Júlia Szendrey. In her first letter to Mária Térey (on the 11th of August, 1845), she wrote about Szatmárnémeti (today Satu Mare in Romania). That was a free royal town⁴⁵ which was regularly mentioned in the correspondence of the girls simply as Szatmár. Júlia asked her friend to buy white shoes for her as she became ill. In spite of that fact, she prepared for a ball to Szatmár, and she cannot gain these attachments in Erdőd.⁴⁶ Szatmárnémeti had similar functions in her life practises than Nagykároly (Carei): she went to there because of entertainment or shopping purposes. For instance, in relation of a fancy-dress ball Mária Térey asked her to gain two similar masks for them, because she could not get these in Nagykároly. On the 10th of February in 1846 Mária Térey wrote connected to another fancy-dress ball that she got her dress from Pest, and it would be impossible to follow suit in Nagykároly. It meant that the girls couldn't wear similar dresses: "It would be good to wear the same dress, but it is impossible, because I get my dress from Pest which inimitable in Károly."⁴⁷ Although the balls belonged to their everyday life practise, they remain important events for them. These were the occasions of entertainment, network-building and the occasions of decisions as well. Júlia Szendrey kept count of the balls. She wrote at the beginning of 1846 to her friend about the anticipatory balls that there will be only six significant ball in that year, four bourgeois balls and two genteel balls. Almost all of the events were connected to the mentioned two towns: Szatmárnémeti (Satu Mare) and Nagykároly (Carei.)

However, Júlia Szendrey felt the differences between Erdőd and Nagykároly not only on the field of entertainment, but also on the level of services. She tried to use her connections to find an appropriate handmaid who would like to "come out to us" (1846. April 17). The expression ("come out" – "kijönni") emphasized that Erdőd is outside of the town, outside of Nagykároly. Júlia Szendrey had called to Erdőd the sister of the handmaid who served for the Térey family in Nagykároly, but the girl choose another workplace and the disappointed Júlia

⁴⁵ About the Hungarian free royal towns: Bácskai Vera, „A királyi városok által pallérozatnak az országok”, in „Urbs. Magyar Várostörténeti Évkönyv”, Budapest 2006, 227 – 233. Kosáry Domokos, *Culture and society in Eighteenth Century Hungary*, Budapest 1987, 25 – 29. About the case of Szatmárnémeti: Pál Judit, *A szabadság ára. Szatmárnémeti harca a szabad királyi városi rangért a 18. század elején*, in « Urbs. Magyar Várostörténeti Évkönyv », Budapest 2006, 1, 203 – 225.

⁴⁶ Mikes Lajos, Dernői Kocsis László (eds.), *Szendrey Julia* cit., 343.

⁴⁷ Mikes Lajos, Dernői Kocsis László (eds.), *Szendrey Julia* cit., 349.

stressed that it is almost impossible to find quickly an appropriate handmaid – as she wrote – “notedly at that place.”

There are letters which referred to the differences between the infrastructure of Erdőd and Nagykároly from another point of view. Júlia Szendrey asked not only ball attachments and dresses from Nagykároly when her father went there, but also books, journals and sheet music. In several cases these were accessible only from Pest through their connections. For instance, Mária Térey mentioned the problems around a sheet-music on the 1st of April, 1846. Her final suggestion in order to reach the desired sheet-music was the invitation of Júlia into Nagykároly.⁴⁸

The description of the cultural and social life in Nagykároly helps to understand the context of my central question. In the town the Károlyi Palace was the symbol of the aristocrat lifestyle. That was built between 1793 and 1794 based on the quadratic ground of old, castle-like palace. There was an English garden around the palace which was encompassed by stone and wooden palisade.⁴⁹ In the palace especially the function of abode prevailed. The Count and the Countess had separate suite of rooms. The chambers of the palace such as dressing-room, bedroom served the demands of the private sphere, while the writing-room and the living room were public spaces as well.⁵⁰ In the town this building was the admired scene of the social life, it had important representative challenges. The chambers with communal functions in the palace were the dining-rooms, the billiard-room, the chapel and the saloon.⁵¹ The Térey family lived in the proximity of the Károlyi Palace. Sometimes they invited the Countess and her family to their house. They regarded these visitations as really significant events and they prepared for several days in advance. The Countess was important figure of the local balls as well.⁵² Hence the social and cultural life was organised mostly in feudal framework.

At the same time, the clues of the bourgeois lifestyle were also observable. For instance, the locals established a choir in the town which worked as an association. The self-organising societies, the civil associations became more and more significant in the middle class of the

⁴⁸ Mikes Lajos, Dernői Kocsis László (eds.), *Szendrey Julia* cit., 351.

⁴⁹ Fazekas Rózsa – Kujbusné Mecsei Éva, *Mindennapok Szabolcs és Szatmár megyében a XIX. században (Forrás- és szemelvénygyűjtemény)*, Nyíregyháza 2000, 226 – 227.

⁵⁰ In the essay of Rózsa Fazekas the rooms of the castle are described based on the detailed inventory of 1846.

⁵¹ Fazekas Rózsa, *A nagykárolyi kastély enteriőrje egy 1846. évi inventárium tükrében*, in: „Szabolcs-Szatmár-Beregi levéltári évkönyv”, 2008, 18, 203 – 230, 216.

⁵² Mikes Lajos, Dernői Kocsis László (eds.), *Szendrey Julia* cit., 353.

19th century.⁵³ Mária Térey highlighted its importance in a letter to Júlia when they sang in order to help for the poor people: “we ask you seriously for the contribution and for the singing of some melodies. One of these should be an aria, there are really nice for you, just these should be translated into Hungarian, and it meant just a few words for you. For the second song we would prefer your nice Hungarian songs which you would sing with Horvát. Although Kirch wrote to Pest for some Hungarian songs because of this goal, but these will not arrive till then.”⁵⁴ The name of Kirch was regularly mentioned in the correspondence as the man who gained from Pest the sheet music which was needed for the girls. The role of the music in the society was important not only from aesthetical point of view, but also from material aspect as well. The musical instruments, especially the piano represented the richness and the social status of the given family. That became an obligatory piece of furniture in the flats of the bourgeois middle class.⁵⁵ In addition, the musical education – especially in the case of women – was the significant part of the “good education” which also included the singing and knowledge of foreign languages. These skills were important as cultural assets for women even during their marriages. Having the piano, the sheet music and the other needed musical accessories meant the following of these European cultural norms and also the belonging to the educated, well-to-do social strata.

The cultural life of Nagykároly was deeply influenced (at least periodically) by the political life of the town as well.⁵⁶ The political function of the place became important especially during the period of (re)election of officials. These had significant impact on personal connections as more intellectuals came to the town in order to participate in the elections of officials. For instance, the poet Sándor Petőfi – who was already widely known as celebrated poet at that time – came to Nagykároly in 1846 because of the upcoming elections. Originally he wanted to travel to the diet of Kolozsvár (today Cluj-Napoca in Romania), but he met with Júlia Szendrey at the ball of the county.⁵⁷ On the 12th of October Mária Térey wrote to her friend that it is impossible to avoid the period of elections in Nagykároly.⁵⁸ Júlia corresponded

⁵³ About the case of the civil associations of Pest-Buda: Tóth Árpád, *Önszervező polgárok. A pesti egyesületek társadalomtörténete a reformkorban*. Budapest 2005.

⁵⁴ Mikes Lajos, Dernői Kocsis László (eds.), *Szendrey Julia* cit., 366.

⁵⁵ Fónagy Zoltán, *Kislány a zongoránál. A zene a középosztály magánéletében a 19. században*, in „Korall”, 2013, 14, 18.

⁵⁶ The voting per head became obligatory after 1819 during elections. Therefore, the political role of the lowest strata of the nobility became more important. Kósa László, *“Hét szilvafa árnyékában” A nemesség alsó rétegének élete és mentalitása a rendi társadalom utolsó évtizedeiben Magyarországon*. Budapest 2001, 173.

⁵⁷ Kerényi Ferenc, *Petőfi Sándor élete és költészete. Kritikai életrajz*, Budapest 2008, 259 – 261.

⁵⁸ Mikes Lajos, Dernői Kocsis László (eds.), *Szendrey Julia* cit., 356.

that Petőfi gave up the plan to travel to Transylvania and “Mármaros”⁵⁹ which was a county on the borders of the today Romania and Ukraine.

Petőfi spent the October mainly in Nagykároly and visited Júlia several times in Erdőd.⁶⁰ They fell in love with each other, but there was enormous social gap between them. Petőfi wanted to marry with her after one month of acquaintance. At first, Júlia refused him, because she was not sure in her feelings after so short period, but finally they agreed in the next spring. They decided to marry then if they feel the same. After that an exciting love story started with a lot of turns and misunderstandings. The correspondence and any kind of communication were prohibited between them due to the father of Júlia Szendrey. However, a close friend – who worked in the castle of Erdőd as the employee of Szendrey – conveyed the messages. At the same time, Petőfi used also the printed press in order to communicate with his love: he published several poems which addressed her and assured about his strong feelings. In the next May he went to Erdőd again and he asked for her hand, but the father always refused him because of his poor origins. The appearance of Petőfi in the life of her daughter destroyed his plans about the noble upheaval of the family. However, the lovers were adamant. Ignác Szendrey finally accepted the marriage, but he was not present at the wedding and he gave not dowry with her daughter. Therefore, their marriage started with a kind of norm breaking: the girl was not submissive or dutiful at all, she insisted to her choice and married without paternal bless. The reception of this fact was totally different in the urban society and at the countryside. Whereas the readership and the literary circles of Pest-Buda celebrated the brave woman, the locals and old friends in Nagykároly had considerably bad opinion about her behaviour.⁶¹

Experienced and imagined spaces

One of the most frequent and characteristic rhetorical turn in the correspondence of the girls is the continual referring on the few pleasure of the countryside. They regarded it as the main characteristics of their environment. Júlia Szendrey highlighted the eventless of Erdőd several times, especially when she explained her attraction about Nagykároly. The ironic characterization of the social life of Erdőd appeared in her letters as well. She corresponded to

⁵⁹ Mikes Lajos, Dernői Kocsis László (eds.), *Szendrey Julia* cit., 356.

⁶⁰ Kerényi Ferenc, *Petőfi Sándor* cit., 262 – 270.

⁶¹ Mikes Lajos, Dernői Kocsis László (eds.), *Szendrey Julia* cit., 380.

Mária Térey about a “big noble ball” which will hold in the Sas rest-house.⁶² The contrast between the huge preparation and the triviality of the event emphasized the eventless of the village. After the ball Júlia Szendrey wrote to her friend about the consistency of the participants according to provenience. She wrote that there were a lot of stranger, but none of them came from Nagykároly (regarding men, because there were women from Nagykároly as well), but there were good dancers from Szatmár.⁶³ The description of the detailed preparation of the local girls for the ball implied her opinion about the insignificance of the ridiculous balls in the village.

Whereas she was continuously unsatisfied with the experienced towns and villages, the imagined big cities were very attractive for her. She had never been outside of Hungary, but she often dreamed about European cities, especially about Paris and Venice in her texts. In the spring of 1847 she planned to travel to America through France. She (re)started to learn French and wrote funnily to Mária that she wants to walk out with French cavaliers.⁶⁴ She continued learning French in all her life, she read French novels and sometimes she translated certain parts of these into Hungarian.

Paris – the city which was often hailed as the “queen” of the cities or “the mother” of the cities⁶⁵ or later as the “Capital of Pleasures”⁶⁶ – appeared in her text as the space of flirting and joy. The romantic attraction of the city was probably also strong for her as well as the sophisticated manners, fashion and lifestyle which entirely fitted to her former education. However, Paris was also attractive for her future husband because of a totally different reason. For Petőfi – who studied deeply the history of the French Revolution – Paris was the “Capital of the Revolution.”⁶⁷

Later the tension between the lack of travelling and the desire for that appeared in her short diary item about Venice. She described the city in details and she unfolded only at the end of the text that her imagination was connected to only the picture of Venice which lay in front of

⁶² Mikes Lajos, Dernői Kocsis László (eds.), *Szendrey Julia* cit., 363 – 364.

⁶³ Mikes Lajos, Dernői Kocsis László (eds.), *Szendrey Julia* cit., 364.

⁶⁴ Mikes Lajos, Dernői Kocsis László (eds.), *Szendrey Julia* cit., 367.

⁶⁵ Rearick, Charles, *Paris Dreams, Paris Memories. The City and Its Mystique*. Stanford, California 2011, 6.

⁶⁶ Rearick, Charles, *Paris Dreams* cit., 10.

⁶⁷ About the representations of Paris between 1830 and 1848: Harvey, David, *Paris, capital of modernity*. New York, 2003, 23 – 89.

her. The cult of Venice⁶⁸ was strong in the 19th century. Several Hungarian painters visited Italy in order to learn there and Venice was common topic among them. For instance, Miklós Barabás – who was known as the most popular portraitist – made a beautiful painting about Venice in 1834. The city was preferred scene also in the romantic novels such as in the *Consuelo* written by George Sand who was the favourite French writer of Júlia Szendrey.

However, there was one city which was experienced and imagined space for her at the same time: Pest-Buda. As she had already lived there before, she was aware of the missing elements of the city when she lived again at the countryside. Therefore, that became an imagined and desired city for her. On 10 November in 1845, when she was seventeen, she wrote a letter which highlighted the dullness and boredom of the life at the countryside, especially in winter. She stressed that she hasn't got any hope, because her mother has already told that she does not allow her to go to Pest: "The winter is already here again with the sad chance that it will be a terrible boring, bald and bad winter. And there is no hope even related to the summer, nothing chance that it could be other, because my Mum has already asserted that she will not let me go to Pest."⁶⁹ The French superscription of the letter was the following: *Madame Thereze de Tomasek a Börvely*. The addressed girl, Teréz Tomasek was Hungarian, but Júlia Szendrey often wrote the superscriptions in French on her letters which showed the cultivation of that language. Börvely was a small village in Szatmár County where her friend, Teréz Tomasek lived. In the texts of Júlia Szendrey in that period (1845 – 1847) emerged a strong opposition of the urban and rural life. The countryside meant a totally boresome place without any kind of amusement, whereas the city meant an exciting space where everything is available. As a result, Pest-Buda was important for her as *marketplace* where she could reach the needed books, sheet-music, dresses, as *cultural space* where she could participate in cultural events, finally as the *centre of the media* where the majority of the journals were published.

The affinity of the girls towards the music is recurring element of their correspondence. This affinity was largely influenced by the conditions of the environment, by the problems of the different opportunities of the cities, towns and villages. They always tried to gain sheet-music from Pest by the help of their acquaintanceship in Nagykároly, but that was often difficult or unsuccessful. They also tried to go to Pest for significant concerts and to gain piano from

⁶⁸ About the images of Venice: Norwich, John Julius, *Paradise of Cities. Venice in the 19th Century*, New York 2003.

⁶⁹ PIM Kt. V. 637/2.

Vienna. For instance, Mária Térey wanted to go to Pest with her father because of a Liszt-concert (1st of April, 1846).⁷⁰ Beside of her affinity to the music, there was another element which motivated her to go to the concert of Liszt: she wanted to meet with her secret love, Kornél Ábrányi who was also a pianist. Their love was forbidden by the parents of Mária Térey because of the social status of the boy. They did not manage to achieve the final agreement of the parents.⁷¹ Almost the same model repeated later in the case of Júlia Szendrey. Her father refused the proposal of Sándor Petőfi who was only a poor, parasite and dowry-hunter poet in his eyes. The bourgeois lifestyle of Petőfi – who basically was a freelancer intellectual using artfully the power of the media in order to manage his poet career – was totally different from the ideal son-in-law imagined by Ignác Szendrey. Their opposition embodied the differences between the rural and urban lifestyle as well as the feudal and the bourgeois way of thinking.

Summary

In Szatmár County the most important towns on the mental map of Júlia Szendrey were Nagykároly and Szatmárnémeti. These had simultaneously several functions in her life: to maintain the relation with her best friend, Mária Térey and with her social network, to prepare for balls and to participate in these. All of these practices were connected to her everyday material as well as cultural needs: the shopping, the participation in public balls, private companionships and family receptions. If the mental map is considered on regional level, on the scale of the settlements of Szatmár County, the mentioned two towns appeared as nodes. Whereas she experienced the spaces of the countryside, there were always imagined cities in her mind. Some of these remained inaccessible in her whole life such as Paris and Venice. At the same time, Pest as reference point was continually present in the rhetoric of the letters. That was the desired city for her in the intersections of experienced and imagined spaces. If the settlement network of the whole country is considered, Pest was the main node on her mental map. In her mind the literature, the music and other various forms of culture was belonged to the urban space. Therefore, in her later life – when she became one of the first Hungarian female writers who published regularly – she insisted to the urban lifestyle and never left Pest-Buda for longer period.

⁷⁰ Mikes Lajos, Dernői Kocsis László (eds.), *Szendrey Julia* cit., 351.

⁷¹ Mikes Lajos, Dernői Kocsis László (eds.), *Szendrey Julia* cit., 351.

“... the source and factory of every newspaper” The life of Júlia Szendrey and Sándor Petőfi in Pest-Buda

Júlia Szendrey and Sándor Petőfi married in Erdőd on 8 September in 1847. Their honeymoon was more than a month long in the castle of Sándor Teleki Count – who was the only aristocratic friend of Petőfi – in Koltó (today Coltau in Romania). Then they travelled to Kolozsvár (today Cluj-Napoca) and arrived to Pest-Buda on 5 November. I analyse their first home in the city, their ordinary lifestyle, the traditional and the norm breaking elements of their gender roles. Could their home be considered as bourgeois, biedermeier flat? Were their female and male roles in the marriage traditional from gender point of view? As Natalie Zemon Davis suggested, I examine not only the female, but also the male roles and the interference between them in order to understand the significance of the contemporary gender norms.⁷² As their marriage was a special case, the acts of norm breaking and norm following are also observable during the examination.

The first accommodation of the young couple was founded by a great actor, Gábor Egressy – who was the friend of Petőfi – at the corner of the Dohány and Síp Street. (Map.4.) He has already reported Petőfi about the flat on 7 August in 1847:

“Your accommodation has already reserved, but I am not satisfied with my proceeding, because the flat is nice though, but incredibly expensive. It is close to us, in the Dohány Street, Schiller-house, first floor...Three rooms, alcove, hall, kitchen, etc. for 560 forint which quarter part you have to pay in advance. Although you entitled me only until 500 forint, if you do not approve my deal, you do it deservedly. But we looked at least fifty accommodation, without that only one would be appropriate to the wishes, so: 1. It should be close to me – we would sacrifice it for comfort and cheapness. 2. It must not be more outside than ours, but inward. 3. It should have three rooms. 4. It should be dry, clean and it should have fresh air. 5. At least one room with views to the street. 6. It should not be more expensive, than 500 forint. It was impossible to find all of these criteria together in one place... Out of a number of bad choices, I could only choose the least bad one, considering that you should not take your fiancée in Pest at first to something ugly, unhealthy and dark jail because of 60 forint difference, or rather for 30.”⁷³

⁷² Zemon Davis, Natalie, *Women's History In Transition: The European Case*, in „Feminist Studies”, 3, 1975-1976, 90.

⁷³ The letter of Egressy was published: Martinkó András (ed.), *Petőfi Sándor összes prózai művei és levelezése*, Budapest 1974.

The last few words referred to the solution of the situation: to share the costs with a friend. Petőfi invited his writer friend, Mór Jókai to the flat who occupied the third room.⁷⁴ At that time Jókai was only 22 years old, but he was the editor of the most significant journal of the contemporary Hungarian literary life (Életképek). Later, in the second half of the century, he became the richest and most popular writer in Hungary who earned a fortune by his novels and editorial work.

The mentioned six criteria of Petőfi related to their flat showed that he was absolutely aware of the average flat conditions of the city as well as the features of certain districts. Therefore, the second point of his list referred not only to the proximity of the flat to the Kerepesi Street (today Rákóczi Street) where Egressy lived, but also to the fact that this location meant a borderline to him within the city. He insisted to live with her wife in the inner city. The goal was achieved: the flat was relatively close to each prominent scenes of the city: to the National Theatre, National Museum, City-hall, printing houses and to their favourite meeting point: the Pilvax Coffeehouse. (Map 4.)

This special form of cohabitation in a rented flat, the world of coffeehouses and artist companionships as well as the features of the urban media meant totally different, new lifestyle to the gentle girl. She was used to the world of balls and the boring, but well-to-do life form of the countryside. Júlia Szendrey and Sándor Petőfi belonged to so different social strata, that the friends of Petőfi in Pest could not believe the possibility of the marriage for a good while. Gábor Egressy wrote in the same letter than the quoted news about the flat the following line: “You Sándor! I believe that you can marry with that girl only if I see her in my room here in Pest or next to you in your accommodation.”⁷⁵ The doubt was not causeless: as I mentioned in the previous chapter, Ignác Szendrey, the father of Júlia allowed the marriage just after multiple proposals of Petőfi, with the punishment that he did not give any dowry to her daughter.

⁷⁴ Jókai began his friendship with Sándor Petőfi during their studies at the Református Kollégium in Pápa in 1841. He undertook the editorship of *Életképek* in 1847, with Petőfi as his best known associate. He married the actress Róza Laborfálvi in summer 1848. He is considered the most distinguished writer of romantic fiction in Hungary. Many of his novels have been translated into Armenian, Bulgarian, Chinese, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Rumanian, Russian, Rutherfordian, Serbian, Slovakian, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish and Ukrainian. Basic information related to the biographical data, editions, bibliographies, biographies and criticism of Jókai: Tezla, Albert, *Hungarian Authors. A Bibliographical Handbook*, Cambridge 1970, 238 – 255, Fábri Anna, *Mór Jókai*, in Gerő András (ed.), *Hungarian Liberals*, Budapest 1999, 114 – 127.

⁷⁵ Martinkó András (ed.), *Petőfi Sándor összes prózai művei és levelezése*, Budapest 1974.

Therefore, Petőfi had to prepare for the marriage also in financial sense. He made serious contracts with his publisher, Gusztáv Emich: he sold the right of publishing of his *All poems (Összes költemények)* and he agreed with different editors (among others with Jókai) in the annual number and amount of poems and money.⁷⁶ He tried to use each segment of the literary life in order to create financial basis for his marriage. The endeavours were efficient: they rented a nice and well-equipped flat where the middle room fulfilled the function of living room or saloon. The furnishings probably seemed gorgeous richness for Petőfi who always lived a traveller life without permanent residence.

There are different types of sources about the equipment, first of all a catalogue about the property of the Petőfi family which was made by the authorities who occupied the objects in 1849 because of the revolutionary activity of Petőfi.⁷⁷ According to the catalogue they had in the flat a seater coated by blue and white woollen, a writing desk with green baize and reading lamp, valuable books in vitrines, the sewing-table of Júlia Szendrey, the portraits of the characters of the French Revolution ordered from Paris, a pipe-rack, etc.⁷⁸ The equipment of the flat implied so intellectual life style in which the taste of both part was represented.

The other source about the flat is visual: the painting of Soma Orlai Petrich who was the friend and the second cousin of Petőfi. He made several pictures about Petőfi at different places. The title of the painting which depicted him in the flat is the following: *Petőfi in his workroom in Pest (Petőfi pesti dolgozószobájában)*. On this representation Petőfi stands with crossed arms in front of his writing desk. There is a Shakespeare-statue and an inkpot with pen on the desk. On the wall a picture hang about Júlia Szendrey. This painting – which was made by Miklós Barabás, the outstanding painter of the period – became the most known portrayal about Júlia Szendrey. Beside these there are a bookcase and an armchair in the room. The picture – among others – deserves attention because of the fact that it depicted one of the most important male figures of the period in the private sphere.

The concept of the separate spheres inclined to overemphasize that the public sphere was the empire of men, whereas the private home was the territory of women. However, the everyday use of space was not so single-sided: there were everyday practices which connected men to the private sphere as well as women to the public spaces. As Hobsbawm highlighted, the

⁷⁶ Kerényi Ferenc, *Petőfi Sándor* cit., 314.

⁷⁷ Kalla Zsuzsa – Ratzky Rita (eds.), *Beszélő tárgyak. A Petőfi család relikviái*, Budapest 2006.

⁷⁸ Kerényi Ferenc, *Petőfi Sándor* cit., 341.

home was “the quintessential bourgeois world”⁷⁹ where the interiors and clothes, the domestic rituals and material artefacts had elementary roles. The analysis of the domestic space stressed that several phenomenon seem superficial, evident or obvious at first which was belonged to the essence of the bourgeois lifestyle.

The beauty of the Biedermeier interiors expressed not only the richness and social status, but also the spiritual values of the bourgeoisie, the link between the material and the ideal.⁸⁰ One of the best examples of this duality, the piano – which symbolize not only the value of the music, the spirituality of the art, but also the richness and the higher social class of the family – was totally missing in the flat of Petőfi. However, the purchase of a piano was among their plans. Júlia Szendrey wrote to her friend, Teréz Tomasek who lived in Szatmár county on 20 February in 1848: “I have endless joy now: after a few days I will get a piano...Now I will already be able to appreciate it better.”⁸¹ She described her previous feelings as she tried to do not think on the piano, but she really missed it and now playing again will be so extremely good feeling which she could not imagine if she always had the opportunity to play continuously. The experience of the deprivation had impact on her way of thinking: she became cautious. She promised for herself in the letter that she will consider extensively what kind of entertainment tool to buy and teach to her future child and what not – in order to avoid the similar cases. As she really loved music, the life without the instrument meant for her a serious lack. However, there were other objects in the flat which expressed the duality of spirit and material: the Shakespeare-statue as well as the litographies of the French revolutionists which had deeper meanings for them than the simple possession of objects. Through the Biedermeier furnishing they expressed their belonging to the European artists, citizens. Although they never emphasized their European identity in their writings, the appreciation of the mentioned objects and lifestyle meant a strong feeling of belonging to this class. Above all the expression of the idea of freedom through objects – such as pictures about the main characters of the French Revolution – was important in their flat. Therefore, the furnishings represented a decent comfort of a Biedermeier bourgeois flat, but not in a traditional way. On the one hand, basic elements of the representation of richness were missing such as the piano. On the other hand, the intellectual lifestyle was signed in the flat by numerous valuable books as well as their revolutionary way of thinking through pictures.

⁷⁹ Hobsbawm, Eric, *The Age of Capital 1848 – 1875*, London 1975, 270.

⁸⁰ Hobsbawm, Eric, *The Age of Capital* cit., 272.

⁸¹ PIM Kt. V. 637/2.

How was the flat and the lifestyle of the young couple seen by the visitors? Especially the role of Júlia Szendrey seemed strange for the contemporaries. Emília Kánya, the later editor wrote about her visitation in the Dohány Street. The cause of the meeting was that her husband – who wrote leading articles in maverick journals – met with Petőfi in an editorial office and visited them at home. Júlia Szendrey as the wife of Petőfi invited Emília Kánya to their house.⁸² She described the meeting thoroughly in her memoir:

“In the Dohány Street – on that part where now the Jewish church stands – lived Petőfi in a bigger house. We went there in the afternoon. We entered into the hall and I heard loud speech and laughing. Nobody heard our clop because of the noisy speech, therefore we came into: a sea smoke welcomed us. In the room there were 6-8 men, the landlord [Petőfi] came on before us, and from the sofa which stood between two windows, a female figure get up who laid there. She was the famous nice Júlia... She welcomed me gently, we shook hands, after that she took me into the neighbour room. The lords just have fun alone, for us the other room will be better – she said, and left her cigar here which was fuming among her lips. In my eyes Júlia was not nice woman. She was just very interesting...She wore short hair; she could smile gently, but not warmly...To tell the truth, I always felt reserve towards the easy-mannered women, and Júlia talked with men by so short and chummy tone which seemed to me totally new and I was shocked...I said goodbye in the certain sense that they did not like me, I am not proper to them...There were some writers in the first room, I did not know them...we still talked a little bit, after that we left...Júlia visited us a few days later, but we have not been at home.”⁸³

Although some parts of the described scene seem exaggeration, the phrasing of the text shows that the ordinary practices of the young couple were perceived as norm-breaking by the contemporaries in certain cases: for instance, the smoking and the participation in men companies on the side of Júlia Szendrey. The use of space within the flat has important role in the source. According to the description, Júlia Szendrey invited Emília Kánya to a separate room with the expressed reason that the men just have fun alone, for them as for women a separate room is more comfortable. However, in spite of the traditional gendered space division, the door remained open and the conversation was not totally interrupted between women and men, because Júlia sometimes told some words to the men in chummy style. Therefore, the usage of the separate sphere with the lady guest was only adaption to the etiquette. At the same time, she also broke the etiquette because of her unusual and confident style according to the perception of Emília. The words of Júlia in the description show an

⁸² Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időről. Egy 19. századi írónő emlékiratai* (eds. Fábri Anna, Kiss Bori), Budapest 1998, 87.

⁸³ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időről* cit., 87 – 88.

absolutely sociable woman. Nevertheless, in a totally different way than in the case of Emília Kánya who also connected to the social life in her whole career. They embodied not only other female roles; the sociability itself meant other manner for them due to their education. Whereas Emília Kánya grew up in a protestant family where they had important guests every day, Júlia Szendrey learnt the art of the conversation in a girl seminary where it was the part of the training as well as the German and French language learning or the painting.

The poet Pál Jám bor (his pseudonym was Hiador) wrote about the young couple in much more appreciative narrative:

“Júlia Szendrey had some masculine attitudes which raise ideas, not emotions... There was barely topic in which she would not have been at home. Her husband always respectfully listened to her, rarely spoke in debates, not in order to contradict, but to confirm the statements of his wife. Whenever I visited that woman, I always found them reading. Mrs. Petőfi was an interesting person with short haircut, roundy face and full-blown/fully developed figure. At first sight the elevated forehead, the dark eyes and her intelligent gaze attracted the attention...If somebody saw them next to each other, he would have bet that the exceptional phenomena among them the woman. Both of them were that.”⁸⁴

Based on this text the marriage of Júlia Szendrey and Sándor Petőfi meant a considerably new type of relationship for the observer. The traditional gender roles changed in their case and both parts were equally dominant and active. The intellectual partnership was the basic part of their marriage which was quite unusual in the period in which most of the women were regarded by their husbands only as sexual partners, housewives and mothers. The unique role of Júlia Szendrey and the unique atmosphere of their ordinary life also appeared in the memory speech of Jókai in 1882, when the Petőfi-statue was unveiled at the Danube Bank:

“I have never seen other on Mrs. Petőfi than simple, black dress: she had short haircut. We ordered the lunch from the “Golden Eagle” and we ate together: our whole spending was thirty forint per month. Neither of us drunk wine: I never did it, Petőfi since he married; the dinner was replaced by having tea, during we were reading out our own works or from French poets. Our only amusement was that sometimes we went to the theatre when the programme was drama and Gábor Egressy played. Petőfi never went to opera. They did not go to visitations...”⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Beregnyei Miklós (ed.), *Jám bor Pál emlékalbum*, Paks 2007, 59. Quoted by Ferenc Kerényi: Kerényi Ferenc, *Petőfi cit.*, 346.

⁸⁵ Jókai Mór, *Petőfi emlékszo bránál (Emlékbeszéd)*, in „Koszorú”, 1882, VIII., 5., 388 – 407. Quoted by Ferenc Kerényi: Kerényi Ferenc, *Petőfi cit.*, 345.

According to the description, Júlia Szendrey did not care too much with female expectations: she did not spend too much time for dressing and she did not cook. The new female role which she embodied at home created the new atmosphere of familiar, inspiring intellectual work. The antecedent of the common work was the publication of the diary items of Júlia Szendrey in the journal of Jókai. The *Életképek (Life Pictures)* was one of the most important fashion magazines of the decade. Jókai established a special column for women called *Lady Saloon* in the journal. This column contained Júlia Szendrey's diary items, what Jókai started to publish when she got married to Petőfi, but he had already advertised these during their betrothal as the part of his marketing.

Jókai reported not only on the marriage of the young couple, but also wrote a preface to the diary of Júlia Szendrey, which was published as *Petőfiné naplója (The diary of Mrs. Petőfi)*.⁸⁶ The title, the preface and other editorial methods largely influenced the reception of these texts. The readership was interested in the details of the marriage and Jókai's editorial gestures and manoeuvres aimed to satisfy this curiosity. From the diary entries which originally based on self-analysis, he created a love story. He changed the order of the diary entries and published only those which had connections to the emotions and events related to Petőfi. The other parts of the diary, such as the descriptions of nature and the introspective entries (e.g. the first three entries, which would be decisive during the interpretation of the whole diary), stayed unpublished. The preface of Jókai suggested Júlia Szendrey's text as the sketch of Petőfi's love and happiness. Jókai emphasized the romantic elements during the editorial process of the diary. This strategy proved to be successful. Júlia Szendrey was celebrated as a female writer and a German journal called *Der Ungar* published the German translation of her texts as well.⁸⁷ That was a special experience for the readership, because it was unusual to publish a diary written by woman.

Although the young couple was very active and celebrated in the media, they did not have too widespread social life. Not only Jókai remarked this aspect in his quoted speech, but also Júlia Szendrey referred to this fact in her letter to Teréz Tomasek, her friend in Szatmár County. In February of 1848 she wrote the following lines about her new life style:

⁸⁶ Szendrey Júlia, *Petőfiné naplója*, in „Életképek”, 1847, 18, 19, 561 – 568, 593 – 597.
Szendrey Júlia, *Naplótöredék*, in „Hazánk”, 1847, 129, 515 – 519.

⁸⁷ Szendrey Júlia, *Schmerz und Freude. Ein Phantasiestück von Julia Petőfi*, in „Der Ungar”, 1847, 289, 290.

“I am so sorry that I cannot inform you about any ball-story, except one which was held under our flat. We heard the music of it during the whole night, but unfortunately it was just the ball of carpenters, and it is not exactly the most interesting amid the carnival amusements. Could you imagine that I have not been in any ball, at any evening party? We got some tickets for the former and some invitation for the later, but we stayed at home in spite of every temptations! And we mentioned with so much delight and how many times during the evening that it is better to be together, to be alone!...”⁸⁸

The comparison between the former and actual life practices is outstanding element of the letter. She expressed that she could not imagine her life without balls and dancing a year ago, but at the present she is absolutely satisfied. Although in primary reading she denied that she really missed some practices from her former life, the implied feeling is observable. However, there is one more significant remark in her letter: she called Pest as “the source and factory of every newspaper.”⁸⁹ She mentioned this expression in regard to the opposition of the eventless life of Szatmár and the continual news of the city. At the same time, the lack of the piano was analysed in the same letter. Therefore, in this text both sides of her new life were indirectly represented: the power of the media which celebrated her as female writer as well as their modest social life and the limitations of their financial position.

The whole framework of their more or less comfortable, bourgeois life was destroyed by the Revolution and War of Independence in 1848 – 1849. On 15 March in 1848 the flat in the Dohány Street had central role in the Hungarian revolutionary events. It was important meeting point of the young organizers as it was close to the main scenes of the revolution such as to the Pilvax Coffehouse, the printing house of Landerer and the National Museum. Petőfi and Jókai, who were the leaders of the young revolutionists, organized mass demonstrations on 15th March 1848. The crowd gathered in front of the printing office and they started to print the *Twelve Points* of demands written by Jókai and the *National Song* written by Petőfi. The first point of the Twelve Points demanded the freedom of press and the abolition of censorship. The printed press had a significant role during the Revolution and War of Independence.

Sándor Petőfi participated in the fights not only as a poet and the author of the *National Song*, but also as a member of the national army. He served for the Polish General Józef Bem, who regarded him as his own son. The national army was developed during the War of

⁸⁸ Petőfi Literary Museum. V. 637/2.

⁸⁹ Petőfi Literary Museum. V. 637/2.

Independence and was named as Honvédség. This name was immediately elevated to a level of greatest honour by Petőfi who wrote: “After God it is the most beautiful and sacred word – honvéd; why wouldn’t I try to deserve this beautiful, great name?”

As Mór Jókai married with a famous actress, Róza Laborfalvi, Petőfi had to search a new and smaller flat with Júlia Szendrey. At first, they found accommodation in the narrow Lövész Street (today Pál Királyi Street 18) near to the Széna square (today Kálvin square) in Pest.⁹⁰ (Map. 5.) Finally they lived in the Kerepesi Street (today Rákóczi Street), in the so-called Marczibány-house where Gábor Egressy, the actor friend of Petőfi also lived. It was their last common flat in Pest-Buda.

Whereas Petőfi served in the national army, the pregnant Júlia Szendrey stayed in the house of her parents in Erdőd. However, they had to escape from the village because of ethnical rioting. Due to the Habsburg propaganda the Rumanians revolted against Hungarians. The Szendrey family went to Debrecen which was quite close to their village. The famous Protestant town – which was often called as the “Calvinist Rome” in Hungary – was the second biggest city of the country. Debrecen was also the seat of the Hungarian Diet between January and May of 1849 when Pest was occupied by the Austrians. Therefore, the city had central role during the war. The dethronement of the Habsburg-house was proclaimed there in April of 1849. Zoltán Petőfi, the son of Júlia Szendrey and Sándor Petőfi was born in Debrecen on 15 December in 1848. As the Szendrey family was strict Catholic family, the newborn boy was christened for this religion.

However, the relationship between Petőfi and his parents-in-law was not the best as they refused his whole professional and revolutionary activities. Therefore, Petőfi tried to take her wife and son close to himself. They travelled a lot according to his actual habitation which changed based on the movements of the army. Usually Júlia and their son stayed at the friends of Petőfi who lived in small villages or towns at the Eastern part of the country. The most important basis for them was the house of the poet János Arany in Nagyszalonta and the home of the painter Orlai in Mezőberény.

⁹⁰ Kerényi Ferenc, *Petőfi Sándor élete és költészete. Kritikai életrajz*, Budapest 2008, 415.

In July of 1849, Petőfi went to Transylvania with the army of General Bem. He left his family at the house of a Calvinist priest in a small village, Torda. He met with Júlia Szendrey here for last time as he disappeared during one of the last fights of the war, on 31st July 1849 in the battle of the Transylvanian Segesvár. It was assumed that he was dead. Júlia Szendrey tried to find any traces and leads, but her endeavours were not successful. She became the target of gossips as she travelled in male clothes and with male company for the sake of safeness during her investigation. She and her little son, Zoltán Petőfi, were in a desperate situation. They spent the turn of 1849 – 1850 in Erdőd in her father's house.

Júlia returned back to Pest in April of 1850 in order to gain a passport to Turkey. She wanted to gain more information about her husband from the migrant Hungarians (among others from Bem) who escaped to Turkey after the Habsburg-house defeated the Hungarian armies by the help of Russia. However, her every attempt remained unsuccessful. Besides these she was in the centre of different types of attacks. She was suspect not only for the Austrian authorities, but also for the nationalists who expected the role of the “widow of the nation” from her. As she was in regular contact with several men because of her arrangements, she was surrounded by gossips and guesses. As she visited Liechtenstein prince – who was the employee of Haynau, the imperial commissioner of the reprisals against the revolutionist – in order to gain passport, she was denigrated with him. She started to be regarded as his mistress.⁹¹ At the same time, she was threatened by the authorities by exclusion from Pest-Buda as her residence permit was close to its end. They told her that only the name of Petőfi is enough for her to be excluded from the city.

She was in hopeless financial and moral situation with her little son in which she had to choose again between the city and the countryside than three years earlier, in 1847. Two main possibilities revealed before her. One of these was to go back to the house of her father – who regularly abused the memory of Petőfi – and live again at the countryside. The other opportunity was to remarry in the city and stay in Pest-Buda. As a historian, Árpád Horvát – who claimed that he admired Petőfi – proposed her hand; she accepted the new marriage in July of 1850. The denied role of the “widow of the nation” was a wound on the nation-building and her public assessment became very negative.

⁹¹ Somogyi Sándor (ed.), *Gyulai Pál levelezése 1843-tól 1867-ig*, Budapest 1961, 55 – 56.

Summary

In Pest-Buda Júlia Szendrey started to live a totally new lifestyle. She experienced both the advantages and disadvantages of it: her life was full of happiness and celebrity, but she also met with loss in financial terms. They lived in border situation in several senses. Their flat had a comfortable, Biedermeier interior, but without piano, the main symbol of the bourgeois life. They had valuable objects in the flat which expressed their belonging to the European bourgeoisie, but most of these (French lithographies) were appreciated by them especially because of the connections towards the revolutionary meanings. They had widespread social network, they used the possibilities of the media professionally and Pest-Buda meant “the source and factory of every newspaper” for them. On the other hand, they lived simple, quiet life without big visitations.

This kind of duality was observable also from gender point of view. The gender roles changed in the life of Júlia Szendrey within a very short period. She was young girl, wife, mother, single woman (widow) and remarried woman within three years (1847 – 1850.) She was norm breaker and traditional at the same time. As young girl she committed norm breaking in the eyes of the countryside because she was not submissive child and followed her own choice in the love.

As young wife she embodied in the marriage the intellectual partner who free and brave enough to participate in social debates. She was far from the traditional housewife type woman. However, the social use of space was absolutely traditional in the case of the young couple. Only Petőfi went to coffeehouses, only he organised the revolution in public spaces. The main space of the activities of Júlia Szendrey was at home. Every astonishing element of her behaviour which was mentioned in distinct memoires (smoking, wearing trousers or red Phrygian cap) was connected to their home, to the private space. At the same time, their common room was called and furnished as the working room of her husband as it was represented on the picture of Orlai.

As widow, she tried to act independently, but she had to realize that the status of the single woman is basically different than the married one. Although the conditions of her marriage with Petőfi were unusual, the status of wife protected her from several attacks. She lost that

kind of protection with the disappearance of Petőfi, but without evident proofs about the death of him, she was not in widow status. Therefore, she was extremely vulnerable. She abolished this ambiguous, doubtful and provisional position with her new marriage. Although in this new relationship she undertook the traditional woman roles (she was attentive house wife, she gave birth four children), she remained in the cultural memory as the symbol of the extremely strange, norm breaker woman.

The position of female writers in urban society

In Hungary especially from the 1840s, the flourishing fashion journals played an increasingly important role in writers' literary careers.⁹² Discourse on muliebrity presented a continuously controversial issue in the printed press in that time. The pervading opinion was that women were inscrutable and mysterious. Men thought that esprit and communicativeness were typically feminine features. At the same time, women were considered as ingenious, but inconsiderate, digressive and unable to perform serious, intense mental labour. The concept of the "special circle" for women was widespread in the texts of male authors. For instance, Jácint Rónay⁹³ remarked in his series of articles about female features in 1847: "[W]e should find the woman where she is destined by nature, and in her own circles she will be no lesser than the man in his gorgeous endeavours."⁹⁴ This concept determined the discourse about the women writers in the 19th century. The leaders of the cultural life tried to prohibit the public writing to the women, but as it was impossible, they created the "female circle" within the literature. That included especially the writing of fairy tales, the translations and the expressions of the mother role in poems.

⁹² On the features of the political, social and cultural life, the reading public and press of the era: Dobszay Tamás – Fónagy Zoltán, *The Reform Era*, in Tóth György István (ed.), *A concise history of Hungary*, Budapest 2005, 356 – 374. On Pest-Buda as the cultural and political centre of the country: Csorba László, *Transition from Pest-Buda to Budapest, 1815 – 1873*, in Gerő András – Poór János (eds.), *Budapest: A History from Its Beginnings to 1998*, New York, 1997, 69 – 101. About female journals until the end of 19th century: Nagydiósi Gézáne, *Magyarországi női lapok a XIX. század végéig*, in „OSzK Évkönyv”, 1957, 193 – 229.

⁹³ Rónay Jácint (1814 – 1889) was a proposit from Bratislava, a bishop, a Benedictine master, a natural philosopher and a writer at the same time. He was also the instructor of the Crown Prince Rudolf and the Archduchess and Princess Marie Valerie, children of the Emperor Franz Joseph. He is sometimes mentioned as a Hungarian émigré living in London who published a book on the subject of Darwin's theory in 1864.

⁹⁴ „Ott keressük fel a' nőt, hova a' természet rendelé, és saját körében bizonyosan nem leend kisebb, mint a' férfitu nagyszerű törekvéseiben.” Rónay, Rónay Jácint, *Millyen a' nő?*, in „Hazánk”, 1847, 80 – 94.

In the 1840s, one of the most famous and important journal was the *Pesti Divatlap* (Pest Vogue) edited by Imre Vahot.⁹⁵ Vahot was an excellent manager of several newspapers and the first manager of Sándor Petőfi. The main feature of the *Pesti Divatlap* (Pest Vogue) was that it was not only a fashion journal, but literary as well. It published literary works along with pictures of fashionable dresses. That was one of the reasons why it was very popular and successful among female readers.

The other important fashion magazine of the decade was the *Életképek* (Life Pictures) edited by Mór Jókai. In 1847, he established a special column for women called *Lady Salon* in his fashion magazine. The column contained Júlia Szendrey's diary items, what Jókai started to publish when she got married to Sándor Petőfi. This case shows that there was a very thin borderline between the public and the private sphere during the publication process of texts written by women. On the one hand, this can lead to success by satisfying the curiosity of the readership; on the other hand, it can be considered as norm-breaking. Analysing the reception of Júlia Szendrey's diary, the different approaches of female writing and publication practices are observable.

This publication can be regarded as a prelude of a longer process. Although it was celebrated by the urban media, some people regarded the publication as norm-breaking and gave utterance to their confusion in their private letters. I present two cases which show two different, but equally condemnatory approaches. On the one hand, Pál Gyulai, the subsequent famous critic and literary historian – who wrote a series of articles about female writers ten years later, in 1858 – regarded the publication of the diary as a profanation of female feelings in order to achieve success. This opinion argued against the urban media which started to become flourishing and widespread in that time. Pál Gyulai had elitist concepts about the literature. He wanted to publish only high-standard works and he wanted to control the working of the press. He did not recognize that it was possible at the end of the eighteenth century from the countryside when the homes of literary leaders meant the nodes in the cultural life, but is not possible any more. From the 1840s the urban journals had more and more advantages, the printed press started to become unstoppably prolific and uncontrollable.

⁹⁵ Petőfi was employed by Imre Vahot as a sub-editor of Pest Vogue, which provided him with a literary platform. He also met his first love, Etelka Csapó, within the Vahot family. She was an innocent, child-like young girl, who died in 1845. She was the sister of Mária Csapó, the wife of Sándor Vachott who later edited female journal. Social historical approaches to the editorial career and social network of Imre Vahot: Demmel József, *Az irodalom (szociális) hálójá. Közéletések Vahot Imréhez*, in „Sic Itur Ad Astra”, 2009, 59, 253 – 268.

On the other hand, Mária Térey, the old friend corresponded to Júlia Szendrey that the reading of her diary was prohibited for a girl in Szatmár County. The argument of her mother was that she wants to avoid that her girl follow the way of Júlia Szendrey and fall in love with a poor man. In that case tension revealed between the urban and rural mentality. Whereas in Pest-Buda the honest confess of the female love experience as topic could achieve success, it was unacceptable at the countryside.

The first periodical founded after the revolution in Hungary was called *Hölgyfutár* (Lady Express). It was a daily literary paper which aimed to amuse the female readership. Although at the beginning of the 1850s the majority of the authors were male, there was a debate about female writers in 1851. During the discussion, beside the foreign female writers such as George Sand, only Júlia Szendrey was mentioned as Hungarian female writer. This case proves that the diary publishing was remarkable for the readership and also the low presence of female writers in the Hungarian printed press before 1850.

The debates about female intellectuals were heating up later, at the end of the 1850s. The discussion revolved around production and construction of literary texts rather than scientific activities. In 1858 – when numerous female writers started to publish their works – the most extensive debate about female authors was happening. Pál Gyulai critic and literary historian, wrote a series of articles about female writers.⁹⁶ He argued that women who wrote could not be happy, could not be good wives or good mothers, because they denied their female roles with their writing process:

“They are nor men, or women, but still they claim the rights of women there, those of men here. They can feel themselves at home neither in public careers, nor in the family circle; the former is too broad, noisy and dangerous, and the latter too narrow, peaceful and prosaic. They become public persons and everybody has the rights to access them.”⁹⁷

According to Pál Gyulai, writing and any other public activity made women vain and unhappy. He accused the editors of fashion magazines for this phenomenon, because they gave limitless opportunities for dilettante women to publish their works regardless of their quality in order to achieve success by the profanation of female feelings. In his opinion, the editors were pursuing profiteering and sensation-hunting practices, which brought down the

⁹⁶ Gyulai Pál, *Íróñőink*, in Gyulai Pál, *Kritikai dolgozatok 1854 – 1861*, Budapest 1908, 272 – 307.

⁹⁷ „Sem a férfiakhoz, sem a nőkhez nem tartoznak, ott a nők jogait követelik, itt a férfiakét; sem a közpályán, sem a családi körben nem találják otthon magukat, az nekik igen tág, zajos és veszélyes, ez igen szűk, csendes, prózai. A közönség személyeivé váltak, kikhez mindenkinek joga van.” Gyulai Pál, *Íróñőink* cit., 278.

literary life. “Our female writers are created by fashion journals,”⁹⁸ he wrote in his article called *Írónőink* (Our female writers), which was the starting point of the whole debate.

Some female and also male writers objected his approach and the discussion lasted for years.⁹⁹ Mór Jókai supported the presence of female writers because he ascribed particular importance to amusement of the readership. He regarded the market-based publishing processes as an indispensable mode of existence of modern literature.

Some participants of the debate questioned the actual position of the writer profession – the discussion therefore also reached the question of professionalization. The first sentence of János Erdélyi’s essay on female writers exemplifies the discussion: “Writing has not been an honourable trade a long time, even for men. Before, it was considered a pleasurable, but not a noble or serious activity.”¹⁰⁰ During the debates, the distinction emerged which writing roles could be acceptable and what was more profitable for a female writer; for instance a mother role in poem writing, tale writing, and translations were more accepted than novel or drama writing.¹⁰¹ Although Pál Gyulai did not accept the presence of numerous female writers, he approved of the merits of Júlia Szendrey, who translated the tales of Andersen¹⁰² and became the first Hungarian translator of him.¹⁰³ Therefore, the practices of the acceptance and resistance towards the female writers were expressed at the same time.

A lot of expectations in connection with female literature persisted for a long time: for example, female writers should interpret those feelings which men cannot experience, such as motherhood. This was the only point of the debate which was accepted by the all participants. As a result, the mother role was the most acceptable for a female poet. Júlia Szendrey recognized this when she started her own literary career in 1857. The title of the first poem she published was *Három rózsabimbó* (*Three rosebud*);¹⁰⁴ and it was an introduction of her three children. Her poem collection is preserved at the manuscript archives of the Hungarian

⁹⁸ „Egyébiránt írónőink egészen a divatlapok teremtményei.” Gyulai Pál, *Írónőink* cit., 290.

⁹⁹ The humorous response of Júlia Szendrey: Szendrey Júlia, *A Pesti Napló 61., 62. és 65-ik száma*, in Bihari Mór (ed.), *Petőfiné Szendrey Júlia eredeti elbeszélései*. Budapest 1909, 49 – 75.

¹⁰⁰ „Még a férfiaknak sem oly rég ideje, hogy becsület az irás. Kedvtelésnek megjárta, de valami nemes, komoly tettek alig.” Erdélyi János. *Irodalmi tanulmányok és pályaképek*, edited by T. Erdélyi Ilona. Budapest: Akadémiai, 1991, 472.

¹⁰¹ Gyulai Pál, *Írónőink* cit., 287 – 288.

¹⁰² Gyulai Pál, *Írónőink* cit., 305.

¹⁰³ Szendrey Júlia, *Andersen meséi*, Pest 1858.

¹⁰⁴ Szendrey Júlia, *Három rózsabimbó*, in „Napkelet”, 1857, 37, 604.

Academy of Sciences and still remains unpublished.¹⁰⁵ In this booklet, every poem is accompanied by the date of its formation. In 1857, she had already written the majority of the texts, so it is possible that it was her conscious decision to publish exactly this poem. The significant parts of her poems were never published. The majority of these discuss her inner anxiety and death-wish. Through the analysis of her writing practices and publishing practices, we can observe not only her own individual strategies and writing methods, but also the impact of literary criticism and mass media. This means that the literary careers of Júlia Szendrey and other female authors become comprehensible through the interaction between their writing practices for private use and their public activities in the contemporary printed press.

The literary career of Júlia Szendrey exemplifies the features of mass media, which emerged in these decades and had a serious impact on female and male careers. As the revolutions of 1848 brought about several changes, a very significant change occurred in literary life as well. Whereas in the first half of the century, male intellectuals supervised the press, after the revolution, the structure of the media transformed and they lost their control above the rampant press. As a result, the debate about female writers becomes understandable within this context. In the middle of the 1850s, many derivative poets and female writers appeared in mass media and the readership enjoyed their works. Pál Gyulai struggled against this process: he wanted to supervise the taste and the reading and consuming habits of the readership and he did not want to accept the presence of numerous periodicals, serials, newspapers, fashion magazines, which in his opinion published female texts in order to achieve financial advantages.

In the aftermath of the revolutions of 1848, many women (just like Júlia Szendrey) became widows and were expected to accommodate to the new circumstances and find their new roles. On the one hand, the revolution meant a private crisis for them; while on the other hand, it became a public crisis because of the transformation of the press. The revival of media in the 1850s offered new opportunities. The utility of these formed the public crisis for new optional career models. Most of the female writers started their publishing process around 1857. It seems that they recognized these opportunities. At the same time, the Gyulai debate as a crisis mentioned many problems related to contemporary literature and society, such as

¹⁰⁵ MTAK Kt. K 524/1. The manuscript archive of the National Széchényi Library and the Petőfi Literary Museum keep Júlia Szendrey's manuscripts as well.

the relationship between female writers and the emancipation of women, the questions of amateurishness, the professionalization of (both male and female) writers and the differences between the commercialized and aesthetic, elitist approaches to literature.

Social and financial background of the female writers

The majority of the female writers were supported by their families in their literary activities in the 19th century.¹⁰⁶ Some of them lived in literary atmosphere from her childhood as the parents were writers; others married with writers and continued or started to publish their works as wives. Whereas in the 18th century the women writers had mainly aristocrat or noble origin, Protestant religion and habitation at the countryside, in the 19th century the number of the citizen women who started to publish their works significantly increased. One of the reasons was the impact of the Revolution and War of Independence of 1848 – 1849 which was the most difficult for those widow women who lived in the city without independent estate or familiar inheritance. Therefore, the consequences of the war intertwined with the individual desires for self-expression and encouraged the female participation in the world of paid work.

According to the previous researches of Anna Fábri especially those women concentrated in Pest-Buda who were novel writers, translators or dealt with children literature, whereas others who preferred the poems or the personal genres such as memoirs and diaries rather lived at the countryside.¹⁰⁷ She also emphasized that the works of Lutheran female writers were outstanding among the novel writers, whereas the Catholic women writers paid more attention to the children literature as well as to the translations. The single or divorced women preferred the personal genres, whereas the married women contributed to the children literature in a significantly higher extent. Although the birthplaces of female writers represented equally the different parts of the country, especially those women tried to move to Pest-Buda who came from the lowland plain or from Upper Hungary, whereas the cultural power of Transylvania was strong. According to the measures of Anna Fábri approximately 40 percent of the regularly publisher women lived in Pest-Buda.¹⁰⁸ At the same time, those women who insisted

¹⁰⁶ Fábri Anna, »*A szép tiltott táj felé*« *A magyar íróknak története két századforduló között (1795 – 1905)*, Budapest 1996, 233. The summarization of her researches in English: Fábri Anna, *Hungarian Women Writers, 1790 – 1900*, in Celia Hawkesworth (ed.), *A History of Central European Women's Writing*, New York 2001, 87 – 109.

¹⁰⁷ Fábri Anna, »*A szép tiltott táj felé*« cit., 237.

¹⁰⁸ Fábri Anna, »*A szép tiltott táj felé*« cit., 232.

to their homeland (especially those who came from Transdanubia or Transylvania), preserved the regional character of their career.¹⁰⁹ Therefore, regardless of the exact number of the citizen female writers, the most active representatives of the profession lived in Pest-Buda with a writer, poet or editor husband.

The most productive female writer of the period was the novel writer Lenke Bajza. She was the most popular and widely-read Hungarian writer after Mór Jókai and the first female writer who had significant readership in the country.¹¹⁰ She was the daughter of József Bajza poet and critic who died in 1858. Lenke Bajza published her first book in the same year and married with Gusztáv Heckenast who was the most influential and rich book publisher in the contemporary Pest-Buda. Although later she divorced and married with her previous admirer, the politician Ferenc Beniczky and became a best-seller author in the second marriage, at the beginning of her writer career the first marriage with Heckenast was very profitable. The later reception of Lenke Bajza always emphasized that she was not a good writer from aesthetical point of view, but she was a professional breadwinner writer and her presence in the contemporary cultural life was determining. Therefore, her figure is an inevitable comparison point in the discussion about the professionalization of the writing.

In comparison with Lenke Bajza, the career of Júlia Szendrey was barely supported with influential social network. The two years of her marriage with Petőfi was very short and her second marriage did not connect her to the literary life at all. She lived with her historian husband, Árpád Horvát considerably isolated life in the Hársfa Street which situated in Erzsébetváros (Elisabethtown). (Map. 5.) This part of Pest-Buda situated farer from the city centre than her previous residences during her first marriage. However, as Ignác Szendrey, the father of Júlia bought the house, it was their own property. They did not participate in social events; Júlia Szendrey spent the majority of her time as housewife and mother as they had three children.

She lived in the traditional female roles which were totally different than in her first marriage which was a modern relationship based on equality. Whereas Petőfi regarded her as intellectual partner and independent personality, Árpád Horvát expected from her the

¹⁰⁹ Fábri Anna, »A szép tiltott táj felé« cit., 83.

¹¹⁰ Török Zsuzsa, „Legtermékenyebb összes női íróink között” Beniczkyné Bajza Lenke és a könyvpiar a 19. század második felében, in „Irodalomtörténet”, 2015, 4, 376.

traditional female roles in the everyday life and – as her last letter proved – totally subaltern female roles in their sexual life. After 17 years of their marriage, in 1867 she moved separately to the Zerge (today Horánszky) Street and wanted to change her religion from Catholic to Protestant in order to divorce from Árpád Horvát.¹¹¹ Although she died one year later, in 1868 and they never divorced officially, a few days before her death she sent a letter to him in which she analysed the problems of their marriage in a detailed way. They had different opinions about the happiness, about the sexuality as well as about the female roles: “I confidently denied the truth of that principle which he as husband wanted to force on me, according to which “the woman does not have other duty than the satisfaction of the lasciviousness of the husband” and “the woman have to be happy only in the satisfaction of this lasciviousness.”¹¹² According to her description, Árpád Horvát always handled her as blind and submissive toy for his rough instincts.

Júlia Szendrey started her own literary career in 1857, in the seventh year of her second marriage. Her poems were organized based on three main, recurring topics: her maternal feelings, her very strong desire after the death and the memory of her former, eternally lost happiness. She never published under the name of her husband; she always used her maiden name. As she knew the working of the urban media, she achieved success soon. She translated Andersen-tales and published poems, short stories in the most diverse journals. Her social network was quite broad based on her publication list. She did not connect her career only to one journal which was characteristic in the cases of other female writers who had editor husbands.

However, she published not only in journals, but also in specific press products which were made especially for women. These were distinct annals, calendars or albums which contained literary texts as well as useful information for mothers about the education of children, recipes, advices about beauty care, etc. These aesthetic, small-size press products were edited usually by women such as the *Almanac for Hungarian Women* by Emília Kánya. Júlia Szendrey published poems also in different albums with charitable goals. One of these was edited by Pál Gyulai as the representative of *Hungarian Writers' Charity Foundation (Magyar Írók Segélyegylete)*.¹¹³ This case highlights that the principles of the public

¹¹¹ Mikes Lajos, Dernői Kocsis László (eds.), *Szendrey Julia* cit., 337 – 338.

¹¹² Mikes Lajos, Dernői Kocsis László (eds.), *Szendrey Julia* cit., 184.

¹¹³ Gyulai Pál (ed.), *Anthologia híres magyar írók és költők műveiből. Részvét könyve*, Pest 1863, 276.

discussion about female writers were often different from the practise of the editors. Gyulai – who regularly appeared in the media as the biggest enemy of the female writing – occasionally published poems of women as editor.

The poet and editor János Arany was more permissive towards the female writers than his friend, Gyulai. He thought that the female art is not useful, nor harmful. Although he did not support the women in theory at all, he also published several texts from them in his journal called *Koszoru*. However, he used in practise the theoretical principles about female writing and preferred rather the tales and translations than the poems. He published several times these text types from Júlia Szendrey and he also supported the career of a young girl, Janka Wohl who became one of the most determining female figures of the literary life from the 1860s.¹¹⁴

Summary

The debates about the women writers in 1858 and in the following years revealed double approaches towards the high number of the female publications. On the one hand, the new phenomenon was shocking for the elitist representatives of the contemporary cultural life, on the other hand the principles and the practices were not on the same page. Gyulai – who was considered as the enemy of the public female writing – as well as János Arany – who insisted to the high quality of the literary texts – also published the works of women. However, they distinguished the “female genres” and preferred those authors and texts which accept their rules. The publication list of Júlia Szendrey reflected the contemporary expectations: she published her novelettes, tales and translations in prestigious journals, whereas her poems were published in specifically female press products.

The women writers – even if they were really successful – did not become the really appreciated members of the urban society. As their activities did not match with the official idea about the role of literature in the nation building and in the high culture, their works were usually considered as superfluous or even harmful practices which ruin the traditional female roles. In spite of the actresses who strengthened the national identity by their Hungarian

¹¹⁴ Török Zsuzsa, *Wohl Janka és Arany János kapcsolata sajtóközlemények tükrében*, in Pusztai Bertalan (ed.), *Médiумok, történetek, használatok – Ünnepi tanulmánykötet a 60 éves Szajbély Mihály tiszteletére*, Szeged 2012, 140 – 155.

performances, the female writers did not contribute to similar goals. Therefore, their activities were regarded as valuable work only if these served “useful goals” as the education of women and children. In spite of the prejudices, the female writers were able to earn significant amounts of money by their work. As the majority of them had literary familiar background as their parents or husbands were key figures as writers or editors, they did not take it as the primary source of living. However, as the female readership – which strengthened in this period – needed the new and exciting readings, the novel writer women (for instance, Lenke Bajza) could become rich due to their writings.

Urban Space Through Female Eyes – Pest-Buda in the memoir of Emília Kánya

Emília Kánya became the first female editor in the Austro-Hungarian Empire when her magazine called *Családi Kör* (Family Circle) was set off in 1860. That was also the first family magazine in Hungary which aimed at the educated middle-class women as its reading public.¹¹⁵ The phenomenon of the new type of journal edited by woman editor was examined several times by Hungarian literary historians in the context of the contemporary printed press and female education.¹¹⁶ The memoir of Emília Kánya was also analysed from social historical approach, with special emphasis on its image about Fiume.¹¹⁷ However, the role of Pest-Buda in her career has never been investigated.

My main goal is to explore the representation and the role of the city in the memoir of Emília Kánya. I put special emphasis on the connections between her mental map and her social network. I analyze the text especially through three main aspects: the expressions of the urban identity, her reflections on the changes of the cityscape and the role of the female editor in urban society.

She was born in 1828 as the daughter of Pál Kánya Lutheran headmaster in Pest.¹¹⁸ Therefore, she participated in the social life of the city from her childhood. The home of the Kánya family was important social centre in the city. The evangelical elite in Pest were multicultural (ethnically and linguistically German, Slovak and Hungarian) and it had significant role in the

¹¹⁵ Szaffner Emilia, *Az első magyar szerkesztőnő és lapja, a Családi Kör*, in „Magyar Könyvszemle”, 1998, 4, 371.

¹¹⁶ Szaffner Emilia, *Az első magyar szerkesztőnő* cit., 353 – 371. Török Zsuzsa, *Kánya Emília szerkesztői és írói pályája*, in: “Irodalomtörténet”, 2011, 42, 4, 475 – 489. Pogány György, *Női olvasás a reformkorban és az önkényuralom idején: Slachta Etelka, Kánya Emília olvasmányai, Jósika Júlia nézetei az olvasásról*, in: “Könyv és nevelés”, 2014, 16, 42 – 58.

¹¹⁷ Borsody Emese, *Kánya Emília: Réges-régi időkről – Egy 19. századi írónő emlékiratának elemzése és értelmezése*. Manuscript: History MA Thesis, Miskolc 2011. Fábri Anna, *Egy XIX. századi írónő Fiume magyarjairól: Kánya Emília emlékirata*, in: Csaba, Kiss Gy. (ed.), *Fiume és a magyar kultúra: művelődéstörténeti tanulmányok*, Budapest 2004, 47 – 80. Kiss Gy. Csaba, *Fiumei képek Kánya Emília idejéből*, in: Steinert Ágota (edit.), *Évek és színek: tanulmányok Fábri Anna tiszteletére hatvanadik születésnapja alkalmából*, Budapest 2005, 177 – 181.

¹¹⁸ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időkről. Egy 19. századi írónő emlékiratai* (eds. Fábri Anna, Kiss Bori), Budapest 1998, 19.

cultural life of the city.¹¹⁹ The sociability and the different kind of companionships remained important during the whole life of Emília Kánya.

The Kánya family lived at the later Deák square, next to the Lutheran church and school. (Map.4.) This was a determining node with the highest location in the city. Emília Kánya characterized the square thoroughly when she wrote about the big flood of 1838 in her memoir:

“Since several days there was touchable apprehension in the whole city, and at the square where the Lutheran church and double-storied school building stood, where we lived, the scramble was indescribable. The news were awful from each part of the city, now this street was swamped by the water, now that, this and this house was crashed over. The residents of the suburb escaped to the countryside, but countless family came to here, to our area, because the Elisabeth square which was only an empty, ugly place at that time, and the Deák square before our house, and the Sütő street until the church – the highest point was in the city, and we lived as on an island, beset with water-waves.”¹²⁰

The Deák square remained an important node on the mental map of Emília Kánya for her whole life. When she became the editor of the first Hungarian female magazine, she had to choose the place of her editorial office. She rented a small flat on the corner of the Hajó Street, near to the Deák square, because she lived there with her parents again after her divorce. She spent her mornings in her office, she greeted the writers, wrote and corrected their manuscripts with colleagues, Viktor Szokoly and Mór Szegfi who became her second husband. The urban space and her career inevitably intertwined in her whole life.

The parks, gardens and green environment also had significant role in the life practices of Emília Kánya. She mentioned two major parks from her childhood. One of these was the Városliget (City Park) where the family took walks generally twice a week. In the first half of the nineteenth century it was regarded in also international context as one of the first city

¹¹⁹ László Ferenc, *Evangélikus társasélet a reformkori Pest-Budán*, in: “Budapesti Negyed”, 2004, 12, 165 – 184.

¹²⁰ “Nem voltam akkor még tízéves (1828. novemberben születtem). Már napok óta nagy nyugtalanság volt az egész városban, és azon a téren, ahol a lutheránus templom és a kétemeletes iskolaépület állt, ahol mi laktunk, ott leírhatatlan volt a tolongás. Rettentő híreket hoztak hozzánk a város minden részéből, most ezt az utcát öntötte el a víz, most amazt, most ennyi meg ennyi ház dőlt össze. A külváros lakói vidékre menekültek, de számtalan család ide, a mi tájunkra, mert az Erzsébet tér, ami akkor még csak egy üres, csúnya hely volt, meg a Deák tér a házuk előtt, meg a Sütő utca a templomig – a legmagasabb pontja volt a városnak, és mi mintegy szigeten laktunk, körülvéve hullámokkal.” Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időkről* cit., 19.

parks which was in public property.¹²¹ The other was the Városmajor at the Buda side where they often picnicked.¹²²

Another female memoir written by Mária Csapó – who later also edited family journal for shorter period – mentioned also the parks of the city as pleasant scenes of her childhood in her memoir. She wrote remarks beyond the Városliget and Városmajor about Zugliget and the Orczy-garden¹²³ which was also mentioned by the significant guide books about Pest.¹²⁴ She was looking for the Sundays when the family went with carriage to the Orczy-garden where her brother regularly did his homework as well.¹²⁵

Beside the private free time, the parks and public gardens had crucial role in the urban social life as well. These were determining places of the self-representation of distinct social groups. The hills of Buda, especially the so-called Zugliget and Normafa were the focal points of social connections. (Map. 6.) The most prominent writers, painters, actors, singers as well as the bourgeois families and children spent their free time at these places. The parks and gardens were one of the most important meeting points of the intellectuals in the city.

The memoir of Emília Kánya included a description of a Sunday excursion at Zugliget in 1846. She spent the day in the company of Albert Pákh who was old friend of her family and the later editor of the famous and long-lived family magazine, the *Vasárnapi Újság* (Sunday Newspaper). In 1860 he suggested to her the idea of editing a female magazine.¹²⁶ According to the description of the excursion the company was sitting next to the little lake of Disznófő which was a famous fountain in Zugliget. Meanwhile a young writer, Alajos Degré joined to their company and let them know that the famous Tízek Társasága (company of ten famous writers and poets) spent their time near to them. As Sándor Petőfi, the most famous poet of the company was also present among the writers, Emília Kánya asked Degré to introduce him to their company.¹²⁷ Therefore, the personal connection of Emília Kánya and Júlia Szendrey, the later wife of Petőfi derived from this meeting.

¹²¹ Magyar Erzsébet, *Kertek, parkok Pest-Buda társaséletében a 19. században*, in: “Budapesti Negyed”, 2004, 12, 136 – 164.

¹²² Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időkről* cit., 10.

¹²³ Vachott Sándorné, *Rajzok a múltból*. Budapest 1889, 300 – 301.

¹²⁴ Tomala Ferdinánd, Buda és Pesth városoknak s környékeinek tekinteteik hozzá kapcsolt leírással. Pest 1827, 22 – 23.

¹²⁵ Vachott Sándorné, *Rajzok a múltból* cit., 300 – 301.

¹²⁶ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időkről* cit., 179.

¹²⁷ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időkről* cit., 62 – 63.

The Zugliget as well as the Normafa were covered by forests at the end of the eighteenth century and these started to be build-up area due to restaurants and holiday houses of famous artists from the 1830s – 1840s. The Normafa was called after the similar title of the Bellini-opera (Norma), because Róza Klein Schodel, a female opera singer sang it there in 1840.¹²⁸ Although these green areas were the outskirts of the city, these became important centres of the urban social life. Similar processes were observable world-widely. For instance, Frederick Law Olmsted who was regarded as “America’s great pioneer landscape architect,” wrote the following line in 1870 in his essay called *Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns*.¹²⁹: “A park fairly well managed near a large town, will surely become a new center of that town.”¹³⁰ In this article he provided a number of specific guidelines for parks, parkways and laid out the political and philosophical case for public parks with three main arguments related to their functions: to improve public health, to combat urban vice and social degeneration and to advance the cause of civilisation by the provision of urban amenities that would be democratically available to all.

Therefore, the parks, public gardens and green areas had double function on the mental maps of Kánya Emília and her contemporaries. On the one hand, these were nodes of the coeval social life. On the other hand, if one considers the physical image of the city, these could be regarded as landmarks, because these were easily identifiable contrast with their background. The parks provided dust-proof, refreshing and healthy environment for the citizens and served the emersion from the usual framework.

Social network and mental map

At the same time, the interlocking function of the node and landmark in the space utilization of Emília Kánya was not haphazard. As the social connections had determining role in her life from her childhood, these shaped her mental map as well. Due to her wide social network, she participated in distinct companies which provided diversified spaces for her life practices. Therefore, not only public, but also private gardens were opened for her such as the garden of Miklós Barabás, the famous painter who portrayed the significant artists and intellectuals of

¹²⁸ Overview about the career of Róza Klein Schodel as well as about the professionalization of the Hungarian opera: Tallián Tibor, *Schodel Rozália és a hivatásos magyar operajátszás kezdetei*, Budapest 2015.

¹²⁹ Olmsted, Frederick Law, *Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns*, in: Richard T. LeGates and Frederic Stout (eds.), *The City Reader*, London, New York, 2003, 307 – 313.

¹³⁰ Olmsted, Frederick Law, *Public Parks* cit., 313.

the period.¹³¹ They have known each other from her childhood. Emília Kánya met with English people at first at the house of Barabás.¹³² They came to Pest-Buda because of the building of the Chain Bridge. Barabás had two houses in the city: one was a flat next to the Danube Bank and the second was a mansion with garden in the Városmajor. Emília Kánya described a representative evening party in the garden of the Barabás-mansion as a mark of esteem for Ferenc Liszt famous musician. The garden was designed by fairy-lamps and the most important figures of the musical life were present, for instance, the famous music critic Zellner from Vienna.¹³³ As Emília Kánya was interested in music, she participated in many concerts as well. For instance, in 1853 she was present at the first philharmonic concert in Pest which was organized in the National Museum where Ferenc Erkel, the illustrious composer played.

Emília was also regular theatre-goer. She called the opening of the National Theatre of 1837 as unforgettable moment in her memoir; however, she was only nine years old at that time.¹³⁴ She enjoyed the experiences of the theatre and wrote about the significant actors and actresses such as Gábor Egressy, Márton Lendvay, Mrs. Lendvay, Róza Laborfalvi, Mrs. Schodel and Kornélia Hollósy. Therefore, the cultural institutions, the gardens and the salons of her friends determined her mental map in the city. She regarded these places as nodes of the social life and as landmarks in the cityscape.

Emília referred several times to the Danube which was the main edge in the city, between Pest and Buda. The putting of the foundation stone of the Chain Bridge was a key moment in her childhood. Although she was not present at the celebration, on the following day she went with her family to the scene. She referred to their adult experiences related to the Danube Bank as well. In 1849, during the Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence General Hentzi's cannons had demolished the palaces of the Danube Bank on the Pest side. She was shocked by the experience and regretted the palaces of the Danube Bank, especially the *Redout* as one of the most significant buildings in the social and cultural life of Pest. (Map 4.)

¹³¹ He portrayed Emília Kánya before her first marriage: Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időről. Egy 19. századi írónő emlékiratai* (eds. Fábri Anna, Kiss Bori), Budapest 1998, 73.

¹³² Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időről* cit., 34 – 35.

¹³³ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időről* cit., 154.

¹³⁴ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időről* cit., 24.

Private use of space

The private use of space was influenced by her marriages in Emília Kánya's life. She lived at the later Deák square from her birth until 1847 when she married with Feldinger Grottfied who was the son of a rich German family in Temesvár (today Timisoara, in Romania). Before the wedding the family was shopping furniture and dresses in the city. The wedding was held on 8 September in 1847, and the new couple travelled to Temesvár on the following day by steam boat. (Map.2.) The role of Pest-Buda in her life was highlighted because of this event: "My heart was almost broken, saying goodbye to my beloved parents, brothers, to good friends and the blessed soil of my home city!"¹³⁵

The following occasion when Emília Kánya went to Pest-Buda to visit her parents was in April of 1848. She arrived with his husband to the revolutionary atmosphere of the city. "How much changes are in Pest, how much liveliness and glorious face!"¹³⁶ In the next month, they took an excursion to Vienna. After the return to Pest-Buda, the Kánya family was divided: the sister and mother of Emília moved to the hills of Buda, because their doctor suggested the air of the Svábhegy to them which is a district with a lot of green area on the hills of Buda. Therefore, Emília stayed at the Deák square and she enjoyed the status of the young and relatively independent housewife in the urban flat.

Although Emília returned to Temesvár with her husband, the atmosphere of the town became dangerous for them because of the revolutionary articles of Grottfied. The nationalities of Temesvár stood on the side of the Habsburgs and the young couple was threatened by them. Therefore, they moved to Pest-Buda and bought a flat near to home of Emília's parents, in the so-called Blühdorn-house, in the Háromkorona Street.¹³⁷ The first child of her, Irén was born here. Before Windischgrätz occupied Pest-Buda, they left the city and escaped to Pilis which situated in the nearby mountains where Samu Sárkány, the friend of Grottfied lived.

They returned to Pest-Buda in May of 1849, after the Austrians left the city, but General Hentzi, the governor of Buda started to bombard Pest in the same month. They had to escape again within the city: "We went in dark, with petrified heart in killing anxiety, in drift of bullets, in the Zrínyi Street, after we turned in other street and finally achieved the Újvilág Street, to the medical university. Lajos Markusovszky our beloved friend accompanied us,

¹³⁵ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időről* cit., 74.

¹³⁶ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időről* cit., 85.

¹³⁷ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időről* cit., 92.

embraved and encouraged that the strong walls of the university provide us enough safety.”¹³⁸ Nevertheless, as the noise of the bombing was enormous, and the place did not prove secure, they had to escape further: “On the following day Balassa, our gentle deliverer took us to Terézváros, to the Hársfa Street where the freshly built and still untenanted commercial hospital was.”¹³⁹ As Emília feared for her child and the bombing was unbearably close and noisy, she decided that they left the city: “I was running through the Városliget and I stopped just at the Hermina chapel. I flopped down on the stairs of the chapel, I took hold my dear Irénke and I was crying bitterly...Where now houses stand around the chapel, there then trees and grass were, and several thousand people crowded, below canvas tents. Pure sad misery! They sold the food; they jangled, haggled, cried and cursed. And the gunfire continually was bumping.”¹⁴⁰ They wanted to achieve the train line and escape to anywhere. They went to Kőbánya, entered to the garden of a restaurant, ordered lunch and looked the people. Emília recognized Mór Jókai writer and his wife, Róza Laborfalvi among the people who also had lunch in the garden. Finally they went to Pilis and stay there until the end of the bombing.

When they returned back to the city, Emília was shocked by the scene of the city: “What has become of our beautiful city! The Danube Bank became almost unrecognizable! The big Redout-building was battered down; the enormous pillars were laying on the earth... and the Nagyhíd Street (today Deák Street), the nearby streets and squares!”¹⁴¹

In the following three years Emília lived with her husband’s family in Temesvár again, but in 1852 they moved finally to Pest-Buda. They found flat on the corner of the Papnövelde and Egyetem Street and her house started to become the scene of the familiar and professional meetings as well.¹⁴² (Map 2. Map 4.)

Editorial attempts

In 1851 Grottfied, the husband of Emília had an idea about publishing a German newspaper. As they lived in Temesvár, they could not edit it in Hungarian, because the residents of the town spoke in German. The title of the journal was Euphrosine. It was short-lived attempt, because the humoristic newspaper did not attract the readership.¹⁴³ However, the correspondence around the journal was arranged by Emília for six months. She wrote letters

¹³⁸ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időről* cit., 107.

¹³⁹ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időről* cit., 108.

¹⁴⁰ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időről* cit., 109.

¹⁴¹ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időről*. cit., 110.

¹⁴² Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időről*. cit., 151.

¹⁴³ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időről* cit., 134.

to German and Viennese writers (Castelli, Cerry, Hebel, Vogl, Wouwerman) as well as Hungarian authors (Albert Pákh) in order to ask texts for the newspaper. The mentioned foreigner writer encouraged her to write articles and short stories which were published in Hamburg.¹⁴⁴ Later she became to the colleague of a local journal, the *Temesvári Lapok*.¹⁴⁵ However, she wrote under pseudonym; because she did not want let her friends know about her working. She emphasized in her memoire that her children and household never suffered from her writer attempts.

After 1852, when Emília moved to Pest-Buda, she was asked by the editor of the *Temesvarer Zeitung*, Viktor Flatt to write letters from Pest for the journal. She corresponded about the events of the social life, literature and art instead of politics. At the beginning she wrote once, later twice a week and she got regularly fees after her texts.

She got request from journals of Pest as well. The editor of the *Divatcsarnok*, Gyula Bulyovszky asked a novel from her, but she refused it: “At that time I still feared from the women writers and I keep my attempts in secret.”¹⁴⁶ However, by that time she has already published in journals of Berlin and Hamburg.

Her autonomous and publicly undertook career started only years later, after she divorced from her husband and she needed own income. She sued for divorce in 1857 which lasted until 1860. She moved to the house of her parents with her four children: “My autonomous life started here, in which I had to work for my children and for myself, because the maintenance fee was so slim that I could only beg. I started to write assiduously during my lawsuit, and not only for the drawer of my writing-table, but also for subsistence.”¹⁴⁷

Albert Pákh who was her old friend and the editor of the *Vasárnapi Újság* (*Sunday Magazine*) which was one of the most successful Hungarian journals, talked with her a lot about his editorial experiences. He encouraged her to edit a female journal which was absent in the press market.¹⁴⁸ She gained publishers, colleagues and editorial office as well.¹⁴⁹ Later she married with Mór Szegfi who was one of her colleagues. Several writers visited her in her editorial office or in the house of her parents. For instance, Mrs. Vachott who started to edit a journal for mothers (*Anyák Hetilapja*) a year later which remained only a short-lived

¹⁴⁴ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időkről* cit., 139.

¹⁴⁵ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időkről* cit., 139.

¹⁴⁶ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időkről* cit., 152.

¹⁴⁷ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időkről* cit., 176.

¹⁴⁸ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időkről* cit., 179.

¹⁴⁹ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időkről* cit., 182.

enterprise, Janka Wohl and Stephanie Wohl, the later celebrated writer sisters and Mrs. Batthány, Júlia Apraxin actress who was a scandalous woman dandy in the eyes of the contemporaries.¹⁵⁰

Beside her own journal she has also participated in other social activities. For instance, she edited almanacs; she sent an ornamented album for a famous Hungarian writer, Miklós Jósika and her wife, Jósika Júlia who immigrated to Brussels.¹⁵¹ She discussed the topics of female education with Mrs. Veres Hermin Beneczky, the famous female school founder. In 1873 they were invited into Vienna because of the first *Frauentag*. Emília was asked to hold a speech about the female education in Hungarian as well as in German.

In 1880 the journal of Emília Kánya was ceased after twenty years, because the taste of the readership has changed.¹⁵² Her financial background became worse. One of her young daughters got a teacher position in Ipolyság (Sahy, today Slovakia), therefore she had to leave Budapest. She never returned back, because later they moved to Fiume (today Rijeka in Croatia) because of the work of her daughter. When she had to say goodbye to the city, she clearly expressed her strong urban identity: “Budapest was not only my place of residence, but I was born there, I was happy there and also very unhappy. Every string of my roots founded there...”¹⁵³ As she was inexperienced in the rural life, she had strong fears towards it. When they lived in the rural and small town, she felt it empty and superficial. She was surprised that the people lived without literature and music, every day is similar, but they could be satisfied.¹⁵⁴

Summary

Emília Kánya wrote her memoir as a seventy-five years old lady in Fiume. It could be significant source material for several research questions such as for the history of reading, the examination of her self-analysis, the connections between the genres of autobiographies and diaries (she wrote her autobiography based on her former diaries) as well as the female professionalization.

¹⁵⁰ Mátay Mónika, *Egy nődandy karrierje: képek Batthyány Apraxin Júlia életéből*, in: “Médiakutató”, 2009, 4, 81 – 86.

¹⁵¹ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időkről* cit., 193 – 194.

¹⁵² Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időkről* cit., 205 – 207.

¹⁵³ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időkről* cit., 215.

¹⁵⁴ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időkről* cit., 229.

I put the emphasis on her image about Pest-Buda. As she wrote her memoir in 1903, she referred several times to the alterations of the cityscape, street names, etc. It makes possible to examine her mental map about the city not only synchronically, but also diachronically. She saw the establishment of the first determining city elements (Chain Bridge, National Theatre, etc.) in her childhood; she experienced the vivid social life in the 1840s, the revolutionary city in 1848, the besieged, battered and ruined city after the Revolution and War of Independence as well as the developing metropolis in the 1860s – 1870s. As she was born in Pest, she did not refer to the paths of the city at all. According to Lynch's empirical research, those people who knew the city best of all did rely more upon small landmarks instead of paths. The mental map of Emília Kánya was formulated based on the spaces of her social interactions: theatres, museums, salons, parks, public gardens and the hills of Buda. These meant small landmarks for her. The later Deák square was the most significant node for her. As the home of her parents remained important for her, she organized the spaces of her career such as her editorial office in relation to this node.

At the same time, she did not think in districts at all in her memoir. What could be the cause of it? The theory of Lynch was formulated based on American cities. Los Angeles is often considered as the quintessential postmodern city because of its size, fragmentation and diversity.¹⁵⁵ Although Pest became a metropolis by 1903, and its districts have already emerged on a certain level,¹⁵⁶ these did not become determining in the perception of the city. At least, in the memoir of Emília Kánya the image of Budapest is not diversified in the terms of districts. She rather depended upon other city elements.

The diachronically formulated image of Pest-Buda highlighted the changing role of the city in her career. The wide-ranging social network from her childhood proved the special advantage in the city and later it was crucial element in her editorial career. The first steps toward the publishing started in Temesvár, but the case of the short-lived journal which she edited with her husband in the Transylvanian town, highlighted one of the main characteristics of the coeval cultural life: the success was connected to the metropolis. She discovered in Pest the possibilities of the urban media as a career opportunity for an intellectual woman.

¹⁵⁵ Richard T. LeGates and Frederic Stout (eds.), *The City Reader*, London, New York, 2003, 166.

¹⁵⁶ In 1873 when the three parts of the city (Pest, Buda, Óbuda) were unified, the area was divided into ten districts.

Reflections on the transformation of Pest-Buda in the 19th century

The 1860s meant an extremely exciting division line and a flourishing period in the urban history of Pest-Buda. Although researchers generally pay much more attention to the period which followed the unification of Budapest (1873), the representations of Pest-Buda in the 1840s – 1860s are also suggestive because of the paradoxical conditions. In these decades several city elements were constructed which determined the image of Budapest until nowadays. My objective is to analyse the reflections and the role of the urban transformations in the rhetoric of a female and a male autobiography. I compare the texts of Emília Kánya and Frigyes Podmaniczky who was the main character in the contemporary municipal policy. As both of them were children in Pest-Buda, I examine their city experience in their childhood as well as their later impressions and reflections on their environment.

Experience of the city in childhood

The appearance of the intensifying urban identity in rural environment is recurring motif in the text of Emília Kánya. When she wrote about her childhood, she often used the viewpoint of other people related to her own identity. For instance, when she described a holiday at her grandmother in Csorba (today Štrba in Slovakia), she called herself in the narration as “poor pale urban missy-grandchild.”¹⁵⁷ She used the same method in the description of a hiking in the hills of Csorba. She wrote about the natives who looked with good-intentioned excuse and regret the “fumbling of the urban missies.”¹⁵⁸ When she described that her aunt visited them in Pest, and she got nice apples, honey, cheese, nuts and mushroom as a gift from her grandmother, she remarked that these are unforgettable moment for an urban child. Although the spaces of Pest-Buda had important role in her autobiography, she also devoted detailed descriptions to her excursions at the countryside. She spent the holidays, Eastern and Pentecost in Tóalmás (55 kilometres from Budapest) where her aunt worked for the Baron Prónay family. As Emília was a fragile young girl, they invited her to Tóalmás where she could enjoy the huge park and lake which belonged to the palace. The aunt was also the friend of the Podmaniczky family who had large estate in Aszód, near to Pest-Buda.¹⁵⁹ Emília visited Mrs. Podmaniczky with her aunt, and she got acquainted with her four children. One of the girls was Júlia Podmaniczky, the later female writer and one of the boys was Frigyes

¹⁵⁷ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időkről* cit., 34.

¹⁵⁸ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időkről* cit., 40.

¹⁵⁹ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időkről* cit., 18.

Podmaniczky, the later municipal politician, writer and the big idolater of the later Budapest. They played together, however, separately according to their gender. The boys were imitating soldier games, whereas the two girls were watching them in secret.¹⁶⁰ When they thought that the boys were far from them, they started to imitate the same game at the terrace. They were walking by soldier steps; they gave commands to each other. However, the boys paid attention to the scene from the window and they started to flout and laugh at them. When the girls realised that they were not alone, they were running to the garden in full flight. Emília remarked that she felt herself ashamed for a long time following this event and she never repeated this kind of game, because she regarded the end of that as a humbling defeat. What all of these means that the children were totally aware of their gender roles and this awareness influenced the borders of their games.

Emília Kánya as well as Frigyes Podmaniczky wrote about their child experiences of Pest-Buda especially from two aspects. They highlighted the different types of catastrophes as well as the spaces of playing. The memory of the flood of 1838: Stephan Prince visited her father and invited him with his whole family to the Castle of Buda.¹⁶¹ Kánya taught Czech language to the Archduke as well as mineralogy and botany, therefore they had good relationship. Although their home was at the Deák square which was free from the water as the highest point of the city, the danger of the flood was close to them. Kánya refused the offer, because his wife had newborn babies and the transportation was also dangerous for them. Therefore, they decided that they will accept the suggestion of the Archduke only if they had to escape. Emília as child was sad because they missed the unique opportunity. According to her child imagination the princes slept in velvet robes and crowns and she regret that the danger of the flood passed away. However, after the flood the bad air of Pest became very unhealthy, the centre of the fever illnesses. Therefore, the Kánya family spent several months in Tóalmás. They went to Pest-Buda only for the bigger events such as the putting of the foundation stone of the Chain Bridge.

Frigyes Podmaniczky organized his experiences in thematic chapters. Although most parts of his text focus on the 1830s and 1840s, as he looked back to this period from the middle of the 1880s, the autobiography contains complex references. When he wrote about the role of the green environment in the cities, he dealt with the problem of public health and mentioned the first big cholera epidemic in Pest-Buda in 1831 which was determining experience in his

¹⁶⁰ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időről* cit., 19.

¹⁶¹ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időről* cit., 21.

childhood.¹⁶² His father did not allow them to leave the city, as the medical conditions were better in Pest. There were revolts in the city against the “protomedicus” (head-physician) who introduced the isolation and prohibited the free movement in the different parts of the city. As the nurse of the Podmaniczky-children was very curious, they were watching the events from the Nagy square (today Erzsébet square) as the hussars compassed the crowd. According to Podmaniczky, the confusion and shock of the people was reasonable as the streets were unbearably hot, dusty and dirty. The corpses were transferred by half-opened wagons to the cemeteries. As the illness was unknown for the people, it was frightening also for the accomplished layers of the urban society. After the epidemic, Podmaniczky mentioned the bad conditions of the public health and the public gardens. As he remarked, the Danube Bank served as the place of garbage collecting in the city and the only promenade which was suitable for walking was the environment of the so-called Újépület which was occupied by the army (near to the today Szabadság square).¹⁶³ However, he reflected on his prejudice: as he was attracted by the soldiers, the environment of this building seemed to him especially clean and pleasant.

Emília Kánya formulated totally different images about the parks of the city which fulfilled outstanding role in the life practices of her family. They celebrated the namedays and birthdays in the hills of Buda. She visited with her mother Mrs. Wohl who spent the summers at the Svábhegy because it was good for her health. As she was an educated, not ordinary woman, a lot of people visited her. Emília played with her 3-years-old daughter, Janka who later became an appreciated woman writer. As her father was a perfect botanist, Emília loved their family excursions in the hills of Buda. She mentioned in her narrative the City Park (Városliget) in a similar way, connected to another friendship from her childhood. As her father taught German and French language to Katinka Kendeffy – who later became the wife of Gyula Andrássy who was the Prime Minister of Hungary between 1867 – 1871) – they became good friends. One of their favourite entertainments was driving out to the City Park. According to the autobiography of Emília it was a peaceful and fresh space. As she remarked, sometimes they forgot about their expectations towards their status and they started to running and shocking their governess who preferred to sit quietly on the grass and read something.

¹⁶²Podmaniczky Frigyes, *Egy régi gavallér emlékei*, in Tóth Ferenc Tibor (ed.), Kutas Emilné Podmaniczky Márta (trans.), electronic doc., 2013, 16.

¹⁶³Podmaniczky Frigyes, *Egy régi gavallér cit.*, 18.

Frigyes Podmaniczky also mentioned the City Park of his childhood in similar context. As his brother did not like the equitation, his best playmate was the abovementioned Gyula Andrassy. They often rode a horse in competition in the City Park, but they had regularly huge debates about the paths to the City Park. Whereas Andrassy preferred the Erzsébet square, Podmaniczky wanted to choose the Korona Street for the scene of their “window parade,” next to the new block of flats of the street.¹⁶⁴ However, he mentioned the City Park also in negative context. In 1830 when the winter was extremely cold in Pest-Buda, the trees of the City Park were cut out in order to help the poor people and he was shocked by the scene which remained very remarkable for him.

The parks of Vienna and Pest-Buda

The experience of the foreign cities had significant impact on their image about Pest-Buda. Although Frigyes Podmaniczky had much more traveller experiences, Emília Kánya also went several times to Vienna where she was amazed by the rich collection of the museums and galleries as well as by the beautiful parks. In May of 1848 she spent four weeks there with her family.¹⁶⁵ The journey was a gift for her from his father-in-law. The brother of Emília studied in Vienna at that time. As she remarked, the young residents of the city lived “the period of posters and proclamations” because of the revolutionary events. However, Emília regarded Vienna as pure artistic experience, without its political connotations. She did not care with the exceptional conditions and events of the city, with the fact that the Habsburg court had to move to Innsbruck from Vienna because of the revolution. She admired the architecture of the city, the grandiose palaces, the royal buildings, the treasury, the collections of natural history, the fantastic theatres as well as the crowded life of the streets.

Emília regularly compared Vienna and Pest in her descriptions. She regarded these as twin cities: the former was the older, rich sister with countless treasures and the later was the poor and young sister in her eyes.¹⁶⁶ She expressed her strong feelings by the help of this image as her impressions were determined by the high quality and number of the Austrian galleries which were considerably bigger than the Hungarian museums. She was also amazed by the gorgeous rooms of Schönbrunn and the apartments of Maria Theresa. The French garden of

¹⁶⁴ He used the „Fensterparádé” expression in which the first part is German, the second one is Hungarian.” Podmaniczky Frigyes, *Egy régi gavallér* cit., 107.

¹⁶⁵ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időkről* cit., 85.

¹⁶⁶ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időkről* cit., 86.

the palace, the outlook from the Gloriette as well as the southern plants of the glasshouse had huge impact on her.

As her friends knew that she was interested in parks and plants, they visited both private and public gardens in Vienna. Emília mentioned the famous garden of Baron Hügel as paradisiacal beauty where millions of roses, jasmine and lilac bushes were blooming. She also visited the garden of Laxenburg which seemed almost as a forest for her because of the old and glorious trees. However, she considered the Prater as the greatest place, because the jovial Viennese people, “the nurse, the child, the soldier, the beer drinker citizen, the multicoloured urban folk” as well as the rich class could find their pleasure equally.¹⁶⁷ She also visited the bath of Baden where she tried the sulphur water; she climbed the Kahlenberg hill and visited the tomb of her favourite composer, Beethoven in the cemetery of Währing. She regarded these experiences as determining impressions which had long-term impact on her soul. Nevertheless, in her later descriptions of Pest-Buda were not present the parallel appraisal. Although in Vienna, she always compared the sights with her own city, later she did not use this experience as a measure during the assessment of Pest-Buda.

The impacts of the experiences of the foreign countries manifested themselves in a totally different way in the autobiography of Frigyes Podmaniczky. He travelled to Paris and Brussels in 1856.¹⁶⁸ The primary goal of the journey was to visit his several relatives and friends who lived in abroad. Her sister, Júlia Podmaniczky was the wife of a popular Hungarian writer, Miklós Jósika who had to leave the country because of his participation in the Revolution and War of Independence in 1848 – 1849. They immigrated to Brussels where the woman opened a lace shop and send fashion descriptions as well as literary texts to the Hungarian journals. The livelihood of the family based on her activities, although she was an aristocratic girl who never prepared for the breadwinner role. However, the intellectual and the merchant activities completed each other in her lifestyle. Podmaniczky visited her and her husband and they spent together a few weeks in a Belgian bath. After that he also travelled to German cities such as Stuttgart, Darmstadt, Heidelberg, Mannheim, Nürnberg, Augsburg and München.

He and his traveller friend stopped in Vienna when they travelled back to Hungary. In the emperor city where they visited Arthur Batthyány and his wife, Julia Apraxin, Podmaniczky

¹⁶⁷Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időkről* cit., 86.

¹⁶⁸ Steinert Ágota (ed.), Podmaniczky Frigyes, *Naplótöredékek 1824 – 1887*, Budapest, 1984, 60.

was amazed by the garden of Schönbrunn. As he highlighted, the fashionable garden served as the meeting point of the Viennese companies and he totally missed the similar social space in Hungary. According to him, the Hungarian spatial conditions did not give enough opportunity to bound social connections. He arrived back to Pest-Buda on Sunday and went to the City Park (Városliget) after lunch. After the Western European cities he was shocked by the experience. He regarded the City Park as the only space for amusement in Pest-Buda. Therefore, he felt huge contrast between the function and the usage of the space. In spite of its social functions, the park was neglected, only a few craftsmen were eating there with their families, during they heard the concert of the military band. As a result, he perceived the park as a hopeless space without the traces of any development or accomplishment. He made up his mind that the main goal of his life will be to improve his beloved, but backward hometown.

The city as palimpsest

How strong is in the autobiographies the perception of the city as palimpsest? In a lot of cases not only the researchers, but also the citizens see the city in layers. The expression of palimpsest refers to the multilayered characteristic. Originally this was a philological term which meant “a manuscript in which later writing has been superimposed on earlier (effaced) writing.”¹⁶⁹ The palimpsest theory is used very fruitfully not only by urban historians and landscape historians,¹⁷⁰ but also in the field of cultural heritage. As the “palimpsest preservation” refers to the multiple layers of histories and meanings, it highlights the importance of understanding the past while experiencing the present.¹⁷¹ Nevertheless, in the case of the autobiographies of Emília Kánya and Frigyes Podmaniczky I refer by this expression to personal histories, to the layers of the spatial memory. Whereas Podmaniczky permanently linked back to the earlier period of the city and referred to the alterations of the cityscape as well as to the changing customs of the citizens, Emília Kánya had rather short remarks about these. However, they did not exceed the chronological borders of their life; they did not go farer than their childhood in the deeper layers and the older memory of the city.

¹⁶⁹ Kroessler, A. Jeffrey, *The City as Palimpsest*, CUNY (City University of New York), Academic Works, 2015. http://academicworks.cuny.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1042&context=jj_pubs (2016. 05. 11.)

¹⁷⁰ Hoskins, William George, *The Making of the English Landscape*, London 1955.

¹⁷¹ Kroessler, A. Jeffrey, *The City as Palimpsest* cit. http://academicworks.cuny.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1042&context=jj_pubs (2016. 05. 11.)

“What a huge change brought the last half century!”¹⁷² – was emphasized in the autobiography of Podmaniczky. According to him, the places of entertainment and clubs were not so visited earlier as in his present, except the theatre and occasionally the circus. He saw the cause in the changing mentality towards the publicity: the lifestyle earlier was more domestic than in the present when every family live at the public spaces. He highlighted especially the occasions of eating. Everybody had breakfast, lunch and dinner at home. The outdoor dining was really extraordinary. However, he remarked that his mother was exception as she preferred to eat outside from early spring until late autumn.

As the mother, Eliza Noszticz-Jänkendorf had German origin; her several customs were unusual at first in Hungary. However, later these became more and more widespread and in the second half of the 19th century were already regarded as the elemental part of the bourgeois life practices. Besides the outdoor eating, the traditions of celebrating Christmas became popular due to her familiar activities. She was the daughter of the Saxon royal minister and came from Dresden. In the first year, when she moved to Hungary, nobody sold pine tree, therefore, she made the Christmas tree by paper. However, the first Christmas in the memory of Frigyes Podmaniczky was the year of 1828 when he was 4-years-old. As he mentioned, a lot of people visited them in order to see how they celebrated the Christmas. The Christmas tree was sensation for their relatives and friends who started to imitate them in the following years. However, it became really widespread only in the 1840s. As Hobsbawm remarked during the analysis of the bourgeois culture, the domestic rituals such as the Christmas tree, Christmas dinner, Christmas song were the expressions of the quintessential bourgeois world, the home.¹⁷³ Although the Baron Podmaniczky family belonged to the aristocracy, they significantly contributed to the spreading of the bourgeois culture by these practices.

The autobiography of Podmaniczky highlighted that the number of the coffeehouses and kiosks considerably increased in the last decades. He mentioned two old places of entertainment of the bourgeoisie (*Polgári Lövölde – Shooting Range, Augarten*) with their exact locations and also indicated their position change within the city. Both of these situated near to the border of the city. The *Lövölde* located at the end of the Lövész Street (today Pál Királyi Street), near to the Vámház boulevard which earlier was bordered by the city wall. The *Augarten* – which referred to the Augarten park in Vienna – was at the later István square

¹⁷² Podmaniczky Frigyes, *Egy régi gavallér* cit., 31.

¹⁷³ Hobsbawm, Eric, *The Age of Capital 1848 – 1875*, London 1975, 270 – 271.

in the Erzsébetváros and it was regarded also as another end of the city. According to Podmaniczky, the farer parts of the Király Street and Dob Street mattered as outskirts; these were neglected and valueless in that period.¹⁷⁴ In his autobiography the references to the earlier conditions of the city are the parts of an evolutionist narrative which put the emphasis on the development of Pest-Buda.

In the case of Emília Kánya the remarks on the conditions of the city of her childhood belong to the background of her stories about the urban spaces. Whereas the narrative of Podmaniczky was jumping between the past and the present, Emília focused rather on the past and put the reflections about the earlier conditions of the given spaces into her text as explanations in order to make the each story more understandable. The comparison between the different periods of the city is crucial in her text especially in the case of natural and social catastrophes. For instance, she noted that the Erzsébet square was only “an empty, ugly place” at the time of the flood of 1838 which was the highest point in the city with the Deák square. That remark served as an explanation why it was suitable space for the escaping crowds. The description about the image of Pest-Buda after its bombing in 1849 also included similar references. When she mentioned the destroyed and almost unrecognizable buildings, she highlighted the Nagyhíd Street as one of the most ruined areas. She also indicated in parentheses that this street is identical with the present Deák Street.

Whereas she used especially the urban spaces of the inner city as well as the fashionable parks, the hills of Buda among normal life conditions, in the period of the war the outskirts, the periphery of the city also became important for her. In 1849 she had to escape from the city twice: in May after the bombing of General Hentzi, and in July because of the Russian occupation. During these occasions she had to cross the dangerous outskirts of Pest-Buda and Temesvár. As she remarked about her style: “I do not talk about facts which belong to the history and which have already noted in the memory of generations, I report only on the dominant atmosphere.”¹⁷⁵ These parts of her text are strong expression of the female experience of the war, especially her fear for her child.

¹⁷⁴ Podmaniczky Frigyes, *Egy régi gavallér* cit., 31.

¹⁷⁵ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időkről* cit., 110.

Summary

Although both autobiographies represent the past of the city from the viewpoint of the present, the narratives which connect the periods are totally different in the two cases. The Podmaniczky-text built on the sharp opposition of the hopeless past and the wonderful present of the city. The imagined reader of his autobiography is totally aware of the important role of Podmaniczky in the progress of the city. He highlighted in the text those aspects which are suitable enough to emphasize the huge development of the city. His autobiography is continual latent interaction between the past and the present, but it also the part of an evolutionist narrative. The well-organized categorization of the different urban topics such as the public health, the role of the green environment in the city, the changing role of each districts and the personal information intertwined in the text. The municipal politician elevated the two cities, Pest-Buda and Budapest and stressed the huge problems of the way between them.

Nevertheless, Emília Kánya – who wrote later her autobiography and was exactly aware of the contemporary status and the enormous transformations of Budapest – did not formulate her narrative along the progressive modifications of the cityscape. The references about the earlier condition of Pest-Buda served background information for her urban stories, but also as emotional bonds between the different layers of the city. She presented her hometown especially by personal stories and by the expression of her strong feelings which connected her to the urban spaces. She often used the “juvenile” and “innocent” adjectives for Budapest. She imagined it as a younger sister of Vienna. However, this comparison determined only the description of the emperor city. In her Budapest-representations she did not remind her reader to the Vienna-experience. In spite of her, Podmaniczky was shocked because of the comparison of the City Park in Pest and the Schönbrunn Garden in Vienna which symbolized the huge differences between the Hungarian and the Western-European conditions. The experience of abroad determined his viewpoint and his goal was to achieve significant changes of the cityscape.

The gardens and parks had crucial role in both autobiographies. However, Emília Kánya always visited the “green salons” with company, whereas Frigyes Podmaniczky sometimes went alone which created another atmosphere to the perception of the city. For instance, his contemplation in the City Park which was a turning point for him after his foreign experiences necessarily was a lonely activity. These features formulated their different point of view.

Whereas Emília Kánya always perceived the city through her social interactions, Frigyes Podmaniczky rather paid attention to the built environment, to the physical conditions of the city which was waiting for development. Whereas the woman represented the atmospheres of each urban space and loved these as the child of the city, the man approached Budapest several times from technological point of view in order to emphasize the progress between the different periods. For Emília Kánya the nodes had crucial roles in the city, but the districts were not specifically important. For Frigyes Podmaniczky the outstanding node was missing in the city. He mentioned the Cukor Street in the inner city as his birthplace, he indicated its name in the present (Károlyi Street) and remarked that they had view to the garden of the Károlyi Palace. However, this place did not fulfil the same role than the Deák square as birthplace for Emília as the Podmaniczky family moved to another house after his birth and they also had a palace in Aszód. This aspect highlights the influence of their origin on their perception. Although Emília had bourgeois family and the Podmaniczky family belonged to the aristocracy, it did not matter so much in their social network as Emília was in close contact with several noble men and women and Podmaniczky also had bourgeois life practices and friends. However, as the Podmaniczky family had several properties, in the case of Frigyes the familiar experiences did not concentrated in one point of the city. In spite of Emília who perceived Pest-Buda from her familiar node. Besides this the other social nodes as the parks and the house of her closer friends determined her point of view. Nevertheless, the districts were important for Podmaniczky as indicators of the urban development. He could stress the transformations of the city by the changing position of its districts. The transformation which created a metropolis from the earlier Pest-Buda was equally positive phenomenon for them, but it had different role in their rhetoric.

The position of the female editors in urban society

Emília Kánya regularly emphasized the possibilities and advantages of the female working in her journal as well as in the contemporary debates about the female writers. In 1863 she protested against a statement of Pál Gyulai which said that the woman writer do not bind and do not embroider.¹⁷⁶ She regarded this sentence as the repetition of the former opinion of Gyulai according to which the female writer could not be “faithful mother and good women.”¹⁷⁷ Although the connection between the two statements was unambiguous for the contemporaries, Gyulai defend himself with a good argument. The quoted sentence about the female writers who do not like the handcraft was written in a fictive text, in a novel called *Women in front of the mirror (Nők a tükör előtt)*.¹⁷⁸ Gyulai argued that he did not express his own opinion as this was the sentence of one character of the novel. Nevertheless, Emília Kánya publicly polemized with the most prominent literary historians and poets (Pál Gyulai, János Arany) about this question and argued in order of the appreciation of female working. I analyze in this chapter the participation of Emília Kánya in the public debate about women writers as well as her opinion about the possibilities of the female work. I also take into consideration the editorial attempts of Mária Csapó Vachott who was supported by prominent figures of the contemporary cultural and political life.

The mediums of the debate in 1863 were two journals: the *Koszoru* edited by the poet János Arany and the *Családi Kör (Family Circle)* edited by Emília Kánya. The central question of the debate was whether female writers could be good wives, mothers and housewives. Pál Gyulai’s answer was ‘no’ and female writers struggled to disprove this approach. Emília Kánya wrote series of articles about the question in her own journal. She emphasized that women were able to fulfil their maternal and marital duties as well as male writers could undertake other jobs, such as being a teacher, priest, doctor etc. As a result, the importance of the female working emerged as an interesting topic. At this point, the debate connected to questions of other professions, because it was emphasized that: if women work as actresses, why could not become writers? At the same time, the female writers did not regard writing as a part of the emancipation of women. In their eyes, Gyulai’s biggest fault was the connection

¹⁷⁶ Kánya Emília, *Néhány szó a nőnem érdekében*, in „Családi Kör”, 1863, 4, 85 – 87, 102 – 103, 114 – 115, 121 – 123.

¹⁷⁷ Kánya Emília, *Néhány szó a nőnem* cit., 85.

¹⁷⁸ Gyulai Pál, *A nők a tükör előtt*, in „Koszoru”, 1863, 1, 1 – 7., 7 – 18, 32 – 38, 55 – 60, 78 – 83, 102 – 107, 126 – 131, 149 – 154.

of the notions of emancipation of women and female writing. The main arguments of the female writers and the protective authors were based on the separation of the two notions.

The standpoint of János Arany was between Pál Gyulai and the female writers. Ostensibly he supported Gyulai, but he had several gestures which alienated the approach of Gyulai from his own viewpoint.¹⁷⁹ The symbolical end of the debate was the editorial message of Arany in the *Koszoru* which highlighted the significance of the same critical assessment for female and male writers. That concept stressed that the women writers cannot expect politeness from the male critics because of their gender. Arany represented the principles of the pure aesthetic which do not give advantages for the bad female writers from politeness, for bad national writers from patriotism, for the aristocrat authors because of their origin, for the silány tanköltő because of moral reasons. Although the program of the equal assessment in literary critics was important for the diplomatic Arany, he did not accept the free choice of topics. In the case of female writers, he limited the optional topics of their texts. For instance, he refused the fighter rhetoric in national topics in the case of women and appreciated the traditionally feminine and gentle poses such as the narrative of the prayer woman.¹⁸⁰

Emília Kánya highlighted that the women writers accepted the traditional female roles: mother, wife and housewife. She expressed her opinion also during the editing. Besides her literary paper, the *Családi Kör* (Family Circle), which was the favourite weekly paper among families for 20 years, from 1860 to 1880, she also edited other specific products for women. For instance, in her *Almanac of Hungarian Women (Magyar Nők Évkönyve)* the readers could get advice about household, hair care, skin care, different kinds of shops as well as poems.¹⁸¹ In this period in the Hungarian media the almanacs and annals – which aimed specifically the female readership and combined useful, practical information with literary texts – were pervading and popular. Therefore, she used an effective way to convey her message to the women and prove her subsistence at the same time.

Emília Kánya mentioned the question of female professions not only in her articles, but also in her autobiography. “Then several women felt ashamed because of working for money...”¹⁸² – remembered for the time when she worked not only as editor, but also participated in different associations which aimed to improve the education of girls. Therefore, she

¹⁷⁹ Vaderna Gábor, *Gyulai Pál, Arany János és a nők. A női írás a 19. század második felében Magyarországon*, in „Irodalomtörténet”, 2015, 96, 156.

¹⁸⁰ Vaderna Gábor, *Gyulai Pál* cit., 156.

¹⁸¹ Kánya Emília (ed.), *Magyar Nők Évkönyve*, Pest 1861.

¹⁸² Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időkről* cit., 200.

considered as important the establishment of an industrial school for woman. The school was established in the Kazinczy Street. Girls were taught sewing, dressmaking, mathematics, drawing and commercial accounting.¹⁸³

In her memoire, Emília mentioned several female intellectual professions as well. For instance, she appreciated the career of a female archaeologist, Zsófia Torma who was her friend from Transylvania: “...she worked and studied on the field of archaeology like a man... She devoted the biggest part of her money for her collection, she wrote some famous work about her excavations and findings. All of these works were in German, because at home the highly educated girl was not understood, whereas in foreign countries she was celebrated... I loved and admired this outstanding woman who has already died in Szászváros for several years. Her archaeological collections, as I remember, became the parts of the museum of Kolozsvár.”¹⁸⁴

Emília also mentioned the preceptress profession several times as appropriate source of making money. At the same time, in her case it caused a significant dilemma. At the end of the 1860s, she was asked to be the preceptress of Archduchness Marie Valerie of Austria, the daughter of Emperor Francis Joseph and Empress Elisabeth: “...Her Majesty, the Queen heard about me, she was surprised, impressed and touched that I am the mother of eight children who were nursed and tended by myself..., and I did not neglect my education.”¹⁸⁵

Finally Emília Kánya refused the offer, because she did not want to let her children and husband alone who did not encourage her to accept the opportunity at all. One of the interesting points of this case which highlighted the specificity of this period was the different frameworks of the editor profession and the preceptress or lady-in-waiting in the Habsburg Court. Whereas the first was a bourgeois and modern profession, the latter was until a certain extent the part of an imperial and feudal system. However, Emília Kánya was chosen by the Empress as the possible worker of the court based on her own merits, from intellectual point of view. The fact that instead of her origin Elizabeth considered her professional and personal achievements referred to the thinking of the modern society, but paradoxically offered way to a hierarchical and imperial world which appreciated the origin above all.

¹⁸³ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időről* cit., 200.

¹⁸⁴ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időről* cit., 210.

¹⁸⁵ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időről* cit., 203.

What else could be considered as contemporary intellectual profession for women? Although Emilia did not mention it, the artistic professions also offered opportunities for female careers. As the drawing and painting was traditionally part of the education of women, the female participation in these professions did not provoke so flaming debates then in other cases.¹⁸⁶ The “good education” included especially artistic activities (painting, playing piano) and learning languages (French and German) in the cases of women. For instance, Júlia Szendrey painted an aquarelle about bunch of flowers in the girl seminary which today available in the collection of the Petőfi Literary Museum. The flower-paintings were considered as typically female genres. Therefore, in 1871 when the education of the drawing teachers and artists started at university level, the school received female student from its establishment. However, in many cases the university was regarded as the longer version of the “good education” and many girls did not practise her profession in her later life.¹⁸⁷ At the same time, the female artists who wanted to participate in the same professional associations and exhibitions than their male colleagues, often met with difficulties and misesteem.¹⁸⁸

As the professionalization-theories highlighted, in the modern society the status of the individual is not determined by his or her birth of prerogative anymore, instead of that the key factor is the education and the profession.¹⁸⁹ In the focus of the researches on professionalization is the process which established the autonomous professional groups based on the intellectual professions. The prototypical intellectual professions are the physicians and lawyers who had expertise which they gained during long educational process and the practitioners have to pay attention for several professional and ethical norms.¹⁹⁰ These professions had strong and prestigious position within the society. Although the artistic professions are more special, the notions and certain aspects of the professionalization-theories proved to be useful for literary historians and social historians.¹⁹¹

However, in the case of the editor profession some crucial requirements of the abovementioned theories such as the officially organized education were missing. Whereas

¹⁸⁶ Szívós Erika, *A magyar képzőművészet társadalomtörténete 1867 – 1918*, Budapest 2009, 103.

¹⁸⁷ Szívós Erika, *A magyar képzőművészet* cit., 106.

¹⁸⁸ Szívós Erika, *A magyar képzőművészet* cit., 103.

¹⁸⁹ Szívós Erika, *A magyar képzőművészet* cit., 179.

¹⁹⁰ Wilensky, Harold L., *The Professionalization of Everyone?*, in „The American Journal of Sociology”, 1964, 70, 137 – 158.

¹⁹¹ Szívós Erika, *A magyar képzőművészet társadalomtörténete 1867 – 1918*, Budapest 2009. T. SZABÓ Levente, *A tér képei: tér, irodalom, társadalom*, Kolozsvár, Korunk, Kompress, 2008. T. SZABÓ Levente, *Az irodalmi hivatásosodás és az írói szolidaritás új formái a 19. század közepén: a Magyar Írói Segélyegylet esete*, in „Irodalomtörténet”, 2008, 89, 347 – 377.

the actors, painters, musicians learnt their professions in well-organized schools from the 1860s, 1870s, the writers and editors did not have similar educational framework. However, as the printing press had determining role in the contemporary lifestyle, as the media started to possess considerable power in this period, the significance of the editors was incontestable. They often published editorial messages in their journals which explained the details and principles of their work. These texts helped to prove for the society the professional prestige of the editorial work.

However, the editors were often attacked from different sides. For instance, when Pál Gyulai wrote his debated article about the female writers in 1858, he held the editors responsible for the whole process and regarded the women as their victims. According to him, the reason why the editors accept even the low-standard work of women is the sensation hunting and the greed of gain. As the subscribers determined the fate of the each journal and the women writers attracted the female readership, the benefit of the editors after the female authors were considerable.

As I have already indicated, the editors did not have independent educational institution, professional journal, local and national association or organization which otherwise belong to the fundamental steps of the professionalization.¹⁹² The unified professional-ethical code was also missing as the different approaches to the literature, the distinction between the elite and the popular culture determined totally different editorial principles. However, the role of the professional community is significant as the first female editors were supported by their male colleagues.

What was the reason of their supportive mentality which – in comparison with other professions – was quite specific? I assume that there are two main answers for this question. The female readers needed a journal which was edited from female point of view; and those men who did not refuse the female intellectual work were convinced that a woman editor would be the best for this position. On the other hand, the editorial work ensured the possibility to become a breadwinner for the women.

According to the description of Emília Kánya, she was encouraged by her successful editor friend, Albert Pákh. When he mentioned to her that she should edit and publish a female

¹⁹² Wilensky, Harold L., *The Professionalization of Everyone?*, in „The Americal Journal of Sociology”, 1964, 70, 137 – 158.

journal, at first she laughed at the idea.¹⁹³ However, Pákh had good argumentation which emphasized that the women need more knowledge and he believed that Emília could indicate the good way for them. In addition, he advised her to discuss the question with her friends. This fact highlighted that the social network had crucial role in the editorial career. Finally Emília reconsidered the idea and realised the significance of it.

However, her first steps towards the editor profession were accompanied with numerous difficulties. First of all, she had to visit several places in order to gain the allowance to the publishing of the own journal. In order to achieve that, she went to General Benedek, the lieutenant in Buda, the prefect of the police in Pest.¹⁹⁴ She noted the words of the General: “Why want I, Hungarian woman, to publish a journal, to edit, me, the little women of the little Hungary, whereas in the big Austria there is no woman who would like to undertake so genuine, but superfluous work? Do I want to be the first, and perhaps pioneer?”¹⁹⁵ Emília could convince the General only by the argument that she had four children and she wanted to edit the journal in order to assure their living.¹⁹⁶ This remark stressed the other aspect why this type of the female endeavours was supported. Whereas the female writers were often accused of vanity, the editorial work did not have the same negative connotations in the media. Naturally the cause of the different assessment was – among others – the huge difference in the number of the representatives. The high number of the female writers from the end of the 1850s determined the discourses about them, whereas Emília Kánya as the first female editor started her activities from 1860.

However, she already had editorial experiences by that time as she organized everything around the *Euphrosine* which she edited earlier in Temesvár with her first husband. Nine years passed between the two cases. She started to edit the *Euphrosine* in 1851 and the *Családi Kör (Family Circle)* in 1860. There were several differences between the editing of the two journals. First of all, the communication with the authors was different. She corresponded with foreign writers in German because of the *Euphrosine*, however, she discussed personally the details of the *Családi Kör (Family Circle)* with Hungarian writers. In the first case she had to organize all of the details from the countryside, whereas in the second case she had an editorial office in Pest-Buda. The first was an additional and amateur activity of a housewife; the second was professional and breadwinner activity of a divorced woman.

¹⁹³ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időkről* cit., 179.

¹⁹⁴ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időkről* cit., 180.

¹⁹⁵ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időkről* cit., 180.

¹⁹⁶ Kánya Emília, *Réges-régi időkről* cit., 181.

The outcomes finally proved the significance of the changes: the first journal was edited for half year, whereas the second journal was successful for 20 years.

From the 1860s other women also tried to achieve financial advantages as editors. In their rhetoric the emphasizing of the necessity and the interest of their children were elemental part as these motifs ensured the legitimacy of their activity in the strict social narratives. For instance, Mária Csapó Vachott – who started her literary career because of the illness and later death of her husband – stressed her “destiny” in her memoir which forced her to start a new life by the literature for her “fatherless children.”¹⁹⁷ As she had considerably widespread social network, the two most significant writer and politician, József Eötvös and Ferenc Deák helped her with advices in private letters as well as by the power of their name in the printed press.¹⁹⁸ In their approach the editorial work was maternal duty. The role of the female editor was one version of the traditional female roles: the caring and provider mother who has to work because of financial reasons. Therefore, they probably considered as social responsibility to help her.

The activities of Mrs. Vachott totally fitted into the expected image about modest female intellectual work which tried to serve the practical education of women. She edited the Mothers’ Journal (*Anyák Hetilapja*) in 1861 as well as the Journal of Hungarian Housewives (*Magyar Gazdasszonyok Hetilapja*) between 1863 and 1865. She also dealt with children literature. Mrs. Vachott as well as Emília Kánya edited not only journals, but also other press products such as pocketbooks, calendars and almanacs which were popular as helped the women with practical information about the good shopping facilities in the city, about beauty tricks and advices for the logical and economical household.

Summary

The first female editors – besides the difficulties of the new challenge – could enjoy the advantages of their profession. Although ostensibly the female writer and editor status intertwined until a certain extent in the debates and also in some careers, the assessments of the two professions were significantly different. Whereas the activities of the female writers and poets were often considered as superfluous, vain exhibitionism, the social reactions

¹⁹⁷ Vachott Sándorné Csapó Mária, *Rajzok a múltból. Emlékiratok*, Gyöngyös 2007, 143 – 144.

¹⁹⁸ Lisztóczy László, *Vachott Sándorné írói pályája*, in Lisztóczy László (ed.), *A Vachott-család és a XIX. századi magyar irodalom*, Gyöngyös 2009, 85 – 107.

towards the female editors were much more helpful, appreciative and supportive. The causes of the different approaches are understandable by the female roles which were embodied by the practisers of the given profession. The first female editors, Emília Kánya as well as Mrs. Vachott were mothers who lost their husbands because of divorce or death. Therefore, some of the influential male members of their social network felt the responsibility and helped them with private advices and public letters. As the profile of the journals edited by Emília Kánya and Mrs. Vachott met the expectations, they embodied the experienced, mature, clever, but modest woman type, the mother type who could teach the other women. Therefore, their editorial works were considered as useful activities for the society. As they had widespread social network, the personal connections and sympathies also influenced their respected status.

The period of barnstorming in a successful actress career

In the Hungarian cultural memory the most famous performance of Kornélia Prielle was connected to Debrecen. This town of Eastern-Hungary was famous not only because of the strong Protestant identity of the citizens, but also because of its theatrical traditions. In the December of 1846 Kornélia Prielle belonged to the acting company of Debrecen. The reason why this performance became exceptionally memorable was not especially the quality of the acting as it was interrupted by the appearance of Sándor Petőfi who was extremely popular poet at that time. When the actress Kornélia Prielle got to know that he is among the spectators, she decided to change one song in the performance. She chose the musical version of a famous Petőfi-poem about the love: „A virágnak megtiltani nem lehet...” [You cannot forbid the Flower]. She sang this text in order to surprise the spectators and express her honest to the poet.

Petőfi – who just got false bad news about his love, Júlia Szendrey and he believed that she will marry with another, rich man – was amazed by the gesture of the young actress. He visited her in the cloakroom, they had a long conversation and he asked her to marry with him. She told yes, but the plan of this marriage was flying very quickly. They had different religion (Prielle was Catholic and Petőfi was Lutheran). Although Petőfi visited the Catholic as well as the Lutheran priest on the same day and he wanted to change his religion immediately in order to make the marriage possible very quickly, both priest refused the plan as the process needed more time. One of the colleagues of Kornélia summarized the case within one sentence to her: “Vanity on your part, foolish fever on his part.”¹⁹⁹ Petőfi changed his mind very early after the events. In a short time he already published poems to Júlia Szendrey in the journals and they married in the next year.

However, Petőfi who in 1844 played as actor in the same place, wrote about the experience of his celebration in the theatre of Debrecen in his travelogue: “Three and half years later in the same theatre where at that time I played my small role without any attention, three and half years later, I say, as I appeared among the spectators, each eyes looked at me and the enthusiasm hailed by the voice of the thunderstorm: vivat Petőfi Sándor!” At the same time, he had definitely bad opinion about the town. He expressed it also in his travelogue which

¹⁹⁹ Mályuszné Császár Edit, *Egy színészházaspár élete. Szerdahelyi Kálmán és Prielle Kornélia*. Budapest, 1956, 24.

consisted of public letters to one of his friends: “Have you ever been in Debrecen, my friend? Have you ever seen that town of the plains or more like this plain town? If you want to drown to dust or mud, just come to hear, you can achieve it easily, but cover your nose, or before you may suffocate, you will be smited with palsy by the foul odour of bacon... If they buy even book here, probably they buy it only in order to cover the bacon with it.” Although the exaggerations did not stand too far from the writing style of Petőfi, the conditions of the transportation between the towns and villages of the countryside as well as the general mentality of the locals towards the culture are not misinterpretations in his text. Based on these kinds of descriptions, it is very hard to imagine the working of the barnstormer acting companies which was connected mainly to the countryside. The young Kornélia Prielle, the famous actress of the later period lived between these conditions from her 15-year-old.

My main sources in this chapter are the notes of Kornélia Prielle about the beginning of her actress career. The manuscripts were gift from one of her descendants to the so-called Petőfi House – the antecedent of the contemporary Petőfi Literary Museum – which collected not only relics which directly connected to the poet, but also every kind of writings which touched – even only from far – the memory of Petőfi. Today the source is available in the manuscript archive of the Petőfi Literary Museum. At first the name of the donator, Kálmán Rozsnyay is readable on the manuscript with the date of the donation (November of 1909) and with the following remark: “The only note of Cornélia Prielle to her planned diary.”²⁰⁰ However, the genre of the text is not clear-cut. These are notes rather for a memoir than for a diary as these were written in retrospective style. The other aspect that these are rather fragmented words which help the memory than complete sentences. These texts included her short memoirs about the period from 1826 until the October of 1846. She also wrote other notes with the following title: *Small memoirs (Apró visszaemlékezések)*.²⁰¹ However, the majority of these related to her adventurous experiences about the town of Nagybecskerek (today Зрењанин / Zrenjanin in Serbia) where she spent a winter season as young actress and later returned as an older lady because of her guest acting. Originally these notes served as sketch for a planned longer text about her life as several instructions indicated the temporal gaps between the each life events and commented the completed texts. However, she never finished the final version.

²⁰⁰ PIM Kt. V. 693.

²⁰¹ PIM Kt. V. 4713/1025.

I examine based on these texts the mental map of Kornélia Prielle about the settlement network which surrounded her. As her life was full of experiences, she did not write about imagined spaces at all, but the physical space had important role in her writings. The notes about the atmosphere of the barnstorming make comprehensible the role of the countryside in her career. Nevertheless, her texts reflected on the numerous visited towns and villages only as the spaces of her successes. The special characteristics of the settlements were barely mentioned in her writings. Therefore, I focus on her personal narrative about the barnstorming and the role of this life practise in the formation of her career.

Kornélia Prielle was born in 1826 in the town of Máramarossziget (today *Sighetu Marmatiei* in Romania) which located at the bank of the Tisza River in Eastern-Hungary. (Map 3.) The father, József Prielle was a harness-maker, but in the parish register his name was indicated as Brill which referred to his German origin.²⁰² Her mother, Eleonóra Székely was Transylvanian woman. Originally they christened their daughter as Antónia Prielle, but they changed that name very early, she was called Kornélia already from her childhood and later she always used this name variation in the public life. She had two sisters (Lilla, Emília) and one brother, Péter Prielle who later also played as actors/actresses. In 1838 Kornélia moved to her aunt who lived in Munkács (today *Мукачеве* in Ukraine.) Two years later she went back to her parents to Máramarossziget which she mentioned simply as Sziget (literally Island) in her writings.

When she was 15-year-old, she joined to the acting company of István Tóth. She played at first as actress in the town of Szatmár in June of 1841 (today Satu Mare in Romania.) Her role was a small boy called Jean in a French stage-play. Later she referred to this case in her notes: “I was in a very immature age.”²⁰³ One month later, in July she went with the company to Bicszád which situated in the same county. (Today that is Bixad in Romania). This settlement became really famous due to its bath which was popular in the 19th century. Júlia Szendrey also visited and mentioned it several times, but that was fashionable not only within the county. The company played there three or four times in the month. Their everyday conditions were not the best. According to the memoirs of Kornélia, they lived under the stage. She also mentioned the name of the two primadonna of the company (Mrs. Szaklányi, Eszter Szilvássy) who with she was in friendship.

²⁰²Based on the register of baptism in *Borromeo Saint Charles Parish* in Máramarossziget: Bartha Katalin Ágnes, *Hírnév, patriotizmus, színésznőség Magyarországon a tömegkultúra századában. Prielle Kornélia esete*, in „Irodalomismeret”, 2016, 59.

²⁰³PIM Kt. V. 693.

The period of the continuous travelling started for her in this year. The barnstormer companies were still flourishing in Hungary at that time, but the actors had to sacrifice a lot for this style of living. The company in which Kornélia participated moved especially within Szatmár County. They travelled through the towns of Nagybánya, Nagykároly and Zilah. (Today these towns are called as Baia Mare, Carei and Zalău in Romania.) Sometimes occurred that two acting companies met at the same settlement and one of these became the winner. Kornélia regularly referred to the reception of their activity. She remarked that they were very appreciated in Zilah, but earlier another company had bigger success in Szilágysomlyó (today Simleu Silvaniei).

She also referred regularly to the spaces within each town where they played. For instance, in Szatmár at first the scene of their acting was the so-called *Csizmadia szín* which originally was the building of the bootmaker guild, but it also gave home to the theatrical life of the town. Later they also played for a long time in the “White House” which was built in 1771 and it was the first storied building in the town.

In 1842 they spent the whole winter in Zilah where they were so successful in the previous year. The leader of the company and Kornélia went to Kolozsvár from Zilah in 1843. She has seen the first big Hungarian actress, Mrs. Déry (her maiden name was Róza Széppataki) there. Then they visited Dész (today Dej in Romania) where they contracted with the members of other companies. Then they went back to Zilah just for their last performance and the whole company of Tóth moved to Dész.²⁰⁴

The mother of Kornélia died in February, but Kornélia did not know it. She knew the bad news only in the next month when she stayed in Nagybánya (today Baia Mare in Romania) which was named after its rich mines. She had to go home for his small sister who was only 8-year-old at that time. They travelled through the Szatmári-crag. “Enormous storm, awful journey” – Kornélia remarked only these words about the case in her later memoir.²⁰⁵ In May the company disbanded, Kornélia and her sister went to a Transylvanian town, Marosvásárhely (today Targu Mures in Romania) where they joined to another company which took care of the two girls. The leader of this company was Dávid Kilényi who has already had serious theatrical experience not only as actor, but also as director and entrepreneur at that time. He was the husband of Johanna Széppataki, the sister of the famous

²⁰⁴ PIM Kt. V. 693.

²⁰⁵ PIM Kt. V. 693.

primadonna, the abovementioned Róza Széppataki who earlier also joined to their company for a period.

The girls travelled again a lot, at first to Csernáton (today Cernat in Romania) which was a small village at the South-Eastern part of Transylvania. Kornélia had two notes about this period. One of these referred to the conditions of their work: “We played in a barn.”²⁰⁶ On the other hand, she wrote about her success: “they get me off the stage, giving me from hand to hand and kissed me.”²⁰⁷ She also remarked that she wore velvet shoes. These short notes accidentally highlighted two aspects of the life of actresses. One of these was their doubtful position in the society, the other the financial difficulties of the profession. As the dressing was enormous problem for also the most famous actresses – because they had to arrange it and pay for their costumes – the very young barnstormer actress could really appreciate the velvet shoes.

After three performances the actors travelled to Kézdivásárhely (today Targu Secuiesc in Romania) which was often called as the “town of guilds.” The second part of the town name (vásárhely) referred to the fact that it was a market space already in the Middle Ages. Kornélia mentioned related to the town that they were celebrated by music during each night and the company leader was annoyed, because they always had to curtsy themselves in front of the windows. She also noted that she received so much respect on the side of the citizens of Brassó (today Brasov in Romania) which was the centre of the Saxon people in Transylvania. About Gyergyószentmiklós (today Gheorgheni in Romania) she remembered for the prayerful and devout audience.²⁰⁸

From the end of 1843 she was approached by more and more marriage proposals, but she consistently refused these. The 17-year-old girl spent the whole winter in Marosvásárhely. The next important stage of her life was Sepsiszentgyörgy (Sfantu Gheorghe in Romania) where besides the glory and flowers, the company was asked to play again several scenes. This gesture was regarded by her as a huge respect. As she stated in her memoir, she never experienced similar case, nor earlier, nor later. The next steps were the famous bath of Előpatak (today Valcele), Fogaras (Fagaras) and Medgyes (Medias) which was a free royal town with Saxon citizens. After these performances the company had a rest for a month. However, the next stand, Nagyenyed (today Aiud in Romania) was turning point in the career

²⁰⁶ PIM Kt. V. 693.

²⁰⁷ PIM Kt. V. 693.

²⁰⁸ PIM Kt. V. 693.

of Kornélia Prielle. She met here with Ede Szigligeti, the highly praised playwright and director who discovered her talent. Therefore, he invited her immediately to the National Theatre of Best-Buda.

The young barnstormer actress had a contract in the prestigious institution and arrived to Pest-Buda in the December of 1844. She spent about ten months in the city, but in November of the next year she was already guest actress in the town of Nagyvárad (today Oradea in Romania). Although in the next period she was connected again to the countryside, her position within the theatrical life changed, probably due to the period which she spent in the National Theatre. On the one hand, she started to stay for more time in regional centres such as Debrecen. On the other hand, she had higher prestige within the acting companies. For instance, in 1846 in Nagykálló – which was the seat of the Eastern Szabolcs county from the 18th century – only she had permission for acting. Therefore, she became the co-director of the company with Lajos Láng who was a 47-year-old director, actor, dancer and choreographer.

Probably this fact made her relatives more tolerant towards her profession. As she remarked, she visited her aunt and uncle in Munkács at Pentecost and they were softened related to her career. The rejection of the beginning was not surprising at all in the context of the contemporary assessment of the actresses. They were regularly regarded as whores or mistresses – especially the barnstormer actresses.²⁰⁹ In Hungary the status of the actress basically changed in the life of Kornélia Prielle, it became a much more accepted profession. Nevertheless, the most successful actresses – who were celebrated in their life and death with so much enthusiasm – came from the next generation, for instance, Lujza Blaha.

Kirsten Pullen examined the Western cultural myths of women and sexuality based on the enduring tie between prostitution and performance. She stated based on her case studies that the whore stigma “was used to limit female experience and expression” and “the boundaries between women and whores are policed in order to constrain the activities of all women.”²¹⁰ The body of the actress and that of prostitute was approached very similarly: the first was considered in the historical narratives as the object of the projected male desires, whereas the

²⁰⁹ Kiss Csilla, „Királynő vagy te a művészet országában!” *A színésznői szerepkör vizsgálata a 19. századi Magyarországon*, in: Fábri Anna – Várkonyi Gábor (eds.) *A nők világa. Művelődés- és társadalomtörténeti tanulmányok*, Budapest 2007, 89 – 108.

²¹⁰ Pullen, Kirsten, *Actresses and whores: on stage and in society*. Cambridge – New York, 2005, 2.

second one was the object of the enacted male desires.²¹¹ Therefore, the two separate entities (actress, prostitute) as constructions blended into one in the discourses.²¹² According to Kirsten Pullen in the Western civilization the histories of prostitution always explained the trope of actress and whore based on the Greek flute girls or dancing girls, the accomplished professional musicians as starting points.²¹³ The theatre and acting histories tried to clarify the position of the actresses by their incipient professionalization and dispel the stereotypes about the close connection between the activities of actresses and prostitutes.²¹⁴

However, the sisters of Kornélia also practised the same profession. They participated in different acting companies. For instance, Emília arrived to Debrecen with the Transylvanian Miklós Feleky who was famous as actor and director. The companies of the two sisters started to work together. About the July of 1846 Kornélia noted: “Now I am already satisfied in Debrecen. I live in the house of Feleky, lovely, familiar life, unity and nice performances. Petőfi asked my hand.”²¹⁵ In fact that proposal was not in July, but in December as I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter.

In October the company went to Kolozsvár because of the Diet. Here they enjoyed absolute success and huge earnings. According to the notes of Kornélia, the directors wanted to give her fix salary, but she did not accept it because of the other members who participated in the popular performances. She wanted everybody to enjoy and participate also in the financial outcomes of their success. By this time, Kornélia was already praised and celebrated woman. Two noblemen proposed marriage to her in that period, but she refused them.

However, at the end of 1847 when she stayed in Nagybecskerek (today this town is situated in Serbia and called as *Зрењанин / Zrenjanin*), she was already engaged. As she remembered, the company had a cheerful and glorious period there, among enthusiastic Hungarian supporters.²¹⁶ Nevertheless, she stated that she did not participate in anything, because her hand and her heart were engaged and the jealousy of her fiancé also made her to wipe off her face powder.²¹⁷ Probably the make-up was regarded as the belonging of an unmoral world as well as the wig which was among the “seven main sins” according to the later memorials of

²¹¹ Pullen, Kirsten, *Actresses and whores* cit., 2005, 2.

²¹² Pullen, Kirsten, *Actresses and whores* cit., 2005, 2.

²¹³ Pullen, Kirsten, *Actresses and whores* cit., 2005, 3.

²¹⁴ Pullen, Kirsten, *Actresses and whores* cit., 2005 3.

²¹⁵ PIM Kt. V. 693.

²¹⁶ PIM Kt. V. 4713/1025.

²¹⁷ PIM Kt. V. 4713/1025.

Kornélia.²¹⁸ What is surprising in that case that her fiancé, Kálmán Szerdahelyi was not outsider, he exactly knew the context of the theatrical world as he was also an actor and his sister, Nelli Szerdahelyi was opera singer.²¹⁹ In spite of this fact or perhaps rather because of this fact, he considered as good solution to distinguish the work and the amusement in the life of her actress fiancée.

Kornélia Prielle wrote about the journey of the company from Debrecen to Nagybecskerek which lasted for nine days.²²⁰ (The distance is 257 kilometres in straight line and actually approximately 430 kilometres on highway.) In her memoir she remembered for the atmosphere of the travelling in the following way: “We were young, nice and happy (this was the cradle of love) imbued with hope and already with glory, but the Rác [the name of Serbians in the 19th century and earlier] shipmen were grumbling that it was easier to deliver the wheat earlier than now these many comedians.”²²¹ They went there as the first Hungarian acting company which was invited to the town for the whole winter season. In Temesvár (today Timișoara in Romania) they travelled by ship thorough the so-called Béga-channel which original goal was in the 18th century to ensure the military and civil shipping between Temesvár and Pétervárad (today *Петроварадин / Petrovaradin* in Serbia).²²² Now the channel helps the water transport between Romania and Serbia.²²³ After the successful season the company went back to Kolozsvár.²²⁴

²¹⁸ PIM Kt. V. 615.

²¹⁹ Mályuszné Császár Edit, *Egy színészházaspár* cit., 31.

²²⁰ PIM Kt. V. 4713/1025.

²²¹ PIM Kt. V. 4713/1025.

²²² Jancsó Árpád, *A Bega, a Bánság elkényeztetett folyója*, Temesvár, 2007.

²²³ Jancsó Árpád, *A Bega* cit., 2007.

²²⁴ However, Kornélia returned to Nagybecskerek 36 years later. She wrote about this second journey in the same memoir where about the first one. However, that is not the same than the previously analysed, fragmented texts, but another which include longer descriptions. This event is analysed in a distinguishably detailed way. She wrote again about the transportation, her thoughts and fears and also about her reception. In 1884 she has already travelled by train. When she was approaching, she was thinking about her memoirs related to the town in which she was playing as young and successful actress. She also had doubts whether anybody still remembers for her from the past: “how foolishness was to come to guest act at a place where I did not play for 36 years – even some of them know me from the stage of the capital, but I have no merits here.”²²⁴ Finally her concerns proved to be superfluous. Enormous crowd was waiting for her arrival, she was celebrated by feast. After her first performance, she received a letter with a poem which was dedicated – as the text stated – to her “mother.” The writer of the letter expressed that he was happy to the deserving reception of the actress as he was the admirer also of her mother earlier. Kornélia realised that the memory of her young figure in the town is considered as her mother, because she is regarded much younger than her real age. The poem was written in 1848 and she was addressed by the text. She answered to the probably old admirer the following lines: “I am the mother of my daughter as well as the daughter of my mother.” PIM Kt. V. 4713/1025.

When the young actors left Nagybecskerek in 1848, they stopped for three times for playing during their journey: in Temesvár, in Arad and in Nagyvárada (today these towns are called as Timișoara, Arad and Oradea in Romania.) In Temesvár the Hungarian and the German companies used the same theatre building: the Hungarians in the afternoon, the Germans in the evening. Their audience was equally enthusiastic. In March of 1848 Kornélia stayed with the company in Arad. The actresses expressed their enthusiasm towards the revolutionary events of Pest-Buda through their dresses. Kornélia played a noblewoman in national colours. However, the war of independence which followed the revolution caused for her big sadness. Her husband, Kálmán Szerdahelyi went to the army as soldier with other actors and they divorced. The first months of their marriage were not so cloudless. The mother and the sister of Szerdahelyi did not like Kornélia at all. Her father-in-law, the composer and actor József Szerdahelyi did not allow her to play as actress in the company. The husband was only 19-years-old and everybody considered him immature at that time. He was three years younger than the 22-years-old Kornélia.

Although the divorce convulsed her, in the next year she married with another man, Elek Hidassy who was a hussar captain. That marriage meant a break for her actress career again, because she gave up the acting again for three years. Although Hidassy tried to create a new company, he made a lot of debt and lived a drunkard and gambler life. Kornélia went to guest acting for a longer tour in order to gain money, but during this time her husband had a young mistress.²²⁵ Therefore, they divorced and Kornélia started her independent career again. However, she was only guest in the National Theatre of Budapest, because she basically connected her career to the towns of the countryside until the end of the 1850s.

Summary

There are two specifically remarkable characteristics regarding the mental map of the young Kornélia Prielle. One of these was the dominance of the experienced, physical spaces above the imagined ones. Whereas in the case of Júlia Szendrey the imagination influenced significantly her mental map, Kornélia Prielle lived a very intensive and often changeable life during her barnstorming. The subjective topography about the settlement network around her was determined by the fast alterations of destinations of the barnstormer companies. The other

²²⁵ Kiss Csilla, *Királynő* cit., 94.

characteristic was the consequence of this diversified mobility: the lack of one outstanding node. Although in the previously analysed cases of the woman writer and editor, Pest-Buda was an inevitable node, in the first half of the career of Kornélia Prielle the city was only one station among the uncountable destinations. Naturally that was an important reference point for Kornélia Prielle and her first success in the National Theatre of Pest-Buda determined her higher position within the acting companies. Nevertheless, she did not suffer because of her distance from the city when she stayed at the countryside. She did not create the classical opposition between centre and periphery. She just accepted and elegantly undertook the tasks of barnstorming which probably meant difficult challenges and familiar traditions for her at the same time. Although she visited several times the so-called “theatrical towns”²²⁶ such as Szatmár, Kolozsvár and Marosvásárhely, the frequent acting in the really small settlements also had significant role in her life. The impact of the barnstormer lifestyle made the special features of the visited towns and villages totally secondary for her, because she regarded these from theatrical point of view. She interested in above all the reactions of the locals related to her performances. She stressed the quality of those parts of the towns which were provided for the actors as the spaces of preparation and playing as well as the extent of their successes in comparison with other companies.

²²⁶ As the Hungarian theatre historian Edit Rajnai emphasized, around the each “theatrical towns” other groups of settlements were organized where the number of the population were very changeable. At the lowland which constituted the middle of the country the number of inhabitants were higher than in many cases in the Transylvanian settlements. Rajnai Edit, *A színi kerületi rendszer kialakulása: (1879–1905)*, PhD Thesis (manuscript), Budapest, Eötvös Loránd University, 2010, OSZK Színháztörténeti Tár, Irattár, MS 711.

The image of the bourgeois actress in Pest-Buda

In this chapter I examine two main questions related to the career of Kornélia Prielle. On the one hand, I introduce her social network during her first stay in Pest-Buda. Those social connections which emerged in the life of Kornélia Prielle in 1845, determined her later career as well. On the other hand, I analyze the changes of her images as actress. How did she become from the actress of the countryside to a bourgeois actress in the city? The interpretation of this process intertwined with several other questions such as the requirements towards the “actress of the nation” as well as the social assessment of the profession.

The members of the actor-house at the Kerepesi Street

In the 1840s there was a house at the Kerepesi (today Rákóczi) Street where the young and also the older artists of the National Theatre lived. One of the most famous dwellers, Gábor Egressy, the great actor was already mentioned as the friend who helped Petőfi to find an appropriate flat when he married with Júlia Szendrey. Finally the flat of the couple in the Dohány Street was only a few steps from the house of the actors. However, not only the actors themselves, but also their families lived there. When Ede Szigligeti invited Kornélia Prielle to the National Theatre after their meeting in Nagyenyed, she spent about ten months there from the December of 1844 until the November of 1845.

According to the memories of Kornélia Prielle, the community stayed together in honest love, but she remarked with self-reflection: “I have seen everything in rose in that time.” As she was the youngest among the dwellers, everybody “indulged, loved, praised, nursed and chiddened”²²⁷ her. She highlighted especially the kindness of the wife of Egressy who always gave different kind of titbits to her, for instance apple, walnut or fresh loaf of bread.²²⁸ Mrs. Egressy was also an actress; her maiden name was Zsuzsanna Szentpétery.²²⁹ She was the sister of the stage-director Zsigmond Szentpétery who was among the first members of the National Theatre.²³⁰ When that was opened in 1837, the first director, József Bajza invited him immediately to work and he joined to the company. Therefore, the Szentpétery and Egressy family lived in the actor flat. Kornélia remarked that regularly the old mother of Szentpétery gave lunch to them.

²²⁷ PIM Kt. V. 615.

²²⁸ PIM Kt. V. 615.

²²⁹ Török Margit (ed.), *Magyar Színházművészeti Lexikon*, Budapest 1994, 179.

²³⁰ Török Margit (ed.), *Magyar Színházművészeti* cit., 743 – 744.

Gábor Egressy was not only a celebrated actor, but also a very accomplished theoretical expert of the theatre. He popularized Shakespeare in Hungary and translated several dramas from him.²³¹ Although his family devoted him originally to be a Calvinist priest, he became an actor in 1826. His brother, Béni Egressy followed his example. At first he joined to a barnstormer company, he played in Kassa (today Kosice in Slovakia) and Kolozsvár, but he also studied music theory and languages. In 1838 he went to Italy in order to learn singing. Five years later, in 1843 he contracted to the National Theatre in Pest as choral singer. However, he became really famous as composer from the 1840s. He achieved one of his biggest successes by the composition of the Szózat, the famous patriotic poem of Mihály Vörösmarty which is elemental part of the Hungarian nation building until today and it can be considered as a second anthem. Therefore, the young Kornélia participated in an actor company which have already had high prestige and a lot of experiences at that time.

She also mentioned József Szigeti who moved out of his small room and assigned it to Kornélia. József Szigeti became an actor against the will of his parents and changed his family name from Tripamer to Szigeti.²³² He started his career in a town of the Great Plain, Jászberény in 1841. In 1844 he played in Pest due to the intervention of a famous actress, Mrs. Lendvai.²³³ After this event he got a contract in the National Theatre where he worked in the next decades. He also became the second successful playwright after Ede Szigligeti due to his dramas.

There were further members of the actor colony who changed their original profession in order to participate in the theatrical world. For instance, Miklós Udvarhelyi broke his theological studies in Debrecen and started to play in Pest-Buda and in Kolozsvár.²³⁴ He was not only actor, but also singer, director and the member of the National Theatre from 1837. His brother, Sándor Udvarhelyi – who started his career in Kolozsvár – also lived in the same flat at that time.²³⁵

Lajos Fánicsy also became actor from university student in Pest-Buda.²³⁶ He was tempted by the theatre from his childhood. He often visited the Beleznay-garden which was on the corner of the Kerepesi (today Rákóczi) and the Ötpacsirta (today Puskin) Street, because there was a

²³¹ Török Margit (ed.), *Magyar Színházművészeti cit.*, 179.

²³² Török Margit (ed.), *Magyar Színházművészeti cit.*, 749.

²³³ Török Margit (ed.), *Magyar Színházművészeti cit.*, 454.

²³⁴ Török Margit (ed.), *Magyar Színházművészeti cit.*, 820 – 821.

²³⁵ Török Margit (ed.), *Magyar Színházművészeti cit.*, 821.

²³⁶ Török Margit (ed.), *Magyar Színházművészeti cit.*, 200.

palace in the garden which was the scene of performances and other social events.²³⁷ Finally he went there not only as spectator, but also as actor, he joined to the company of Károly Balla which played in the Beleznay-garden between 1829 and 1831. That was called Beleznay-garden, because the aristocrat Mrs. Beleznay bought it in 1787 and her palace with the garden became an important social meeting point in the next decades.²³⁸

Fáncsy was so successful that he joined to the Transdanubian Acting Company. After the period of barnstorming, he played in the company of the Castle Theatre in Buda, he studied the working of the theatres in Germany and became the founder member of the National Theatre. After that he continually worked there. He participated in the theatrical life not only as actor, but he also represented the interests of the National Theatre in the printed press, he organised the affairs of the director, and he was also the member of the board of the theatre which emerged in 1843.

The intellectual, friendly and engaging personalities of the company attracted other artists and litterateurs into the flat as visitors. Therefore, the broader social network of Kornélia Prielle included not only actors, but also poets, writers and other artists. Kornélia met with Petőfi at first in this flat when the poet visited Egressy. She wrote about the case in a detailed way in her memoir about Petőfi.²³⁹ After he left the company, Mrs. Egressy asked the young actress whether she liked the poet. The impression of Kornélia was not the best because of the dressing of Petőfi who wore totally different clothes than the others. She asked Egressy about its reasons who regarded that as the expression of the independent mind of the poet.

Petőfi also had characteristic opinion about the young actress who was introduced to him by Egressy as “the little Nelli” (the Hungarian nickname of the Kornélia first name). Another poet, Zsigmond Czakó who also often was guest in the actors’ house, mentioned to Kornélia the sentence of Petőfi about her. Petőfi remarked to him in the theatre about the actress: “so pity that her short hair blemish that girl.”²⁴⁰ Kornélia was wounded and he answered to Czakó: “tell to Petőfi, do not watch me until my hair do not become longer, but I bet that I will never like his blowzy head.”²⁴¹ In the narration of the memoir not only this dialogue, but

²³⁷ Gundel Imre – Harmath Judit, *A vendéglátás emlékei. A pesti, budai és óbudai fogadók, vendéglők, korcsmák, serházak, kávéházak, mulatók, cukrászdák és egyéb vendéglátóhelyek életéből*, Budapest 1979, 249.

²³⁸ About Mrs. Beleznay (her maiden name: Anna Mária Podmaniczky): Szilágyi Márton, *Beleznay Miklósné Podmaniczky Anna Mária irodalmi szalonja: legenda és valóság*. ItK, 2015, 119. 6. 769 – 777.

²³⁹ PIM Kt. V. 615.

²⁴⁰ PIM Kt. V. 615.

²⁴¹ PIM Kt. V. 615.

also a picture description refers to the hair problem. Miklós Barabás, the most popular portrait painter of the period made aquarelle about her in this period. She wrote about this painting that he prefer it above all of those pictures which tried to represent her with long hair. As wearing wig was considered among “the seven main sins” at that time, Barabás was not intended to mislead anybody – and this aquarelle became her favourite picture about herself because of that reason.

The company of the artists, writers and actors had important role in her further life, but after ten months she left the city. In her memoire she did not explain the reason in a detailed way: “Later I disappeared from the stage of the National Theatre, for a long, long time, perhaps my destiny was to fulfil my profession elsewhere, perhaps in order to come back only when my work was really needed.”²⁴² She remarked that Petőfi also left the capital at that time and travelled to Szepesség (today this region is called *Spiš* in Slovakia, and the territory of the former Szepes county is divided between Slovakia and Poland.) Their parallel careers are interesting not only because a few years later they met in Debrecen and Petőfi proposed marriage to her, but also because the actor flat which was so close to the National Theatre at the Kerepesi Street, became the last habitation of Petőfi in Pest-Buda during the War of Independence in 1849.

However, one of the most determining relationships of her first period in Pest-Buda was another writer, Lajos Kuthy who embodied a totally different artist type and men type than Petőfi.²⁴³ The theatre historian Edit Császár Mályusz remarked that Kornélia Prielle became an accomplished woman due to the friendship of Lajos Kuthy.²⁴⁴ Nevertheless, according to the memoires of Kornélia, this relationship contributed to her farewell to Pest-Buda. She talked about Kuthy with Petőfi as the young poet was astonished, because of the Kuthy-picture which hung on the wall of the room where Kornélia stayed. She explained to him her feelings towards Kuthy. According to this, she distinguished the writer and the man, and she tried to find an excuse for him: “He did not offend me at all, not his fault that I did not know that he had a wife. It seems to me that a certain class of the capital do not consider that in wakening of sympathy, but finally I got to know that in time, and I did not find other solution

²⁴² PIM Kt. V. 615.

²⁴³ About the relationship between Kuthy and Petőfi: Völgyesi Orsolya, *Kuthy Lajos estélyei*, in „Budapesti Negyed”, 2004, 46, 257 – 272.

²⁴⁴ Mályuszné Császár Edit, *Színház és közönség az elnyomatás korában (1849 – 1867)*. Manuscript. OSzK SZT. Ms 400, 12.

with my simple mind than to leave the capital anyway.”²⁴⁵ The main characteristics of Kuthy, the fashionably dressing, the elegancy, the lightness, the love of the French culture were attractive for Kornélia who later used the female version of this style in her performances.

The triumph of the bourgeois actress in Pest-Buda

Although the barnstormer actress career was really successful for Kornélia Prielle and she insisted on this way of life for a long time, at the end of the 1850s she went again to the National Theatre. At first only for the sake of guest acting in 1857, but two years later, in 1859 she finally became the member of the National Theatre. She achieved her biggest successes from the 1860s when the French social comedies became very popular in which the graceful conversations had crucial role. This genre is considered as the fusion of the comedy and the serious drama. It is also called as “French realistic social drama or the comedy of manners” which was introduced by Alexandre Dumas in 1852 with his first play, *La Dame aux Camélias*.²⁴⁶ Not surprising that Kornélia Prielle achieved huge success several times with the female protagonist role of this play.²⁴⁷ According to the theatre historians she had rarely good roles in the classic dramas in which the strong voice, the tragic screams and the decorative appearance were important. However, she was talented in the conversations, in the sophisticated gestures, in the quiet or even nonverbal expressions of feelings. The critics often highlighted her natural movements and speech.²⁴⁸ Therefore, when the urban bourgeois taste started to prefer the French social comedies which represented the bourgeois everyday life, the career of Kornélia arrived to its summit.²⁴⁹ The former “actress of the countryside” image has altered and she became the symbol of the “bourgeois actress” as she expressed the style of this social stratum through her playing.

In addition, according to Edit Császár, in Hungary the French dramas was also popular instead of the Austrian theatrical traditions as the latter reminded to the oppression of the country, whereas the previous symbolized the revolutionary culture of liberty, equality and fraternity which was much more attractive.²⁵⁰ However, the fashion of the French culture led to the popularity of another genre, the operetta as well. The male protagonist of the first

²⁴⁵ PIM Kt. V. 615.

²⁴⁶ Gassner, John – Quinn, Edward (eds.), *The Reader's Encyclopedia of World Drama*, New York, 2002, 190.

²⁴⁷ Two outstanding occasions were 1857 when she was guest acting in the National Theatre with this role and 1865 when she played this because of the special request of Elizabeth Empress.

²⁴⁸ Máluszné Császár Edit, *Színház és közönség* cit., 13.

²⁴⁹ Cenner Mihály, *Prielle Kornélia. Emlékezés és adattár*, in „Színháztörténeti Füzetek”, Budapest, 1957, 2.

²⁵⁰ M. Császár Edit, *Egy színészházaspár* cit., 69 – 70.

Offenbach-operetta was Kálmán Szerdahelyi, the first husband of Kornélia Prielle. He was one of the favourite actors of the audience in the National Theatre around 1860.²⁵¹ He was considered as the most elegant, the most cheerful and also the most mundane Hungarian actor.²⁵² He was the only male actor according to the public who could play real Parisians.²⁵³

Szerdahelyi as popular actor married with Jozefa Benke, the half-sister of the most determining actress, Róza Laborfalvi. Therefore, he could enjoy the support of the popular tragedienne and also his writer husband, Jókai. This social network further confirmed his position. Jókai devoted important roles to his brother-in-law in his dramas. Szerdahelyi as actor popularized the poems of Jókai. Both of them felt the advantages of their close relationship. However, besides Jókai a lot of other authors wrote roles directly for Szerdahelyi. In this regard the outstanding writer is Szigligeti who built significant number of his texts on the talent of Szerdahelyi.²⁵⁴

The other benefit of the marriage for Szerdahelyi was the French language itself. As the mother of Jozefa Benke was the French Marie Maron, she spoke perfectly the language and she taught it to her husband. Whereas the social network of Szerdahelyi dominated in the National Theatre, Kornélia Prielle was the celebrated actress of the countryside. However, in 1857 Szigligeti invited her to the National Theatre for guest acting. All of her three performances were successful. Szigligeti wanted her to stay in the institution, but the other members were against the idea. On the one hand, they considered much more important the network of the Jókai-Laborfalvi couple, on the other hand the urban actresses were jealous and they tried to defend their position within the theatre. However, they were unable to fulfil the female protagonist roles in the French dramas and in the genteel comedies, because of their age or because they were educated based on German theatrical traditions.²⁵⁵ The National Theatre missed the female character who proper enough to convey the French elegance. Therefore, the theatre needed inevitably the presence of Kornélia Prielle. She was contracted from 1859.

Although she moved to Pest-Buda, she did not finish the guest-acting at the countryside. She travelled to Pécs which is located in the South-Western part of the country. She met with a colleague, Ádám Takács whose wife died at that time and he had a new-born daughter.

²⁵¹ M. Császár Edit, *Egy színészházaspár* cit. , 73.

²⁵² M. Császár Edit, *Egy színészházaspár* cit. , 74.

²⁵³ M. Császár Edit, *Egy színészházaspár* cit. , 74.

²⁵⁴ M. Császár Edit, *Egy színészházaspár* cit. , 76.

²⁵⁵ M. Császár Edit, *Egy színészházaspár* cit. , 82.

Kornélia assumed to take care after the child and she travelled back to Pest-Buda in the company of the baby. As Edit Császár remarked, this kind of activity is unique among the actress biographies. After one year, Kornélia had to leave the National Theatre as the intendant extracted her from the institution. However, the following intendant invited her again and after that she became a fashionable and admired actress.²⁵⁶

Whereas Szerdahelyi travelled to Paris in order to study from the French theatres, Kornélia and the new intendant, Radnótfáy started a close relationship with each other. However, when Szerdahelyi returned to Hungary, he was invited with Kornélia to Székesfehérvár in order to guest acting. As it was invited for charitable goals, they could not refuse it. During the journey the former spouses decided to start again their love. Although Szerdahelyi tried to court to Kornélia also earlier in the National Theatre, that was not serious as he always returned to his actual wife. Nevertheless, in this occasion in 1864 he decided to divorce from Jozefa Benke. Kornélia also had to break with the intendant who had significant power in the theatre. Both of them sacrificed a beneficial relationship for the sake of their love.

Although the previous marriage of Szerdahelyi was not invalidated until 1870, he lived together with Kornélia and the public celebrated them as a married couple.²⁵⁷ Not only the theatre, but also the capital knew the story of their love. In spite of their not quotidian relationship, they were not considered as norm-breakers. The popularity of the National Theatre based on their common work in the next decade. They became not only exceptionally praised artists, but also the first actor couple who formulated their successful career together. The colleagues were also amazed by the impact of their conversations, by the power of the sentences which they sent towards each other at the stage.

The critics about Kornélia emphasized that she was born to represent marquises by her salon-like, amazingly graceful and natural manner. According to Imre Áldor, when Alexandre Dumas came to Hungary, he was barely convinced that he stayed in Miskolc and not in Paris, because Prielle was so similar to the French women in the performance.²⁵⁸ Szerdahelyi also noted about their guest acting in Újvidék (today Novi Sad in Serbia) where the Serbians

²⁵⁶ M. Császár Edit, *Egy színészházaspár* cit. , 85.

²⁵⁷ Mályuszné Császár Edit, *Színház és közönség* cit., 14.

²⁵⁸ OSzK SZT. Irattár 162/1.

considered Kornélia as French actress who learnt Hungarian for the sake of the popularization of the Hungarian culture.²⁵⁹

The French style became so elementary part of her image that several short biographies which was published about her in different journals, started to emphasize the French origin of her father who was considered as the son of a French emigrant.²⁶⁰ Exciting question that why did she let to spread this false information about herself if the father had German origin and the mother was Hungarian. Supposedly it was the part of her aware image-building. As one of her main assets – which made her attractive and indispensable for the National Theatre – was her talent in the style of the contemporary French dramas, she did not mind the emerging legend about her origin which enhanced her elegant image. When she was young actress in Pest-Buda in 1845, she signed the receipts as Corneille Priell De Vuilaux or de Vuillaux.²⁶¹ Although later she never repeated this form, she allowed to the press to highlight her assumed French ancestors.

However, she was appreciated also because she insisted on the Hungarian theatres and she never went to abroad. This aspect of her biography was considered as patriotism also in an article which argued for the erection of a Prielle-statue in 1902 in Palics (today Палић / *Palić* in Serbia) where she often was the guest of the local bath.²⁶² Although the narrative of the article – which was written in plural – represented the local identity, they also referred to the national significance of the actress. This article is only one example which could show that “the actress of the nation” image also increased the popularity of Kornélia Prielle. The difference between her career and another actress of the National Theatre, Lilla Bulyovszky could be another outstanding example. Although both of them were talented, both of them participated in charitable events, their reception in the Hungarian printed press was totally different. Lilla Bulyovszky went to Germany in 1859 and became internationally praised actress. However, when she returned to Hungary, her reception was not too enthusiastic because earlier she left the Hungarian stages. In the interpretation of the Hungarian audience, she regarded more important her personal interest than the national interest. Therefore, Kornélia Prielle could enjoy the priority of the national actress.

²⁵⁹ Bartha Katalin Ágnes, *Hírnév, patriotizmus, színésznőség Magyarországon a tömegkultúra századában. Prielle Kornélia esete*, in „Irodalomismeret”, 2016, 2, 58 – 81.

²⁶⁰ *Prielle Kornélia*, Vasárnapi Ujság, 1869, 16, 25.

²⁶¹ OSzK SZT. Fond 4/129.

²⁶² OSzK SZT. Irattár 162/1.

All of these cases showed that from the end of the 1850s the Hungarian journal culture became really differentiated and the press had more and more power. The media started to influence seriously the artist careers and the each newspaper was aware of the role which they fulfilled. For instance, the *Családi Kör*, the journal of Emília Kánya highlighted the following characteristic of the acting among the different arts: the masterpiece ends in the same moment when it was created. The actors and actresses have to achieve the success in their life, in spite of the writers who could be appreciated later. According to the journal, the responsibility of the press was to preserve the memoire of the success of the actors. Therefore, they were much more dependent on the power of the media.

At the end of the 1860s, Kornélia Prielle achieved a relatively high life standard and she lived in a large flat with her husband in the Vas Street, near to the National Theatre. (Map. 7.) The comparison between her first accommodation in the city in 1845 and their flat in the Vas Street in the 1860s could show the significant changes in the assessment of her profession. Whereas the previous served as a common house for the different generations of the theatre, the latter was a comfortable flat with six rooms including saloon and library. In her neighbourhood Eugénia Kazinczy lived who was the daughter of Ferenc Kazinczy, the former most significant organizer of the Hungarian cultural life.²⁶³

Another indicator of her strong position was that she became the first eternal member of the National Theatre in 1881. At the 40th anniversary of her actress career, the director Ede Paulay contracted her until the end of her life. The journals explained the significance of this contract to the readers: she will always get the high honorarium of the theatre if she plays or not, if she retire or not. They also highlighted that the educated countries support their artists not only in their active period, but also when they are not able to play anymore.²⁶⁴ However, Kornélia Prielle did not stop the acting, neither the travelling. Although she was guest acting all around the country, from Upper Hungary (today Slovakia) until the southern part of Hungary (today Serbia), from Transdanubia until Transylvania, the most outstanding town was Kolozsvár for her, where she had widespread social network from her barnstormer period. Her last performance at the countryside was in 1902 when she played in her hometown, Máramarossziget for charitable goals. However, one of the biggest successes of the old actress was the protagonist role of “The Grandmother.” Gergely Csiky playwright wrote this role directly for Kornélia Prielle. In 1892 when the members of the National

²⁶³ Czifra Mariann, *Zseni a Panteon kertjében – Kazinczy Eugénia pályája*, in „Századvég”, 2013, 68, 91.

²⁶⁴ OSzK SZT. Irattár 162/1.

Theatre were guest acting in Vienna, she was celebrated by huge applause in this role. She received several gestures which in other cases usually respected only dead artists. For instance, Pál Rakodczay published a biographical book about her in 1891. He later wrote biographies also about other actors such as Gábor Egressy.²⁶⁵ Therefore, she was the first in Hungary who became the topic of a book as actress.²⁶⁶ In 1902 a statue was erected about her in the National Theatre. Nevertheless, that was still not the end of her life. In 1905 she married with Kálmán Rozsnyai who was graphic artist, journalist, critic and also actor. They lived together only half year, because Kornélia Prielle died in the February of 1906.

Summary

Kornélia Prielle as actress was not dependent on Pest-Buda. Although at the end of 1844 she was invited to the National Theatre by Ede Szigligeti, she spent only ten months in the city. As 18-year-old girl, she was the youngest actress in the company which lived together in a house of the Kerepesi Street which was maintained for actors and their families. The biographies of the other members showed very similar patterns. Usually they had another original profession and they changed it against the will of their parents. They started to play in barnstormer companies at the countryside, but most of them were already among the founders of the National Theatre. They were older and more experienced than Kornélia, and they also had widespread social network. Therefore, Kornélia Prielle became acquainted with significant personalities of the contemporary cultural life. Lajos Kuthy who was known as the most elegant Hungarian writer of the period had significant impact on her.

In the next decade the most important spaces of her work situated at the countryside, she was considered as the “first actress” there. Nevertheless, she achieved her biggest successes with those performances in Pest-Buda which represented the ordinary life and problems of the bourgeoisie. She was famous because of her refined conversational style and natural elegance. She and her husband, Szerdahelyi became the first big actor couple who were amazed by their common play. Both of them were attracted by the French culture. Therefore, Kornélia Prielle used her assumed French origin as an important element of her image which contributed to her popularity. However, she was always considered also as typical Hungarian actress who insisted on the Hungarian language and the Hungarian countryside. Therefore, she could remain the symbol of national and European actress at the same time. That was one of the

²⁶⁵ Mályuszné Császár Edit, *Színház és közönség* cit., 12.

²⁶⁶ Mályuszné Császár Edit, *Színház és közönség* cit., 12.

most important reasons of her extensive success. The other one was the deliberate choosing of roles. In spite of other actresses who lost their popularity and became inconsiderable around the age of 40, she handled her role changes artfully. After the period of young heroines and ingénue roles she became the celebrated actress of social comedies and bourgeois dramas with her husband. Later she played old dame roles and also exciting bit parts. She was in the intersections of several categories such as national and European, rural and urban, traditional and modern due to her diversified career and colourful personality. Therefore, she could satisfy so different tastes and became incontestably talented actress in every context.

The position of the actresses in urban society

In Hungary the first permanent, Hungarian-speaking acting company started to work in 1790.²⁶⁷ The majority of the first actresses choose this profession because of the familiar connections; they were generally wives, daughters or sisters of a male actor.²⁶⁸ In their case the acting did not mean independent existence. However, the most outstanding actress of this early period, Mrs. Déry did not have actor relatives at all. The actress in the period of the barnstorming often was regarded as a prostitute and its social prestige was quite low. How did it become within a few decades to an appreciated profession which ensured the independent breadwinner position to the women? I examine this question based on three main points of view. First of all, I analyse the discourses about the acting of the countryside and the city based on the case of Kornélia Prielle. I also give an overview about the transitions in the assessment of the actress career, with a special emphasis on the financial and the educational aspect. In order to understand the significance of the actress position within the society in a broader period, I also examine the career of Lujza Blaha (1850 – 1926) who achieved outstanding prestige.

The reception of Kornélia Prielle in Pest-Buda – Discourse of the printed press about the acting at the countryside and in the city

After the guest acting of Prielle in the National Theatre in 1857, several critics were published about her performances in the printed press.²⁶⁹ However, these texts touched not only the question of her actress talent, but also the differences between the taste of the countryside and the city. She participated as female protagonist in the following three performances: “Margit Gauthier” (sic!) based on the Dumas-novel, “Tiszaháti Libácska” (Goosey of Tiszahát) and “Czigány” (Gypsy) written by Ede Szigligeti. There was a recurring motif in the texts which analysed her performance. All of the authors referred to the fact that she came from the countryside, regardless the positive or negative valuation.

The poet János Vajda, who edited a journal called *Nővilág* which aimed especially the female audience, wrote a critic which shocked the public opinion. He stated that the second-class actors of the National Theatre are better than the first actress of the countryside, and now they

²⁶⁷ Kiss Csilla, „*Királynő...*” cit. 92.

²⁶⁸ Kiss Csilla, „*Királynő...*” cit. 92.

²⁶⁹ In the Theatre History Archive of the National Széchényi Library there is an unexplored album about Kornélia Prielle which collected the articles which appeared in the printed press about the performances of the actress. OSzK SZT. Irattár 162/1.

totally understood the taste and quality of the countryside. A lot of authors answered to this critic in different journals as it was considered as humiliation and attack against the acting of the countryside. Especially the journals of the countryside expressed their indignation. During they refused the critic, the authors used several arguments. For instance, the *Győri Közlöny* on 15th of October in 1857 highlighted that the audience of the countryside educate the good actors and actresses for the National Theatre as the name list of the company members could prove that. The author expressed that they collectively proud of Kornélia Prielle who is considered as the pupil of the countryside. After that he quoted other urban journals of Pest-Buda such as *Napkelet*, *Magyar Posta*, *Pesti Napló* which were delighted by the performance of the actress and offered her continual contract to the National Theatre. The *Kolozsvári Közlöny* stressed that in Kolozsvár there have been already theatregoers when in Pest-Buda the theatre was only “pium desiderium”. In addition, they highlighted that the higher drama art itself is popular in Kolozsvár, without the help of the opera or ballet.

Besides the journals of the countryside the urban authors also were interested in the Prielle-question. Ágost Greguss really praised the play of Kornélia, he considered her as a talented and emotional actress who is far from the superfluous sentimentalism. However, in the last line of his critic, he remarked that sometimes in the pronunciation of Kornélia he discovered dialect.

Szigligeti wrote separate critics about the three performances of the actress. The first text, which analysed the Gauthier Margit-performance mentioned that Kornélia was not contributed member, but guest in the theatre. The story of their first meeting was also described in a detailed way: when Szigligeti travelled through Transylvania, he has discovered the talent of Kornélia in Nagyenyed who was only a “one-year actress” at that time. Szigligeti emphasized the differences between the conditions of acting in abroad, in Pest-Buda and at the countryside. Whereas in the foreign countries the actresses do not have to study more than six roles, in Pest the law allows ten days for a protagonist role. In spite of these customs, in Nagyenyed they wrote the texts at night, the reading rehearsal was in the next morning, full rehearsal at noon and they performed in the evening. Therefore, the conclusion of his critic was that miracle when the spirit of the actress does not become insensible and Kornélia preserved the immaculacy of her art from the affectation.

The second critic about the second performance (Tiszaháti Libácska) appreciated the differentiated playing of the actress who had difficult role: she had to express the cleverness

of the main character, but later she also had to pretend stupidity. At the end of the text Szigligeti highlighted that Kornélia Prielle continuously played at the countryside for ten years, without experts who could teach her and she was guided by her own genius. Szigligeti wrote the third critic about his own drama in which Kornélia played the protagonist gypsy girl. He stressed again that the lack of attitudinize elements is one of the main aspects of the performance of Kornélia. He refused the statement of Vajda about the acting of the countryside and expressed the appreciative opinions of the National Theatre members towards the actress.

Imre Vahot, the editor of the *Napkelet (East)* also considered the actress as an outstanding talent. He expressed that in the period when she was contributed to the National Theatre in 1845, he also regarded her as an artist with nice future. He started the whole text with mentioning the war in the printed press about the acting at the countryside and in the city. His opinion was that the really good talent improve at the countryside instead of failure. He mentioned Kornélia and also earlier actresses as Mrs. Kántor and Mrs. Szatmáry as proof. However, he also expressed that he does not regard the collection of the good actors in Pest-Buda as a goal. Instead of that he suggested to build more and more theatres and share the talented artists among these.

The categories of this debate highlighted the changing position of the actress which was dependent (among others) on the residency. The actress from the countryside needed urban supporters who could explain with serious arguments to the public her talent and the earlier merits. If she was even the most popular and most appreciated actress at the countryside, the official introduction in the urban press by a praised member of the National Theatre was indispensable element of the success in Pest-Buda. However, even the benevolent, open-minded and unbiased authors such as Szigligeti and Greguss, emphasized the hard conditions of the countryside which made difficult for the actress the professional improvement. Therefore, the urban image of the acting at the countryside necessarily included the drawbacks of the location and the lack of the urban belongings of acting such as continuous critic and professional feedback. When Szigligeti tried to reveal the huge differences between the practices of role learning at the countryside and the city, he highlighted the disadvantages of the actress profession. In spite of the ostensibly adventurous and sparkling life, they lived among strict rules which was decided by the directors and intendants of the companies. At the countryside the actresses had to learn their roles on a day to day basis, whereas the members of the National Theatre had relatively better conditions.

Social, financial and educational background of actresses

The significant part of the 19th century actresses came from the lower layers of the nobility or the urban bourgeoisie. As the majority of them were the members of actor dynasties where the parents, sisters, brothers or even the grandparents were also actors, Transylvania and Partium were the most frequent birthplaces. The reason is that the practise of the brainstorming was widespread especially in these territories, in spite of the Transdanubian region. That could be the reason why nobody came from Transdanubia in the first two actor generations.²⁷⁰ As the guest acting was popular among the actresses, in a lot of cases the birthplace of their child was accidental. According to Edit Császár, the nobility usually regarded the actors as comedians. Therefore, the actor became the appreciated member of the society when the bourgeoisie started to dominate the public in the 1860s.²⁷¹ However, she highlighted that only those artists who lived in bourgeois comfort had prestige. The financial safety meant the social prestige for them at the same time.

The payment of the prima donna and the female singers was much higher than that of actresses. In addition, they received plus money for their dresses. For instance, in 1846 when the most famous, leader actress of the National Theatre, Róza Laborfalvi got 400 forint as contribution to the costs of her dresses, the career entrant Kornélia Hollósy as female opera singer received the same amount. In the following year she received already 1000 forint for the same goal.²⁷² Kornélia Hollósy was special among the actresses and female singers because of her nobiliary origin. When she was student in a cloister of Temesvár, her musical talent was very outstanding. Although her father did not want to allow her to choose the singer profession at first, she asked her dowry and inheritance on her mother's side in order to study abroad. Besides these, she disclaimed her further financial demands. She travelled to Vienna and Milano in the company of a female relative. She spent two years there and finalised her studies with exam. She returned to Hungary in 1846 and achieved huge successes. According to the memoires, the staff of the theatre felt that the contract of the young, noble girl will mitigate the bias of the society towards the whole profession.²⁷³

However, the education of the actresses was not evident at all, at least in the earlier decades. As Kornélia Prielle referred to her conditions in her memoire: "I did not come from the

²⁷⁰ Kiss Csilla, „*Királynő*” cit. 99 – 100.

²⁷¹ Mályuszné Császár Edit, *Színház és közönség* cit., 4.

²⁷² Kiss Csilla, *Hollósy Kornélia szalonja*, in: „Budapesti Negyed”, 2004, 12, 273 – 288.

²⁷³ Kiss Csilla, *Hollósy Kornélia* cit., 273 – 288.

actors' school where among the recent fortunate conditions the future actresses are intellectually improved. Sadly in the same period when today a girl starts the actors' school, I excused in the world as motherless orphan towards the mysterious goal which is called art as I have understood later."²⁷⁴ In the Actors School which opened in 1865, the students learnt history, literature, style- and toilette courses, psychology and foreign languages.²⁷⁵ Nevertheless, there were several autodidact actresses who started to study alone. For instance, Mari Jászai, the later great tragedienne learnt English, German and French, she read the original version of the novels in which she had roles. Several actresses devoted their time also to the literature. They wrote memoirs and different literary works such as Lilla Bulyovszky who published novels and Norwegian travelogues.²⁷⁶

The status of the acting in the urban society was seriously influenced by the aspect of the education. Whereas in the first half of the 19th century neither male, nor female actors were considered as intellectuals, after the 1860s the profession proved not only more or less high standard of living, but also social prestige for its representatives. The most outstanding example of the transformation which finally proved the social appreciation of the actresses was the funeral of Lujza Blaha in 1926. She was the most celebrated actress in the 19th century after the generation of Kornélia Prielle. Her funeral was so significant event as the end of a 19th century female career which could be compared only to the previous memorial services of statesman and politicians.²⁷⁷ She was accompanied to the cemetery by famous personalities, colleagues, representatives of the states in enormous crowd. The cinemas played the news recordings about the funeral for months after the event.

In 1918 when she was still alive, the square of the National Theatre was named after her as Lujza Blaha square. This act highlights that the actresses became not only praised, but also iconic figures of the collective memory. Although the operetta prima donnas earned significantly more money, the two most influential actresses between 1860 and 1914 were Lujza Blaha and Mari Jászai.²⁷⁸ The name of two important squares in Budapest reminds them also today, however, there are considerably few public spaces named after women in the city.

²⁷⁴ „Nem a színképezdéből kerültem ki, hol a mai szerencsés viszonyok közt, annyira kiművelik értelmileg is a leendő színésznőket; fájdalom, én már azon korban, midőn ma egy lányka színi-képezdebe juthat, mint anyátlan árva két évig bolyongtam a sejtelmes cél felé, melyet később értettem meg, hogy művészetnek nevezünk.” PIM Kt. V. 615.

²⁷⁵ Kiss Csilla, „*Királynő*” cit., 103.

²⁷⁶ Bulyovszky Lilla, *Norvégiából. Úti emlékek*. Pest 1866. *Bulyovszky Lilla novellái*, Pest 1855 – 1857. *Bulyovszky Lilla útinaplója*, Pest 1858.

²⁷⁷ Szécsi Noémi – Géra Eleonóra, *A budapesti úrinő magánélete (1860 – 1914)*, Budapest 2015, 389 – 390.

²⁷⁸ Szécsi Noémi – Géra Eleonóra, *A budapesti úrinő* cit, 388.

Why were they the chosen ones? Why does the Hungarian cultural memory prefer the actresses instead of female writers? Lujza Blaha was the prototype of the imagined Hungarian woman as she played the leading roles in the so-called folk plays which were considered as national genre. She symbolized the significance of the Hungarian language as the basis of the Hungarian acting in the context of the nation building. She was called as “the nightingale of the nation.” Whereas the activities of the women writers were often considered as superfluous or even harmful for the society and they did not suit into the national narrative at all, the theatres were seen as the spaces of patriotism and the actresses who embodied this role were seriously respected.

When Lujza Blaha was invited to the National Theatre, she shortly visited Kornélia Prielle at her flat who was the favourite actress and former colleague of her mother. Lujza Ponti was also an actress in the company of Boldizsár Láng who was the husband of Emília Prielle, the sister of Kornélia. When the company was guest acting at Upper Hungary (the northern part of the former territory of Hungary, today Slovakia), Lujza Ponti gave birth to her child in Rimaszombat (today Rimavská Sobota.) The whole company (among others Kornélia Prielle) took care about the baby who way called Lujza after her mother. The 5-years-old girl has already had smaller roles in the company. When she was 15-years-old, she was contributed to Szabadka (today *Сyбoмyцa/ Subotica* in Serbia) and married in the same year with Jan Blaha who was the conductor of the military music band. The man had Czech origin, did not speak Hungarian at all, but Lujza kept the Blaha name throughout her life and through two other marriages. In 1866, when she was 16, she was invited to Debrecen where she became famous as prima donna. Therefore, Ede Szigligeti who was the head of the National Theatre at that time heard about the successes of the young woman. He sent the director Ede Paulay to Debrecen. He visited one of the performances of Lujza Blaha and then contracted her to the National Theatre in 1870.

According to the memoirs of Lujza Blaha, she was not amazed by Pest-Buda at first. When she glimpsed the building of the National Theatre, she thought that the theatre of Debrecen is significantly nicer and bigger.²⁷⁹ She travelled with her mother, sister, stepfather and a maid also accompanied them. The city was extremely crowded as countrywide market was organized and all of the guest houses and hotels were occupied. They were looking for accommodation for hours with their driver. She was exhausted because of the unusual

²⁷⁹ Blaha Lujza, *Életem naplója*, Budapest 1920, 84.

experiences, the noise, and the sight of the numerous people as well as because of the light of the many lamps.²⁸⁰ Finally they found a guest house near to the Danube Bank. According to her feelings, the host was disdainful towards them, because they did not order dinner and he did not allow to her little dog to stay in the same room. All of these elements reflected on the typically mentioned negative characteristics of the city.

The next day her step father was looking for a flat close to the National Theatre as Lujza asked him. He found one in the Újvilág Street (today Semmelweis Street). Although this street was only a few steps from the theatre building, at first the way seemed very long for the excited Lujza Blaha. Although otherwise her walk was fleet, she approached slowly her future workplace. She was astonished how big the houses are, and how many stairs and windows were built in the city. Her impressions about the buildings were gloomy, she felt that the big, grey houses oppress and squeeze. She described the symptoms of the feeling: her breath was heavy, she felt a tug at her heart-strings, dizziness in her head and she imagined as the grey houses spinning around her.²⁸¹ As she remarked, she did not pay attention to the passer-by people and did not deal with window-shopping, just prepared for the meeting in her mind. When she arrived to the National Theatre and went towards to the room of the director, she felt as she was regarded by the waiting actors as a chit girl from the countryside. She discussed with Szigligeti and Paulay – who were really helpful – the details of her first performance. She achieved huge success by this event: she was celebrated immediately in Pest as much as in Debrecen. After the event she went to a restaurant called Sas (Eagle) near to their accommodation with her family and friends. As she entered to the restaurant, she was immediately cheered. She remarked that a lot of men sat at a long table and they raised their glasses and saluted her each time when she looked at that direction. Next morning she read the critics about her performance in the journals and the majority of these were positive. This strengthened her professional and female self-awareness: “I did not dare to show myself so far, but from today I will have the bravery.”²⁸²

After this case she was also brave enough to use the urban space as a confident woman. She wrote about her first walk in the Váci Street. She went with Újházy, another member of the National Theatre who invited her to the Váci Street with the following explanation: “Each

²⁸⁰ Blaha Lujza, *Életem* cit., 85.

²⁸¹ Blaha Lujza, *Életem* cit., 89.

²⁸² Blaha Lujza, *Életem* cit., 93.

decent people are walking there at noon: that is the fashion.”²⁸³ She was very proud during they walk and felt the admiration of the people who looked after them. Some of them recognised her, others made guesses who is the lady with the actor. She wondered the shop-windows and the many women and girls who were walking in the Váci Street. These experiences evoked the memory of her childhood when she recited a poem about Pest. She mentioned only the refrain about the beauty of the city, however, the title of the poem was “The little countrywoman in Pest” (A falusi kisleány Pesten) written by Gergely Czuczor in 1837. He was linguist and poet at the same time. A significant part of his poems transformed into folksongs. The mentioned poem built on the motifs of genteel stroller people of the city, the experience of the endless walks and the continually changing impressions: “my eyes did not find place to rest.” The reflection on the many windows of the buildings – which was also present in the abovementioned description of Lujza Blaha – indicated in the poem an important comparison point of the people from the countryside. The speaker of the poem notes that there are “window upon windows throughout three or four rows” and the tower is not so high in their village. This remark makes also more comprehensible the perception of Lujza Blaha about the citizens who do not built other than stairs and windows.²⁸⁴ Although the author of the poem, Czuczor was a man, he wrote the text from female point of view. The speaker was approached during she sold apples in the city by several gentlemen who tried to seduce her. The highlighted impression about the cityscape is the continual festive atmosphere, because the women, girls and men are always well-dressed and the streets are also full of pearl, silver, golden commodities. The quotation of this poem activated in the Blaha-memoire the distinct narratives about the city which emphasized the positive and the negative features at the same time.

The next step of the career entrant actress was to go for visitations in the city. At first she visited Kornélia Prielle at her flat.²⁸⁵ She was amazed by the taste of the older actress and decided that she will decorate her own room in very similar way. She described the objects of aesthetical equipment: flowers, small statue and little bird in a cage, lace on the furniture and beautiful pictures. She also appreciated the simple, but tasty, white house dress of Kornélia Prielle. The interest of this scene is the similarity between their careers at this point. Although both of them experienced the conditions of the countryside, participated in barnstormer companies, but in the urban environment they get used quickly to the bourgeois comfort and

²⁸³ Blaha Lujza, *Életem* cit., 94.

²⁸⁴ Blaha Lujza, *Életem* cit., 89.

²⁸⁵ Blaha Lujza, *Életem* cit., 95.

usual accessories of the everyday life. This modification also meant change in their social position. From the sometimes celebrated, but sometimes unhonoured “comedians,” they became appreciated member of the urban society and started to belong to the well-to-do class. However, their social network was determined by the former connections. As Kornélia knew the mother of Lujza as well as the company of Debrecen, she asked her about their common friends and laughed when the young actress described a 40-years-old friend as old woman. Lujza was astonished when she realised that Kornélia herself is more than 40, as she looked like much younger and she regularly played very young girls at the stage. The motif of the eternal youth became the characteristic part of the later prima donna images.²⁸⁶ One of the first appearances of these was exactly the celebration of Lujza Blaha at the 25th anniversary of her first performance, in 1896.²⁸⁷ She was described by her never aging, eternal youth which was often used element also in the cases of the 20th century big prima donnas such as Sári Fedák who reflected on her age by the old buildings of the city. Between the two world wars she often called herself ironically “as old as the Citadel” and “as pre-war as the Basilica.”²⁸⁸ Both were built in the 19th century, the first one as a military fortress on the top of the Gellért Hill, the second one as a church dedicated to the first Hungarian king, Saint Stephan. Although Fedák used these motifs as a tool against the ridicule, the iconic elements of the cityscape also referred to the inevitable position of the old prima donnas and actresses within the society.

Summary

The actress careers reveal the two extremities of the discourse about women. They were often stigmatized by the prostitute label; however, they were the only ones who could achieve outstanding success, attention, salary and prestige at the same time as women. Nevertheless, the analysed careers exemplify that not only Pest-Buda or later Budapest was the only space of their success. Although the period of barnstorming meant especially the beginning for the later nationwide famous actresses, the acting in the city and the guest-acting at the countryside (or vice versa) could exist in parallel in the successful careers. In addition, the countryside was not homogenous at all. In the debate which followed the performances of Kornélia Prielle in Pest in 1857, the proud “theatre towns” of the countryside – such as Kolozsvár,

²⁸⁶ Heltai Gyöngyi, *Primadonna-paradigma*, in „Metszetek. Társadalomtudományi folyóirat”, 2014, 3, 94.

²⁸⁷ Heltai Gyöngyi, *Primadonna-paradigma* cit., 95.

²⁸⁸ Fedák Sári, *Édes öcsém Egyed!*, in „Film – Színház – Irodalom”, 1942, 18. 7. Quoted by Gyöngyi Heltai: Heltai Gyöngyi, *Primadonnatoposzok: típusaik és transzfermechanizmusaik*, in: Erdősi Péter – Klement Judit (eds.), *Vis-à-vis. Tanulmányok az Atelier fennállásának 25. évfordulójára*, Budapest 2015, 192.

Debrecen and Győr – highlighted the significance of the acting also outside of Pest-Buda. Therefore, the attraction of Pest-Buda was not so unambiguous in the case of actresses than in the case of the female writers. Although the invitation to the National Theatre was an outstanding event which changed the further possibilities and the extent of fame, there were several other opportunities which could prove the existence for the actresses. Lujza Blaha – who arrived to Pest-Buda from Debrecen because of the irrefutable offer of the National Theatre – was not amazed by the city; however, she became more and more confident in the usage of the urban space. The mending financial conditions and the institutionalization of the education led to higher prestige of the profession within the society. Therefore, the successful actresses in the second half of the 19th century were not regarded as poor, unmoral members of the society anymore. They became iconic figures who advertised fashionable dresses, but mostly different beauty products such as powders, creams and embodied the female version of the bourgeois comfort and fashion. Although they were often dependent on the male works of the theatres such as intendants and directors who possessed bigger power, they became also key figures as they attracted the audience to the theatres. Therefore, they received relatively high salaries (especially the prima donnas) which proved their financial independence. As a result, in spite of the difficulties of the beginning, the actress profession became more profitable for women than the other intellectual professions in the second half of the 19th century.

Conclusions

In my thesis I explored intersections of different spheres and life practices, with the deliberate aim to get beyond the sharply distinguished categories and classical dichotomies (private – public, female – male). Although I primarily examined three main research questions throughout the three main cases, it turned out that the researched issues were intertwined with several other problems of the period. Therefore, I follow my original research questions in the conclusion, yet I also refer to other connected observations as well as the possible directions in the further research of the topic.

As I was interested in the impact of the environment on the personal life strategies, I investigated the role of the countryside and the city in the distinct careers based on the personal mental maps. I reconstructed these using different types of ego-documents. In the case of Júlia Szendrey I analysed the physical as well as the imagined spaces as the contrast between them determined her thoughts, her desires and also her later lifestyle. Whereas she as a girl from the countryside was continuously unsatisfied with her closer environment, Emília Kánya as urban girl decidedly enjoyed the advantages of the countryside when she occasionally stayed there. At the same time, she also had very strong urban identity which constituted the basis of her self-interpretation in many cases. The perception of the physical spaces which surrounded her became the constitutive part of her identity, whereas in the case of Júlia Szendrey the impact of the widespread cultural imaginations was stronger. However, Pest-Buda as cultural centre served as important node and also as continuous point of comparison for them. On the other hand, Kornélia Prielle positioned herself in a constantly changeable environment, without one outstanding node. Therefore, she never regarded Pest-Buda as an exclusively important space of her career. Although she lived there as popular actress from the 1860s, she did not stop her to be guest acting at the countryside. These cases revealed that the personal experience, the cultural imagination and the social knowledge about the space together constituted the mental maps which determined the personal choices.

The image of environment is conceptualized as the outcome of the interaction between the observed and observers. The perception of the cityscape could also be influenced by the previous environmental experiences of the observers. The perception of Júlia Szendrey between 1844 and 1847 within Szatmár County was influenced by her previous experiences about Pest from the period of the girl seminary. When she finally moved to the city in 1847, this opposition had impact on her changing mental map again. She regarded Pest as the capital

of the urban media (“the source and factory of every newspaper”²⁸⁹), as the scene of the countless newness and contrasted it with the eventless rhythm of the rural life. This approach is not surprising at all as her new lifestyle with Petőfi was based on the urban media: on their continual publications and presence in the contemporary printed press. Therefore, in her case the interaction between the observed space and the observer was determined by the definite rejection of the countryside and the attachment to the city. She regarded Pest-Buda as the city of opportunities which offered numerous ways of cultural amusement. The intellectual life practices what the city offered were much more attractive for her than the wealthy, but often boring or frivolous practices of the countryside.

For Emília Kánya who spent the majority of her life in Pest-Buda, the city was important emotionally and also professionally. The urban space was full of social nodes which ensured for her the personal communications. The widespread social network which was the basis of her editorial career was available for her only in her hometown. Therefore, when she lived at the countryside as old lady, she complained about the poor cultural interest of the locals. The perception of Kornélia Prielle was totally determined by professional point of view. She regarded the visited towns as the stages of her professional actress career and the reactions of the locals were more significant for her than the special characteristics of the visited spaces. The abovementioned cases show the spatial conditions of the different professions within Hungary. Whereas the centre of the literary life was apparently Pest-Buda, the theatrical life was built on several parallel nodes which included several towns of the countryside such as Kolozsvár, Szatmár and Debrecen.

As the mental mapping theory offered the opportunity of playing with scales, the method is applicable on different (such as urban, regional and national) levels. Therefore, the emphasis is on two keywords in regard to the theory: comparative approach and scale changing. By the comparative analysis of the images of distinct cities the specific characters and the general features could be more visible. At the same time, for the researchers one of the most important aspects is to be aware of the required scales and scale changing of the investigation in the given context.

Although historians could not even hope to obtain so direct answers from their sources as Kevin Lynch did from the interviewed people, the historical sources might contain implicit information related to the 19th century way of using the space. In this case the image of the

²⁸⁹ Petőfi Literary Museum. V. 637/2.

environment was constructed by remarks on determining city elements, urban practices and experiences. At the same time, the genre of the source type could influence the making of the city image. An autobiography, a correspondence and a diary could shape different image of the same city. As the original goals of writing were not related to space utilization (which could seem evident for the contemporaries), the referring and remarks on it appeared in the texts only implicitly. Whereas the autobiography can provide a broader cross section and diachronically formulated city image, the diaries and letters rather related to the connections between daily life practices and city elements.

Regarding the perception of Pest-Buda the significance of the child experiences are not omissible. The descriptions of the cityscape were rich in details only in those cases when the authors spent the majority of their childhood in Pest-Buda. The first generational urban intellectuals, Júlia Szendrey and Kornélia Prielle – who became city dwellers when they were already adults – did not pay attention to the alterations of the cityscape in their writings. These types of reflections had crucial role in the texts of Emília Kánya. The outcome of the comparison between the autobiographies of her and Frigyes Podmaniczky highlighted two important aspects. One of the most characteristic elements in the narratives was the contrasting between the different layers of the city, between the present and the past, between the childhood and the adulthood. However, the alterations of the built environment could serve in different functions in the personal rhetoric. Emília Kánya used these as the colourful additional elements of her personal stories, whereas Frigyes Podmaniczky as the evidences of the grandiose development of the city. On the other hand, the comparison between their texts highlighted that not the female and male spaces were necessarily separated, but the meanings of the same spaces were different for women and men. The examination of the so-called gendered spaces could include these differentiated meanings instead of the separated spheres. Emília Kánya and Frigyes Podmaniczky used the same urban spaces and parks in different ways, even in their childhood. The majority of these differences were determined by their gender. The types of their games, their transportation within the city, their company and the objects of their attention were divergent in all of their life period.

Similar differences and intersections are observable in the case of Júlia Szendrey and Sándor Petőfi. Although their factual social life and common participation in public social events was not too extensive, they were considerable figures of the contemporary public life through their private life. It meant successful strategy for them in their publication strategies (public confessions about their private feelings) as well as in their use of private space for public

purposes. Their flat became the scene of important conversations where the presence of the writer and artist friends was ordinary. Due to its central position it became the organization scene of the revolutionary events as well. Therefore, the originally private space worked in public functions in several cases. The meanings of the rooms were also differentiated. The common room of the married couple was bedroom and workroom at the same time, the dining room served as salon for their literary discussions. However, they received their guests also in their bedrooms. Their case shows that the contemporary meanings of the private and the public categories was not unambiguous at all. The intersections between these could be in the focus of the further deeper interpretations.

One of the most conspicuous common features of the analysed female careers was that the dominance of the bourgeoisie in the cultural life helped the careers and positioned these as the parts of the professionalization. The primary cause of this fact was the different meanings of the intellectual work in the different layers of the society. Although in the 18th century the majority of the female writers were aristocrat and noble women, they did not regard it as a profession and they did not presented themselves as a professional community in the press. In the 1850s and 1860s not the female writing itself provoked intense debates, but the new phenomenon of the high number of women who regularly published their work. During the period of the debates these women expressed their opinion not only in separate articles, but also together in a collective letter.²⁹⁰ They did not refuse the traditional female roles, but definitely emphasized their right to the profession. In the lower social stratum the physical work was determining and the individuals did not have the opportunity to the free choice of an intellectual work. Therefore, the emergence of the female intellectual work in a modern sense was connected to the conditions of the bourgeois society. The basic education and the literacy of the girls were ensured in the middle class, but the financial background without continuous male work-force was not sufficient. As a result, in some cases the financial necessity required the usage of the intellectual abilities from the women. In these cases the reactions of the society were much more appreciative than in those cases when only the desire of the self-expression was the motivation. The extreme assessment of the actresses became also more stabile when they were already regarded as the members of the bourgeois society. The alterations are observable in the life practices and in the habitation types of Kornélia Prielle. As barnstormer actress she stayed at the most diverse places and changed the locations

²⁹⁰ Néhány nőirő, *Lehet-e jó nő a magyar írónő?*, Nefelejts, 1863, 49, 617 – 618.

very quickly. As the celebrated actress of the National Theatre she lived in the Vas Street, close to the National Theatre. The vicinity of the theatre made that area important also for other actresses.

What kind of abilities and skills did these women possess which helped them in their professions? The role of the conversational skills was important in each case. In this period it was considered as a typically feminine talent. However, the cases of the analysed three women underpinned that this talent could be expressed in very diverse ways. In the case of Kornélia Prielle it was essential part of her success as the presentation of the French dramas in the National Theatre built on her particular conversational style. Emília Kánya needed very good communicational skills as editor, but she possessed these from her childhood as the house of her parents functioned as important social space of the urban intellectuals. The unique talent of Júlia Szendrey in the intellectual conversations was often mentioned in the letters and memoirs of the contemporaries. Although she did not use it so directly in her profession than the other two ladies, it was the basic element of her contemporary image. On the other hand, it was also observable in the style of her writings, especially in her fairy-tales and in her translations.

The knowledge of languages was also useful for them. Emília corresponded with German writers and travelled to Vienna because of a conference as female editor, Júlia translated German and French texts as well as the tales of Andersen based on its German version. The impact of the French culture was significant especially in the reception of Júlia and Kornélia. The cultural patterns of the French literary and theatrical life influenced the Hungarian culture through its iconic figures and particular style. Júlia Szendrey was considered regularly as the “Hungarian George Sand” in the letters of the contemporaries as well as in the later media. She embodied a woman type which was singular and isolated in the contemporary Hungarian social life. Although she preferred other genres than George Sand, the comparison between them was emphasized again and again because of her short hair, readings, publications and conversation style. Kornélia Prielle was also often compared to the French actresses. She had the strongest professional identity which was often expressed in her writings when she characterized her artist career. Emília Kánya had German cultural background as her social network built on the Lutheran intellectuals in her childhood.

However, the social assessment of the intellectual women was dependent above all the relation between their activities and the traditional female roles. One of the most important

requirements was the utilization of their skills for the common good, their contribution to the general education of women. As the female editor undertook these tasks, they were appreciated, unlike the female writers who were often accused by vanity. However, the concept of the social utility did not include the female contribution to the nation building. The literary historian Pál Gyulai and János Arany, poet and editor who were the ruler of the discourse about female writers and the contemporary literary life – preferred the texts about special female feelings such as maternity instead of national feelings. Although women were supposed to be not only good mothers, but good patriots as well, the expression of the female patriotism was absurd and ridiculous in the eyes of the contemporaries. At the same time, in the case of the actresses their Hungarian performances were considered as great contributions to the strengthening and spreading of the Hungarian language. This aspect of their activities constituted one important element of their praised status.

The source material which I used could offer also further research directions. All of the examined ladies had several marriages. The spouses tried to formulate their careers together: Júlia Szendrey with Petőfi as literary couple, Emília Kánya with her colleague, Mór Szegfi who helped her in the editing and married her. Kornélia Prielle and Szerdahelyi achieved together their successes because of their special and similar style. There were several other couples in the 19th century who used the same strategy. The appearance of the private life in the media was good advertisement which had power also in the cultural life. The questions of the norm following and the norm breaking are also crucial. According to my case studies, both of these were present in the life of the intellectual women. The examination of these could clarify the impact of the widely accepted, axiomatic suppositions on the individual thoughts.

The present thesis could be continued in three main research directions. First, more contemporary female professions could be taken into consideration in order to construct a more complex overview about the female intellectual work. For instance, the preceptress, the schoolmistress and later the female teacher job could mean good reference points as well as the female photographers who were advertised in the printed press from the end of the 1850s.²⁹¹ The examination of these could clarify the specificities, the advantages and disadvantages of the different intellectual work which became available for women. The

²⁹¹ For instance, Karolina Werner opened a photographer studio in 1859 in the inner city (Hatvani Street 13). Farkas Zsuzsa, *A fényképész szakma növekedése a Magyar Korona területén, 1840 – 1890*, in: http://www.fotomuveszet.net/korabbi_szamok/201002/a_fenykepesh_szakma_novekedese_a_magyar_korona_teruleten_18401890?PHPSE (2016. 06. 01.)

institutional background and framework of these professions should be also considered. Second, the deeper analysis of the personal perceptions of city require further sources which provide more detailed information about the individual, daily use of urban space. For instance, the female and child diaries of urban intellectual families provide rich data and diversified information related to this question. Finally, the numerous female travelogues of the period can be also useful sources as these could show the impact of foreign urban cultures and cityscapes on the perception of Pest-Buda. All of these research directions and case studies could contribute to the multifaceted and colourful history of those feelings, imaginations and perceptions which are called aggregately as Budapest-experience.

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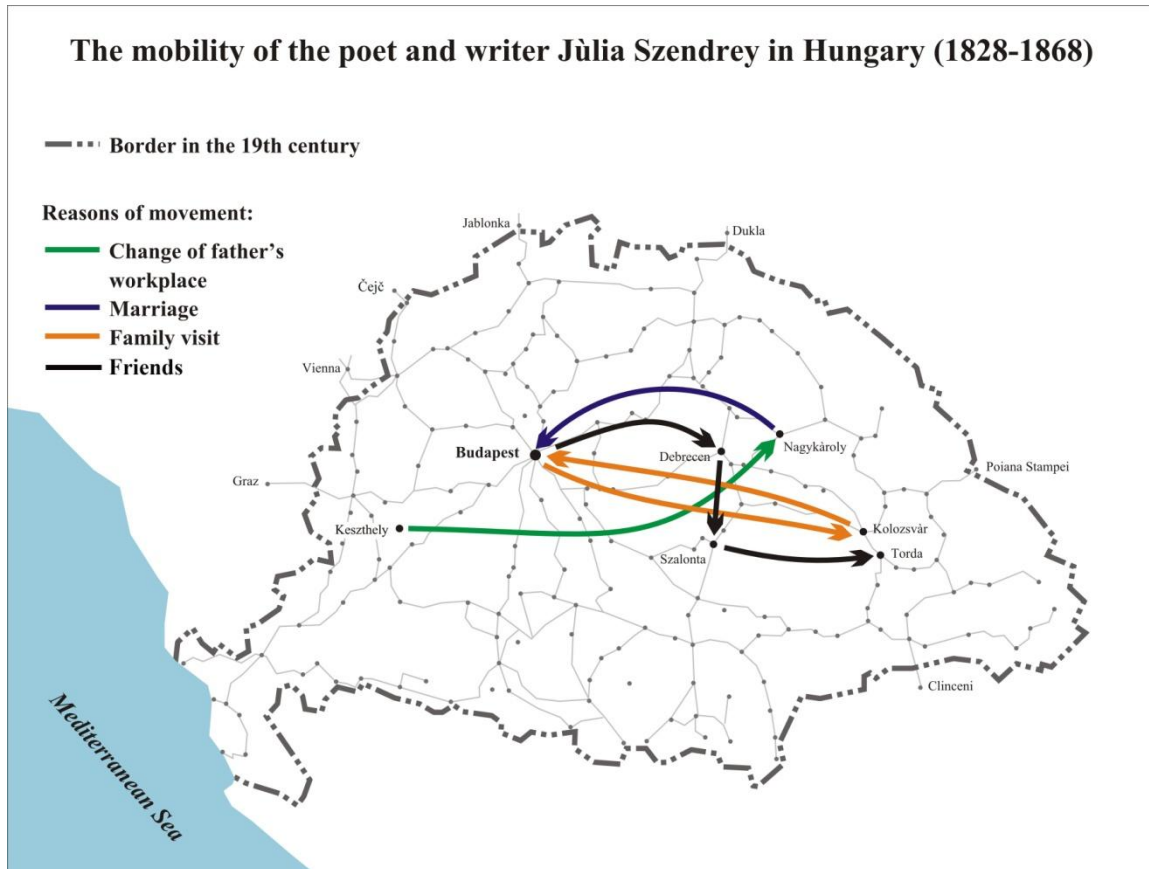
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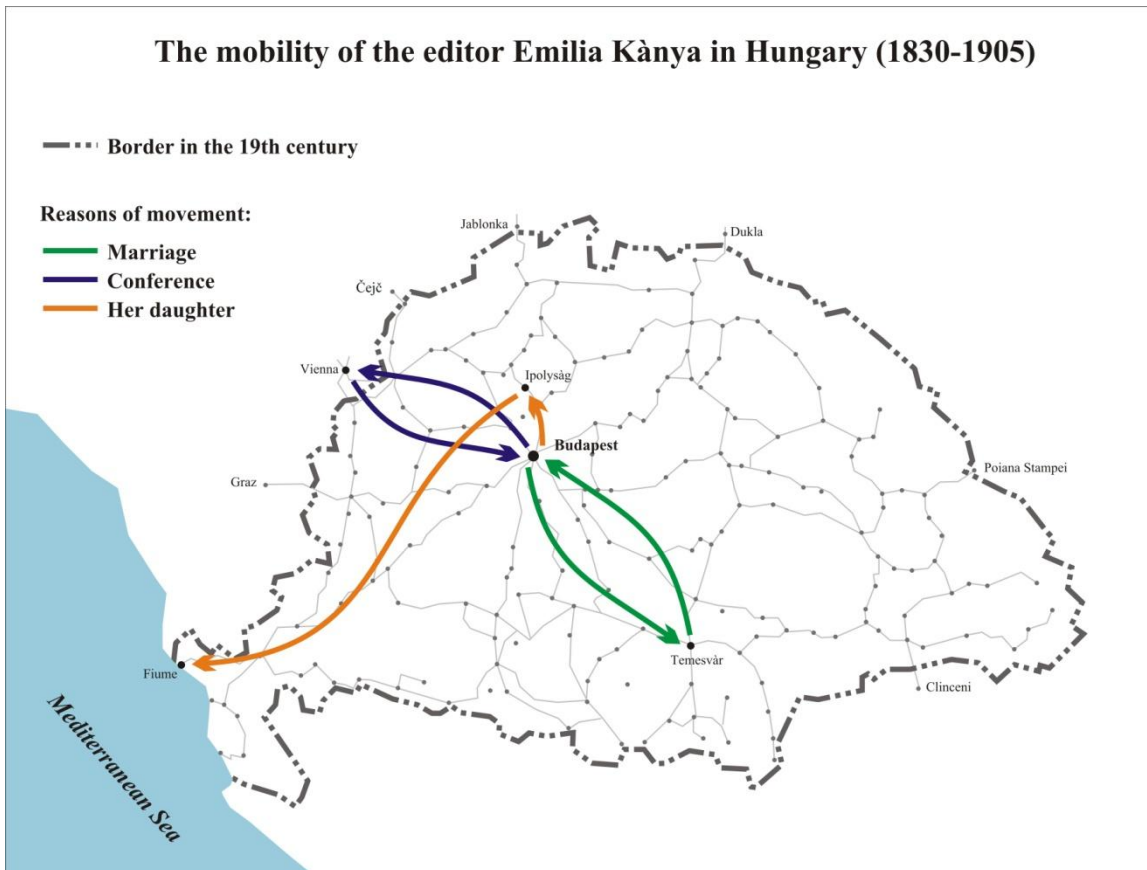
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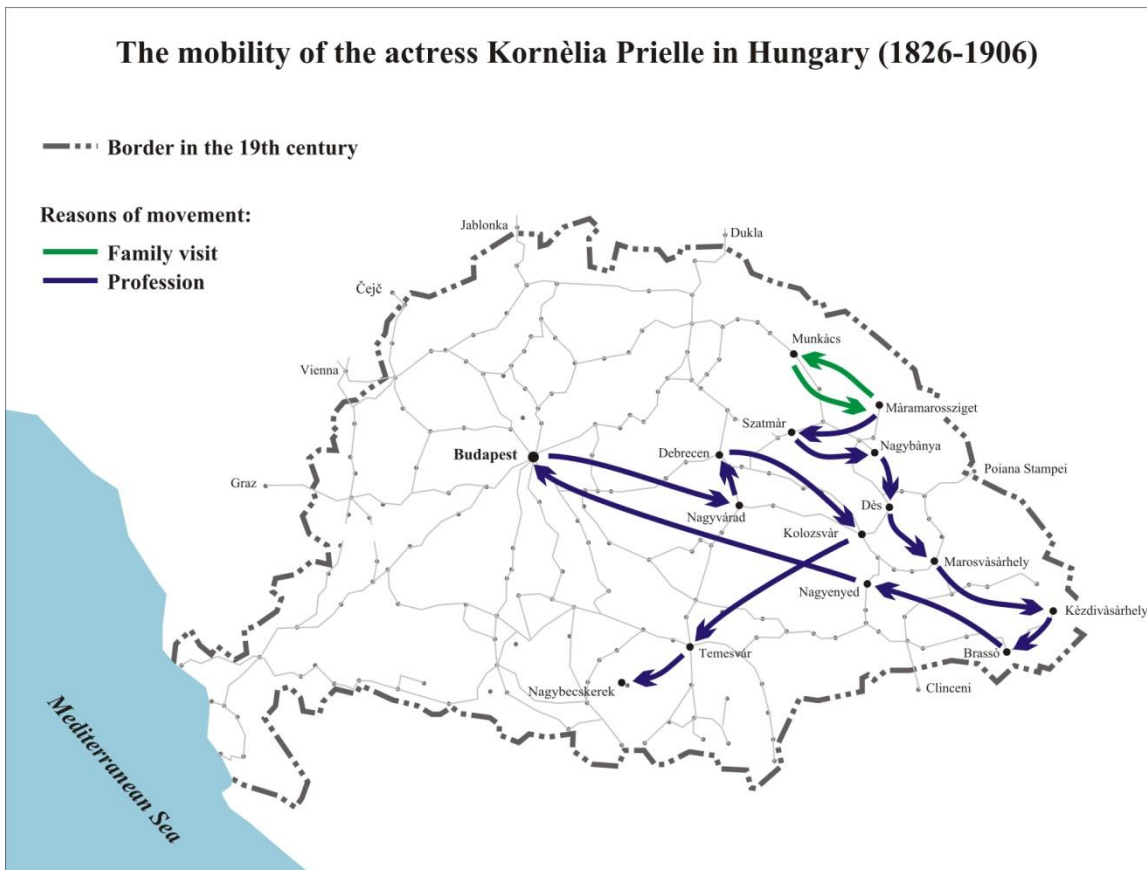
APPENDIX

Map 1.





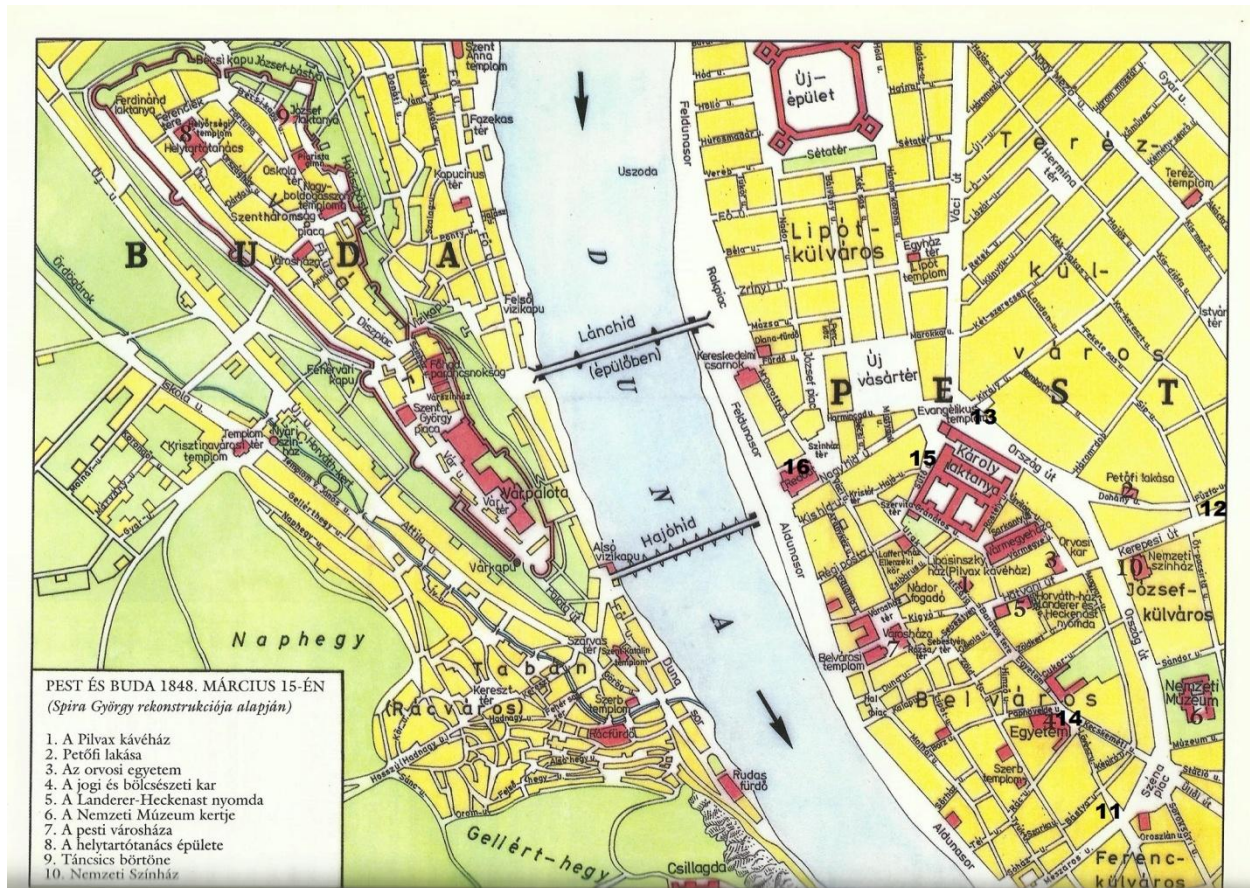
Map 2. Map 3.



Map 4.

The map of Ferenc Kerényi about the inner city of Pest-Buda in 1848.²⁹²

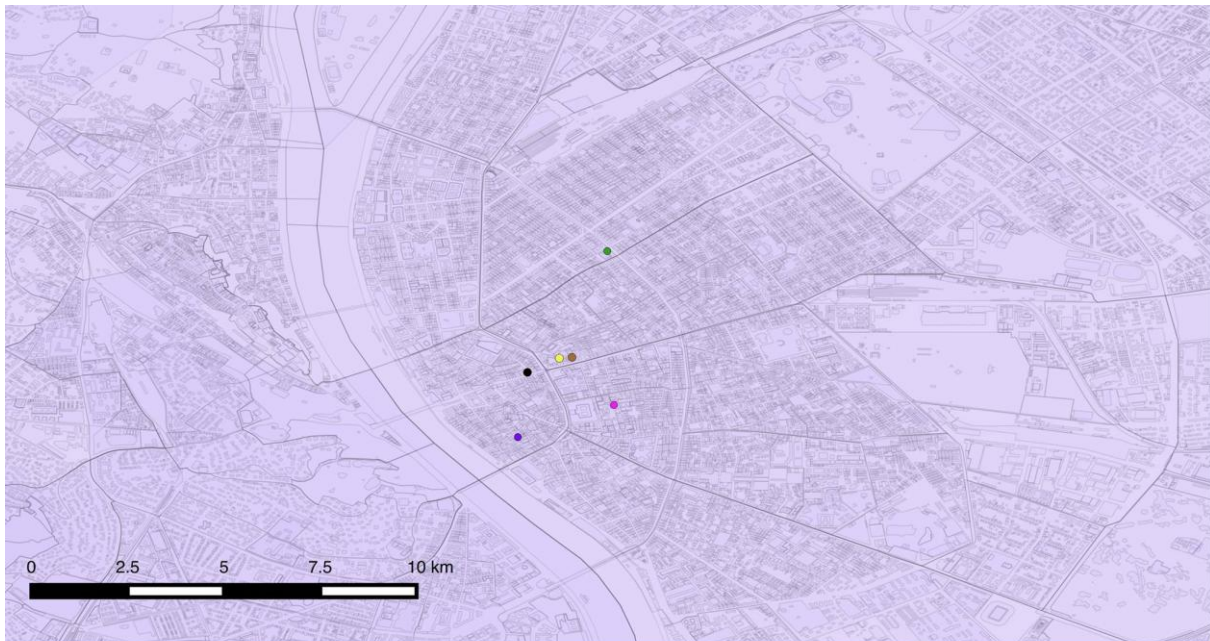
He indicated the important locations of the revolution (1 – 10). I also add further locations (11 – 16) which had important role in the everyday lives of the examined women.



²⁹² Kerényi Ferenc, *Petőfi Sándor élete és kora 1823 – 1849*. Budapest 1998, 96.

1. Pilvax Coffeehouse
2. The Schiller-house where Szendrey Júlia, Petőfi and Jókai lived together
3. Medical University
4. Faculty of Law and Arts
5. Landerer-Heckenast Printing House
6. Garden of the National Museum
7. City Hall of Pest
8. Council of the Royal Governor
9. The prison of Mihály Táncsics (iconic political prisoner in the period)
10. National Theatre
11. The house of Júlia Szendrey and Sándor Petőfi in 1848
12. Marczibányi - house where the actors (among others the young Kornélia Prielle and Gábor Egressy) lived
13. The house of the parents of Emília Kánya at the later Deák square
14. The house of Emília Kánya and her first husband in 1852
15. The editorial office of Emília Kánya
16. Redout (Vigadó), the famous concert hall

Map. 5 – 7. (Júlia Szendrey, Emília Kánya and Kornélia Prielle in Pest-Buda)



Legend

- Királyi Pál (Lövész) utca 18: Júlia Szendrey and Sándor Petőfi lived here (August 1848 – May 1849)
- Horánszky (Zerge) utca 13: Júlia Szendrey lived here alone in the last year of her life (1867 – 1868)
- Hársfa utca 54.: The house of Júlia Szendrey and her second husband, Árpád Horvát between 1853 and 1867
- Rákóczi (Kerepesi) út 12: Júlia Szendrey and Sándor Petőfi lived here (May 1849 – July 1849)
- Rákóczi (Kerepesi) út 1: National Theatre
- Dohány utca 16 – 18: The Schiller-house where Júlia Szendrey, Sándor Petőfi and Mór Jókai lived together (November 1847 – July 1848)
- Map of Budapest



Legend

- Vigadó (Redoute): Famous concert hall, the space of social and cultural events
- Városmajor u. 44: The villa of Miklós Barabás painter
- Városliget: City Park
- Corner of the Papnövelde utca and Egyetem tér: The house of Emília Kánya and her first husband in 1852
- Normafa: one of the favourite green areas of the city dwellers in Pest-Buda, the meeting point of actors, writers and other artists
- Fehér Hajó utca (Hajó utca): The editorial office of Emília Kánya
- Deák tér (Kohl Platz): The house of the Kánya family next to the Lutheran church
- Map of Budapest



Legend

- Vas utca 8: The house of Kornélia Prielle from the 1860s
- Rákóczi (Kerepesi) út 12: Kornélia Prielle lived here in 1845 with other actors
- Rákóczi (Kerepesi) út 1: National Theatre
- Map of Budapest