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**THE IDEA OF THE CAUCASIAN HUNGARIANS AND ITS
ARMENIAN ASPECTS IN 19TH CENTURY HUNGARY**

In this article I am about to present a theory of the 19th century Hungarian historical science and its effects on the Hungarian national identity, namely the idea of the Caucasian Hungarians and a Hungarian national home in the Caucasus, with a special regard to its Armenian aspects. I will show, how the region of the Caucasus was identified in Hungary as a “sacred center” (Smith, 1991: 16), or an “iconic site” (Edensor, 2002: 45) of the “nation”, and served as a lieu de mémoire; that was believed to be the ancient birthplace of the Hungarians, with historic locations providing “evidence of a ‘glorious’ past of ‘golden age’ and antecedence”¹.

More than a dozen of Hungarian expeditions were led to the Caucasus throughout the 19th century, in quest for finding the remaining Hungarian tribes. Most of the nations, nationalities or ethnic groups of the region were considered to be descendants, or relative folks of Hungarians, this way, direct relation, kinship was suggested between Hungarians and the Parthians of Georgia by István Hotváth in 1825; the Karachays by Gergely Dankovszky in 1826; the Abkhazians, Georgians and Karachays by Jenő Zichy in 1897; the Kabardian people by Gábor Bálint and Lajos Szádecky-Kardoss in 1901 and 1917, and the list goes on. The Armenian people were also of this kind, Hungarian, and Transylvanian Armenian historians suggested direct relations between Hungarians and Armenians, their ethnicity and language. In the first part of my article I will present the evolution of this approach, and in the second, I will outline, how the relevant Hungarian literature, as historical source, could distribute to Armenian studies, to the history of Armenia and the Armenian people of the 19th century.

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¹ **Tim Edensor**, *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*, Oxford – New York, 2002, p. 45, **Anthony D. Smith**, *National Identity*, London, 1991.

The idea of the Caucasian Hungarians and the theory of an Armeno-Hungarian ethnogenesis

The idea of the Caucasian Hungarians emerged at a time, when Hungarian historical science witnessed its institutionalizing and disciplinization, which was also the time for the search for the roots of the nation². It was of the greatest value to research the early history of the Hungarians, practically every well-educated person in the country expressed his opinion on the matter, establishing dozens of different concepts on the origins of the nation: the theories of Sumerian, Egyptian, Parthian origins, and so on. However, two main theories appeared: the concepts of the Finno-Ugric and Turkic origins of Hungarians. Although these two theories marked most essentially the academic investigations of the early Hungarian history both outside, and inside the frameworks of the activities of the National Academy of Sciences, a third idea emerged, that had an immense number of supporters and researchers, and had a great impact on the formation of the national identity of the Hungarian people: the idea of the Caucasian Hungarians.

It would be anachronistic to talk about national identities and national consciousness in Europe before the 18th century. Collectivity, collective consciousness, identity – these notions marked at most religious communities; groups with common language or habits in a mixed population; residents of the same village, district or kingdom; etc. In Hungary, before the emergence of nationalist ideologies – according to Jenő Szűcs –, the conception of “nation” had three different meanings: subjects of the Hungarian Kingdom (*hungarus*); members of groups with common language and culture; and members of the “nation” in a feudal legal sense, that included noblemen and members of the clergy³. It was not

² Although already in the 18th and 19th centuries, a relatively certain picture was drawn on the early Hungarian history and the origins of the Hungarians, these topics are subjects of academic disputes ever since. Hungarian is the most-spoken language of the Finno-Ugric languages of the Uralic language family, and was the first to have its own alphabet – Old Hungarian alphabet, or Hungarian Runic alphabet. Yet, it was considered to be a shameful narrative of Hungarian history, in the time of the Hungarian national- and independence movement of the 19th century, the theory of the relations with the “fish-odor” Finnish people was the least popular belief, the main principle of making a national history was conceived as follows: “the triumphal, the better!”

³ **Jenő Szűcs**, *The evolution of Hungarian national consciousness*, Budapest, 1997 (in Hungarian); **Gábor Gyáni**, “Jenő Szűcs, the lonely Historian”, *Forrás*, 40 (2003) 6, pp. 3-18 (in Hungarian). It wasn't any different in other parts of Europe, for a detailed

until the (late) 18th and 19th centuries that the belief in a common past and a shared fate, and the sense of a language- and ethnicity based *imagined* community became the basic principles for identifying nations. Medieval and early modern Hungarian historiography, concerning early Hungarian history – thus the origins and characteristics of the nation – stated that Hungarians are descendants of Attila and the Huns – which idea dates back to the 13th century, formulated by Simon Kézai in his codex titled *Gesta Hungarorum* – and the Avars – who between the 6th and 9th centuries resided in the Carpathian Basin, the territory of Hungary –, however, these ideas reached only a handful of literate, wealthy people, who could afford education and the maintenance of libraries. Thus, these ideas remained historical concepts, without any serious influence on group-identification – such historical concepts could only have an impact on collective identities after the spread of literacy and the emergence of nationalist ideologies.

During the early modern period, by the establishment of book-printing and publishing houses – first by Johannes Gutenberg in 1439, Germany, and later in 1472, in Buda, Hungary too –, and the spread of literacy, printed books and booklets; language, ethnicity and origins – thus, the idea of a coherent entity: the nation – became more and more the bases of communal identities, and soon, national consciousness, nationalism and national identities were born. As Benedict Anderson put it into words, “print-languages laid the bases for national consciousnesses”⁴, and indeed, it was the case in Hungary as well⁵. The publication of a single letter had such a great impact on Hungarian national identity and histori-

account see: **Joseph Canning**: *A History of Medieval Political Thought: 300-1450*. London – New York, 1996.

⁴ **Benedict Anderson**, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London – New York, 1991, p. 44.

⁵ Although Benedict Anderson had a relatively clear vision on the history of Hungarian nationalism, his discernment was limited, due to the lack of contemporary special literature. His relevant argumentation discussed merely the “impotent struggle of the national oligarchy” of Hungary as he emphasized mostly the anti-Habsburg/German political asseverations – e.g. the struggle for the Hungarian to be the state-language in the country –, and the “enforced Magyarization” of the late 19th century Hungarian politics, whilst these were only the visible tips of the icebergs of not some Hungarian nationalist conceptions, but more of the momentary political contests of the influential political and social elites of Austria and Hungary. It is noteworthy that Anderson refers only to a handful of contemporary publicists and actors of these events as sources, all of them with extremely unorthodox, far-out ways of thinking.

cal consciousness, that it caused the establishment of one of the most influential thoughts of 19th century Hungarian national identity. This particular letter was written in Astrakhan by Sámuel Turkoly – an officer of the cavalry of Ferenc Rákóczi II, who after the defeat of the independence war against the Habsburgs in 1711, fled to Russia, and served in the army of the Russian tsar, Peter the Great – dated to 1725. Turkoly fought in the Russo-Persian War of 1722-1723, and was held a prisoner by Persia in the Caucasus. In his letter to his relatives in Szikszó, Hungary, he reported sensational news: in the crags of the Caucasus he found the remains of the early Hungarian tribes: “*And the King of Hungarians resided alongside the Kuma River, in a Castle of which the Walls might be ruined, but they are still standing, and the name of the place in the local pagan languages is called Magyar...*”⁶

The letter was first presented to the public in a journal of the city Győr in 1747, and in the following 150 years, it was re-published at least eight times⁷. During the 19th century, on the grounds of the belief of the city of Magyari/Madzsari as the real site of the historical “capital city” of the Hungarians of the Caucasus, more than a dozen of explorers and scholars visited the assumed place of the ruins of Magyari. Numerous monographs and dozens of articles, public presentations were made in connection with the Caucasian Hungarians, it was believed that even at that time, the Caucasus gave shelter for remaining Hungarian tribes. One of the popular journals in 1825 stated that “...around the Caucasus in the length of 300 miles, there are more than seven million people [...] who speak Hungarian”⁸.

The idea was the most popular at the end of the century, when it was taken up, sponsored and promoted by a wealthy and influential person, politician and historian Count Jenő Zichy, who financed, organized and led three expeditions to the region between 1895-1898 – one of his expeditions in 1895 even had an Armenian member, Hakob Chellinger-

⁶ “Magyar” is the self-appellation of Hungarians. See the text in: “Letter of Sámuel Turkoly from the city of Astrakhan, next to the Caspian Sea, dated to 10th of St. George’s month, 1725”, *Sokfele*, 7 (1801), pp. 146-165 (in Hungarian).

⁷ It was published in 1783, 1795, 1801, 1825, 1843, 1867, 1879 and 1895 in several journals, magazines and newspapers such as *Hon*, *Tudománytár*, *Vasárnapi Újság* or *Magyar Közélet*.

⁸ **László Perecsényi Nagy**, “About two compatriot explorers of the East”, *Felső Magyar Országi Minerva*, 1. (1825) 5, p. 205 (in Hungarian).

ian.⁹ His expeditions had a wide publicity, the best-sold weekly paper of that time, the *Sunday Journal* (Vasárnapi Újság) in 1895 published thirteen articles – two of them on the front page – reporting about the expeditions, spreading the news of “relative folks of the ancient Hungarians” who lived in the Caucasus – their “ancient homeland” – and were “discovered” by the expedition. The news spread not only among the educated and wealthy, but amidst the lower classes of the society too, as it was documented by the founder and director of the Hungarian Ethnographic Society, Ottó Herman in 1898: “*Even the shepherds in my service, who had access to the newspapers, believed that the legendary Golden Land was found*”¹⁰.

Although it is impossible to give an exact definition of “national identity” or “historical consciousness”, most of the researchers seem to agree that given territories – such as a “national home” or an “ancestral homeland” – are of an essential importance in defining such ideologies. As Kelman Herbert phrased it, an “almost ubiquitous characteristic of groups that we define as nations is their residence in a common territory that they consider their homeland, or else their shared memory of such a territory – of an ancestral homeland that they may have lost but not forgotten”¹¹. Groups with collective cultural identities tend to identify themselves – as a community – inside of given spaces, so called “national spaces”; and vice-versa, territories, landscapes or even buildings for that matter, can be identified as “national” too¹². Perhaps the most accurate designation of this kind of manifestations of spatial identity was given by Pierre Nora, who introduced the concept of *lieux de mémoire*, according

⁹ Very little is known about Hakob Chellingerian – or as the Hungarian sources call him: Csellingerján Jakab. According to István Joó, he studied natural sciences in Munich and Halle, and in 1895 travelled through Hungary when he met the other members of the expedition and decided to join them. See: **Joó, István** (ed.), *The Zichy-expedition. Caucasus, Central-Asia, 1895. The journal of Lajos Szádeczky-Kardoss*, Budapest, 2000.

¹⁰ **Ottó Herman**, “Count Jenő Zochy’s Journey in the Caucasus”, *Budapesti Szemle*, 93 (1898) 253, pp. 123-139 (in Hungarian).

¹¹ **Herbert C. Kelman**, “Nationalism, Patriotism, and National Identity: Social-Psychological Dimensions”, In: **Bar-Tal, Daniel – Staub, Ervin**, *Patriotism in the Lives of Individuals and Nations*, Chicago, 1997, pp. 168-169.

¹² Tim Edensor differentiated seven different levels of national places, seven levels of spatial identity: the nation as bounded space; ideological rural national landscapes; iconic sites; sites of popular culture and assembly; familiar, quotidian landscaped; dwelling spaces; and finally, homely spaces. See **Tim Edensor**, 2002, pp. 36-57.

to which, national spaces or sites of the collective cultural memory of a given group are the “embodiment of memory in certain sites where a sense of historical continuity persists” and historical consciousness crystallizes¹³.

On the grounds of these above mentioned theories it is easier to understand the importance of the belief of the Caucasus being the birthplace, and a national home for Hungarians. Already the second expedition that was organized to the city of Magyar, the Caucasus and the Armenian plateau by János Károly Ógyallai Besse in 1829-1830 had a great impact in Hungary, János Jerney, historian and publicist in 1840 stated the followings: “*there is barely a person among the educated people of our nation, who wouldn’t know about the journey of János Besse to the region of the Caucasus...*”¹⁴ The idea even effected the Hungarian literature and art, one of the most famous and influential Hungarian poets of the 19th century, Mihály Vörösmarty, writer of the second Hungarian national anthem, in 1828 dedicated an epic poem to Magyarvár [Hungarian Castle / Castle of Magyar] “on the shore of River Kuma”¹⁵.

By the end of the century, as a result of the intensifying media coverage by the press, the idea became so popular that – as it is mentioned above – the Caucasus was believed to be the “Golden Land”, a national home for the Hungarians even among the lowest classes of the society. Even those who visited the Caucasus for a completely unrelated purpose felt it their obligation to keep an open eye on the folks of the region in the hope of discovering the remaining Hungarian tribes. István Nogel, entomologist, joined the expedition of the German orientalist Moritz Wagner to the Caucasus in 1842. Later in his memoirs he stated that “*in the hope of finding some folks with Hungarian origins, I decided to join*

¹³ **Pierre Nora**, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire”, *Representations*, 26 (1989), 1, pp. 7-24.

¹⁴ **János Jerney**, “Local literature. A Journey. I”, *Figyelmező az egyetemes literatura’ körében*, 1840/6. pp. 87-93 (in Hungarian).

¹⁵ A short fragment of it – in a rough translation – sounds as follows: “Crashed, lonely it stands, a picture of consummation, Magyarvár; in its own ruins, looms on the pretty mountains of the Kuma...” As a footnote the poet added the following explanation: “The ruins of Magyarvár still exist on the shore of River Kuma.” See **Mihály Vörösmarty**, “Magyarvár,” *Koszorú, Szép-Literatúrai Ajándék a’ Tudományos Gyűjteményhez*, 8 (1828), pp. 161-171.

the young naturalist with pleasure”¹⁶. Geologist and geographer, Mór Déchy, who was one of the first researchers of the geography of the Caucasus, led seven expeditions to different areas of the mountainous region. Regarding the reasons for choosing this particular region as a subject of his investigations, in his monograph on the Caucasus published in 1907 he wrote: “*Me and my fellow travelers were highly interested in these people for another reason. The question was, whether the great migratory-flows of history that waved around the Caucasus threw between the crags of these high mountains tribes or folks, who, with our nation [...] the Hungarians, shared kinship...*”¹⁷

In the public discourse the Caucasus was identified as the ancestral homeland of the nation, thus, a “home” for Hungarians, this way the imagined borders of the Hungarian national space was expanded, including the distant region of the Caucasus. László Perecsényi Nagy, in 1825 stated that it was the Caucasus where “*the original birthplace of the olden Hungarians of the Scythian homeland can be found*”¹⁸. János Besse in 1830 described the Caucasus in a similar way, as a place where “*our ancient Ancestors once settled down*”¹⁹. Jenő Zichy in 1897 already called the mountainous region as another “homeland” for our nation²⁰, similar to Lajos Szádeczky-Kardoss, who wrote about the North-Caucasus as the place “*where the descendants of our relatives who remained home, still live*”²¹.

Although the sense of a shared national home induced strong mental ties with the people of the Caucasus, to identify them as relative folks or compatriots, it was important to bestow other national characteristics and symbols upon them. According to Herbert Kelman, “inhabiting the same territory – or sharing the memory of or aspiration to such a territory – is not a sufficient condition for defining a group as a nation. Group mem-

¹⁶ **István Nogel**, *István Nogel's journey to the East*, Pest, 1847, pp. 38-39 (in Hungarian).

¹⁷ **Mór Déchy**, *The Caucasus. My researches and experiences in the crags of the Caucasus*, Budapest, 1907, p. 392 (in Hungarian).

¹⁸ **Perecsényi Nagy**, 1825, p. 203.

¹⁹ **János Besse**, *Fourth report of János Ógyallai Besse from the Caucasus to his compatriots*, Pest, 1830, p. 10 (In Hungarian. Hereinafter: Besse, 1830/1).

²⁰ **Jenő Zichy**, *The migration of the Hungarian race*, Budapest, 1897, p. 14 (in Hungarian).

²¹ **Lajos Szádeczky-Kardoss**, “Relative folks in the Caucasus. III”, *Turán*, 2 (1917) 8-9, p. 372 (in Hungarian).

bers must also share certain other cultural elements”²². The case of the idea of the Caucasian Hungarians gives a proper example for the process of bestowing national characteristics upon other groups and people – the process of identifying “national” and “relative” entities. To prove, that one or another national group of the Caucasus was in fact a descendant or relative folk of the Hungarian nation, promoters of the idea of the Caucasian Hungarians argued that the cultural characteristics of one or another group are equal or at least tightly connected to its Hungarian equivalent.

There are uncountable examples for this kind of identification; the first one was given by the first explorer ever to visit the Caucasus and the city of Magyari in 1804 in search for the remaining Hungarian tribes, Gergely Jaksics. In an interview he gave to a journal, he described an imaginary encounter between him and “the prince of the Hungarians” whom he met in the Caucasus. Among many other fictional, however, in a cultural anthropological point of view, remarkable data he gave, he compared the beauty of the Caucasian Hungarians to those in the Hungarian cities of Veszprém, Miskolc and Debrecen²³. Gergely Dankovszky’s monograph of 1826 titled “The remaining of the Hungarian Nation in its Ancestral Habitation” also gives us some fine examples, among others, in connection with the Karachay people. On the grounds of the account that was given by Heinrich Julius Klaproth, German linguist and ethnographer in his publications concerning the people of the Caucasus, Dankovszky appeared to discover putative congruencies between Karachay and Hungarian national attributes, e.g. their cuisines²⁴.

A reporter of the journal titled *Useful Amusements* (*Hasznos Mulatságok*) in 1828 wrote an article on the Avars of Dagestan, who – according to the article – “live along river Attila and in the mountains of the Caucasus, and their capital city is called Chumsak, or Kunság”²⁵. By this short description the reporter invented two congruencies between the Avars of Dagestan and Hungarians: he gave the name Attila for the river of their habitation after “our common primogenitor”, and “Kunság” for

²² **Kelman**, 1997, p. 169.

²³ **Perecsenyi Nagy**, 1825.

²⁴ On the grounds of the descriptions of Klaproth, he “invented” some shared national food with completely groundless etymological argumentations: “...their most common food is the Kefir, [...] in Hungarian “Kövér”, or Bacon.” See **Gergely Dankovszky**, *The remaining of the Hungarian Nation in its Ancestral Residence*, Pozsony, 1826, p. 15 (in Hungarian).

²⁵ “Caucasians”, *Hasznos Mulatságok*, 1828/2 (52.), pp. 381-382.

their capital city, which is the name of a region in Hungary, relating to another ethnic group, the Cumans. János Besse in his publications of the 1830s, introduced a new level of the Caucasian-Hungarian national attribute identification process, as he ventured upon proving the Hungarian nature and origins of practically every nation of the Caucasus he encountered with: already in his first report on his journey in 1829, he defined as Hungarian not less than seven different Caucasian nations, and argued that even the names of local rivers and families seem to prove that the Caucasus is the birthplace of Hungarians: “*If we examine the names of rivers, settlements and families without the slightest prejudice, [we find that] there is no Nation of which the language would be so similar to the Hungarian then this*”²⁶.

Lajos Szádeczky-Kardoss, historian, who was a member of one of the expeditions of Jenő Zichy to the Caucasus in 1895, wrote about the Circassian people, and their Hungarian-like emotions as follows: “*Their racial character, proud self-esteem: the love of freedom; chivalrous personality; brave, straight look; hospitality; heroic intrepidity and their habits in general our exceedingly similar to the Hungarians*’.” Similar to this, Gábor Bálint, linguist, in his book of 1901 bestowed Hungarian characters upon the “Adyghe-Kabardian” people of Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachay-Cherkessia: “*...who are these aristocrat Adyghe-Kabardians; whose language, clothes, and their whole mental and physical nature verifies them to be the sweet relatives of Hungarians, which is an acknowledged fact among every educated person in the Caucasus*”²⁷.

As we can see, on the grounds of the idea of the Caucasian Hungarians, the region of the Caucasus was identified in Hungary as a national home, an iconic site of the Hungarian national identity, while its inhabitants, different national or ethnic groups as relative folks, sharing common origins and national-cultural attributes with the Hungarian people. The Armenians were also of this kind, in 19th century Hungary direct

²⁶ **János Besse**, *The reports of János Besse Ógyallai from the Caucasus, the olden residence of the Hungarians, that he sent in the months of July, Aug. and September of 1829* [xx#], 1830. 6-7 (Hereinafter: Besse, 1830/2.). For more, see **de Jean-Chrales Besse**, *Voyage en Crimée, au Cavcase, en Géorgie, en Arménie, en Asie-Mineure et a Constantinople, en 1829 et 1830; pour servir à l’histoire de Hongrie*, Paris, 1838., Besse, 1830/1.

²⁷ **Gábor Bálint**, *Revision of the Landtaking, or the clarification of the Hunnic, Szekler, Pecheneg and Cuman questions*, Kolozsvár, 1901. p. 8 (in Hungarian).

relation between the two people were suggested, as the theory of the Armeno-Hungarian ethnogenesis appeared.

The first researcher ever to suggest such a relation was the above mentioned János Károly Ógyallai Besse, who believed that Armenians – among many other nations of the region – preserved some names in their language, that can provide evidences for the historic presence of Hungarians in the Caucasus and the Armenian plateau. In his book of 1838, published in Paris, he assembled a dictionary of “identical” Hungarian-Caucasian words, among them he marked a so called “Armenian dynasty of Marzaban” – clearly mistaken for the Persian bureaucratic title of Marzaban – and suggested that this so called dynasty is the ancestor of the Hungarian noble family of Marcibány. He also suggested that the name of the biblical mountain Ararat in fact has a Hungarian etymology, accordingly to which, the original Hungarian name sounds as: “Ár-ár-állt”, meaning “flood-flood-stopped”²⁸.

Bálint Kiss, Calvinist priest and historian in his book of 1839, for the first time, formulated the theory of a common Armeno-Hungarian ethnogenesis, which roots back to the biblical time and place of the Great Flood. Kiss’s basic assumption was that Madai, son of Japheth, is in fact the direct primogenitor of the Hungarians (Magyars), who settled down with his people “in the mountains southeast of Ararat” that was “named Armenia after Aram, [and?] his valiant companion, Arménus”. Kiss believed that on these lands, the tribes of Aram – the Armenians – and the tribes of Madai – the Hungarians – mixed with each other, which he considered to be one of the most important steps in the formation of the Hungarian nation. He even named the four “Armenian tribes” assimilated into the Hungarian tribal structure: “Kadusius’, Amards, Kyrdis and Tapirs”. After the amalgamation of the Hungarians and Armenians, according to Kiss’s narrative, Hungarians lived inside the borders of the Parthian Empire and Armenia, from where they were expelled by Muhammad himself, with his army of Muslim conquerors in the 7th century. After their defeat, they were driven out of the Caucasus to the steppes in the north, from where they started their migration in the direction of Central Europe and today’s Hungary²⁹.

²⁸ de Besse, 1838, pp. 79, 89.

²⁹ Bálint Kiss, *Hungarian Antiquities*, Pest, 1839, pp. 136-143, 172-173, 210-211 (in Hungarian).

A more academic approach of the theory of the Armeno-Hungarian ethnogenesis was procreated by József Thúry, academician linguist and orientalist. He believed that the predecessor of Hungarians was an Armenian sub-ethnic group called Siavordi, which, prior to the 9th century lived in the “Armenian district of Udi”, between “River Kura in the North; Lake Sevan, or Artsakh [...] in the South; Kukar province in the West; and finally, Sheki and Phaidagaran provinces in the East”³⁰. The foundation of this theory lied in the fact that the first written account on the Hungarians, imparted in the *De administrando Imperio* of Constantine the VII, emperor of the Byzantine Empire, used the name “Sabartoi asphaloi” for the Hungarians – of which the origins are still unclear. However, József Thúry appeared to find a satisfying solution, which was also reinforced by the idea of the Caucasian Hungarians³¹. Thúry, as an academic orientalist, was one of the first Hungarian scholars to research Armenian sources and special literature³², on the course of which, he first found out about the name of the “Armenian sub-ethnic group” Siavorti, of which the similarity with the name Sabartoi Asphaloi led him to the conclusion of common Armenian-Hungarian origins. Referring to historian Stephanos Orbelian, he believed that even that time, in Syunik region of Armenia, there was a place called Hungarian-valley (*Մաճառա-ղաճոր*), which indicated the veraciousness of his theory³³.

The concept of a common Armeno-Hungarian ethnogenesis was popular among the Armenian community of Transylvania too, which led to the establishment of an Armenian narrative of the theory. The Armenian community of Transylvania was a highly assimilated national group of the Hungarian Kingdom that integrated into the Hungarian social- (many of them received noble title) and religious structure (they adopted Catholicism by the unification with Rome, and the establishment of the Armenian Catholic Church of Hungary) throughout the 18th and 19th cen-

³⁰ József Thúry, “The ‘Savarti-asphali’ name of Hungarians”, *Századok*, 31 (1897) 4, p. 322.

³¹ His theory was not without any supporters, E.g. Károly Fiók, philologist of the Parsee and Sanskrit languages, in his article of 1897 agreed with Thúry’s idea: Károly Fiók, “Again about the name ‘sabatoiasfaloi’. Second and final article”, *Századok*, 31 (1897) 7-8, pp. 611-617, 699-706.

³² He used the works of Movses Khorenatsi, Stephanos Orbelian, Mikhael Chamichian and Ghukas Inchichyan.

³³ Thúry, 1897, p. 325.

turies³⁴. On a certain level of assimilation, the Armenians of Transylvania – of whom even the vernacular was Hungarian³⁵ – developed a dual-identity, to which, the idea of a shared past with the Hungarian people suited properly.

Kristóf Lukácsy, Armenian Catholic vicar of Armenopolis (or Szamosújvár, today: Gherla, RO) in his book of 1870 titled “The progenitors of Hungarians, their olden names and habitations” ventured upon proving that Hungarians are “an ancient folk of the Armenian race”, of which the “birthplace and original habitation was, in my opinion, Great-Armenia, namely its Northern part, which used to be called Upper-Armenia alongside River Araxes”³⁶. In his book he imparted a dictionary of 212 “identical” Armenian and Hungarian words to support his theory. The basis of this idea was the preconception, that the primogenitor of Hungarians was not Japheth but Chus, son of Ham, of whom the descendants were called Khushs. He believed that the homeland of the Khushs (Hungarians) was a district of Artsakh called Khusdi, where the name of a settlement still provides proof for the historic existence of Hungarians: H’narakert (Հնարակերտ), founded by Hunor, a mythical primogenitor of the Hungarians³⁷. The theory of Kristóf Lukácsy was acknowledged and supported by Lukács Patrubby too, a teacher at the University of Budapest with Armenian descent³⁸.

On the grounds of the theory proposed by Lukácsy, Kristóf Szongott, editor of the journal titled *Armenia* and founder of the *Armenian Museum* in Armenopolis, developed his own narrative of the Armeno-Hungarian ethnogenesis³⁹. In his book of 1906 titled “The origins and homeland of

³⁴ For more detailed information see **Kovács Bálint, Bernád Rita** (eds.), *The Armenian Catholic Collective Archive in Armenopolis*. Budapest – Gyulafehérvár – Leipzig, 2013, **Kovács Bálint, Pál Emese** (eds.), *Far Away from Mount Ararat. Armenian culture in the Carpathian Basin*, Budapest – Leipzig, 2013.

³⁵ There was even a ditty among them that stated: “In Armenopolis near the Szamos River, more Hungarian than the Hungarians – we are.” See in: **Szűcs Salgó, Mária**, “In the wake of Armenians”, *Pesti Hírlap Vasárnapja*, 26 July 1936, p. 32 (in Hungarian).

³⁶ **Kristóf Lukácsy**, *The progenitors of Hungarians, their olden names and habitations*, Kolozsvár, 1870, pp. 151, 180 (in Hungarian).

³⁷ **Lukácsy**, 1870, pp. 155-163.

³⁸ **Lukács Patrubby**, “Ancient Hungarians in Armenia”, *Armenia*, 13 (1899) 7, p. 232 (in Hungarian).

³⁹ He also translated to Hungarian and published Movses Khorenatsi’s History of Armenia in 1892, giving grounds for further academic investigations on the early Armenian history: **Mózes Chorenei**, *History of Great-Armenia*, Szamosújvár, 1892 (in Hungarian).

Hungarians” he attempted to explicate the etymology of the appellation of Hungarians used by Constantine the VII. – i.e. Sabartoi Asphaloi – by giving an Armenian-Greek etymology for the designation. He believed that the word Sabartoi stands for the combination of Armenian words *սև* (black) and *սրբի* (son) – while the Greek word Asphaloi (black) only emphasized its Greek nature. Szongott came out with an imaginative idea, that Hungarians – just like the appellation Sabartoi Asphaloi – were of a mixed Armenian-Greek origin. The amalgamation of the two nations took place in Etelköz – probably today’s inner-Ukraine, north of the Black Sea –, where the officialdom of Heraclius, emperor of the Byzantine Empire, that fled from the Empire after the death of Heraclius, in the second part of the 7th century mixed with the local Armenian community, and “decided” to create a new language, culture and identity; a family, in which the father was Greece, the mother was Armenia, and the newborn son was the Hungarian nation itself. As an appendix to his book, Szongott published a dictionary of several hundreds of putative congruencies of the Armenian, Greek and Hungarian languages⁴⁰.

As we can see from these above mentioned examples, the theory of the Armeno-Hungarian ethnogenesis was not just a sub-theory of the idea of the Caucasian Hungarians, but a school of its own, nonetheless it emerged parallel to, and in connection with the idea of the Caucasian Hungarians. Although a large number of researchers promoted the theory of the Armeno-Hungarian ethnogenesis, it was mostly popular among the Armenians of Transylvania, their journal titled *Armenia* – that was published between 1887 and 1907 – was the only real stage for such a discussion on common Armenian-Hungarian origins, thus, the theory had significant effects only on the identities of the members of the Transylvanian Armenian community, strengthening their – already determinative – dual-identity.

The literature of the idea of the Caucasian Hungarians as sources of Armenian history and ethnography

The researchers of the idea of the Caucasian Hungarians and the explorers who led expeditions to the Caucasus left behind a great number of written sources – including memoirs of their journeys – giving account on several Armenian communities from Brusa to Baku. Most of these

⁴⁰ **Kristóf Szongott**, *The origins and homeland of Hungarians*, Szamosújvár, 1906 (in Hungarian).

accounts are of the slightest significance, mentioning only the existence of an Armenian community in the given settlement or city – such as Vladikavkaz, Mozdok, Kislovodsk, Groznij or Feodosia –, or gives only a short historical description of the local Armenian community – e.g. Armavir –, however, some of these accounts have a great value for Armenian studies as sources, mostly for ethnographic purposes.

Other than these written sources, there are also visual sources of the Caucasian Armenian ethnography: on the course of the expeditions of Count Jenő Zichy, photos were purchased about and taken of local Armenian people in their traditional dresses, for further ethnographic investigations, together with about a dozen of postcards of the local Armenian folk art and sights – the pictures are kept in the archives of the Museum of Ethnography in Budapest⁴¹. One shows an Armenian woman from Tbilisi completely in Georgian clothes, two pictures are about Armenian women from Shamakha in their traditional dresses, one with a headscarf, the other without. Two pictures were made in Artsakh – one, the only taken by the members of the expedition themselves, was taken in Shushi (see picture N 11) – about Armenian women in their traditional clothes. On both pictures one may find evidence of the usage of the traditional garment that covered the women's mouth, and on one of these pictures one may find a traditional rounder in operation as well. The last one worthy of mentioning is about a woman from Nukha, or Sheki, also wearing the above mentioned garment on her mouth (see picture N 12).

As for the written sources, it seems reasonable to start with the sources on the Armenian community of Magyari⁴². This small settlement, where the ruins – or just remains of the ruins – of the assumed “castle” that Sámuel Tukroly mentioned in his ominous letter, was visited by

⁴¹ Unfortunately only two pictures can be published in this volume of essays, however, all of them can be found at the Photo Archives of the Museum of Ethnography in Budapest: “Armenian woman from Tbilisi”, Caucasus. F.1.170. Museum of Ethnography, Photography Collection (MEPC); “Armenian woman from Shemakha”, Caucasus. F.1.171. MEPC; “Armenian women from Karabakh”, Caucasus. F.1.172, MEPC; “Armenian woman. Shemakha”, Caucasus. F.1.342, MEPC; “Armenian woman from Nukha”, Caucasus. F.1.347, MEPC; “Armenian woman with her child on the back of a horse”, Shushi. F.1.450, MEPC.

⁴² There are real potentials in the Hungarian archival collections for researchers of earlier periods of the Armenian history too, e.g. the correspondence of Pál Ráday, who, for instance, in his letter of November, 1709, gave an account on the Armenian community of Causeni in Moldova. See **Benda Kálmán** (ed.): *Documents of Pál Ráday, 1709-1711*, Budapest, 2003 (in Hungarian).

most of the Hungarian explorers who travelled to the Caucasus. The exact location of it is unclear, however, it is sure that it was situated somewhere between Terek and Kuma Rivers. János Besse Ógyallai gave a detailed account of the village after his visit in 1829, according to which the village was inhabited by “a German colony of 33 households, an Armenian [community] of 40 households, and 4 families of Kalmyks”. He described its surrounding environment as rich in cattle and sheep, pheasant and partridge⁴³. Sixty six years later, the expedition of Count Jenő Zichy also found the Armenian community in Magyari, where the Armenian member of the expedition, Hakob Chellingerian found out that the inhabitants called the village Karabakh, in tribute to their land of origin: Artsakh⁴⁴.

Lajos Szádeczky-Kardoss, in his stenographic journal, took account of the ethnic composition of Pokoynom, a city of today's Stavropol Krai in Russia, where Armenians lived together with Abkhazians, Persians, Tatars and Russians. The expedition visited the local school where “there were 3 teachers and 100 students, 6 classes. One person pays 80 rubles, good and poor students are on state expenditure. The uniforms are linen-dresses and black hats”⁴⁵. In the Georgian city of Uplistsikhe, the members of the expedition also met with the local Armenian community, about which, among others, Szádeczky-Kardoss noted that it was a highly assimilated community “wearing Georgian dresses from top to toes”. However, the local oral tradition preserved their belief that they are the descendants and heirs of the local Armenian dynasty that ruled the land many centuries ago. Szádeczky-Kardoss also noted that the ruling lord of the village was the Christoff family⁴⁶.

Concerning the Georgian capital Tbilisi, most of the Hungarian travelers expressed their amazement in connection with its complex ethnic composition: “It's the Babylon of our times!” Szádeczky-Kardoss stated that: “Beside Russians, Armenians and Persians, there are also quite a few local Georgians, Tatars, Greeks, Germans, French, and Jews”⁴⁷. Bertalan Csudáky, ethnographer, travelled through the Caucasus prior to 1907, of which later he wrote and published his memoirs. In it, he gave

⁴³ Besse, 1830/2, pp. 11-16.

⁴⁴ Joó, 2000, p. 92.

⁴⁵ Joó, 2000, p. 97.

⁴⁶ Joó, 2000, pp. 194-195.

⁴⁷ Joó, 2000, pp. 169-170.

account on some exciting ethnographic records he took concerning the Armenian women of Tbilisi. According to Csudáky, not only did they wear expensive and colorful dresses, but also believed that they were the “most direct descendants of the lovely sinner Eva”⁴⁸.

Csudáky also visited the city of Baku, about what he drew an illustrative image: *“Its filthy, curved streets, shallow Persian and Tatar huts, diffuse loud mass of nations, show a significant contrast with the European-style district on the shores of the Sea. It is here, where the mercurial Armenian and the Persian sleeps, and bustles about the seminude Tatar, and it is here that the elegant maelstrom of the always querulous millionaires (petroleum kings) of Baku rushes. [...] It can be said, that other than some Persian and Armenian merchants, the whole city consists only of indigent laborers and millionaires competing with the American Dollar-kings”*⁴⁹. Csudáky also recorded another interesting folk tradition concerning the legendary of Ararat, Noah, and the tradition of Armenian oenology: *“...it was also here, that the forefather of every wine-drinking person, our cheerful Father Noah, for the first time, looked on the bottom of a wine jug”*⁵⁰.

The most important account on an Armenian community, however, was given by the above mentioned István Nogel, companion of Moritz Wagner on his expedition to the Caucasus, of which he gave a detailed account in his memoirs published in 1847. Nevertheless, the most detailed and significant account was not taken of an Armenian community in the Caucasus, but of the Anatolian city of Brusa, or Broussa. Its significance lies in the fact, that the history of the Armenian community in the city of more than ten thousand people is considered to be a “black hole” of Armenian historiography, Sarkis Karayan in 1980 wrote that *“There is very little written about the Armenian community of Brousse (Brusa) [...] Writing the history of Armenian Broussa should be considered “urgent historiography”, before the last survivors from the city pass away”*⁵¹. Although some 34 years has passed, still, there is little known

⁴⁸ Bertalan Csudáky, *Eastern Landscapes (Crimea and the Caucasus)*, Budapest, 1907, p. 168 (in Hungarian).

⁴⁹ Csudáky, 1907, p. 144.

⁵⁰ Csudáky, 1907. p. 168. He also recorded a Georgian variant of the biblical story of the Ark of Noah, that it was the Elbrus where the Ark touched the ground, but the mountain casted it on the top of Ararat. See: Csudáky, 1907. p. 123.

⁵¹ Sarkis Karayan, “Bibliography. Histories of Armenian Communities in Turkey”, *Armenian Review*, 33 (1980) 1, p. 94.

about the Armenian people of Brusa and their everyday lives. The account of István Nogel is an important source of the pre-genocide social history of Western Anatolian Armenian communities.

Nogel, as an entomologist, was sent to Constantinople by Imre Frivaldszky, academician zoologist, in order to research (collect and categorize) the fauna of that area. Soon after Nogel arrived to Constantinople in 1841, he decided to move to a close, but smaller city, so he decided to stay in Brusa for a while. There, he received accommodation at an Armenian family, among whom he lived for several months. He observed the city, its Turkish, Apostolic and Catholic Armenian and “Spanish Jew” inhabitants, and gave account on even some slighter details, e.g. the Armenian cemetery on the border of the city next to a chestnut forest. He attended an Armenian wedding in January, 1842, of which he gave a comprehensive report – five pages – in his memoirs: starting with the gathering of guests in the house of the bride – women and men in different rooms –, the march of the family and guests in the city, the introduction of the bride in her wedding dress – that covered even her eyes –, and the wedding ceremony itself⁵².

Conclusions

The idea of the Caucasian Hungarians was a significant fragment of the 19th century Hungarian national identity that expanded the Hungarian spatial identity, including the distant lands of the Caucasus, providing Hungarian historical consciousness with another *lieu de mémoire*, a site of memory, where the sense of a “glorious past” of the Caucasian Hungarians and the “ancestors of the nation” crystallized. Although there were many to oppose the idea, every single one of these objections was phrased by members of the academic community, promoters of other theories⁵³. The theory of the Armeno-Hungarian ethnogenesis met with a warm response mostly in the Armenian community of Hungary, and had an effect at most on their collective cultural memories and national identities.

⁵² Nogel, 1847.

⁵³ To mention a few: **Herman**, 1898, **János Jerney**, *Enlightment on the languages of Avars and Chumsaki people*, Szeged, 1829 (in Hungarian) [Nevertheless, Jerney later annulled his objections and became a promoter of the idea of the Caucasian Hungarians], **Bernát Munkácsi**, “About Jenő Zichy’s third Asian journey”, *Ethnographia*, 8, (1897) 3, pp. 238-239 (in Hungarian).

The photos kept in the archives of the Ethnographic Museum in Budapest should be considered as important primary sources of 19th century Armenian folklore in the South Caucasus, which demonstrates their rich heritage in different traditional dresses region by region. These archival collections of Hungary not only preserve photo collections of this period, but also from later ages: one may find collections of pictures taken and purchased in the 1930s in South Caucasian, Anatolian, Mesopotamian, Syrian and Palestinian Armenian communities, and also, from the 1960s in Armenia and Georgia, from the collection of István Vincze.

The literature of the idea of the Caucasian Hungarians, and the memoirs of 19th century Hungarian travelers can provide researchers of 19th century Armenian history with important sources, mostly concerning social history and folklore. For example, the memoir of István Nogel is a source with a significant importance, since the account it gives on the Armenian community of Brusa is a detailed and illustrative source on the pre-genocide Western Anatolian Armenian folklore and social history.

The article in general shows the potentials of the Hungarian archival collections and literature of the 19th century that may be used by researchers of different disciplines for their investigations in connection with global Armenian studies; and on the other hand, introduces two ideologies so far unknown to the international historical science: the idea of the Caucasian Hungarians, and the theory of the Armeno-Hungarian ethnogenesis⁵⁴.

Պետեր Պալ Կրանից

«Կովկասյան հունգարներ» հասկացությունը և հայերի հետ դրա առնչակցությունը 19-րդ դարի Հունգարիայում

Պատմությունը Հունգարիայում որպես գիտություն ձևավորվել ու համակարգվել է 19-րդ դարում, և այդ ժամանակ է, որ ազգն իր արմատներն էր փնտրում: Առաջ եկան տասնյակ տեսություններ, որոնց մեջ ամենից ազդեցիկներից էր կովկասյան հունգարների գաղափարը: Այն ներգործել է նաև հունգարների ազգային ինքնության վրա, Կովկասը ներկայացնելով որպես հարազատ տուն, ազգի հինավուրց բնօրրան, ժողովրդի միասնական մշակութային հիշողության մեջ մի սրբազան վայր: Հողվածներ, գրքեր, բանաստեղծություններ և անգամ մի ցուցահանդես է նվիրվել Կովկասին, որտեղ, ինչպես

⁵⁴ The idea of the Caucasian Hungarians was introduced in the following article: Péter Pál Kránitz, "The idea of the Caucasian Hungarians in the 19th century", *Világtörténet* (in Hungarian).

կարծում էին, նույնիսկ այդ ժամանակ դեռ գոյություն ունեին հին հունգարական ցեղերի հետնորդներ: Տասից ավելի արշավախմբեր այցելեցին Կովկաս՝ նրա լեռներում այդ հունգարական ցեղերը կամ նրանց ազգակից ժողովուրդներ գտնելու նպատակով, ուղղակի ցեղակցական կապեր առաջարկվեցին այնտեղի ազգերից մեծ մասի, այդ թվում և հայերի հետ: Հայ-հունգարական էթնոգենեզի տեսությունը, որ առաջ քաշվեց Հունգարիայում 19-րդ դարում, ոչ թե սոսկ «կովկասյան հունգարներ»-ի ենթատեսությունն էր, այլ դա մի առաձին դպրոց էր, որի ազդեցությունն էր կրում հատկապես Տրանսիլվանիայի հայերի պատմական գիտակցությունը: Կովկասյան հունգարների գաղափարին ծառայած նյութերը՝ հուշեր, նամակագրություն, հրատարակված գրքեր ու հոդվածներ, Կովկասում արված լուսանկարներ, այդ ամենը կարելի է օգտագործել որպես 19-րդ դարի Հայաստանի և հայ ժողովրդի պատմության աղբյուր: Արշավախմբերի հաշվետվություններ են գրվել առնվազն տասներեք հայ համայնքների մասին՝ անչափ հետաքրքիր տեղեկություններ հաղորդելով հիմնականում հայերի ազգագրության և ընկերային կառույցների մասին: Ամենամանրամասն հաշվետվությունն այնուամենայնիվ տրվել է ոչ թե Կովկասի, այլ Կոստանդնուպոլսից հարավ գտնվող Բրուսայի հայերի մասին: Հունգարական արխիվներում կան նաև Կովկասի տարբեր շրջաններում արված՝ հայերին և նրանց ավանդական տարազը ներկայացնող լուսանկարներ:

