CULTURE AND CUSTOMS OF HUNGARY

Oksana Buranbaeva and Vanja Mladineo

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OKSANA BURANBAEVA AND VANJA MLADINEO

Culture and Customs of Europe

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The authors dedicate this book to Rimma Buranbaeva and Ural Buranbaev; to Mirjana and Marko Mladineo

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Series Foreword

The Old World and the New World have maintained a fluid exchange of people, ideas, innovations, and styles. Even though the United States became the defacto world leader and economic superpower in the wake of a devastated Europe in World War II, Europe has remained for many the standard bearer of Western culture.

Millions of Americans can trace their ancestors to Europe. The United States as we know it was built on waves of European immigration, starting with the English, who braved the seas to found the Jamestown Colony in 1607. Bosnian and Albanian immigrants are some of the latest new Americans. In the Gilded Age of one of our great expatriates, the novelist Henry James, the Grand Tour of Europe was de rigueur for young American men of means to prepare them for a life of refinement and taste. In the more recent democratic age, scores of American college students have Eurorailed their way across Great Britain and the continent, sampling the fabled capitals and bergs in a mad, great adventure, or have benefited from a semester abroad. For other American vacationers and culture vultures, Europe is the prime destination. What is the new post–Cold War, post–Berlin Wall Europe in the new millennium? Even with the different languages, rhythms, and rituals, Europeans have much in common: They are largely well educated, prosperous, and worldly. They also have similar goals, face common threats, and form alliances. With the advent of the European Union, the open borders,

and the euro, and considering globalization and the prospect of a homogenized Europe, an updated survey of the region is warranted.

Culture and Customs of Europe features individual volumes on the countries most studied for which fresh information is in demand from students and other readers. The Series casts a wide net, including not only the expected countries, such as Spain, France, England, and Germany, but also countries such as Poland and Greece that lie outside Western Europe proper. Each volume is written by a country specialist with intimate knowledge of the contemporary dynamics of a people and culture. Sustained narrative chapters cover the land, the people, and offer a brief history; they also discuss religion, social customs, gender roles, family, marriage, literature and media, performing arts and cinema, and art and architecture. The national character and ongoing popular traditions of each country are framed in a historical context and celebrated along with the latest trends and major cultural figures. A country map, chronology, glossary, and evocative photos enhance the text. The storied and enlightened Europeans will continue to fascinate Americans. Our futures are strongly linked politically, economically, and culturally.

Preface

The story of Hungary is a story of a country at the heart of Europe, geographical as well as cultural, and of a people quite distinct from their eastern and western neighbors yet their histories and future irrevocably intertwined. The Hungarian people succeeded in preserving a separate identity in their European homeland in the face of conquest, assimilation, and shifting historical alliances for over a millennium. Hungary today is most certainly a Central European nation in terms of a modern geopolitical and cultural understanding of Europe. Moreover, it has occupied a central position in the constellation of European kingdoms for centuries. The Kingdom of Hungary existed with some interruptions in its homeland on the Carpathian basin for over nine hundred years, battling, conquering, and forming alliances with its neighboring kingdoms. Hungary's remarkable heritage spans literature, music, architecture, philosophy, natural science, and political thought and is a unique contribution to European culture.

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Chronology

Carpathian Basin before the Hungarians

cca. 350,000 BCE	Carpathian basin was home to *Homo erectus seu sapiens Paleohungaricus*—Samu.
cca. 5,000 BCE	Agrarian societies thrived in Carpathian basin.
2,000 BCE–1,300 BCE	Carpathian Basin was inhabited by tribes with developed military-pastoral social hierarchy.
800s BCE	Territory of Carpathian basin was home to tribes of Iranian origin, the Scythians, Celtic peoples, and Pannonians.
9 BCE–378 CE	Romans ruled over Pannonia.
106–270 CE	Romans ruled over Dacia.
370s	Huns migrated into Europe.
434–453	Attila the Hun ruled.
567	Avars subjugated the Carpathian basin.
626	Byzantine Empire defeated the Avars.
796	Franks defeated the Avars.

Hungarian Conquest of the Carpathian Basin

895–900	Hungarians arrived in the Carpathian basin led by Árpád and Kurszán.
904	Kurszán died, Árpád becomes sole ruler.
907	Árpád died.
933	Hungarians defeated by Henry I "the Fowler" at Merseburg.
955	Hungarians defeated by Otto I "the Great" at Augsburg.
972	Géza became Grand Prince.
c. 970	Vajk, christened István (Stephen), was born.
996	István married Gisella, daughter of Henry of Bavaria.
997	Grand Prince Géza died.

Reign of the House of Arpád

1000 or 1001	István crowned first Hungarian King.
1038	King István died.
1077–1095	King László ruled.
1091	László acquired inland Croatian territories.
1095–1116	King Kálmán ruled.
1105	Kálmán conquered Dalmatia.
1172–1196	King Béla III ruled.
1222	King András II issued the Golden Bull.
1235–1270	King Béla IV ruled.
1241	Hungarians defeated by Mongol invaders at Muhi.
1285	Hungarians under King Ladislas IV repelled second Mongol invasion.
1301	Last Arpád King András III died without an heir.

Reign of the "Foreign" Kings

1310–1342	King Charles I ruled.
1342–1382	King Luis I "the Great" ruled.
1367	Luis I founded University of Pécs.

1387–1437	King Sigismund ruled.
cc. 1407	János Hunyadi was born.
1446–1452	Hunyadi governed Hungary in the name of the underage King Ladislas V (László).
1456	Hunyadi-led Hungarian army triumphed over the Ottoman Turks at Belgrade.
1458	Matthias I became king.
1485	King Matthias I captured Vienna.
1490	Matthias I died.
1514	Large peasant uprising crushed by Hungarian nobles.
1526	Hungarian army defeated by the Ottomans at Mohacs.

Tripartite Kingdom

1541	Buda conquered by Ottomans; Hungary divided into three parts.
1568	Edict of Torda proclaimed in Transylvania.
1571	István Bathori became prince of the Principality of Transylvania.
1593–1606	Fifteen Year War fought.
1606	Peace of Vienna concluded between the Habsburg and the Principality of Transylvania.
1613–1648	Reigns of Gábor Bethlen and György I Rákóczi marked the Golden Age of Transylvania.
1683	Ottomans defeated at the Battle of Vienna and Transylvania annexed to other Habsburg-controlled territories.
1699	Hungarian lands liberated from the Ottomans.
1703	Ferenc Rákóczi II leads an unsuccessful uprising against Habsburg control.
1711	Last Transylvanian prince replaced by Habsburg governors.

Absolutism, Reforms, and Revolution

1784	Joseph II decreed German to be the official language in all Habsburg lands.

1789	Joseph II's decree introduced unitary tax on both peasant and noble land holdings.
1790	Joseph II withdrew his reforms shortly before his death.
1848 March	Protesters marched through Buda and Pest with Twelve Points.
April	Diet promulgated April Laws. Batthyány Government took office.
September	Hungarian war for independence raged.
1849 April	Declaration of Independence proclaimed.
May	Russia invaded Hungary in support of Austria.
August	Hungary capitulated.
October	Batthyány executed.

Austria-Hungary and First World War

1867	Austro-Hungarian Compromise concluded.
1914 June	Archduke Franz Ferdinand assassinated.
July	Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia.
1916 November	Emperor Franz Joseph died.
1918 November	Austria-Hungary signed the armistice.
	First Hungarian Republic proclaimed.

Interwar period and World War II

1919 March	First Hungarian Republic dissolved.
	Hungarian Soviet Republic proclaimed.
August	Hungarian Soviet Republic came to an end.
November	Horty's army entered Budapest.
1920 March	Horthy became Regent.
June	Treaty of Trianon signed.
1932	Regent Horthy appointed extreme rightist Gyula Gömbös prime minister.

1939	Hungary received Czechoslovakian territory after German annexation.
1940	Hungary annexed Northern Transylvania after Germany invaded Romania.
	Hungary joined Axis Powers.
1941 April	Hungary joined Germany in the invasion of Yugoslavia.
June	Hungary joined in the invasion of Soviet Union.
1943	Hungary negotiated possible armistice with Allies.
1944 March	German troops occupied Hungary.
December	Budapest besieged by Soviet troops.
	Provisional Hungarian government set up.
1945 January	Provisional government signed armistice with Allies.
February	Budapest fell to the Red Army.
April	Hostilities ended on Hungarian territory.
1946 February	Hungary declared Republic.

Communist Hungary

1956 October 23	Hungarian revolution began.
November 4	Revolution ended with Soviet tanks rolling into Budapest.
1958	Imre Nagy executed.
1988	János Kádár resigned.
1989 May	Hungary opened Iron Curtain border with Austria.
June	Imre Nagy re-buried with full honors.
October	Republic of Hungary proclaimed.

Modern Hungary

1990 March/April	First free elections held.
1999 March	Hungary joined NATO.
2004 May	Hungary joined EU.

2006	Protesters in the streets of Budapest demanded the resignation of prime minister.
2007	Far-right protests erupted on the anniversary of 1956.
2008 November	Hungary accepts IMF Stand-By Agreement after being hit by the global economic crisis.
2010 April	Center-right FIDESz came into power in a landslide parliamentary election victory. Far-right Jobbik party entered parliament.

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Context

The Place

A landlocked country in the geographic heart of Europe, Hungary is nestled in the lowlands of the Carpathian basin (or the Pannonian plain, as it is also commonly known) and transected by one of Europe's longest rivers, the Danube. Its capital, Budapest, is approximately as far away from London as it is from Moscow, as close to Copenhagen as it is to Athens. As is the case with many other countries, periods of Hungary's history have been strongly influenced by the country's geographic features. Its forgiving and passable landscape and its central position on the continent have left the territory of Hungary open to great migrations and vulnerable to invading tribes.

Today the Hungarian territory occupies a geographic area of just under 36,000 square miles, and is comparable in size to Portugal, South Korea, and in the United States, the state of Indiana. The country is elongated in the direction of east-west spanning a distance of 330 miles, whereas its north-south traverse extends about 167 miles. About two-thirds of the Hungarian territory is made up of lowlands, plains, and mildly hilly terrain with elevation around 660 feet. The largest Hungarian plain is the Great Plain (Alföld or more precisely the Nagyalföld) occupying over half of the country's territory. This mostly flat, vast expanse of land extends from the Danube eastward through the basin of the River Tisza and its tributaries to the Romanian border. Its smaller "cousin" is the Small Plain (or the Kisalföld), found in northwestern Hungary along the borders with Slovakia and Austria. Hungarian plains are sprinkled with numerous farmsteads, villages, orchards, vineyards, and large

The Visegrád Citadel, located on a 328m hill, offers a spectacular view over the countryside of the Danube Bend. (Courtesy of Oksana Buranbaeva.)

wheat and other cereal fields. Spectacular sunrises, brilliant rainbows, and *délibáb* (heat-produced mirages), which can be seen on these plains, feed the popular image of the immense and enchanting Hungarian flatlands and often appear in Hungarian literature and folklore. Several mountainous regions intersect and circumscribe the Hungarian plains and basins. Mountains of the Northern Central Highland Belt, along the Slovak border, are home to fascinating karst formations in which rivers have carved out elaborate cave systems such as the ones in Aggtelek National Park, a United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) heritage site. Hungary's highest peak is Kékes in the Mátra mountain range, part of the Northern Central Highland Belt. A 3327 foot high volcanic peak, Kékes is a popular tourist destination with many beautiful hiking trails, panoramic views, and winter sports facilities. Transdanubia is a region of rolling hills crisscrossed by low mountain ranges beginning with the Alpokalja (foothills of the Alps) in the northwest, through the Central Transdanubian Highland Belt, extending from Lake Balaton to the large Danube bend, to the Mecsek, the black coal mountains in the south. Hungary's mountains are treasure troves of water, vegetation, and animal life; traditional costumes and colorful folk customs; as well as rich deposits of minerals.

Hungary's most valuable natural resources are its water reserves and its numerous rivers. When looking at the map of Hungary, it appears as if the

country is both framed by and transected by the blue of its rivers. They all belong to the Danube watershed, the most recognizable and internationally renowned of all of Hungary's rivers. The Danube is the second-longest river in Europe, and its Hungarian section is about 250 miles long. The Danube enters Hungary from the west, from Austria, flowing along the border between Hungary and Slovakia until it reaches Visegrád where it turns sharply south, soon thereafter entering the capital Budapest. Aside from Budapest, the Danube flows through three other Central and Eastern European capitals (Vienna, Bratislava, and Belgrade) and has, throughout history, been one of the most important inland transportation and trading routes in Europe connecting western European cities with the Black Sea. By the beginning of the twentieth century, Budapest had become the largest port on the Danube. The Danube in Hungary not only divides Budapest into two banks, Buda and Pest, but its splits the entire country into two approximate halves. Aside from being its main waterway, the Danube provides around two-thirds of Hungary's water supply. The second-longest river in Hungary, the River Tisza, flows through the Great Plain. An important source of water for the surrounding fields, orchards, villages, and towns, the Tisza's flooding and changing course has, on occasion throughout history, caused much of the Great Plain to become a marshland. The Tisza was finally regulated some one hundred years ago and today is an important source of irrigation, energy generation, and navigation. Another important body of water in Hungary is Lake Balaton in the heart of Transdanubia. With the surface area of about 230 square miles, it is the largest Central European lake. Because of its picturesque shores, numerous resorts, sandy beaches, abundant fishing, rich vegetation, and plentiful bird species, Lake Balaton is one of Hungarians' and visitors' favorite holiday destinations. The summer surface temperature of the water in the lake can easily reach 77°F, making it quite pleasant for swimming and water sports. In fact, Lake Balaton is endearingly referred to as the "Hungarian sea."

Though Hungary's climate is predominately continental, it displays noticeable elements of the Mediterranean and oceanic climates. The Mediterranean influences from the south bring hot, dry air in the summer, whereas the influence of the oceanic climate from the west makes the spring and, on occasion, the fall, wet and soggy. Hungary's annual precipitation is about 24 inches, although its distribution across the regions is quite irregular. Late spring, early summer, and fall are the rainiest periods of the year and most of it falls in the southwestern parts of the country. Hungary's temperate continental climate is responsible for the cold, dry, and windy winters that dominate the Hungarian plains, as well as its sunny, hot summers. The average annual temperature in Hungary is 52°F with a July mean temperature of 72°F and a

Lake Balaton is the largest lake in Central Europe and Hungary's most famous vacation spot. (Courtesy of Oksana Buranbaeva.)

January mean of 30°F. The western parts of the country are quite wet and overall get more precipitation than the rest of the country. Between 20 and 30 days each year have snow in the lowlands, whereas in the mountains the number of snow days is between 40 and 50. Winters in the northeastern parts of the country are, thus, generally colder and harsher than in the rest of the country. Overall, Hungary's climate supports its agricultural production and provides for a fertile and relatively reliable growing season for crops, fruit, vegetables, and wine. About 62 percent of all land in Hungary is arable and a large part of it is very rich and fertile. Such soil, locally known as black soil, contains a highly fertile humus layer and is easily cultivated. The richest of these soils can be found in the Small Plain.

The simplest geographic division of Hungary follows the Danube, Hungary's mightiest river, which splits the country into an eastern (roughly the Great Plain) and a western part (roughly Transdanubia). On the other hand, throughout its history Hungary's regional divisions ran along more complicated lines of conquests, land acquisitions, and monarchical alliances. Regions such as Slavonia, Dalmatia, and Transylvania were, at different historical periods, lands belonging to the Hungarian Crown. Beginning with the founding of the Hungarian Kingdom these regions were considered its vital parts and were fought over and vied for by Hungarian and competing European monarchs, whereas today, they are integral parts of independent

nations of Croatia and Romania. In present-day Hungary, there are nineteen administrative units: Győr-Moson-Sopron County, Vas County, Zala County, Komárom-Esztergom County, Veszprém County, Fejér County, Somogy County, Tolna County, Baranya County, Nógrád County, Heves County, Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County, Pest County, Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County, Hajdú-Bihar County, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County, Bács-Kiskun County, Csongrád County, and Békés County. The city of Budapest makes up the twentieth. A more historic and instructive delineation of Hungary proper reveals seven traditional regions: Western Transdanubia, Central Transdanubia, Southern Transdanubia, Northern Hungary, Central Hungary, Northern Great Plain, and Southern Great Plain.

Western Transdanubia, encompassing the counties of Győr-Moson-Sopron, Vas, and Zala, is the westernmost region of Hungary bordering Slovenia, Slovakia, and Austria. Once part of the Roman province of Pannonia, this region was largely spared the devastation experienced by the rest of Hungary during the Ottoman occupation. The Habsburgs controlled Western Transdanubia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and their influence is reflected in the region's rich baroque architectural heritage. The largest regional city is Győr, a traditional intersection of trading routes at the halfway point between Vienna and Budapest, as well as a beautiful and historic town. Sopron, another significant urban hub of the region, has a beautiful medieval town center and is the heart of the winemaking area in Western Transdanubia. This region abounds in traditional crafts and folklore, as well as natural beauty, with noteworthy rivers, wetlands, lakes, rolling hills, and plentiful forests. Historically, Western Transdanubia was home to a prominent German minority, as well as a significant Jewish population prior to World War II, when many of them were deported to concentration camps. Presently, home to a population of just under a million people, Western Transdanubia has one of the lowest unemployment rates in Hungary. Moreover, it has the second-highest industrial output with a large part of the population employed in industrial production. Partially due to its geographical proximity to the West, this region's number of registered enterprises per 1,000 inhabitants is among the highest in Hungary, as are its rates of foreign investment.

The territory of the neighboring region, Central Transdanubia, is outlined by the boundary with Slovakia to the north, the shores of Lake Balaton to the south, and the banks of the Danube to the east. It includes the counties of Komárom-Esztergom, Veszprém, and Fejér. The name of the largest city in Central Transdanubia, Székesfehérvár, translates as the "white castle with a throne," as it was a historic seat of Hungarian kings. Grand Prince Géza founded Székesfehérvár in 972 and there King András II proclaimed the

Golden Bull, one of the most important edicts establishing the rights of Hungarian nobility, in 1222. The town was occupied by the Ottomans for a century and a half, whilst, under the Habsburgs in the eighteenth century, it enjoyed prosperity and the status of a free royal town. Veszprém, another regionally important town, is known for its castle and as the seat of the bishop of Veszprém who, for centuries, crowned Hungarian queens. The nature of Central Transdanubia is as rich and as interesting as its historical heritage. Lake Velence in Fejér is one of Europe's warmest lakes, a favorite tourist destination for vacationing Hungarians and a bird reserve. Central Transdanubian Highland Belt mountain range is located just north of Lake Balaton and includes Bakony hills, a smaller range popular with nature enthusiasts, hikers, and cyclists. Southern slopes of Bakony hills looking out over the north shore of Lake Balaton are fertile grounds for a prosperous wine industry. With a population of just over a million people, Central Transdanubia is an industrialized region with one of the highest percentage of population employed in industry and among the lowest unemployment rates in Hungary. Central Transdanubia has been home to the large porcelain manufacturer Herend since 1826 and the Ajka Crystal Factory since 1878, both producing the traditional artifacts of the region.

Counties of Somogy, Tolna, and Baranya make up the region of Southern Transdanubia, which expands to the south from Lake Balaton, to the east from the Danube, and to the north from the River Drava along the border with Croatia. Southern Transdanubia is a land of thermal springs, beautiful forests, rural tourism, wine-making, and comparably warm weather. Thanks to climatic influences from the Mediterranean, plentiful vineyards south of the Balaton yield many of the prized Hungarian wines. Lake Balaton, a part of both Southern and Central Transdanubia, is a favorite summer holiday destination for many Hungarians, cherished for its warm, sunny days, water sports, and a fun night life. Tourism, based in large part on Lake Balaton, is also an important source of revenue for both regions. A beautiful mountain range of Mecsek, with its thick forest cover and abundant animal life, is another one of the natural treasures of Southern Transdanubia. In the past, the Mecsek Mountains were also an active uranium and coal mining site. Nearby, Pécs, the largest city in the region, the 2010 European cultural capital and a vibrant, university town has significant Croatian, German, and Roma minorities with its own distinct cultural heritage. Pécs city center, with its early-Christian Roman ruins, has been classified a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Mohács and Szigetvár, both smaller towns in the region, are important markers of Ottoman legacy in southern Hungary and the sites of historic battles between the Ottomans and Hungarian armies. One of the largest regions of Hungary, Southern Transdanubia, is, nevertheless, sparsely

populated. The proportion of its inhabitants employed in agriculture, in particular corn-growing and cattle-raising, is among the highest in the country. On the other hand, it is one of the poorest Hungarian regions and its population of around 950,000 has among the highest unemployment rates.

Northern Hungary, with its counties of Nógrád, Heves, and Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, is the northernmost region of Hungary extending from the banks of the River Tisza to the south to the border with Slovakia to the north. The region of Northern Hungary is a picturesque collage of natural beauty and traditional heritage. It has the highest land area under forest management in the country and is home to Mount Kékes, Hungary's highest peak, part of the volcanic, wooded Mátra Mountains of oak and beech. Another exceptional example of natural beauty of Northern Hungary is the Baradla Cave in the Aggtelek karstic region. This, Hungary's longest cave, finds itself on the UNESCO World Heritage list because of its striking geomorphologic formations resulting from a rare combination of tropical and glacial climactic effects. This cave system was first mapped out at the end of the eighteenth century, with further exploration revealing remnants of Neolithic cultures and establishing it in the nineteenth century as one of the longest surveyed cave systems in the world at the time. Another UNESCO World Heritage Site in this region is the old village of Hollókő, a living museum of folk art and a beautiful example of traditional Hungarian rural settlements. Originally developed during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, today's Hollókő is a skillfully preserved testimonial of traditional village life with authentic homes, a church, a castle, and exhibitions of time-honored crafts such as weaving and woodcarving. Northern Hungary is also home to the Tokaj Wine Region, an elaborate patchwork of vineyards, villages, farms, and traditional, historic wine cellars. This wine region produces the renowned, white, dessert Tokaji wines, one of the oldest botrytized wines in the world. The distinct historic tradition of viticulture in the Tokaj Wine Region reaches back into the sixteenth century to the discovery that grapes affected by noble rot (*Botrytis cinerea* fungus) yield exceptionally sweet wines. Soon after, Tokaji wine became a well-appreciated drink at many European royal courts. Another celebrated Hungarian wine comes from Northern Hungary, the interestingly named red *Egri Bikavér*, or Bull's Blood, of the Eger Wine Region. With its 1.2 million people, Northern Hungary is among Hungary's more populous regions. This area has a high unemployment rate, with the majority of its population employed in the service sector and industry. Employment in the agricultural sector there is among the lowest in Hungary. The region boasts comparatively high industrial output and least arable land, although its gross domestic product (GDP) is on the lower end of the scale among Hungarian regions.

The two regions of Northern and Southern Great Plain contain one of the most common and striking symbols of the Hungarian landscape: the endless, flat grasslands of the Great Plain. The region of Northern Great Plain consists of the counties of Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok, Hajdú-Bihar, and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg and borders Ukraine to the northeast and Romania to the east and southeast. True to its name, Northern Great Plain is not a highly industrialized region and most of its economic value added comes from agriculture. Productive, arable land is plentiful and the region has the second-highest percentage of population employed in agriculture, mostly cattle-raising, wheat, and corn production. However, Northern Great Plain is second only to Northern Hungary in its unemployment rate, though it is, next to Central Hungary, the country's most populous region. One of the most interesting and representative natural locations in Northern Great Plain is Hortobágy National Park. The largest natural continuous grassland in Europe and an impressive insight into Hungary's pastoral heritage, this national park showcases traditional agriculture, indigenous local breeds of cattle, horsemanship, and well-preserved village life and folk art. The urban center of the region is Debrecen, the second-largest city in Hungary, after Budapest, a historic site of the Hungarian Reformation in the sixteenth century and home to the largest Calvinist church in the country.

On the map of Hungary, just below Northern Great Plain is the region of Southern Great Plain. The steppe-like flatlands of the Southern Great Plain (same as those of its northern neighbor) have over the centuries inspired many Hungarian poets and writers and made their way into the Hungarian national consciousness. Mostly due to its geographic location, landscape, and climate, the Great Plain has been inhabited more or less continuously since prehistoric times and has, to this day, preserved the remnants of its pastoral and nomadic traditions. Southern Great Plain thus has a rich tradition of horsemanship, horse breeding, and horseback riding. Moreover, this region is one of the most fertile parts of Hungary, with the highest value added in agricultural production, as well as the highest percentage of the population employed in agriculture. Comparatively, however, it is among the less wealthy regions in the country. Southern Great Plain encompasses the counties of Bács-Kiskun, Csongrád, and Békés, and borders Serbia. Southern Great Plain is rich in natural water sources, as the rivers Tisza, Maros, and Danube run through it, but is also home to many thermal medicinal baths which readily attract tourists and visitors and are a loved source of leisure for many Hungarians. The region's largest town is Szeged, an active settlement since the times of the Roman Empire, which survived the thirteenth-century Mongol invasion and witnessed a catastrophic flood at the end of the nineteenth century when the River Tisza broke through the dams and

devastated the city. Today, Szeged is the fourth-largest city in Hungary, a vibrant university town with a developed food processing industry known for some of Hungary's favorite agricultural products, such as the spice paprika and the Pick brand of salami.

Hungary's most populous region, Central Hungary is inhabited by almost three million people. It includes the county of Pest and the capital city of Budapest. True to its name, Central Hungary is indeed centrally placed, bordering four other Hungarian regions (Central Transdanubia, Northern Hungary, Northern Great Plain, and Southern Great Plain). It has the lowest unemployment rate and is, by most indicators, the richest region with developed industrial production and a strong service sector. One of the more memorable places in Central Hungary is Visegrád, a castle town in the Danube Bend. It is a historic site of alliances between Hungarian, Czech, and Polish rulers for the first time in 1335 and then again in 1991. The crown jewel of Central Hungary, however, is undoubtedly Budapest, the country's historic, vibrant, and impressive capital city. Budapest grew into a unified city in 1873 from three separate settlements, Buda and Óbuda on the right bank of the Danube, and Pest on the left bank. Modern Budapest developed on the ruins of Aquincum, a Roman military base, and a border protection site which became the capital of the Roman province of Pannonia and whose remnants can be found today in the Óbuda section of Budapest, the oldest part of the city. Buda today is the hilly and wooded part of Budapest with the striking castle sitting on a hilltop above the Danube. It was the capital of Hungary from the mid-fourteenth to the mid-sixteenth centuries until it was overrun by the Ottomans, and later Austria. Buda became the Hungarian capital again in the late eighteenth century. The largest section of Budapest is occupied by Pest, which was documented as a separate thriving city as early as the twelfth century, though it was destroyed by the Mongols in the thirteenth century and flooded by the Danube in the nineteenth century.

Budapest abounds in monumental historical landmarks, testaments of Budapest's rich history, such as the Buda Castle, St. Mátyás Church, the Parliament building, the Opera House, and the Lánchíd (Chain Bridge), each one telling stories of coronations, struggles for statehood, and survival, building and rebuilding a city. Budapest today is a dynamic city bustling with cafés, trendy and traditional restaurants, thermal baths and hotels, universities, historical architecture, and a rich cultural life. The River Danube has always been a vital artery running through the city of Budapest, even before its three parts were one, with its waters separating the city and its nine bridges bringing it together. Danube's three islands in and close to Budapest—Óbuda Island, Margaret Island, and Csepel Island—are sites of beautiful parks, ports, and cultural festivals. Budapest lays claim to the first electric

The Visegrád Citadel is part of the fortress built by King Béla IV and his wife Queen Maria in the 1250s. (Courtesy of Oksana Buranbaeva.)

subway train built in Europe in 1896. A particularly appealing and unique feature of Budapest city life is and has been its coffee houses. By the end of the nineteenth century Budapest's cafés numbered over six hundred and were places where people came to socialize; discuss politics, art, and literature; as well as peruse the newest newspapers and journals.[1] A true Central European capital of around 1.7 million people, Budapest is only about 124 miles (200 km) away from Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia and 155 miles (250 km) away from the capital of Austria, Vienna.

Because of its central location, Hungary shares its borders with a number of countries: Austria, Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania, Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia. Its longest borders, as well as the most complex intertwined histories, are shared with Slovakia and Romania, the countries with the largest Hungarian minority. Romania is home to the largest Hungarian population outside of Hungary and the majority is concentrated in Transylvania. Transylvania was historically a part of Hungary and throughout the twentieth century, a source of much tension between Hungary and Romania. About 20 percent of Transylvania's

population today is ethnic Hungarian. After the fall of communism in 1989, the ethnic relations between Romanians and Hungarians in Transylvania deteriorated. In 1996, however, the two countries signed a treaty of co-operation, guaranteeing its respective borders and its national minority's rights. Today, with both countries in the European Union (EU), their relationship is much improved and the nearly 7 percent of Romania's total population who is ethnic Hungarian has significant cultural, educational, linguistic, and political rights. The relationship between Hungary and Slovakia has been slightly more tenuous and has similarly been defined by the position of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia and the Slovakian minority in Hungary. The majority of ethnic Hungarians live in southern Slovakia, where they make up about 60 percent of the population. Throughout history, and most recently in Austria-Hungary, significant parts of Slovakia have been controlled and dominated by Hungary and there is still some residual resentment among Slovaks because of this history. In recent years, there have been a few incidents of hostility towards ethnic Hungarians in Slovakia, but inflammatory nationalistic speech appears mostly in situations when politicians on both sides are vying for power. In general, the two ethnic groups have coexisted in relative peace for decades. Moreover, the Slovak Hungarian parties have been part of the Slovak central government repeatedly for significant periods in the last decade and much of the advocacy on behalf of the Hungarian minority is done through participation in mainstream politics. A recent point of controversy between the two countries was the Slovak Language Act, passed in 1995 and amended in 2009, which limits the use of Hungarian and other minority languages and proscribes penalties for speaking languages other than Slovakian in a range of situations, which were deemed inappropriate by representatives of national minorities.

Despite these issues with Slovakia and Romania, Hungary's relationships with its neighbors are overall positive and constructive. Hungary is a member of the Visegrád Group or the Visegrád Four, an alliance it entered into with the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Poland with the goal of furthering European integration and promoting the countries' common interests within the EU framework. Although the basis of cooperation for the Visegrád Group countries are periodic summits and meetings, the relevant institutions and organization in the four countries are also, at present, involved in common projects and initiatives in the areas of the environment, defense, security, culture, science, and education. Furthermore, Hungary is an active member of the EU, as well as the North American Treaty Organization (NATO). Having joined NATO in March 1999, Hungarian soldiers served as part of the NATO forces in Kosovo. Hungary became a full member of the European community of nations in May 2004, along with nine other mostly post-communist

countries, thus playing an important role in opening a new chapter in European history.

The People

The latest available census figures for Hungary (as of 2010) put the population of the country at a little over 10.1 million. This makes Hungary about as populous as Belgium in Europe or Michigan in the United States. Although the 2011 census data was unavailable as of the printing of this book, Hungary's population is estimated to have dropped by about 100,000 since the last (2001) census.[2] Similarly, its population density has been declining since the 1980s. Today, there are about 108 people per square kilometer in Hungary, whereas in 1980 the population density was 115. Not surprisingly, Central Hungary is by far the most densely populated region with a little over 400 inhabitants per square kilometer, because much of the country's population is concentrated in and around Budapest. The flatlands of Southern Transdanubia and Southern Great Plain, on the other hand, are the least densely populated (70 and 75 people per square kilometer).[3] These figures, though useful, in fact reveal very little about the people who live in Hungary. While ethnic Hungarians today are the vast majority of Hungary's population, they are not the only ethnic group inhabiting the country, nor have they been so in the past. Taking a closer look at the different nationalities and ethnic groups that reside and have resided in Hungary is, however, only part of the puzzle. Another revealing piece has to do with the idea of what it means to be Hungarian, as well as the Hungarians' perception of themselves.

Ethnic Hungarians make up around 92 percent of the population of Hungary. They refer to themselves as Magyars, the name for Hungarian people in Hungarian, the national language of the country. The Hungarian language is quite unlike the languages of the neighboring Slavic- and Germanic-speaking countries. Linguists were able to partially illuminate the genesis of Hungarian through establishing the historical existence and evolution of a common Finno-Ugric language which is accepted among most scholars as the foundation of, among others, Finnish, Estonian, and Hungarian languages. The unique and unusual character of the Hungarian language in the region has always provided Hungarians with a sense of being separate and distinct from their neighbors. It has also inspired lasting legends of their origins. Although scholars have identified the Urals as the approximate homeland of the Hungarian people, many of the previous theories and myths about where Hungarians came from still linger in the national consciousness. The idea that Hungarians descend from the Huns—Central Asian nomadic warriors

personified in the fearsome, cruel, and fascinating Hun leader Attila, "the Scourge of God"—though debunked, still appeals to those who find romance in the self-reliance and irreverence of this ruler and his armies. Less mythically, Hungarians trace their lineage and relate their identity to two important historical personalities: Árpád, the first ruler of undeniably Hungarian origin and the founder of the royal dynasty, the House of Árpád, and István, the first Hungarian crowned king, who was later proclaimed a saint. Árpád and his young Hungarian princedom symbolize the incessant Hungarian aspiration towards national homogeneity and unity and carving out their own national space. On the other hand, for many, Saint István and his kingdom epitomize the multiethnic and multicultural character which Hungary proudly retained for many centuries.

By the end of the nineteenth century more than 50 percent of the population of Hungary was non-Hungarian. This multinational Hungarian state disintegrated at the end of World War I and most of the ethnic groups that lived under the Hungarian Crown for centuries found themselves in other newly founded or newly independent nation states. The population transfers after World War II further homogenized Hungary's population. National minorities today make up less than 10 percent of the population based on the self-identification figures in the 2001 census. The most numerous ethnic group in Hungary are the Roma who, according to the same figures, make up just fewer than 2 percent of the population. Other estimates put the Hungarian Roma population at around 4 percent.[4] Though present in other regions, the majority of the European Roma is concentrated in the Carpathian Basin and the Balkans. The earliest record of Roma living in the Carpathian region goes back to the fourteenth century. Within the Hungarian Kingdom, the Roma were able to live relatively undisturbed until the Habsburgs enacted absolutist policies in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, designed to put an end to the Roma's traditionally migratory, nomadic existence. Towards the end of World War II thousands were deported from Hungary and met their death in concentration camps. During communist times, attempts were made in Hungary at mandatory integration of the Roma population with the goal of improving their material position in society; however, at the significant cost of their distinct identity. Hungarian governments, since the fall of communism, have attempted to introduce programs aimed at improving the livelihoods of the Roma, as well as more opportunities for political representation and self-government, while making an effort to foster their national identity and tradition with various degrees of success. Traditionally, one of the most marginalized and vulnerable groups in Hungary, the Roma to this day experience discrimination and mostly live in poverty incomparable to most of the rest of the population. Roma birth rates are considerably higher than the rest of the population and their life expectancy

lower; they experience higher unemployment rates and a lower standard of living, and by and large, they live segregated in ghetto-like conditions. In recent years, there has been increased hostility and incidents of violence and animosity towards Roma. The swing of the political pendulum to the right since 2008 in Hungary and the mounting economic crisis contributed to the rise of anti-Roma sentiment among certain segments of the population and extremist groups. The rise and recent gains of the Jobbik party in the 2010 parliamentary election, with its openly anti-Roma and anti-Semitic rhetoric, and the wave of violence directed at the Hungarian Roma perpetrated by extremist, far-right groups contribute to the overall bleak outlook for rapid and meaningful improvements in the socioeconomic status of the Roma in Hungary and full realization of their minority rights.

The next largest national minority in Hungary are Germans, followed by significant numbers of Slovaks and Croats. Throughout history, the Germans in Hungary have been numerous, geographically relatively dispersed and economically prosperous, living in free towns and making up much of the merchant and artisan classes in urban society. The last census in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, conducted in 1910, put the German population in Hungary at about 10 percent of Hungary's total population. Much of that population was lost in the annexation of Burgenland in Western Hungary to Austria in 1920 and expelled from Hungary in 1946 after World War II. The number of Germans in Hungary is significantly smaller today with only about 60,000 self-declared Germans living in Hungary. This is in part because, in many ways, Hungarian Germans have traditionally been and are today among the most assimilated minorities in Hungary. The Croats, on the other hand, though subjects of the Hungarian Crown for more than eight hundred years, have traditionally enjoyed considerable cultural and even political autonomy. Approximately 15,000 Croats in modern-day Hungary live predominantly along the border with Croatia and, despite concentrated efforts at Magyarization at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, they managed to preserve their language and cultural identity. Most of modern Slovakia had been an integral part of the Kingdom of Hungary for over a millennium with virtually no regional autonomy, while the majority of the Slovak population living under the Hungarian rule consisted of disenfranchised peasants. After Slovakia gained independence following World War I, the percentage of ethnic Slovaks in total population dropped significantly and today there only about 17,000 Slovaks living in Hungary.

The religious makeup of Hungary's population is significantly less homogeneous than its ethnic composition. About 68 percent of the population is Roman Catholic, about 20 percent is Calvinist, 5 percent Lutheran, and

approximately 8 percent claims no religious affiliation. Although not considered an ethnic minority, but rather a religious group, the Jewish presence in Hungary is much more meaningful in the context of its historical, cultural, and intellectual legacy, than the present absolute size of its population. Historically, Jews have lived continuously, with sporadic persecutions and expulsions, in the Hungarian lands since the tenth century. By the beginning of the twentieth century, around 5 percent of Hungary's population was Jewish, as well as almost a quarter of Budapest's inhabitants. In the first decade of the twentieth century city-dwelling Hungarian Jews were a highly educated group, mostly working as lawyers, medical practitioners, industrialists, and financiers, as well as journalists, writers, and artists. Their intellectual and material prosperity laid the foundation for a new Hungarian bourgeoisie, though the glaring lack of their presence in government, civil service, and agriculture pointed to inherent and inherited inequalities. Nevertheless, Hungarian Jews assimilated far more quickly and fully than the Jewish populations of the other Central and Eastern European countries, with many of the wealthiest and most prominent Jewish families converting to Christianity. At the turn of the twentieth century, many Hungarian Jews rose to prominence in entrepreneurship, art, and scholarship, both in national and international contexts. Despite their never being fully integrated into Hungarian society, many felt a profound loyalty to the Hungarian state. The rise of anti-Semitism and the political turn to the right following World War I culminated in anti-Jewish laws, discrimination, and exclusion of Jews from society in the lead-up to World War II. Much of the Hungarian Jewish population lost their lives in the Holocaust, the majority dying in the final year of World War II. Most estimates put the number of Jewish lives lost in Nazi concentration camps at around 600,000. Today, Hungary's remaining self-declared Jewish population of just under 13,000 is fairly secular and integrated, but still experiences occasional incidents of anti-Semitism, though outright violence is rare. The relatively small number of Jews in Hungary today does not reflect the extraordinary accomplishments of numerous Hungarian Jews over the centuries (such as among other Nobel laureates Imre Kertész, Eugene Wigner, and George Charles de Hevesy) and their contribution to literature, philosophy, economics, mathematics, physics, journalism, and music.

The Past

As many other national histories do, the history of Hungary begins with the history of the place, the Carpathian basin, before it was settled by the Hungarians. The geography and the climate of this region have always defined the lives of the people who occupied it, particularly during prehistoric times. The

abundance of fertile soil and navigable waterways enabled uninterrupted, thriving human inhabitation from prehistory, whereas the vastness and the centrality of the Pannonian plain opened it up to successive waves of migration and made it vulnerable to raids from nomadic peoples. Archeological finds near Vértesszőlős revealed footprints and tools of one of the earliest humans (*Homo erectus seu sapiens Paleohungaricus*—Samu) to inhabit the Hungarian territories dating back to the Paleolithic period, more specifically some 350,000 years ago. Archeological evidence indicates that humans settled this region continuously since around 80,000 BCE to around 30,000 BCE. Humans from these earlier prehistoric cultures lived in simple hut settlements dug into the ground and practiced specialized hunting. By the fifth millennium BCE, the people of the Carpathian basin lived in agrarian societies, bred sheep and goats, made pottery, and used weaving and spinning in their daily lives. Later, during the Bronze Age (2,000 BC–1,300 BCE), the Carpathian basin was, in relative terms, quite a populous and prosperous place, home to about a dozen tribes ruled by a military-pastoral aristocracy actively engaged in trading and dwelling construction. During the Iron Age, beginning circa 800 BCE, the territory of the Hungarian lands was home to several waves of immigrating populations, the more significant among which were equestrian nomadic tribes of Iranian origin, the Scythians, Celtic people, and the Pannonians (one of the Illyrian tribes). First century BCE saw the rise of the Dacians, a group of farming tribes who raised livestock, mined iron, gold, and silver and crafted weapons, jewelry, and other metal implements.

The steady expansion of the Dacian Kingdom and its influence over the Carpathian basin attracted the attention of the neighboring Roman Empire as early as first century BCE. A series of forays of their legions into the Dacian realm resulted in the Roman conquest of their territories beginning under emperors Augustus and Tiberius. The Roman Empire completed the conquest of the territory west of the Danube (Transdanubia) in the second half of first century BCE (between 35 and 9 BCE) organizing it into the Roman province of Pannonia. Most of the territory of the Dacian Kingdom (corresponding to the eastern parts of today's Hungary) came under Roman rule in 106 CE becoming the Roman province of Dacia. A testament to Roman Emperor Trajan's triumphant victory over the Dacians almost 2,000 years ago still stands in present-day Rome as the Trajan's Column, a 98 foot tall stone victory column with its spiral bas relief images carved in marble. Roman rule in the Danube region was a time of relative peace and prosperity, bringing material benefits of Roman civilization and imperial governance to its inhabitants, although it was accompanied by intense Romanization and economic exploitation of the region's resources. Numerous roads, aqueducts, fortifications, and theaters, as well as cultivated vineyards and orchards, sprang up in the

Carpathian basin provinces under Roman rule. Although relatively short-lived, Roman rule left an indelible mark on the history, architecture, agriculture, and traditions of the Carpathian basin. Romans withdrew from Dacia as early as 270 CE, making it one of the first provinces lost to Roman control. By 378 CE Pannonia was also no longer under Roman rule.

By the last decades of fourth century CE this region was caught up in the losing struggle of the Roman Empire to contain the influx of Visigoths, Vandals, and other Germanic tribes from all sides. Once again, the Carpathian basin became a locus of vast migrations and clashes between warring and raiding tribes. During the next four centuries, waves of invading people, the Huns, Germanic tribes, and the Avars, moved into and settled this region. Among the first to occupy the remnants of the quickly dissolving Roman Empire in the Carpathian basin were the Huns. These Central Asian nomads, likely speaking a Turkic language, crossed the Volga in the 370s CE and by the fifth century established a powerful kingdom in the heart of Europe. The Huns were cattle-herding warriors who burst into and remained in the imagination of later Europeans, thanks to their fierce leader Attila, also referred to as the Scourge of God. For centuries the Huns were thought to have been the ancestors of Hungarians and several medieval Hungarian monarchs considered themselves descendents of Attila, a theory generally debunked by modern historians and linguists. A ferocious but charismatic leader, Attila launched numerous attacks against the western half of the Roman Empire and is believed to have presided over his powerful realm from a commanding wooden palace near Szeged, in present-day southern Hungary. According to Hungarian legend, after his death, Attila's body was placed in a triple coffin of gold, silver, and iron and buried in the Tisza riverbed, whose flow was temporarily diverted to permit the burial before it was restored, flooding over the warrior king's remains.

Soon after Attila's death, his unified realm began to disintegrate, bringing the dominance of the Huns in the region to an end by the sixth century. The dissolution of the Hunnic Empire left a vacuum in the Carpathian basin that was quickly filled by the various Germanic and Slavic peoples. Before long, these settlers were conquered by the Avars, whose powerful presence became a force to be reckoned with by the seventh century. Avars were nomadic warriors who came into Europe from Central Asia and northern borders of China and, led by a military elite and their ruler, the *khagan*, subjugated the Carpathian basin by 567. They prevailed over and controled the Germanic and Slavic settlers with their military skill, and a structured, complex, and hierarchical social organization. Cultures of the Avars and the subjugated peoples fused leaving a historical testimony of this volatile, yet a time of multiethnic coexistence in the region. Avar rule, for the first time in

history, unified three major regions of the Carpathian basin (Transdanubia, Transylvania, and the Great Plain) into a single political entity. The defeat of Avars by the Byzantine Empire in 626 marked the beginning a slow decline of the Avar supremacy in the region, concluding with their final surrender to the Franks in 796.

A tenuous coexistence developed in the Carpathian basin in the ninth century between the still-nomadic Avars, the remnants of the dissolving Eastern Frankish Empire, various Slavic princedoms, and the Bulgarian kingdom. It is on this stage that the Hungarians arrived at the end of the ninth century. The accounts of the earliest period of the Hungarian presence in Europe are filled with recycled myths of a nomadic, fierce people arriving from the East, settling the Carpathian Basin, and then foraging into neighboring kingdoms and pillaging. The Hungarian arrival into the Carpathian basin is commonly labeled as an invasion by Germanic and Slavic scholars, whereas some Hungarian sources refer to it as a land acquisition. The historical truth is undoubtedly more complex, though calling the Hungarian arrival a conquest is probably the most adequate label. The origins of the Hungarian people can be traced, albeit tenuously, to an original homeland to the east and south of the Urals, in Western Siberia thanks in part to the unique Finno-Ugric origin of the Hungarian language. Over the period of almost a millennium and a half (cc. 500 BCE–cc. 890 CE) the Finno-Ugric tribes seemed to have migrated from behind the Urals westward and southward into Europe, separating over time into smaller ethno-linguistic groups. The path of one of these groups, the Hungarians, took them south of the Urals, north of the Caspian Sea, and through the Volga watershed. Early Hungarians were semi-nomadic horsemen who dabbled in primitive agriculture and raised livestock. By ninth century CE they were settled in the region north of the Black Sea between the rivers Don and the lower Danube, traditionally referred to as the Etelköz. Here, they lived in relative prosperity with a developed tribal and military organization, engaging in farming and raising domestic animals and established trading relations with powerful neighbors such as the Kievan Rus. Hungarians were, at this time, steadfast warriors with a mobile army, prone to capturing neighboring Slavic settlers and selling them into slavery in Byzantine ports, as well as undertaking military campaigns independently or forming military alliances. The earliest written record unequivocally referring to the Hungarians is from this period, appearing in a Byzantine text from 839.[5]

The influx of the Pechenegs, a nomadic people from further east, and pressure from the adjoining Bulgars caused a confederation of Hungarian tribes led by two chieftains Árpád and Kurszán, their military and spiritual leaders, to leave the Etelköz and cross the Carpathian Mountains in 895. During less than a decade of conquest, Hungarians occupied and gained control of the

remnants of eastern Frankish, Moravian, and Bulgarian kingdoms spanning an area from Transdanubia, through the Great Plain, to Transylvania. After Kurszán's death in 904, the standard of dual principality was abandoned and Árpád became the sole ruler. Today, he is considered the founder of the royal dynasty, the House of Árpád, which would rule Hungary until 1301. Hungarians in their new homeland were organized into a clan-based society with a developed hierarchy consisting of tribal chieftains, clan heads, military aristocracy, craftsmen and artisans, servants and slaves. The general population grew wheat and rye, produced hops, brewed beer, and worked in crafts, especially metal and leather. After Árpád's death in 907, Hungarians began regular raids into neighboring kingdoms, especially targeting territories of Germany, northern Italy, and Byzantium, but reaching as far as southern Spain, northern France, and southern Italy. These raids brought booty, ransom, and tributes, filling the coffers of the burgeoning Hungarian Principality. The "marauding" Hungarians appeared unstoppable until they were defeated at Merseburg in 933 by Henry I "the Fowler" Duke of Saxony and again at Augsburg in 955 by his son Otto "the Great," King of Germany and later Holy Roman Emperor.

These two military defeats marked a shift in the evolution of the Hungarian Principality. The transition of Hungarian tribes away from a nomadic lifestyle and engaging in military raids, towards a more sedentary existence bound to the land, was mostly complete by the second half of the tenth century, at which point, the Hungarian Principality found itself between two powerful neighbors, the Holy Roman and the Byzantine empires. Once the limits of Hungarian military strength became evident, the survival and prosperity of the Principality wedged between these powerful empires became more dependent on stable central rule and a foreign policy focused on maintaining good relations with its influential neighbors. Preserving Hungarian territorial integrity, strengthening the power of the Principality, as well as consolidating his own, were the main tasks facing Géza who became the Hungarian Grand Prince in 972. By this time, the Hungarian conversion to Christianity had already begun under the influence of the Byzantine Empire and the Greek Church, especially in eastern parts of the Hungarian lands, where the most powerful chieftains had converted to eastern Christianity and where Greek and Bulgarian monasteries had already sprung up. Recognizing the growing importance of Christianity, Grand Prince Géza made a political decision to realign his dominion with the Holy Roman Empire, steering the conversion process towards Rome. Upon the Grand Prince Géza's request, the Holy Roman Emperor Otto II dispatched Bruno, a Benedictine monk and the bishop of Sankt Gallen, to Hungary to baptize Géza. Sankt Gallen was, at the time, one of the most powerful abbeys in Europe and incidentally, one that

was raided by the Hungarians about fifty years earlier, in 926. The baptism of Géza by the Sankt Gallen bishop epitomized the remarkably quick and irreversible transition of the Hungarian realm from a pillaging, semi-nomadic menace in the heart of Europe to a stable political entity and a counterpart to be reckoned with by its powerful contemporaries.

Grand Prince Géza used the process of introducing Christianity in his Principality to centralize and consolidate his power over the chieftains, lords, and the military aristocracy, often violently forcing them to accept the new religion and his overlordship. His actions gave rise to multiple uprisings and revolts against the centralization of his princely authority and the increasingly more efficient collection of taxes and duties that Prince Géza levied on his subjects. Géza's son and successor, Vajk, christened István (Stephen), was born around 970, and in 996 he married Gisela, the daughter of Henry of Bavaria, making this marriage the first dynastic alliance between Hungary and a Western power. Following Géza's death a year later, István (1000/1-38) was forced to fight several rebellious relatives for the right to succeed his father, in defiance to the old tribal principle of clan seniority in succession. István's victory over his rivals firmed up the authority of the House of Árpád over the developing Christian Hungarian state, while signaling the end of the power of tribal chiefs and of the remnants of the semi-nomadic alliances that held them in power. Having triumphed, István was crowned the first Hungarian king on Christmas Day in 1000 or New Years Day in 1001 with a royal crown sent by Pope Sylvester II from Rome, with concurrence from Holy Roman Emperor Otto III. István's coronation and the blessing from Rome represented the de-facto international recognition of Hungarian independence. By the time he died in 1038, King István had completed the work began by his father in establishing the Hungarian state. He is considered the consummate Hungarian monarch. His many accomplishments, such as instituting the feudal state and private property, making agriculture the lifeblood of the Hungarian economy, founding bishoprics and building churches, thus institutionalizing the role of the Church, established Hungary as a powerful and functional, albeit new European monarchy. He was canonized in 1083.

After István's death, a struggle for succession ensued among his numerous nephews and relatives with the proxy support of Hungary's powerful neighbors ushering a period of instability that lasted until László (Ladislas) came into power in 1077. His and the subsequent reign of Kálmán (Coloman) brought peace and order to Hungary, enabling the final institutional consolidation of the Hungarian state in terms of political, territorial unity, as well as its commitment to Christianity. László, by most accounts a chivalrous and saintly ruler, instituted laws, some draconian, designed to protect private

The statue of King Stephen I. and Queen Gisela by sculptor József Ispánki is a symbol of Veszprém. The statue was completed in 1938 for the 900th anniversary of the king's death. (Courtesy of Oksana Buranbaeva.)

property and reorganized the system of royal revenues. He was canonized in 1192, almost a hundred years after his death, in recognition of his devotion to his people and his faith. László began and Kálmán concluded the acquisition of Croatian inland and coastal territories, expanding the Hungarian realm to the Adriatic Sea. Considered bookish and enlightened, Kálmán, a former bishop, encouraged the use of the written word in administration and chronicles, but also excelled militarily by beating back the marauding Crusaders on their way to the Holy Land.

The prosperous period of László and Kálmán ended with Kálmán's death in 1116 and was followed by the reigns of several less-than-accomplished successors. The first subsequent Hungarian sovereign of note was Béla III (1172–1196), one of the most powerful and the wealthiest of all the monarchs from the House of Árpád. His successful foreign policy maintained good relations with Byzantium, the Holy Roman Empire, and the papacy all the while emphasizing independence of the Hungarian state. In internal affairs, King Béla III reorganized the chancellery, reformed the fiscal system, and encouraged use of written documents and record-keeping in governance and administration. Béla III's successor, András II (1202–1235), an otherwise unremarkable ruler, was pressured into issuing the Golden Bull of 1222 by the growing and diversifying noble class. This document, in the spirit of the

English *Magna Carta*, was the first de-facto constitution in Continental Europe and the foundation of a future Hungarian political system. The Golden Bull guaranteed uniform rights and privileges of nobility, in particular middle and lower nobility, freeing them from taxes and the obligation to participate in wars outside of Hungary. Most importantly, it allowed the nobles to disobey the king if he acted contrary to the law or violated their rights. The issuing of the Golden Bull reflected the growing pressure from the diversifying noble class, in particular the lower nobility, to assert their power and the subsequent changing social structure in Hungarian society during the reign of András II.

During his time in power, András II's son and successor Béla IV (1235–1270) faced one of the greatest external threats to the Hungarian Kingdom in Medieval times—the advancing, invading Mongol Gold Hordes. In April 1241 Hungarian troops were defeated by the Mongol horsemen led by Batu Khan at Muhi in northeastern Hungary, causing Béla IV to flee and seek refuge as far as the Dalmatian town of Trogir on the Adriatic coast. The Mongol occupation was brief but left the Hungary territory severely devastated, pillaged, and depopulated. With Béla IV's leadership, the country managed to recover from the invasion with remarkable speed and efficiency, however not without sacrifices. Before the Mongol invasion, King Béla IV had attempted to curtail the influence of the highest and most powerful nobles, but the devastation caused by the invasion and the priorities of reconstruction reversed his intentions. He now delegated authority for much of the reconstruction and rebuilding to the barons and the bishops, thus strengthening their influence over the affairs of the state. The reconstruction flourished. Rebuilt and newly built fortified stone manors developed into fast-growing towns and became focal points of urbanization, defense, and civic privilege. A new, more powerful army was created, one that successfully stood up to the Mongols when they struck again over four decades later. The Mongol invasion caused an influx of many different ethnic groups into Hungary as a result of them fleeing the Mongol Hordes and in response to the invitation from King Béla IV to settle the devastated territories. By the late thirteenth century, people such as the Pechenegs, Cumans, Slovaks, Poles, Ruthenes, and Vlachs (Romanians), and in cities Germans, Jews, Walloons, Italians, and Greeks, became a part of the patchwork of nationalities inhabiting Hungary.

By the last decade of King Béla IV's reign, Hungary's most powerful nobles and clergy emboldened and strengthened by their role in reconstruction began vying for ever more power and influence. Tensions, conflicts, and separatist tendencies among the richest and most politically powerful nobility engulfed the last decades of the House of Árpád in anarchy and infighting. The last two Árpád kings, Ladislas IV and András III, never managed to

restore the kind of prosperity and order to Hungary that it enjoyed during Béla IV's reign. Weakened royal authority and finally the death of the heirless András III in 1301 marked the final demise of the House of Árpád. In response to the prospect of an empty throne the southern (Croatian) barons invited Charles Robert of Anjou to Hungary to take over the realm and in May 1301 he was crowned Charles I (1310–1342), the new king of Hungary. The first decades of his rule had him face-off numerous pretenders to the throne and separatist inclinations of the most powerful lords, as well as undergo two subsequent coronations in 1308 and again two years later. Charles I succeeded in subduing the most influential unruly nobles and their clans by 1323 when he finally transferred his capital from Temesvár (Timişoara) in the south to the more centrally located Visegrád, thus de-facto and symbolically taking a firm hold over his entire dominion. Despite his rocky start, during Charles I's reign Hungary experienced notable prosperity. The foundation of the growing Hungarian economy in the fourteenth century was trade and, in particular, mining large resources of precious metals. At the time, Hungary met four fifths of the European demand for gold and extracted a quarter of all silver mined in Europe[6]

Encouraged by economic prosperity, Charles I was able to consolidate his royal authority while fostering allegiance from the powerful nobles. His efforts in international diplomacy and consolidation of the borders were exceedingly successful. When his son Luis I (Lajos) ascended to the throne in 1342, inheriting a politically stable, prosperous, and fiscally strong kingdom in prominent international standing, he directed his attention to warfare and expansionist policy. His warring ventures southward into the Balkans and Naples were moderately successful, whereas his peaceful efforts at alliances with the Habsburg lands, Poland, and Bohemia yielded far better results. Luis I (1342–1382) reformed the court system, confirmed the equal status of nobility in 1351, and instituted the consultative role of court aristocracy as a budding administrative state apparatus. Internal stability during this time allowed for culture, art, and education to flourish. During his fifty-year rule over Hungary, King Sigismund or Zsigmond (1387–1437) of the House of Luxemburg, a consummate European and Luis I's successor, claimed also the titles of the King of Germany, Bohemia, Lombardia, and the Holy Roman Emperor. His reign was marked by his frequent absences from Hungary and a tumultuous foreign policy. Sigismund led an unsuccessful Crusade against the Turks in 1396 and lost Dalmatia to the Venetians irrevocably by the 1430s. Moreover, his claim to the Czech crown and involvement in the Council of Constance led Sigismund into a few disastrous campaigns against the Hussites, the Czech Christian reformists led by Jan Hus.[7] Internally, Sigismund's tenuous relationship with the traditionally

powerful Hungarian nobles, the peasants' revolt in Transylvania, and the polarization of political forces further destabilized Hungary. However, with the help of the new (mostly foreign) aristocracy, the Church and the free towns Sigismund managed to consolidate his authority.

Out of the succession crisis and civil war between the different nobility factions following Sigismund's death emerged János Hunyadi, a successful military commander and one of Hungary's most notable historic figures. Throughout his military career Hunyadi distinguished himself as a courageous and skilled general with an international reputation for his victories against the Ottoman Turks, such as the 1456 triumph at Belgrade. Originally, of relatively modest (though noble) birth, he became the richest land owner in Hungary, *vajda* (ruler) of Transylvania, and later, in 1446, the governor of Hungary for the underage king Ladislas V (László). Though as governor and regent of Hungary, he was somewhat less successful than as a military leader, he still managed to pave the way for his son, Matthias I (Mátyás), to be elected king. The first non-foreign king since the extinction of the Árpáds and an accomplished monarch in his own right, Matthias (1458–1490) left an indelible mark on Hungarian history. Matthias asserted himself quickly after taking power through a well-planned marriage and "Machiavellian" policy towards the aristocracy, lower nobility, and clergy. He championed a restructuring of local government, making territorial administrative units independent of the wealthy barons. Moreover, he improved the judicial system through the establishment of local-level tribunals and appellate courts and was thus known as Matthias "the Just," the protector of individual rights. Matthias' foreign policy was marked by his diplomatic and military expansionist efforts aided by his formidable band of mercenaries known as the "Black Army." He was crowned king of Bohemia and conquered Moravia, Silesia, and capturing Vienna in 1485. He was a cultured monarch, a veritable Renaissance man supporting arts and learning, as well as founding *Bibliotheca Corviniana*, one of the richest libraries at the time, containing a collection of almost 2500 volumes, manuscripts, and artifacts.

Yet another succession crisis following Matthias' death resulted in the ascension of Vladislas II (Ulászló) of the Polish House of Jagiellon to the Hungarian throne. King Vladislas II (1490–1516) proved to be a weak, wasteful, and ineffectual monarch, prone to manipulation by and caprice of the powerful aristocracy, in particular the thirty-nine barons of the Royal Council. Vladislas' rule left the country destabilized, the nobles vying for ever-more power and the peasants and burghers increasingly more impoverished. A large peasant uprising in 1514 was cruelly put down by the nobles, savagely killing the rebellion leaders. The Diet, a representative assembly composed of nobles, further punished the peasantry by legally denying them

ownership of the land, forbidding their transfers among landlords, and requiring them to perform forced labor. *Tripartitum*, a legal document fortifying the existing disenfranchisement of the common populace and solidifying the entitlement of the upper strata of society, was passed by the Diet around the time of the peasant uprising. In this period in Hungary, only 1 in 45 people was a free citizen, as compared to 1 in 10 in France.[8] These destructive forces, weakening the social fabric of Hungarian society, were reinforced by King Vladislas' neglect of the army and his leaving the country vulnerable and virtually defenseless against the advancing Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans imposed a crushing defeat on the Hungarian army in 1526 at Mohács, killing the young King Louis II (Lajos) and much of Hungary's most powerful nobility.

In the wake of Mohács, the advancing Ottoman army plundered and ravaged Hungarian towns and countryside taking thousands of prisoners and eventually overrunning the capital Buda. In terms of perception, the Battle of Mohács remained for a long time etched in the Hungarian national consciousness as the beginning of the end of the powerful medieval Hungarian Kingdom, but its real consequences were equally far-reaching. The first fifteen years after this sweeping defeat, Hungary was a country divided between two rival kings, Janós I Szápolyai and Ferdinand I of Habsburg, each elected by diets formed from rival noble factions. Janós I was propped up by the Ottomans, whereas Ferdinand enjoyed the support of his brother, Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor. This dual rule lasted until Janós's death in 1541, the year when the Turks occupied Buda and Hungary effectively became split into three separate regions. For the next 150 years, Hungary would be a divided, over-taxed, and impoverished land, as well as a theater of continuous antagonism and war for supremacy between the Habsburg and the Ottomans. Kingdom of Hungary, a crescent-shaped territory extending from Western Croatia across Transdanubia to Slovakia, was under the Habsburg Crown. Transylvania (and *Partium*), comprised of eastern territories bordering Moldavia and Walachia, was a semi-independent principality. Most of present-day Hungary, including the Great Plain and the capital Buda, was under Ottoman rule. During this tripartite period, the Turks introduced a relatively orderly administration into the Hungarian lands under their control and allowed for a high degree of religious freedom, thus accelerating the spread of Reformation. Overall, the Ottoman-occupied Hungarian territories were not heavily integrated into the rest of the Ottoman Empire. At first, the Hungarian lands under the Habsburg rule experienced a similar fate. Initially, the Habsburg administration was not overly imperious and was most visible through its military presence in the Kingdom of Hungary, which was mostly governed by diets. This was, however, set to change in the decades to come.

Amid this Habsburg and Ottoman grab for Hungarian territories, a glimmer of independence and preservation of Hungarian identity, religious tolerance, and cultural revival could be found in the third region, Transylvania. Already in 1568 with the Edict of Torda, one of the earliest proclamations addressing religious freedom in Europe, Transylvania was an oasis of Reformation religions tolerance where Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists, and Unitarians coexisted with equal legal guarantees. Muslims, Jews, and Orthodox Christians, on the other hand, were not afforded the same religious freedoms. With the advent of István Báthori as Prince of Transylvania in 1571, Transylvania became a Principality with a significant degree of self-rule, though Bathori's rule was supported by the Ottomans. The culmination of the Habsburg-Ottoman vying for ascendancy across the entire tripartite region was the Fifteen Year War (1593–1606). It was fought by the Christian Holy League, spearheaded by the Pope and represented by the Habsburg realm and its new ally Transylvania, among others, on the one side, and the Ottoman Empire on the other. Although the Fifteen Year War failed to defeat either side, ending in a kind of a stalemate, it nevertheless alerted the members of the Christian Holy League to the prospects for the Ottomans' eventual downfall. With the growing influence of the Habsburg Empire in Transylvania during the final years of the Fifteen Year War, Transylvanian Prince István Bocskai decided to focus his military efforts against the Habsburgs with the ultimate goal of gaining independence and unifying the divided Hungary. After some military success, he concluded the Peace of Vienna in 1606, granting to Transylvania recognition of political and religious independence from the Habsburgs. The Golden Age of the Transylvanian Principality took off soon after, under the reigns of princes Gábor Bethlen (1613–1629) and György I Rákóczi (1630–1648).

The growing political autonomy, relative economic prosperity, religious freedom, and cultural revival during the Golden Age allowed for the preservation of the Hungarian national identity, urbanization, development of architecture, and public education. In the second half of the seventeenth century, the temporarily curbed Habsburg influence began to intensify again in Transylvania and by the time the Ottomans were defeated at the Battle of Vienna in 1683, Transylvania was surely falling under Habsburg control. By 1699 the Ottomans were expelled from the rest of the Hungarian lands (most of the Great Plain and Buda) and Hungarian nobility there recognized the Habsburg right to the throne of Hungary. The last prince of Transylvania, Ferenc Rákóczi II (1705–1711), led an insurrection in 1703 against the Habsburg encroaching domination, as a last attempt of preserving the Principality's independence. The insurrection was only a partial success, ending with the signing of a peace treaty at Szatmár in 1711. The treaty arranged for a

compromise with the Habsburgs, guaranteeing the Hungarian nobility certain rights, such as restitution of confiscated property, respect for the Constitution, and religious peace, while at the same time, consenting to the annexation of Transylvania to the Habsburg Crown, and replacing the Transylvanian prince with a Habsburg-controlled governor.

The age of the Habsburgs in the Hungarian lands began in the earnest with the final demise of Transylvania's independence at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The 1700s brought an uneasy power-sharing compromise to the Hungarian lands now in their entirety under the Habsburg Crown. Under this arrangement, the Hungarian nobles recognized the Habsburg succession to the Hungarian throne, while the Habsburgs ruled with some degree of deference for the Hungarian constitution and other codified laws. The arrival of Empress Maria Theresa on the Habsburg throne introduced absolutism, albeit initially moderate, into Hungarian political life and modernizing reforms into the army, civil administration, schools, hospitals, finances, and religious life. Maria Theresa's son and successor, Emperor Joseph II, took her reforms a step further, embarking on and firmly believing in enlightened absolutism, a comprehensive attempt at transforming society in the Habsburg lands and creating a unitary, modern state for the good of the people and the Empire. Joseph II's ideas of what was "good for the people," however, clashed with the aspirations and entitlements of many of the nobles in the different parts of the Empire. In 1784, Joseph II's decree made German the official language in all the Habsburg lands and in 1789 another royal decree introduced a unitary tax on both peasant and noble land holdings. Despite a relative sense of order and prosperity enjoyed by Hungary during this period, as well as the general flourishing of philosophy, literature, and architecture, Joseph II's reforms, in particular those relating to taxation and German as the official language, proved too ambitious and he withdrew most of them shortly before his death in 1790.

The period following the death of Emperor Joseph II, was a time of homegrown reforms in Hungary and the revival of Hungarian culture and identity. The movement for reform was spearheaded by two distinguished Hungarians, at first by Count István Széchenyi (1791–1860) and later by Lajos Kossuth (1802–1894). Count István Széchenyi, an aristocrat, prolific writer, politician, and founder of the Academy of Sciences, rose to prominence, advocating the modernization of Hungary, economic development through ending the feudal system, and cultural growth within the boundaries of the Habsburg Empire. He was generally considered a moderate liberal among reformers for believing in and encouraging social change and equalizing civic responsibility as a path to progress, as opposed to the more radical rhetoric based in national demagogy espoused by Lajos Kossuth. Kossuth was a political

prisoner, journalistic activist, outspoken politician, and an iconic personality in the struggle for autonomy of Hungary from Habsburg rule in the years before and during the Revolution of 1848. A group of reform-minded nobles active in the Diet of 1832 to 1836 made the first significant attempt at comprehensive reform. Although it was unsuccessful, their efforts both raised public expectations for reform and expanded the pool of young activist politicians. The next reform diet (1839–1840) had a bit more success securing the release of political prisoners, extending the use of the Hungarian language in official communications and introducing other significant changes. Lajos Kossuth was one of the released prisoners as a result of this diet, reestablishing his presence in the Hungarian reform movement. His editorials published in the liberal opposition newspaper *Pesti Hírlap* between 1841 and 1844 laid out a program for the transformation of Hungary appealing to the Hungarian people's sense of national identity and providing a tool to sway the public, particularly the middle-ranking nobility. His pre-revolution political engagement peaked with his election as a deputy in the Diet of Pozsony (Bratislava) of 1847, the last feudal diet in Hungary, where he was able to advocate for reforms in an institutional setting and become well positioned for the momentous events of 1848 that were soon to follow.

Inspired by the "Spring of Nations" revolutions throughout Europe, particularly those in Paris and Vienna, the Hungarians embarked on their own course of revolutionary change. On March 15, 1848, a large crowd led by a group of young revolutionaries gathered in Pest, and printed the Hungarian national poet Sándor Petőfi's revolutionary song without the permission of censors, along with the list of Twelve Articles. This list of demands called for, among others, freedom of press and freedom from censorship, a national army, a national assembly, abolishing serfdom, sharing of tax responsibility, and a union with Transylvania. The Twelve Articles were accepted by the protesters and touted as their official manifesto. The crowd demanding concessions made its way through the city from the National Museum to the city halls of Buda and Pest and finally to the building of the Gubernium, the seat of the Emperor's representative. The relevant Hungarian institutional actors, including the mayors of Buda and Pest and the Pozsony Diet, signed on to the demands of the protestors, which were then delivered by Kossuth to Vienna. On March 18, the Emperor appointed Lajos Batthyány (1806–1849), one of the most active reformers, prime minister with the task of forming the government. Most prominent Hungarian revolutionaries, including Kossuth and Széchenyi, quickly joined the new government, which immediately proposed a set of thirty-one laws, the April Laws, codifying the demands of the protestors. The April Laws were voted on by the Pozsony Diet and signed into law on April 11 by King Ferdinand V. The April Laws

put in place a de-facto constitution, defining Hungary as a hereditary constitutional monarchy and preserving the link with the Habsburg Crown through the person of the king. On the same day, the archaic institution of the Diet ceased to exist and was replaced by the National Assembly to be elected by direct suffrage of nobles, bourgeoisie, and wealthy peasants. The government was now responsible to the National Assembly. In May 1848 Transylvania declared unification with Hungary and in July the first representatives in the National Assembly elected in a general election took their seats. By the summer of 1848 the Revolution in Hungary appeared to have been a success.

An important concern, however, that was barely addressed by the Hungarian revolutionaries, loomed large over the future of the new Hungarian state. The multi-national Hungarian lands provided fertile ground for the complex issues related to the right of ethnic groups to self-government to flare up inspired by the national revolutions throughout Europe. In mid-nineteenth century Romanians made up almost a fifth of all subjects of the Hungarian Crown, Slavs (Ukrainians, Slovaks, Croats, Serbs, Slovenians) a quarter, and Germans about 12 percent.[9] It was thus no surprise when amidst the revolutionary fervor the different ethnic groups demanded their own linguistic and political rights. Though subjects of the Crown, the Croats enjoyed the highest degree of political autonomy with their own parliament and in late March the Croat national committee demanded a government independent from Hungary. Hungarian Prime Minister Batthyány managed to get the Croatian Ban (head of government) Josip Jelačić dismissed but the Croats disobeyed and prepared for war. The national currents among Slovaks, Romanians, and Serbs were as strong, although not with as much institutional backing. Nevertheless, Slovak, Serbian, and Romanian national committees declared demands for their own political autonomy, territorial self-government, and national assemblies. In September, with the intent of reigning in Batthyány's government and reversing Hungary's course towards independence, Austria officially reinstated the Croat Ban Jelačić, fully aware of his warmongering plans.

Jelačić's Croatian army crossed into Hungary in September 1848 with full knowledge and support from Vienna. Soon after, Batthyány's government stepped down, although he remained prime minister and tried to form a new government. The emperor appointed Austrian general Count Ferenc Lamberg Hungarian palatine and commander of the imperial army in an attempt to regain control over the situation in Hungary. Before he could take office, however, Count Lamberg was murdered by an outraged mob in Pest. With Batthyány unable to form a government and no palatine from Vienna to speak of, the Hungarian National Assembly set up the National Defense Committee, investing it with executive powers. By the beginning of October, the new, more decisive Austrian emperor Franz Joseph I dismissed Batthyány

and appointed Jelačić palatine and head of the Hungarian military, thus letting the Hungarians know that Vienna now considered them to be in full-blown rebellion against the Habsburg Empire. At the same time, the National Assembly appointed Kossuth head of the National Defense Committee and he began rallying national support for war. Before the Austrian minister of war could send troops into Hungary to help the Croatians fight the Hungarian army, he was lynched by a mob of revolutionaries in Vienna who rose up in support of their Hungarian brethren. The Viennese Revolution was quickly quelled and the Austrian army was back en route into Hungary.

Aside from now being at war with Austria and Croatia, the Hungarian army was embroiled in conflicts with Serbs in Banat and Romanians in Transylvania. In the time between September 1848 and the spring of 1949 the Hungarian army fought these battles with varying degrees of success. On April 14, 1849, on Lajos Kossuth's urging the National Assembly passed the Declaration of Independence of the Hungarian state and the deposition of the House of Habsburg from authority over the Hungarian lands. Kossuth was elected governor-president of the new state and his intention was for the Declaration to, among others, gain international recognition and support for the Hungarian cause. This did not come to pass and after some military gains on the Hungarian side, Austria turned to Russia for help. Tsar Nicholas I dispatched his army into Hungary in May 1849 to join the regrouped Habsburg army and by August the Hungarian war for independence was over. On August 11, Kossuth stepped down, authorizing the head of the Hungarian army, Artúr Görgey, to surrender; he did so on August 13, to the Russians.

In the wake of the Hungarian capitulation, the Austrians retaliated by executing thirteen Hungarian generals, as well as the former Prime Minister Lajos Batthyány, while Kossuth and many other revolutionary leaders fled into exile. The initial Austrian repression of the vanquished Hungary did not last very long because the weakening Habsburgs' power could not enforce their intended neo-absolutism of the post-revolutionary period. Overall, the decades following the 1848 Revolution were a time of relative peace in Hungary, but also a time of muffled political aspirations for independence and passive resistance to Austrian rule. In 1867 Ferenc Deák (1803–1876), former Minister of Justice in the Batthyány government, and Emperor Franz Joseph I worked out a compromise between the Austrian position vying for increased control over the entire Empire and the various Hungarian political currents seeking different degrees of independence from Austria. This political arrangement, dubbed the Compromise, allowed for Hungarian sovereignty under the Habsburg crown with an independent Hungarian government, parliament, judiciary and internal affairs, while foreign affairs, defense and finance (for common military and diplomatic expenses) were shared domains with Austria. Thus,

Austria-Hungary or the Dual Monarchy was born, at the time, the second largest and the third most populous country in Europe. Though on the face of it, a mighty conglomeration of nationalities, Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was a somewhat archaic and uneasy cohabitation of about a dozen different peoples and the territories they inhabited. Moreover, as much as the 1867 Compromise temporarily resolved the issue of the Hungarian right to self-government vis-à-vis the Austrians, it failed to address the issues of the right of other nationalities to self-determination, especially those within the Hungarian half of the Monarchy. For Hungary, the Dual Monarchy period brought about economic growth, industrialization, infrastructure development, urbanization and advances in education. While agriculture was still the backbone of the Hungarian economy, advances in mechanization, as well as rapidly growing industrial production, construction in urban areas and investments in infrastructure tripled the Hungarian GDP during this period.[10]

Despite significant economic progress, several aspects of Hungarian society remained firmly anchored in the past, which presented significant obstacles to further liberalization and democratization of the country. The seeds of social injustice destabilizing Hungarian society could be traced to the position of two social classes. Firstly, the majority of the Hungarian population was still tied to the land and even with increased access to education their opportunities for social advancement remained limited and the traditional rural social hierarchy rigid. A potentially more immediate challenge to the entrenched social privilege of the well-to-do classes of landowners, magnates and nobles, making the political decisions in the country, was the growing class of factory workers and the trade union movement spurred by urbanization and industrialization. The status of minorities in the Hungarian part of the Monarchy was strongly affected by *Magyarization*, a language-based policy of assimilation of minorities into a unitary Hungarian state. It was ill received by the non-Hungarian peoples within the Monarchy due to their awakened aspirations for independence and contributed to the brewing ethnic tensions between the different nationalities. These minority issues within the Monarchy further complicated the common Austro-Hungarian foreign policy and its intricate political alliances, which ultimately contributed to the outbreak of World War I.

The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Habsburg throne, by the Bosnian Serb Gavrilo Princip in June 1914 spurred the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum and its subsequent declaration of war to Serbia. Due to the convoluted political entanglements of the time, Russia entered the war in support of Serbia (joined by United Kingdom and France as part of the Entente Alliance) while Austria-Hungary fought on the side of the Triple Alliance (or Central Powers) with Germany, Ottoman Empire and Italy

(which later switched sides and joined the Entente). Of the about 3,8 million soldiers mobilized in Hungary to fight for Austria-Hungary, more than 600,000 lost their lives in the brutal trench warfare of the Great War and more than 700,000 were wounded.[11] The main consequence of World War I for Hungary, aside from the lives lost, were food shortages, decline in productivity and an impoverished population. A further destabilizing factor for the Monarchy was the Entente countries', in particular the UK's, support for the demands for self-determination of the Austro-Hungarian ethnic minorities. Moreover, once the United States entered the war, President Woodrow Wilson released his Fourteen Points, one of which specifically called for the autonomous development of the peoples of Austria-Hungary. By mid-1918, Austria-Hungary had suffered a series of military defeats and in November the disintegrating Monarchy exhausted by warfare surrendered to the Entente and signed the armistice.

By late November 1918 Austria-Hungary had collapsed and the First Hungarian Republic (also known as Hungarian Democratic Republic) was proclaimed headed by aristocrat Mihály Károlyi (1875–1955). Károlyi's government, though democratic in its broad orientation, did not succeed in introducing lasting internal reforms into Hungary and improving the livelihood of Hungarians. Instead, it spent most of its time attempting to secure more favorable peace terms from the victors of war and hanging on to the idea of a multinational Hungary without much success. Ineffectiveness and public dissatisfaction with this government brought it to an end in less than four months. By March 1919 most of the Hungarian national minorities had declared their independence or their intention to join their nation-states. The newly formed states of Czechoslovakia and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, as well as the recently independent Romania incorporated into their territories more than 70 percent of the lands of the former Kingdom of Hungary. The northern parts of the old Kingdom became part of Czechoslovakia; some of the southern territories were incorporated in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, while Transylvania was annexed by Romania.

A course different from the unsuccessful and short-lived First Hungarian Republic, began in March 1919 when the Hungarian Communist Party merged with the Social Democrats, got rid of the Károlyi government and declared the Hungarian Soviet Republic led by the Revolutionary Governing Council. This proclaimed dictatorship of the proletariat, presided over by Béla Kun (1886–1939), a journalist with ties to Lenin, nationalized enterprises and apartments, introduced government control of the press and confiscated large landholdings transferring them to cooperatives. The novelty of these measures, however, wore off relatively quickly without much lasting impact on the lives

of the people. After introducing repressive measure, the Revolutionary Governing Council basically lost all public support. The Hungarian Soviet Republic came to an end by the beginning of August, just over four months after it was declared.

After the communists were ousted in the face of the invading Romanian army, the Conservative Royalists or counter-revolutionaries, having organized in Vienna, marched into Hungary with support from the Entente and in November entered Budapest commanded by a former Austro-Hungarian admiral Miklós Horthy (1868–1957). Though Horthy's conservatives restored order to Hungary, they also harshly prosecuted many of the Kun and Károlyi sympathizers and introduced mass pogroms against the Jews. In March 1920 the Hungarian parliament restored the monarchy and appointed Horthy Regent, a position imbued with significant presidential-like powers. Representatives of the Horthy regime signed the Treaty of Trianon on 4 June 1920. This treaty formalized Hungary's previous territorial losses and assigned further concessions of Hungarian territory to Romania, Czechoslovakia, Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and even Austria. Moreover, under the treaty Hungary was obliged to pay reparations to its neighbors. In the eyes of Hungarians, the Treaty of Trianon cost their homeland about two thirds of its previous territory and about 60 percent of its inhabitants. Thus, it left an indelible mark of disappointment and perceived injustice on the Hungarian national consciousness and over the next two and a half decades influenced the course of Hungarian domestic and foreign policy, including its involvement in World War II.

On the wings of the as-of-yet unfulfilled Treaty of Trianon revisionist dreams, the economic crisis of 1929 heightened popular dissatisfaction and facilitated a shift towards the extreme right in Hungarian politics. In 1932 Regent Horthy appointed rightist extremist Gyula Gömbös (1886–1936) Prime Minister. It was during his term that a policy of rapprochement towards fascist Italy and Nazi Germany took form with the general goal of getting the Treaty of Trianon revised. Moreover, by 1935 it was clear that Gömbös had the intention of transforming Hungary into a corporate totalitarian state based in part on the example of Mussolini's Italy. In this general political climate, Hungary was becoming an increasingly more oppressive regime, intolerant towards political opponents and set on introducing anti-Jewish laws. At the outset of the World War II, Hungary found itself in a tentatively allied position towards Germany and, as such, received sections of Czechoslovakian territory after Germany annexed it in 1939. In August 1940 Hungary appropriated Northern Transylvania from Romania, once it was invaded by Germany. Moreover, in April 1941, as a reward for allowing German soldiers passage through Hungarian territory and also participating in the invasion of

Yugoslavia, Hungary was able to annex some of the Yugoslavian territory as well. By the end of 1941, Hungary had official joined the Axis Powers and many of its territorial aspirations for the revision of the Treaty of Trianon were realized, however, its international position was becoming more and more isolated and dependent on Germany's intentions. Germany's decision to invade the Soviet Union prompted Hungary to declare war on the Soviet Union and send troops to the eastern front. This move cost Hungary tens of thousands of lives and embroiled it deeper into the war on the side of the eventual losers. Despite some anti-fascist currents in Hungarian society, the government's pro-German stance was relatively consistent until the second half of 1943 when Hungary's government began negotiating with Allied forces to enter into a tentative armistice.

Hungary's attempt at rapprochement with the Allies provoked a decisive reaction from Hitler who dispatched an occupying force into Hungary. German soldiers entered Budapest in March 1944 and Hungary's government was now completely in line with German policies, in particular with regard to the position of Jews. Up until the German occupation Horthy's government did not engage in mass deportations of Hungary's Jews, but by the end of June 1944 about 440,000 Jews and between 30,000 and 50,000 Roma were deported to extermination camps. The majority of them never returned. In a general attitude of anti-Soviet sentiment in the Horthy government, Hungarians only began negotiating with the Soviets once their troops reached Hungarian territory. Hungary signed a preliminary armistice in October 1944 though it did not honor all its obligations. Horthy stepped down as regent and Hungary was placed under German protective custody led the fascist Arrowcross Party. The senseless violence that followed against their political opponents and the remaining Jewish population was further exacerbated by the German intractable resistance. By Christmas 1944 Budapest was besieged by Soviet troops and finally fell to the Red Army in February 1945 with hostilities ceasing in the rest of the country by April. In December 1944 a provisional government was set up from representatives of a wide range of Hungarian parties from across the political spectrum. This coalition government, sanctioned by the Soviet-ran Allied Control Commission, lasted 11 months and began restoring normalcy to Hungary. It signed an armistice with the Allies, built up a public administration, revoked racial laws, and most significantly, undertook agrarian reform. In November 1945 the first and last free Hungarian elections in the post-war period were held and the center-right peasants' Smallholder's Party won the majority while the Communist Party got 17 percent of the vote. On Soviet urging the winning party formed a coalition government, though it had the votes to rule alone. The Communist Party was one of the coalition parties and its representatives quickly gained

prominence in this government. In February 1946 Hungary was declared a Republic.

The next Hungarian parliamentary elections in 1947 were fraudulent and while the Communists did not win a majority, this election set in motion the events leading to the introduction of single party rule in Hungary. The Communist Party infiltrated most of the other political parties and systematically worked on getting rid of its political opponents. The Communist party merged with the Social Democratic Party into the Hungarian Working People's Party and all moderate politicians were exiled or excluded from political life. The state security apparatus grew in strength and played an increasing role in dealing with political rivals. In 1949 Hungarian parliament passed a new constitution modeled on the 1936 Soviet constitution, the Republic of Hungary became the People's Republic of Hungary and socialism was declared as its ultimate goal. General Secretary of the Hungarian Working People's Party Mátyás Rákosi (1892–1971), a former member of the post-World War I Kun's communist government and self-proclaimed "Stalin's best pupil", quickly rose to prominence, becoming the most powerful man in Hungary. During the period between 1949 and 1956, Rákosi ruled Hungary with an iron fist turning it into a totalitarian state. Political purges and secret police (*Államvédelmi Hatóság* or ÁVH) surveillance became the reality of Rákosi's actual and perceived enemies among the ranks of politicians, the military and the Church, as well as ordinary Hungarians. Between 1948 and 1951, an estimated 400,000 people were purged from the ranks of the Party. Moreover, at any point during this general period, the ÁVH likely had at its disposal around 40,000 informers and kept dossiers on approximately 10 percent of the Hungarian population.[12] One of the most prominent events of this Stalinist era of Hungarian history was the trial of Foreign Minister László Rajk, who was arrested in 1949, accused of spying for the West and Tito's Yugoslavia, forced to make a public confession in a show trial and promptly executed. Rákosi's repressive regime penetrated all segments of Hungarian society with its singular purpose of ensuring the attainment of the common goals of all communist states in Stalin's orbit. State-controlled planned economy, rapid industrialization, nationalization of large enterprises and collectivized agriculture, however, yielded mixed results. Forcefully implemented collectivization, setting of unrealistically high production targets and general harassment weighed on the peasants, while city dwellers faced frequent consumer goods shortages and the prospects of secret police invading every nook of daily life.

In June 1953, only three months after Stalin's death, the Hungarian Party delegation lead by Rákosi was summoned to Moscow where the Soviet collective leadership, including among others Secret Police Chief Beria, Foreign

Minister Molotov and Party Secretary Khrushchev, informed Rákosi of their decision: he was to resign as Prime Minister and Imre Nagy (1896–1958) would become his successor. A former Minister of Interior and Speaker of Parliament, Imre Nagy was cast out of the Party in 1949 over his expressed disagreement with Rákosi's hasty collectivization policy. Nagy's comeback in combination with the newly initiated policy of "de-Stalinization" spreading from the Soviet Union through all the satellite states, initiated a "thaw" in the system. Nagy's speech in parliament in July outlined his intended reforms focusing primarily on slowing down the pace of heavy industrialization, disbanding internment camps and reversing the ill effects of forced collectivization on peasants. In everyday life of Hungarians, this turn of events was mostly visible in the loosening of state controls over intellectual life winning Nagy a significant following among writers and journalists. Nagy's "Communism with a Human Face" seemed to be taking root. However, the ousted Rákosi would not relinquish his supremacy so easily, particularly dragging his feet on the rehabilitation and release of political prisoners. A power struggle ensued widening the cleavage between Rákosi's and Nagy's clique in the Party. In April 1955 Nagy was removed from the post of Prime Minister and expelled from all Party functions. Soon after Moscow realized that Rákosi had become a liability and a third person needed to become Prime Minister. Young András Hegedűs became Prime Minister and through him Rákosi was able to briefly reinstate Stalinist measures including increasing the numbers of political prisoners and instituting a new wave of forced collectivization. The Soviet leadership's final break with Stalinism in February 1956 reinforced de-Stalinization in Hungary and weakened Rákosi's stance. In early October 1956 a crowd of at least 100,000 gathered in Budapest to pay their respects to László Rajk and his comrades being rehabilitated in a public re-burial in a first expression of mass popular discontent with the regime since communists came into power.

The historic revolutionary events of 1956 in Hungary kicked off several weeks later on October 23, 1956, with a student demonstration in solidarity with the Polish reformers' efforts at de-Stalinization. The crowd of about 200,000 gathered on the streets of Budapest demanding radical political and economic reforms, including holding free multi-party elections. In the evening hours, a student delegation entered the building of Hungarian Radio with the intention of broadcasting the demands of the protesters. Shots were fired by agents of the ÁVH (*Államvédelmi Hatóság* or the State Protection Authority) and the protesters fought back. The next day, Soviet tanks entered Budapest. Several days of fighting between the freedom fighters and Soviet troops ensued. The government fell and Imre Nagy was reappointed prime minister. A somewhat reluctant revolutionary, Nagy was thrust into the

forefront of the revolution by popular demand, but often found himself behind the curve of widespread public discontent and calls for change. Nevertheless, by October 27, Nagy had reshuffled the government and began referring to the revolutionary events as a "national democratic movement." Moreover, he promised to disband the ÁVH, offer amnesty to the revolutionaries, withdraw from the Warsaw Pact, and reform agricultural policies. A cease-fire took effect between the Soviet leadership and the protesters on October 28. Two days later the Soviet troops began withdrawing from Budapest and negotiations with the Soviet emissaries regarding the desired reforms appeared to be going smoothly. All fighting had ceased and things seemed like they were calming down. Then, on November 4, a Soviet offensive against Budapest began. Despite the courageous resistance put up by the Hungarians and around 3,000 lives lost throughout the country, ultimately the Soviet troops overran Hungary. The hoped-for support from the West did not materialize as the British, the French, and the Israelis were engaged with the intervention in the Suez. Hungary was returned into the Soviet fold as swiftly as the national aspirations to leave it flared up. Nagy and forty-three of his associates fled to the Yugoslav embassy where they stayed for three weeks. János Kádár (1912–1989), former interior minister in Rákosi's government, one of Rajk's accusers but also a former show-trial political prisoner himself, was sworn in as prime minister and head of a de-facto puppet government on November 7. On November 22, Despite having been granted safe passage by Kádár, Nagy was arrested by the Soviets as soon as he left the Yugoslav embassy and transported to Romania. Nagy was then clandestinely returned to Hungary, accused of treason, tried in secrecy, and executed by hanging in June 1958. In the aftermath of 1956, about 22,000 people were condemned, 229 were executed, and over 200.000 fled Hungary because of their involvement in the revolution.[13]

The Hungarian Revolution of 1956, although it ended in bloody defeat, remains one of Hungary's most heroic and most tragic moments. Furthermore, the Revolution takes a proud place in international history as a brave attempt at armed resistance against the commanding Soviet military. The events of 1956 revealed to the world the popular aspirations for change that hid beneath the surface of repressive systems. The remaining 33 years of the communist regime were marked by the personality and the legacy of János Kádár. A shy and puritanical figure, Kádár was disinclined to build a personality cult in Hungary and, once the initial post-1956 repression subsided, his rule was characterized by economic reforms and improvements in the standard of living for Hungarians. During his time, partial privatization and depolitization of the economy, income per capita growth, relaxation in travel restrictions to the West, and a measure of freedom in cultural life made the

Hungary's Prime Minister Imre Nagy makes a radio broadcast during the rebellion of his people against Soviet control in Budapest, Hungary, in this November 2, 1956 file picture. The uprising began on October 23, 1956 with demonstrations against the Stalinist regime in Budapest and was crushed eleven days later by Soviet tanks amid bitter fighting. Some 2,500 people were killed and a further 200,000 forced into exile. (AP Photo.)

lives of ordinary Hungarians more than tolerable. The New Economic Mechanism (NEM) launched in 1968, introduced market-style reforms into the Hungarian economy, and, by the end of the 1980s, about a third of the GDP was created by the private sector. Many in Hungary today recall this period (sometimes referred to as *Gulyás Communism*) with some nostalgia as the golden age in terms of quality of life. Many Hungarians believe that back then, although not free, most of them were content. By the end of the 1980s, a mounting economic crisis, Gorbachev's reforms in the Soviet Union, and the emergence of a political alternative within Hungary to the communist party spelled out the end of Kadarism. After more than three uninterrupted decades in power, János Kádár resigned the post of general secretary in 1988. Two other key developments contributed to the collapse of communism in Hungary. In an event known as the Pan-European Picnic, the Hungarian government made a historic decision in May 1989 to open the border with Austria for a few hours and allow hundreds of East Germans

in Hungary to enter Austria (and make their way to West Germany), effectively dismantling the Iron Curtain. Another sign that the communist regime was losing its grip on Hungarian society happened in June 1989 when a crowd of almost a quarter million people gathered at the funeral of the rehabilitated Imre Nagy to commemorate his role in the 1956 Revolution and pay tribute to all the other victims.

The Present

The communists and the opposition came to an agreement about the transition to multi-party democracy through a peaceful process of negotiations (the so-called Round Table Talks) during the summer and fall of 1989, thus ushering the country out of communism. The new Hungarian Republic was proclaimed on October 23, 1989, on the 33rd anniversary of the 1956 Revolution, while the first free elections were held in March 1990. From the early 1990s, the different political options in Hungary basically agreed on the overarching issues of political transition. Across the political spectrum, most parties worked towards transitioning Hungary to a fully functional democracy. On most other issues, however, the socialists and the center-right parties, alternating in the coalition governments throughout the 1990s, did not see eye to eye. The source of discord between them often revolved around economic policy measures. Initially, as a consequence of the dissolution of communism and the introduction of market reforms, the system of subsidies was dismantled, inflation increased, and the overall standard of living for Hungarians worsened. The final years of the millennium, however, witnessed better economic performance and high foreign investment, as well as the realization of Hungary's key foreign policy goals (joining NATO and commencing negotiations for membership in the EU).

Throughout the 1990s and well into the 2000s, the center-right FIDESz (Federation of Young Democrats) and the reformed Hungarian Socialist Party, took turns winning elections and forming the government, mostly in coalitions with smaller parties. This political see-saw between the two largest parties, notwithstanding, the momentous foreign policy success of joining the EU in 2004 was achieved. At the same time, Hungary's internal politics was rocked by scandals and a couple occurrences of popular unrest. In September 2006, a recording of Socialist Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány's speech admitting that his government lied about its accomplishments in order to win the election leaked and was broadcast on the radio. Large crowds in Budapest took to the streets in protest and demanded the prime minister's resignation. About 800 people were hurt but the prime minster declined to resign. In fact, soon after, he won the vote of confidence in parliament. A year

later, in the fall of 2007, another wave of protests shook the country, this time laced with nationalistic and far-right rhetoric. Police used riot gear to disperse the protestors. Meanwhile, public confidence in the Socialist government kept declining and in the spring 2009 Prime Minister Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány announced his resignation. Economic Minister Gordon Bajnai took over the helm of the government until the end of the mandate. The April 2010 parliamentary elections swept the center-right FIDESz into power in a landslide victory and Viktor Orbán became the prime minister once again (he previously served as one from 1998 to 2002). As a reflection of a worrisome trend in Hungarian politics, the far-right Jobbik party, known for its extremist rhetoric, entered parliament for the first time.

Throughout most of the 2000s, Hungary's economic performance was robust, but by late 2008 the global financial crisis and economic downturn caught up with the Hungarian economy. Faced with large current-account and fiscal deficits, weakening currency, falling domestic and external demand, and contracting economic growth, Hungarian government turned to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for help. The IMF approved a Stand-By Agreement in November 2008, designed to provide Hungary with about $25 billion bailout, and the pressure was put on Orbán's new government to utilize these loans effectively and resolve the country's economic woes. In January 2011 Hungary was set to take over its six-month segment of the first shared EU presidency. With Spain and Belgium, Hungary is part of the first trio to do so under of the new system of team presidency prescribed by the Lisbon Treaty. As it prepares for this historic presidency, Hungary's future in Europe is secure, whereas improving internal processes of political and economic development are an ongoing goal of present and future Hungarian governments.

Notes

1. László Kontler, *A History of Hungary*. Hampshire, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, 313.

2. World Bank, World Development Indicators, Data Finder, Accessed January 2010, from http://datafinder.worldbank.org/population-total.

3. Hungarian Central Statistical Office, "Population Census 2001." Accessed January 2010, from http://www.nepszamlalas.hu/eng/volumes/06/00/content.html.

4. Károly Kocsis, "The Roma (Gypsy) Question in Carpatho-Pannonian Region." In *Hungary towards the 21st Century*. Budapest: Geographical Research Institute, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 2000, 120.

5. Kontler, *A History of Hungary*, 39.

6. Paul Lendvai, *The Hungarians: A Thousand Years of Victory in Defeat*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003, 62.

7. The Council of Constance, held between 1414 and 1418, resolved the issue of the Western Schism unseating the three popes who had claimed the Holy See at that time and elected a new Pope. The Council also convicted Jan Hus as a heretic and burned him at the stake.

8. Paul Lendvai, *The Hungarians: A Thousand Years of Victory in Defeat*, 8.

9. Miklós Molnár, *A Concise History of Hungary*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008, 179.

10. László Kontler, *A History of Hungary*, 303.

11. Miklós Molnár, *A Concise History of Hungary*, 241.

12. Paul Lendvai, *The Hungarians: A Thousand Years of Victory in Defeat*, 439.

13. Ibid., 454–55.

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2

Religion

From the early followers of Tengriism to the conversion to Christianity, the history of religion in Hungary takes us back a thousand years. In both their old homeland and new homeland, the early Hungarian tribes were in contact with two distinct religious environments. In their old homeland, the Khazar Empire, the dominant religion was Tengriism, which combined shamanism with animism and totemism. Focusing on the sky deity Tengri, it was a largely monotheistic religion, even if it recognized other, lesser deities. However, many Jews, Muslims, and Christians also lived in the Empire, and early Hungarians were familiar with the three monotheistic religions. Hungarian vocabulary for religious notions such as God (Isten), the Devil (ördög), or to fast (böjtöl) also testifies to the existence of a complex religions system of the early Hungarians. In contrast, the Hungarians' new homeland in the Carpathian basin had, at the time of the arrival of the Hungarian tribes, been a Christian territory for nearly 800 years. Christianity spread rapidly during the Roman Empire and persisted after its demise.

Upon arriving in their new territory, the Hungarians encountered Christianity through raids to the Christian territories in the West and South and through their Christian slaves who were allowed to exercise their religion. Still, Hungarians continued to practice their own religion for approximately a hundred years. The decisive events that eventually led to the conversion of the Hungarian tribes to Christianity were the rise of the Byzantine Empire in the East and the German Empire in the West, which included intensive missionary activities from Eastern and Western Christianity alike.

The first reported conversions of Hungarian princes took place already in the tenth century, when Bulcsu and Gyula were baptized according to the rites of Eastern Christianity in Constantinople. Prince Gyula returned from his baptism with the monk Hierotheos, who had been ordained Bishop of Turkia (Hungary). Thus Hungarians had initially turned to Eastern or Greek Christianity—a reflection of the then strong position of the Byzantine Empire.

Géza, Grand Prince of the Hungarians (972–997), found himself encircled by the spread of the Byzantine Empire and the ascent and Eastern expansion of the German Empire. Faced with this situation, he decided to align himself with Western Christianity and was baptized together with his brother and son, Vajk, who received the Christian name Stephen. Géza also asked for Western missionaries to be sent to Hungary. The wedding of Géza's son Stephen I of Hungary with Princess Giselle of Bavaria in 996 was a family event with major political and religious implications as it marked Hungary's alignment with Western Christianity.

Although Grand Prince Géza was successful in politically linking Hungary to Western Christianity, chronicles report that he personally never became a convinced Christian. When asked about his worship of pagan gods, he stated that he was rich enough to sacrifice to both the old gods and the new Christian god.[1] Whereas Géza had laid important foundations for Hungarian statehood and its Christianization, it fell to his son, the first king of Hungary, Stephen I, to successfully complete both tasks. Stephen I, by upbringing and personal conviction a Christian, also built up the Hungarian Church organization with 10 dioceses and built many churches and abbeys all over the country. Stephen I was canonized already in 1038 and his "holy right hand" has been treasured until today as a national relic.

Religion in Hungary Today

Any discussion of religion in Hungary today must be informed by the thousand-year history of Christianity in Hungary. Looking from today's perspective, sociologist Miklós Tomka identifies four factors that have shaped the religious landscape from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards: (a) diversity of religious denominations; (b) legacy of Josephinism, the union of the Hungarian state and the Catholic Church; (c) a Hungarian culture war; and (d) a widespread lay piety.[2]

Although the Catholic Church was—with the exception of the height of reformation—a dominant force, religious pluralism is an equally important feature. Freedom of religion was for the first time formally recognized in 1568 in Transylvania, where King John II Sigismund guaranteed in the Edict of Turda the four local denominations: Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists, and

Unitarians. This sent a strong signal for religious tolerance and diversity and had a lasting impact. Since the time of the Reformation, consistently around 15 percent of the population was Calvinist and 7 to 8 percent was Lutheran.[3] There were many religious conflicts, but Hungary avoided religious wars as well as strict territorial separation of denominations—both common features in Europe. In Transylvania and East Hungary Calvinists were in the majority. Throughout the Hungarian territory, religious identity was closely linked with ethnic identity as well as political views (pro/against Habsburg). Calvinist supporters even called their religion the "Hungarian religion" to contrast it with Catholicism as the religion of Habsburg and were the main standard bearers of the national idea. Josephinism, the philosophy and practice of state-church integration, of Emperor and King Joseph II, also had a lasting influence. He attempted to integrate the church fully into the centralist state through limiting its scope of activities to church service, dissolving religious orders, and confiscating their property and controlling important positions in the Church hierarchy. At the same time, the Church, following expectations by the state, took over important state functions in the fields of health and education. This made the Church the most important actor in these fields and ensured its social and cultural influence. In effect, the Catholic Church took on elements of a state church. From the second half of the nineteenth century onwards, two tendencies existed simultaneously. Although the Church hierarchy and elite were engaged in a defensive "culture war" on social issues, this did not affect lay piety and religious feelings among the population. Despite heavy opposition of the Catholic Church, the Hungarian Parliament introduced liberal social legislation, such as mandatory civil marriage and legal divorce, in 1894, early even in a European context. The law on religions of 1867 granted the Jewish religion equal status. The Catholic Church did not have the political influence or well-organized support of lay organizations that might have prevented this legislation from entering into force. At the same time, these debates mainly concerned the nobility and the bourgeoisie. The religious life and customs of the vast majority of the population continued to be important in people's lives.

These trends continued in the first half of the twentieth century. The church was an important political, economic, and social force. It was the largest landowner and an important employer and continued to play a major role in the provision of health and education services. Still, in the school year from 1946 to 1947, the Catholic Church was responsible for around 41 percent of all elementary schools, 23 percent of all secondary schools, and more than 50 percent of teachers colleges.[4] Various church orders also expanded rapidly, with the number of nuns increasing more than threefold from 3,290 in 1920 to 10,581 in 1948. During the same period of time, the number of active

priests increased from 2,331 to 3,846.[5] The spiritual renewal was increasingly accompanied by social activism through the foundation of new religious orders, which focused on social issues. The Jesuits, for example, were particularly active in supporting the creation of young farmer organizations. They did not only develop into the largest social organizations in Hungary but also—through their support of causes like land reform—gave the Catholic Church a new, more social face. All in all, the first decades of the twentieth century amounted to a strong revival of the Catholic Church.

During World War II, Catholic and Protestant Church leaders criticized the anti-Jewish measures. Both churches also established services to support Jews. After the onset of the German occupation in 1944 and the massive deportation of Jews, there were repeated protest notes, including by the Pope, and many individual rescue operations. In Budapest alone, more than 3,000 people were rescued in church institutions.[6] Still, the Churches are criticized for not being more outspoken and united in their stance.

Church under Socialism

As in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union, the Socialist rule fundamentally changed State-Church relations. It interrupted a thousand years of continuity, in which the Catholic Church had been a fundamental building block of daily life, national culture, identity, and politics. The year 1945 became a turning point, when the Hungarian government for the first time openly opposed the Church and religion as a whole.

The implementation of the state's church policy in Hungary can be divided into three phases: from 1945 to 1950, from 1950 to1961, and from 1961 to 1989.[7] In the phase leading to 1950, the Communist party successfully took control of the Church, ended its autonomy, and pushed it out of public life. Important elements were the takeover of Church property, the closure of all orders and associations, the press and publishing houses; the infiltration of the church hierarchy with secret service agents; the imprisonment of resistant church leaders, and large numbers of ordinary priests, monks, and nuns. The almost 4,500 Catholic, Calvinist, and Lutheran schools with more than 1 million students were taken over by the state. The state domination was formalized through agreements in 1948 with the two Protestant Churches and in 1950 with the Catholic Church, which brought the Churches under full state control.

In the phase from 1950 to 1961, the Churches were expected to actively contribute to the building of the socialist society. The weakness of the Church was manifest in the fact that the Church did not play a wider role in the uprising of 1956 beyond demanding the restoration of its autonomy.[8]

The third phase mirrored the overall political development and a gradual increase in openness, leading to some concessions. A milestone was the 1964 agreement between the Holy See and the Hungarian government. Although it included some concessions, it mainly cemented the status quo. This was typical for the third phase, which saw greater flexibility of the state, but no fundamental changes in the degree of freedom or State-Church relations. Persecutions and discrimination continued, albeit easing to some degree. Religiosity in the population as expressed by indicators such as participation in religious rites, church attendance, and the number of priests can also be divided into three phases. During the first phase, until the middle of the 1950s, lay piety and popular religious sentiment largely stayed intact, and even increased in some cases. This is surprising as in political terms this was the most repressive time, with strongest anti-Church action by the state. A major change, however, occurred in the generally more liberal 1960s and 1970s, which were the heyday of de-Christianization and the secularization of Hungarian society, marked by the breakup of religious traditions. Survey results show that the share of people considering themselves religious had declined in 1978 to only 36 percent. In the third phase, from the end of the 1970s onwards, a slow but continuous religious revival occurred, which was accompanied by an increase in visible religious practice. In the 1980s religious and non-religious people were again approximately evenly split and, around 1990, a majority designated themselves religious.[9]

The religious upswing in the last period of Socialist Hungary is a remarkable development, particularly in comparison with the strong secularization taking place in the same period of time in Western Europe.

Religion and the Church after Socialism

With the end of socialist rule in Hungary, a new chapter in the country's religious history began. The democratic state redefined its relations with religious associations, re-affirming their place in society. At the same time, churches had to redefine their role in a new, far more pluralistic environment, in which practicing Christians had become a minority and a majority of the population did not share the conservative and traditional orientation of the Church.

The political changes of the 1990s and the end of religious oppression brought about a large number of questions regarding the relationship between church and state. These questions ranged from the basics concerning freedom of religion to more specific issues, such as the status of churches and religious associations, their role in education, and their financial situation.

The major political parties including the Socialist Party stressed good will towards the churches and, although there were many heated debates, the

grand lines of the state's church policy were consistent across governments. The practical application of the principles of Church-State relations had become consolidated during the first decade of post-Socialist Hungary.

Basic aspects of church and state are regulated in the Hungarian Constitution and the 1990 Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religion and the Churches. Section 60 of the Constitution states that "everybody has the right to the freedom of thought, conscience and religion" and "that the church functions separately from the state." In addition, Hungary is a signatory of the European Convention on Human Rights, which includes the acceptance of the jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights. No official state or otherwise favored religion exists in Hungary. The state provides equal legal status and standing to all religious groups that meet certain criteria. The law on Freedom of Conscience and Religion and the Churches also regulates the legal status of religious associations and requirements for official recognition and states in its preamble that "Churches, denominations and religious communities are factors of prominent importance capable of creating values and communities." It also highlights the role of churches' educational, cultural, and health care activities.[10]

The law sets low legal barriers, such as a minimum number of only 100 members, for registration and to the dismay of the major denominations, treats all religious associations equally with the same rights and obligations. This led to a rapid rise to 154 registered religious associations in 2004. Still, legislation refers to four major denominations: the Catholic Church, the Reformed Church, the Lutheran Church, and the Alliance of Jewish Congregations, as "historic denominations." Examples of this particular role include participation in high state events, regulation of army chaplains, and participation in State-Church negotiations.[11]

After the fall of communism, all churches could reclaim certain parts of their property that had been secularized after 1948 as, in the words of the Constitutional Court, "a partial compensation for the grave injury suffered by the churches serves to restore their functionability and establish their operational ability and ensure the freedom of religion."[12] In most cases denominations opted for financial compensation in the form of annual subsidies from the state budget instead of directly reclaiming their property. Still, there were many direct restitution cases. In 2005 the government offered a fast-track option to close outstanding property claims by 2006, which was accepted by the Catholic Church, the Jewish Community, and the Budai Serb Orthodox Church, but not by the two Protestant Churches. By 2009, all in all, 2,576 objects had been restituted with a total compensation of $342 million (HUF 67.4 billion).[13]

Since the end of the 1990s, basic principles of state funding are in place. There are three funding sources: an option for taxpayers to allocate one percent of their income tax to any registered church, direct state subsidies, and dedicated funding for specific activities and delivery of social services. Until 2008, the state subsidies amounted to 0.9 percent of total income tax collected. Since 2009 the government directly matches every individual taxpayer contribution one to one. The new practice resulted in an overall decrease in state funding of churches from $60 million (HUF 11.9 billion) in 2008 to $50 million (HUF 9.8 billion) in 2009.[14] Generally, only 11 to 13 percent of all Hungarians obliged to file income taxes made use of the opportunity to allocate 1 percent for a religious association.[15] Other support for purposes such as reconstruction of religious institutions, compensation for non-restituted property, church services in the smallest villages, and religious instruction amounted to $82 million (HUF 16.1 billion) in 2009. Another significant source of income for churches not included in these numbers are state subsidies for the provision of public services, mainly education, which are granted on a per-capita basis at the same level as for public institutions performing the same service.

Although there is a strict institutional separation, cooperation between state and church is commonplace. Religious instruction in public schools is one illustration of this practice. Whereas there is no religious instruction in public curricula, public schools have to provide classroom space for religious instruction by church authorities. Churches can also set up their own schools. These schools are bound by the public core curriculum but, in addition, treat religious instruction as a regular graded subject, use religious symbols on school premises, and are allowed to select students and teachers according to religious criteria. In 2004, 5.7 percent of schools were religious schools, a share that was projected to rise to approximately 8 percent.[16] Around the year 2000, there were 300 Catholic elementary and secondary schools, and also a Catholic University with four faculties and 8,000 students.[17] Churches can also provide—and many Hungarians clearly see them in this role—services in the social, educational, and cultural sphere. They have the option of providing religious services not only in schools but also in the army, prisons, and hospitals. The following religious holidays are national holidays in Hungary: Easter Monday, Whit Monday, All Saints' Day, and Christmas.

In the 1990s, the public generally had a positive view of the Church, although there was never a majority that supported a more politically active Church, which would influence government decisions and individual election choices. In this respect, the positive reception of the most serious sociopolitical statement of the Catholic Church, a pastoral letter published in 1996, was a surprise. In this letter, the Church critically reviewed recent history, took a

stand for human rights, solidarity, and moral values, and insisted on its right and obligation to speak out on the most important social and political issues. Its call for a deeper dialogue was well received, which confirmed the public role of the Church. Two subsequent pastoral letters, on marriage and family, as well as bioethics, were also important debate contributions.

The debate about whether to refer to "God" and the Christian heritage in the project of the European constitutional treaty was one of the few pan-European debates on issues of identity and religion. The Hungarian government, alongside Poland, was one of the countries that strongly advocated including the Christian notion of "God" in the constitution. However, only 39 percent of the public supported an explicit reference to "God."[18]

Throughout the 1990s, half of the population thought that churches and religious associations had the right amount of power. Twenty percent would have liked to see them more powerful and 20 percent less powerful.[19] Polls also showed that half of the Hungarian public sought guidance from the Catholic Church in personal and moral issues and questions concerning the meaning of life. One out of six expected the Church to be able to provide answers to social problems. A significant share, between one third and one half of the population, considered it appropriate for the Catholic Church to speak out on issues such as social inequality, unemployment, abortion, or extramarital relationships.[20]

Religiosity in Contemporary Hungarian Society

Hungarian law considers religious affiliation sensitive information that may not be officially recorded. There is therefore no complete database on religious affiliation in Hungary. Still, as long as responses are voluntary, public opinion research and the national census may include questions on religious affiliation. All information on the religious makeup of Hungarian society today is based on these sources, complemented by membership data from the religious organizations and tax statistics. In the last national census, conducted in 2001, 90 percent of the population responded to the voluntary question on religion. According to the census, the population is 55 percent Roman Catholic, 3 percent Greek Catholic, 15 percent Hungarian Reformed, 3 percent Lutheran, and less than 1 percent Jewish. 15 percent declared no religious affiliation. Smaller denominations (5% of the population and less) include the Pentecostal Faith Church, five Orthodox Christian religious groups, seven Buddhist and three Islamic groups. Ten percent of the population did not respond to the question, partly due to a strong campaign against the inclusion of the question on religious affiliation. The more than 5.5 million

Catholics are by far the majority group, followed by approximately 1,6 million Hungarian Reformed Christians and approximately 300,000 Lutherans.[21]

The first years of democratic Hungary between 1990 and 1998 saw the share of people belonging to a church or religious association rise from 58 to 76 percent.[22] Although these are high membership numbers, religious affiliation and practice varies strongly by age group. In the age group above 60 years, only 2 percent of the population is not baptized. However, in the group of adults under 30, this number jumps to 18 percent.[23]

After centuries of the dominance of traditional churches, an interesting recent development is the increasing diversification of the religious landscape. A large number of new denominations appeared in Hungary in the 1990s. The largest of these is the Pentecostal Faith Church, followed by a wide range of neo-Protestant free churches and the Krishna movement as well as Buddhist groups.

The Faith Church was founded already in 1979 as a small prayer group with sixty members by its current leader Sándor Németh. It has approximately 50,000 members and, based on the one-percent tax designation, it is Hungary's fourth most supported church. The Faith Church also operates several schools, a theological college, and a social service foundation. Its services are broadcast on national television. Faith Hall, the denomination's church in Budapest, has room for 10,000 people.[24]

Asked in 2005 and 2006, almost 60 percent of Hungarians stated that religion was an important part of their life. Fifty-two percent stated their belief in a personal god and a further 12 percent in a higher being.[25] Seventy-one percent stated that they had been brought up in faith, and almost 80 percent considered it important to bring up children in faith.[26] These attitudes seemed not to translate into frequent church going, as less than every fifth person attended church at least once a month. Almost half of the population never attends religious services.[27] This is a continuation of a longer-term trend. The oldest age group remembers that 70 percent of mothers and 56 percent of fathers attended church regularly, whereas the youngest age group reports that only 17 percent of mothers and 13 percent of fathers regularly attended church.[28] The frequency of religious conversations and prayer at home showed a similarly strong decline. Similarly, although a large share of parents stress the importance of religious upbringing, only approximately every third student attends voluntary religious instruction at school. Nonetheless, this is a strong increase from the numbers during Socialism, which had been steadily declining and stood at 3 percent in 1987.[29]

Interestingly, religious rites such as baptism and church weddings continue to enjoy high popularity and are considered important far beyond the generally

Bride, groom and their guests happily united after a religious wedding ceremony in Buda. (Courtesy of Oksana Buranbaeva.)

religious groups, which points at the strong cultural, religious tradition. In addition, more than six out of ten Hungarians state that they own a Bible or a New Testament.[30]

As in many countries, religious beliefs in Hungary are becoming more individualized and subjective. In 2006 only every fifth person called themselves religious according the teaching of their church, whereas 59 percent stated that they were religious in their own way.[31] In a wider sense, spiritual beliefs also play a role in today's Hungary. In 2006 almost every third person believed in astrology and horoscopes, every fourth person agreed that amulets, stones, and crystals could be helpfuL;and 12 percent believed in magic and occultism.[32]

Jews in Hungary

Jews have lived in Hungary since the time of the Roman Empire, even before the arrival of the Magyars. While the rulers of the young Hungarian state often placed restrictions on Jews, there were also many periods in which Hungary provided a refuge for Jewish people. A particularly positive period started in the 1860s, when Jews were allowed to settle in any community, participate in all aspects of commerce, and soon after reached full emancipation. Many Jews rose to prominence in politics, culture, and the economy. At the

outbreak of World War I and in the interwar period, Jewish merchants made up more than half of all Hungarian merchants. The Jewish population increased strongly—mainly through immigration—from 340,000 in 1850 to 910,000 in 1910.[33] With a share of 5.9 percent, the Hungarian Jewish minority was the largest in Europe. In some cities, the Jewish share of the population reached more than 20 percent. The increasingly authoritarian and right-wing regime of the interwar period issued a series of anti-Jewish measures.

In spite of strong pressure from Germany during World War II, Hungarian authorities resisted deportation and the establishment of ghettos until 1944. However, the German occupiers deported more than 430,000 Jews—with administrative and technical assistance from the Hungarian state administration—between May and July 1944 alone. The historian Paul Lendvai summarizes that "nowhere else in Eastern and Central Europe were more than 800,000 Jews (including converts) able to live for so long in relative safety as in Hungary. But nowhere else in Central and Eastern Europe were Jews sent to their death so quickly and so brutally."[34] The estimates of Jewish victims on the territory of Greater Hungary amount to 564,000.[35]

During Socialist rule the number of Jews in Hungary had continued to decrease and, in the 1970s, declined to 60,000, out of which 50,000 lived in Budapest. Today, Hungary has once again a thriving, approximately

Interior of the Doheny Synagogue in Budapest, Hungary. (Peter Spiro/iStockphoto.com)

100,000-strong Jewish community. Jews are mainly organized in the Alliance of the Hungarian Jewish Communities, and the Jewish religion is recognized as one of the four "traditional religions." Twelve rabbis practice in Hungary, and there are twenty synagogues in Budapest, complemented by prayer houses in smaller towns. Eastern Europe's only rabbinical seminary is located in Budapest. There is also a number of Jewish schools, various cultural groups, a Jewish museum, a newspaper and a variety of kosher butchers, a bakery, and a restaurant.

All in all, Hungary today is a religiously diverse country with the Catholic Church as the dominant denomination and strong Protestant minorities, but the country also has a significant non-religious segment of the population. With these characteristics it holds a middle ground within both Central and Eastern Europe and the European Union as a whole. Situated between deeply religious, mostly Catholic countries such as Poland or Ireland and almost fully secularized, often traditionally Protestant places such as the Czech Republic or the Eastern part of Germany, Hungary continues to define the relationship between church and state in a pluralistic society.

Notes

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2. Miklós Tomka, *Religion und Kirchen in Ost (Mittel) Europe: Ungarn, Litauen, Slowenien*. Ostfildern, Germany: Schwabenverlag, 1999, 29.
3. Miklós Tomka, *Religioeser Wandel in Ungarn*. Ostfildern, Germany: Matthias-Gruenewald Verlag, 2010, 20.
4. Tomka, *Religion und Kirchen in Ost (Mittel) Europe: Ungarn, Litauen, Slowenien*, 32.
5. Ibid.
6. Gabriel Adriányi, *Kleine Kirchengeschichte Ungarns*. Herne, Germany: Schaefer, 2003, 71.
7. Tomka, *Religion und Kirchen in Ost (Mittel) Europe: Ungarn, Litauen, Slowenien*, 36.
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10. Balász Schanda. "Freedom of Religion and Minority Religions in Hungary." In *Social Justice Research*, Vol. 12, no. 4 (1999): 301.
11. Ibid., 308.
12. Ibid., 309.
13. U.S. State Department, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. "Hungary." In *International Religious Freedom Report 2009*, 5.
14. Ibid., 3.
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17. László Odrobina, "The Situation of Theology in Hungary after the Fall of the Wall. Post-Communistm: Does it Mean Post-Secularism?" In *Theologie im Osten Europeas seit 1989*. Edited by Albert Franz and Wolfgang Baum. Berlin: Lit Verlag Dr. W. Hopf, 2009, 33.

18. Gert Pickel, "Secularization as a European Fate?—Results from the Church and Religion in an Enlarged Europe Project 2006." In *Church and Religion in Contemporary Europe: Results from Empirical and Comparative Research*. Edited by Gert Pickel and Olaf Mueller. Wiesbaden, Germany: VS Verlag, 2009, 98.

19. Tomka, *Religioeser Wandel in Ungarn*, 190.

20. Ibid., 184.

21. Hungarian Central Statistical Office, "Population Census 2001." Accessed October 2010, from http://www.nepszamlalas.hu/eng/volumes/18/tables/load1_26.html.

22. Tomka, *Religioeser Wandel in Ungarn*, 108.

23. Ibid., 110.

24. Ibid., 206.

25. Pickel, *Secularization as a European Fate?—Results from the Church and Religion in an Enlarged Europe Project 2006*, 105.

26. Ibid., 111.

27. Olaf Mueller, "Religiosity in Central and Eastern Europe—Results from the PCE 2000 Survey in Comparison." In *Church and Religion in Contemporary Europe: Results from Empirical and Comparative Research*. Edited by Gert Pickel and Olaf Mueller. Wiesbaden, Germany: VS Verlag, 2009, 72.

28. Tomka, *Religioeser Wandel in Ungarn*, 109.

29. Ibid., 115.

30. Ibid., 165.

31. Pickel, *Secularization as a European Fate?—Results from the Church and Religion in an Enlarged Europe Project 2006*, 104.

32. Ibid., 107.

33. Tomka, *Religioeser Wandel in Ungarn*, 35.

34. Lendvai, *The Hungarians: A Thousand Years of Victory in Defeat*, 422.

35. Ibid., 425.

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3

Language

Hungarian historian and demographer Zoltán Dávid defines a Hungarian as someone who belongs to the Hungarian cultural community, speaks Hungarian with their family, and considers Hungarian his or her mother tongue.[1] Hungarian is the state language of the Republic of Hungary and one of the official languages of the European Union. Hungarian is an island surrounded by a sea of Indo-European languages. The language belongs to the Finno-Ugric group of the Uralic language family and is unrelated to any language spoken in the neighboring countries. The Finno-Ugric group consists of two branches of languages: Finno-Permian and Ugric. Among the largest living languages of the Finno-Permian branch are Finnish, Estonian, Lapp, Udmurt, Komi, Mari, and Mordva. The Hungarian language belongs to the Ugric branch and is closest to Mansi and Khanti, which are spoken along the Ob River in northwestern Siberia. Hungarian is the most widely spoken language of its family. The number of Hungarian speakers is larger than the total number of the speakers of all other Uralic languages.

The Hungarian language is central to Hungarian identity. According to various estimates, there are between 12 and 15 million Hungarian speakers around the globe. More than two-thirds of them live in Hungary. Most others live in seven neighboring countries: Romania, Slovakia, Serbia, Ukraine, Croatia, Austria, and Slovenia. In some of these countries the Hungarian language is recognized as a regional or minority language. Around a million Hungarian speakers are part of the Hungarian diaspora around the globe, particularly in the United States, Canada, Australia, and Israel. The United States alone has

over a hundred thousand Hungarian speakers. Although many non-native speakers have attempted to learn the language, Hungarian still has a reputation for being particularly hard to master.

Description of the Hungarian Language

The Hungarians employ an extension of the Latin alphabet, which was adopted with Christianization and the establishment of the Kingdom of Hungary. The introduction of printing in the sixteenth century contributed to the stabilization of Hungarian orthography. The distinctive features of Hungarian writing are the acute accent (*ó*) marking long vowels—doubled in the case of long, front rounded vowels (*ő*)—and special representations for sibilant sounds (e.g., *sz* corresponds to English *s*, but *s* corresponds to English *sh*).[2] Modern Hungarian has a phonemic orthography, a writing system where the written graphemes correspond to phonemes, or the spoken sounds of the language. There is an opinion that the Old Hungarian script, a system of writing used in the early Middle Ages, was better adapted to Hungarian phonology than the current modified Latin alphabet. The Old script was an alphabet system resembling runic writing, and it is often referred to as *Hungarian runes*. This writing system was likely related to Central Asian ancient Turkic runic script. The Hungarian runes were written in sticks from right to left and left to right, or only from right to left. After the thirteenth century the script was used only by the Székely Magyars, living in eastern Transylvania. The Székely used runes at least until the seventeenth century.

The average Hungarian word consists of two syllables and four and a half sounds. Vowels and consonants are usually alterated.Unless it is a long word, the stress falls generally on the first syllable. Longer words may have a secondary stress on the third and fifth syllable. Words are pronounced clearly, which is essential given the importance of each part of the word in rendering the meaning.[3]

Hungarian is an agglutinative language. This means that words are composed of a sequence of morphemes, each of which represents not more than a single grammatical category. Hungarian has indefinite and definite articles, without grammatical gender.

Hungarian vocabulary is rich in loanwords. Several hundred international words are used daily, and there are several thousand if one includes scientific and professional terminology. Iranian and Turkic words entered the Hungarian lexicon during the Hungarian migration. Another wave of Turkic loanwords arrived with the Ottoman occupation. Latin and German played a central role in Hungary's administration, legislation, education, and literature until the eighteenth century, and left a tremendous imprint on the Hungarian language.

German loanwords are also the result of a long-standing influence of German scientific achievements. Many French and Italian words became part of the Hungarian language through literature. Slav words came either from bilingual regions or from the Russian language in the twentieth century. Most Russian words that were set in a political context, such as Stakhanov movement or Comsomol, are now part of history. English words started penetrating Hungary in the seventeenth century. Hungary's exponential access to international media and culture since 1989 and the development of the worldwide web brought a new wave of loanwords from the English language. Sometimes suffixes are added to English words to Hungarianize them, which is sometimes called *Hunglish*. Similar to German in the past, English currently acts as a bridge for enriching Hungarian with international words.

For its part, Hungarian has contributed some words to English. The word "coach" comes from *kocsi*, which stands for a horse-drawn wagon with springs above the axles. The word "itsy-bitsy" comes from *ici-pici*, meaning "tiny." "Hussar" comes from *huszár*, a light cavalry soldier. The word "tokaji" comes from *tokaji aszú*, the name of the wine from Tokaj, the center of the Hungarian wine-growing district Tokaj-Hegyalja.

Present Varieties of Hungarian

Since 1989, the Hungarian language has become more diversified as the importance of both social and regional dialects has increased. Liberal media channels have been experimenting with informal Hungarian. There is a general trend toward stylistic diversification of the mass media. The use of slang is becoming increasingly widespread, not only in informal conversations and the mass media, but also in the performing arts. Slang comes with looser articulation and shorter sentences, characteristic of urban varities of Hungarian, which have emerged in the last two centuries alongside the increasing importance of cities. Urban varieties are formed by blending local dialects with standard Hungarian, and are used primarily by lower-middle-class and working-class city dwellers.

Dialects differ from standard Hungarian mostly phonetically. The mass media, rural-urban migration, and increased levels of education have brought the dialects closer to standard Hungarian. Nevertheless, elderly people in rural areas often still speak a dialect. Several regional dialects are spoken in Hungary: Alfold, Csango, West Danube, Danube-Tisza, King's Pass Hungarian, Northeast Hungarian, Northwest Hungarian, Székely, and West Hungarian. Csango is a dialect spoken by 60,000 to 70,000 Hungarians in Romania and Moldova. Due to the lasting isolation of the Csango minority group, its dialect bears a strong resemblance to medieval Hungarian. According to Etnologue,

speakers of Standard Hungarian have difficulty understanding the Oberwart dialect spoken in Austria, and considerable difficulty understanding the Moldavian Csango dialect spoken in Romania.[4]

Apart from these cases, two Hungarians speaking different dialects would understand each other. One explanation is that the Hungarians had a strong central authority already during the first decades of the Árpád period. This authority was capable of breaking the autonomy of the tribes. Another reason is the Tatar invasion, which strengthened the mixture of dialects by causing migrations. Central authority, which was strong until the mid-fifteenth century, established a common legal, trade, and transportation system, thus bringing the Hungarian population into a single political, economic, military, and ecclesiastic unit. This unity left little room for fragmented linguistic development. The Turkish rule after the battle of Mohács and all other wars led to resettlement and dislocation, further contributing to the mixing of dialects. Finally, the Hungarian Enlightment and the Age of Reform consolidated the unification of the language.

Needless to say, a non-native speaker learning Hungarian would certainly study the standard variety—the language of official translations, the mass media, literature and theater, education, science, and public administration.

Minority Languages

Although Hungarian is the only official language, the Republic of Hungary is a multicultural and multilingual state. Act LXXVII of 1993 on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities defines a minority as: "any ethnic group with a history of at least one century of living in the Republic of Hungary, which represents a numerical minority among the citizens of the state, the members of which are Hungarian citizens, and are distinguished from the rest of the citizens by their own language, culture and traditions, and at the same time demonstrate a sense of belonging together, which is aimed at the preservation of all these, and the expression and protection of the interests of their communities, which have been formed in the course of history."[5] Article 42 stipulates that Bulgarian, Roma ("Romani" and "Beash"), Greek, Croatian, Polish, German, Armenian, Romanian, Ruthenian, Serbian, Slovak, Slovenian, and Ukrainian are deemed languages used by minorities. Article 16 of the same act guarantees the right of minorities to cultivate and develop their historical traditions and language. The law also ensures teaching the Hungarian language in educational institutions for minorities.

According to Article 68 of the Constitution of the Republic of Hungary, "(1) the national and ethnic minorities living in the Republic of Hungary participate in the sovereign power of the people: they represent a constituent

part of the State. (2) The Republic of Hungary shall provide for the protection of national and ethnic minorities and ensure their collective participation in public affairs, the fostering of their cultures, the use of their native languages, education in their native languages and the use of names in their native languages." In addition, clause 1 of Article 66 of the constitution states that "The Republic of Hungary shall ensure the equality of men and women in all civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights." The Act on Radio and Television Broadcasting requires state media to broadcast programs featuring the culture and life of the minorities and to broadcast in the native languages.[6] At least one nationwide newspaper per minority receives state support. In 1998 Hungarian Radio started broadcasting programs for 13 minorities and work was underway to do the same on Hungarian Public Television. In addition, there is a biweekly Hungarian-language program about the minorities. There are cultural and education institutions such as the Bulgarian Cultural Institute and Library, Roma and German community houses, the National Roma Information and Cultural Centre, the Ukrainian Cultural Centre, the Armenian Cultural Centre, the Slovenian Cultural and Information Centre, and the House of the Slovak Culture.

Nevertheless, in the special issue of the Eurobarometer conducted in 2006, over half of Hungary's population indicated that regional and minority languages should receive greater support.[7] Still, in today's Hungary there is a general trend towards the monolingualism of Hungarian language. Among European nations, Hungary, along with Portugal and Greece, has the highest number of people naming the state language of the country their native language.[8]

The largest linguistic minority in Hungary are the Roma, who speak Romani, Beash, and Hungarian.[9] These communities received a status equivalent to the other national minorities only in 1993, when the LXXVII Law on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities was passed. According to Ethnologue, various dialects of Romani are spoken by 150,000 out of the 190,000 Roma population.[10]

As you see in Table 3.1, according to the 2001 census conducted by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office, German is the second minority language with the largest number of speakers. It is spoken by 34,000 people. Hungarian Germans are also called Danube Swabians and they speak the Swabian dialect of German. Slovak is spoken by approximately 12,000 people. Its use is particularly widespread in the Northern Hills and around Békéscsaba where approximately 10,000 Slovaks live.[11] Croatian is spoken by over 14,000 in the Croatian minority, residing mostly in the southern region of the country. The Romanian language is spoken by approximately 8,000 Romanians, most of them living in and around Gyula in the Békés county of southeastern Hungary near the

Table 3.1
Population by Mother Tongue and Main Age Groups, 2001 (adapted)

Mother tongue	Total	0–14	15–39	40–59	60–x	Total	0–14	15–39	40–59	60–x
								Percentages		
Population	10,198 315	1,694 936	3,574 493	2,847 327	2,081 559	100.0	16.6	35.0	27.9	20.4
Bulgarian	1,299					100.0	6.5	30.8	35.6	27.2
Roma	48,438	14,233	21,366	9,836	3,003	100.0	29.4	44.1	20.3	6.2
Greek	1,921	130	634	549	608	100.0	6.8	33.0	28.6	31.7
Croatian	14,326	1,075	3,402	4,921	4,928	100.0	7.5	23.7	34.4	34.3
Polish	2,580	242	786	1,246	306	100.0	9.4	30.5	48.3	11.9
German	33,774	1,736	5,751	9,546	16,741	100.0	5.1	17.0	28.3	49.6
Armenian	294	42	128	77	47	100.0	14.3	43.5	26.2	16.0
Romanian	8,482	706	3,601	2,263	1,912	100.0	8.3	42.5	26.7	22.5
Ruthenian	1,113	85	391	395	242	100.0	7.6	35.1	35.5	21.7
Serbian	3,388	388	1,176	881	943	100.0	11.5	34.7	26.0	27.8
Slovak	11,817	734	2,252	3,518	5,313	100.0	6.2	19.1	29.8	45.0
Slovenian	3,817	225	832	1,121	1,002	100.0	7.1	26.2	35.3	31.5
Ukrainian	4,885	510	2,106	1,470	799	100.0	10.4	43.1	30.1	16.4
Hungarian	9,546 374	1,559 433	3,326 925	2,673 068	1,986 948	100.0	16.3	34.9	28.0	20.8
Did not wish to answer	513,089	114,041	201,361	136,774	60,913	100.0	22.2	39.2	26.7	11.9
Unknown	28,017	7,443	9,557	6,462	4,555	100.0	26.6	34.1	23.1	16.3

Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office, Ethnic Minorities. Budapest: Hungarian Central Statistical Office, 2001. http://www.nepszamlalas.hu/eng/volumes/24/tables/prnt1_3_1.html

Romanian border. Slovenian is spoken by approximately 3,000 people, living mostly in Western Hungary in proximity to the Slovenian border. The Serbian language is spoken by the Serbian minority, particularly in and around Bácska, but also in other territories of Southern Hungary. Other languages spoken on the territory of Hungary are Ukrainian, Polish, Bulgarian, Greek, Ruthenian, Eastern Yiddish, Western Yiddish, and Armenian.

On November 9, 2009, the Hungarian Parliament unanimously adopted a bill seeking to recognize Hungarian sign language as a minority language. Hungary was the second European country, after Finland, to pass such an act. Sign language users will have the right to use sign language in official communications and are entitled to an interpreter in legal situations and in public administration. That said, the Dictionary of Hungarian Sign Language had already appeared in print 10 years before. Through this publication, the Hungarian Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (SINOSZ) supported "the claim that Hungarian sign language is a natural language with its own vocabulary and grammar independent of spoken Hungarian and other sign languages."[12]

Hungarians and Foreign Languages

Contemporary Hungary must be examined in the context of its membership in the European Union, a single community with a diversity of languages and cultures. The European Commission's multilingualism policy encourages language learning, promotes a healthy multilingual economy, and strives to provide all European Union citizens access to legislation, procedures, and information of the Union in their own language. The long-term target set by the European Union Heads of State and Government in 2002 is for all European citizens to speak two languages in addition to their mother tongue. The special Eurobarometer conducted by the European Commission in 2006 found the Hungarians among top four supporters of this goal, alongside the Poles, the Greeks, the Lithuanians, and the Cypriots.[13] Four out of five Hungarians believe in personal benefits from language acquisition. Thus, when it comes to attitudes, Hungarians greet multilingualism.

Given Hungary's time-honored tradition of multilingualism as well as the previously mentioned figures revealed by the Eurobarometer, it might seem that multilingualism in Hungary is still widespread. As you can see in Table 3.2, this is a false perception. Even though the support for the idea is high, when it comes to their own foreign language acquisition, Hungarians are rather at the lower end of the European scale. Similar to Portugal, 58 percent of population does not speak a foreign language. This figure is 14 percent higher than the European average. In contrast, only 3 percent of Slovaks and 5 percent of Latvians do not speak a

Table 3.2
European barometer: Which languages do you speak well enough in order to be able to have a conversation, excluding your mother tongue? (adapted)

	At least one language	At least two languages	At least three languages	None
EU25 average	**56%**	**28%**	**11%**	**44%**
1. Luxembourg	99%	92%	69%	1%
2. Slovakia	97%	48%	22%	3%
3. Latvia	95%	51%	14%	5%
4. Lithuania	92%	51%	16%	8%
5. Malta	92%	68%	23%	8%
6. Netherlands	91%	75%	34%	9%
7. Slovenia	91%	71%	40%	9%
8. Sweden	90%	48%	17%	10%
9. Estonia	89%	58%	24%	11%
10. Denmark	88%	66%	30%	12%
11. Cyprus	78%	22%	6%	22%
12. Belgium	74%	67%	53%	26%
13. Croatia[1]	71%	36%	11%	29%
14. Finland	69%	47%	23%	31%
15. Germany	67%	27%	8%	33%
16. Austria	62%	32%	21%	38%
17. Czech Republic	61%	29%	10%	39%
18. Bulgaria[2]	59%	31%	8%	41%
19. Greece	57%	19%	4%	43%
20. Poland	57%	32%	4%	43%
21. France	51%	21%	4%	49%
22. Romania[3]	47%	27%	6%	53%
23. Spain	44%	17%	6%	56%
24. Hungary	42%	27%	20%	58%
25. Portugal	42%	23%	6%	58%
26. Italy	41%	16%	7%	59%
27. United Kingdom	38%	18%	6%	62%
28. Ireland	34%	13%	2%	66%
29. Turkey[4]	33%	5%	1%	67%

[1]At the time of the survey Croatia had a status of an acceding country and was not included into the EU25 average calculation.
[2]At the time of the survey Bulgaria had a status of an acceding country and was not included into the EU25 average calculation.
[3]At the time of the survey Romania had a status of an acceding country and was not included into the EU25 average calculation.
[4]Turkey is a candidate country and is not included into the EU25 average calculation.

Source: TNS Opinion & Social. Europeans and Their Languages. *Special Eurobarometer 243/ Wave 64.3*, 33. Brussels: European Commission, 2006.

foreign language. In the European Union, only the United Kingdom and Italy have fewer foreign language speakers than Hungary and Portugal.

Hungarians express a strong preference for dubbing movies. An overwhelming 85 percent of Hungarians spoke out against subtitles, which makes them by far strongest opponents to subtitles in Europe.[14] Scandinavian countries, where films are shown exclusively with subtitles, are on the other end of this scale.

These facts are somewhat surprising considering that Hungarians embrace multilingualism. So why do Hungarians lag behind in foreign language acquisition? The Eurobarometer reveals that people cite lack of motivation and insufficient supply of language courses as the main reasons preventing them from mastering foreign languages.[15]

That being said, every third Hungarian is able to have a conversation in at least two foreign languages. Every fifth Hungarian claims to be conversant in at least three foreign tongues. Here again, the most widely known foreign languages in Hungary are German, which is spoken by 25 percent of the population, and English, which is spoken by 23 percent of people.

In addition, figures give some idea about the popularity of certain languages. Most consider English to be the most useful foreign tongue (62%), followed immediately by German (55%). In stark contrast, French, Italian, and Spanish are considered useful respectively only by 4 percent, 3 percent, and 1 percent of respondents.[16] When asked which language their children should know, given a multiple choice, the vast majority of Hungarians, 85 percent, chose English. German ranks second among Hungarian parents; 73 percent would like to see their children speak the language of Goethe and Schiller.[17]

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4

Gender

Facts and Figures

The elimination of disparities based on gender and sexual orientation is an ongoing battle in Hungary in all spheres of public life. Women lag behind men socially and financially and members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community oftentimes face outright descrimination and hostility.

In recent years, especially due to European Union pressure, the government introduced a number of measures aiming to improve the status of women. The Act on Equal Treatment and the Promotion of Equal Opportunities came into force, guaranteeing gender equality *de jure*. A General Directorate for Equal Opportunities was formed within the Ministry of Employment and Labor in 2002, with a mandate that focused not only on gender equality, but also on equal opportunities for people with disabilities and members of the Roma minority. In 2003 the position of Minister of Equal Opportunites was created and it took over most of the responsibilities from the Directorate. In 2004, Ms. Kinga Göncz was appointed as Minister of Equal Opportunites to head the Council for Gender Equal Opportunities. The Council was designed to raise the awareness of gender issues and collaborate with non-governmental organizations committed to the same mission. In addition, in January 2004 the National Crisis Management and Information Telephone Service was launched to help victims of family violence, adding on the existing civil society efforts. The government also set up a working group

to prevent human trafficking, which includes trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

To give a general overview of gender equality in Hungary, it is crucial to examine some basic social and economic indicators. First, life expectancy of both women and men at birth is far below the reasonable level for Hungary's economic development. According to 2009 estimates, life expectancy at birth was 69.3 years for men and 77.9 for women.[1] Hungary's average life expectancy, at 74.4 years,[2] is several years lower than in the European Union. Interestingly, although higher levels of education tend to decrease men's mortality, for women in Hungary education has the opposite effect. The mortality of women with more years of schooling is higher.[3]

Similar to life expectancy, differences could be seen in both education and employment indicators. In 2002, 60 percent of all university graduates in Hungary were women. The activity rate (which measures the percentage of the population that constitutes the labor supply, regardless of employment status) above the age of 15 was 47 percent for women and 61 percent for men. The unemployment rate for women was slightly lower than for men. Women were twice as likely to take part-time employment as men. Only 1 out of 20 working women worked full-time. In 2005, women constituted one-fourth of total employment in the agricultural sector, one-third in the industrial sector, and slightly over a half in the service sector. Both men and women retire at the age of 62.

Women decide to have children at increasingly older ages, and about one-third of children are born outside of marriage.[4] According to surveys, some 10 percent of young people envisage their lives without children,[5] although the dominant attitude among Hungarians is that one cannot be happy without children. More than a decade of low fertility has resulted in rapid population ageing: adults aged 60 and over represent 22 percent of the

Table 4.1
Sectoral Distribution of Employees by Gender in 2000 and 2005 (percent)

Sector	**2000**		**2005**	
	Men	**Women**	**Men**	**Women**
Agriculture	9.1	3.6	6.9	2.7
Industry	41.1	25.1	41.8	21.2
Services	49.8	71.3	51.3	76.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: From Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, *Consideration of reports submitted by states' parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Sixth periodic report of states' parties. Hungary,* 59.

Table 4.2
Number of Weddings per 1,000 Unmarried Women at Least 15 Years of Age between 1970 and 2004

1970	1980	1990	2000	2004
107.9	106.1	74.8	38.9	31.7

Source: From United Nations Statistics Division, *Demographic Yearbook 2004*.

population. Negative population growth has lasted in Hungary for over a decade, and birth rates are still below replacement level. The decline in the number of births and, consequently, the aging population, has been a crucial political issue for decades.

The maternity benefit is payable for 4 weeks before and 20 weeks after the expected date of childbirth, and women are entitled to paid leave until the child is three years old, a generous arrangement in international comparison. The allowance constitutes 70 percent of former earnings until the child is two and then a fixed sum during the last year. Additional paid maternity leave is available to families with three or more children.

Feminism

In spite of all the problems that Hungarian women have been experiencing, attitudes towards feminism have been negative among women and men alike. This is due in part to the negative portrayal of feminism in the Hungarian media and positive attitudes toward the stay at home mother. Feminism is portrayed as something unnatural, something that does not suit Hungarian women, who are "gentle," "giving" creatures, unlike the "self-centered," "cold-hearted" Western women. On the other hand, Hungarian women believe they have already achieved liberation and emancipation, and they would actually like to have the choice of staying at home with their children. As a result, Hungarian women see feminism as a movement of disillusioned women and not as a positive force capable of improving their lives.

Indeed, for many years the state expected women to perform the roles of mother, full-time worker, and active citizen. To support women's participation in the labor market, the state provided subsidies for child care, sick leave, and paid maternity leave for a period of up to three years. Women had equal access to health care, child care, education, employment, cafeterias, and laundries. During communist times, quotas guaranteed that women occupied a certain number of legislative seats and some government positions. These policies led to high levels of women's literacy, educational attainment, and labor force participation.

Despite these achievements, gender stereotypes lived on, and women were never on an equal footing with men, whether in family or professional life. The man was believed to be the primary breadwinner and head of the household, and the woman was responsible for child rearing and domestic chores. Thus, in effect, women carried a triple burden of domestic and social duties. In addition to being solely responsible for child rearing and household chores, they also participated in the labor force and earned money. They lived under the social pressure of striving to be "superwomen": ideal mothers, workers, wives, and daughters. The inability to meet the ideal resulted in stress and higher rates of mental illnesses for women than for men.[6]

It is noteworthy that many women left the official job market in the 1990s. However, they found few alternatives beyond traditional homemaking roles, being financially dependent on other members of the family, and the informal economy, and the illegal market.[7]

In professional life, stereotypes about gender-appropriate occupations put constraints on career choices among men and women alike. Women earn on average 89 percent of men's pay. One of the major reasons for lower pay is the glass ceiling that prevents women from getting the highest executive positions, even if they have the relevant professional skills. More often than men, women stay in positions that demand lower professional skills and offer

Table 4.3
Proportion of Women in Different Branches of Services in 2000 and 2005

	Proportion of women within the branch	
Branch	**2000**	**2005**
Trade, repairs	51.6	54.4
Accommodation	53.0	54.1
Transport, warehousing	27.7	25.5
Financial operations	66.7	66.9
Real estate transactions	46.0	44.6
Public administration, mandatory social security	48.2	50.9
Education	78.0	77.5
Health, social benefits	75.5	77.8
Other communal and personal services	51.5	56.0
Total services	*54.4*	*55.6*

Source: From Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, *Consideration of reports submitted by states' parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Sixth periodic report of states' parties. Hungary*, 59.

limited opportunities for professional and income growth. Surprisingly, even in the spheres dominated by women, women have difficulties being hired for better-paid managerial positions. If a profession is seen as "feminine," the salary levels within that particular field go down.

In addition to these setbacks, women are seen as unreliable workers and experience greater discrimination in hiring, most often due to expected family obligations. Young female candidates are asked about their family plans during interviews, and are often discriminated for the potential of becoming mothers. In fact, Hungary's employment rate of women between 25 and 45 years of age with at least one minor child is the lowest in the European Union.[8] Eight to nine percent of women in the active age group are on child care leave, living on child care aid, child care allowance, and child care support.[9] The number of women opting for home child care increased drastically in the mid-1990s, when a large number of crèches were shut down and the supply of crèche places constituted just one-tenth of the demand.[10] Once again, this development had a negative impact on women's careers. The three-year absence from work loosens a woman's ties to the labor market and decreases her chances of returning to work, particularly if she uses child care leave for several children in a row.

The triple burden that women had to bear kept them away from active participation in public life and politics. Political representation decreased drastically since the quota-assisted socialist time. As a result, major decisions about women's lives are often made by men. Women's representation in Hungary diminishes as the levels of political influence and stature increase. Only a small number of women are in the highest levels of government. Sadly, if women hold high-level positions, it is usually in the policy areas that deal with women's issues or topics of perceived low importance. There is a clear dominance of men among party leaders. The exception is the Hungarian Socialist Party with a well-established women's section, which has a nationwide network. Only a small number of women are in the Hungarian Parliament. Showing some improvement, women constitute about one-third of the Hungarian delegation to the European Parliament and in foreign service, though they are still underrepresented on a senior level.

Although they have little formal representation, developments in women's political organization demonstrate that women are increasingly organizing themselves. One example is the group called NaNE, which, among other activities, works to raise women's consciousness and sets up shelters for women experiencing domestic violence. The presence of women's groups in the media, the provision of social services and training, and the implementation of welfare projects help make up for the vacuum in formal political representation.

Table 4.4
Proportions of Women and Men at Top Governmental Level between 2002 and 2004

	2002		2003		2004	
	Men	**Women**	**Men**	**Women**	**Men**	**Women**
Ministers	80	20	88	12	88	12
Political state secretaries	96	4	87	13	92	8
Administrative state secretaries	93	7	92	8	87	13
Titular state secretaries	100	0	80	20	80	20
Deputy state secretaries	79	21	77	23	74	26

Source: From Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, *Consideration of reports submitted by states' parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Sixth periodic report of states' parties. Hungary*, 54.

Women in the countryside face additional challenges. Patriarchal rural society is more demanding and they often bear extra burdens. Fertility is higher in economically disadvantaged rural areas than in urban areas.[11]

Gender stereotypes are also deeply rooted in the education system. Men and boys figure more often in school books and in teachings of literature and history. Print materials used in schools reinforce gender stereotypes. The majority of textbooks fail to describe women outside of a home environment and portray men and women in stereotypical occupations.[12]

VIOLENCE

The social and economic instability of the transition years led to high rates of depression and substance abuse, especially among men. This, in turn, led to

Table 4.5
Percentages of Women Candidates of Political Parties between 1990 and 2002

Party	1990	1994	1998	2002
Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP)	10.0	10.8	8.0	23.4
Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ)	11.9	12.0	14.1	18.7
Hungarian Civic Union-Hungarian Democratic Forum (Fidesz-MDF+)	12.3/5.9	7.9/8.3	9.1/6.1	8.5

Source: From Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, *Consideration of reports submitted by states' parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Sixth periodic report of states' parties. Hungary*, 55.

increased levels of violence against women. A popular myth holds that educated men who came from good socioeconomic backgrounds do not perpetrate violence against women. Contrary to the myth, violence against women occurs in every social group, across all educational levels, and with or without substance abuse. Present and former partners are the most frequent perpetrators of sexual violence. In fact, one in three Hungarian women admitted to being subjected to physical violence by their partner.[13] Violence that came from an intimate partner leaves women under continuous threat of a repeated attack and a feeling of powerlessness. Even though two-thirds of sexual violence in Hungary was committed by people known to the victim,[14] few perpetrators were tried by the judicial system.

The legal system has been biased against women who experience violence at home.[15] At times the police disadvise women from reporting acts of violence, claiming that she would not be able to prove her case and that the process would be exhausting. Even if women reported a case, a large number of cases failed to reach the court and did not result in criminal convictions. Cases dropped out at several stages: the police failed to identify the attacker; the victim or her witnesses withdrew their statements or did not press charges; the police, prosecutors, and judges decided that there was not sufficient evidence. Only the most conspicuous cases, in which victims were seriously injured or which involved suspects with a criminal record reached the courts. “I have worked as a judge for twenty years but, to tell you the truth, I myself would not report rape. It is very difficult because of the procedures, the attitudes, and social conventions. It is the victim who has to defend and prove everything,” said a judge interviewed by Amnesty International.[16] According to the same report, most often it is the victim rather than the perpetrator who needs to prove that she did not provoke the abuse. There is still a widespread belief, especially among men, that women are responsible for being raped, and that reports of domestic violence are exaggerated. Similarly, many men think that the state should not intervene in family matters trying to stop domestic violence.

As a result, victims seldom report attacks that take place in private settings. Not only did they fear reprisals but also the potential financial implications for them and their dependants. Housing problems and a lack of shelter force women to stay with their abusers. Patriarchal norms and fear of the abusive partner aggravate unsafe situations. Because so many women went through it, victims oftentimes believe that their experiences were normal, and this contributes to their unwillingness to report cases of violence to law enforcement authorities. At the same time, victims of domestic violence in Hungary face a lack of support services. Many of the professionals dealing with victims of violence lack training in such work. Not surprisingly, women are reluctant

to take steps to seek help and have difficulties recovering from their experience. Thus, most cases of violence are unregistered, making domestic violence the most unreported crime. As a result, there was lack of data and statistics as only the number of investigated cases was recorded.

The government recognized rape within marriage as a crime in 1997. Six years later the government decided to develop a strategy for the prevention and handling of domestic violence. In the same year, the police developed guidelines on the responsibilities of police officers in responding to domestic violence. However, these plans and regulations are not implemented and the victims of domestic and sexual violence easily become victims of blatant prejudice and discrimination. Thus, violence has a devastating impact on women's lives.

Prostitution and Trafficking

In 1949 and 1950 licensed brothels in Hungary were shut down, and prostitutes were trained for other professions. For the following 40 years, prostitution was punishable by imprisonment. Prostitution still existed, and one symbol for it was Budapest's Rákóczi tér. Testifying that prostitution had become a social reality, a musical was written about it in the 1980s, and a controversial documentary, "K," which is short for "whore," was made about prostitutes in Hungary in 1988.[17] The early 1990s saw an expansion of the sex industry. Most sex workers come from the poorest groups and rural areas. In 2006, a small coalition of Hungarian human rights and women's groups ran the campaign "Look for the man!" The motto was a pun on the French saying "Look for the woman!" (Cherchez la femme!) The coalition's aim was to stress the role of men in financing and running prostitution, to show prostitution as modern-day slavery, and to lobby for legal reforms to punish those who use sexual services.[18] This coalition entirely fell apart in a very short time.

Trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation is a grave problem for Hungary, which serves simultaneously as a point of origin, transit, and destination. Primarily Hungary acts as a transit country. Women from Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, and the Commonwealth of Independent States are transported through Hungary to the urban centers of Western Europe, the United States, and the Middle East.[19] Some of the victims of trafficking are exploited in Hungary before they reach their final destination country.

However, many Hungarian women also become victims of trafficking. These women often come from the eastern part of the country, with burgeoning unemployment rates. Hungarian women are mostly trafficked to the Netherlands, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Germany, Austria, Italy, Spain, Ireland, Greece, and the United States.[20]

Tragically, most victims are unaware that they will be forced into prostitution until after their arrival at their destinations, where they become subject to debt bondage, violence, and confiscation of travel documents. Servicing hundreds of clients, women suffer from sexually transmitted diseases, injuries from violence, and even torture, depression, and substance abuse. Victims often do not seek help because of their mistrust of public authorities and because of blackmail by pimps, some of which have even been reported to pose as policemen. In the end, if and when discovered by the law enforcement officers, victims of trafficking are most often treated as criminals, either for prostitution or for breaking immigration laws. Victims of trafficking are arrested or detained pending deportation, with almost no services available to assist them. This experience contributes to the women's trauma. The full scale of the problem remains unknown due both to the fear of social stigma that makes trafficking victims reluctant to tell their stories and to the secrecy that surrounds the transnational trade of human beings.

At the same time, Western European men visit Hungary for sex tourism, which sometimes involves trafficking victims, be they from Romania or Ukraine, or from eastern Hungary. Women from this part of Hungary are also forced to work as prostitutes along the Austrian border. Particularly vulnerable to forced prostitution within Hungary are Roma women and girls, especially those who grew up in orphanages.

Reliable information on the number of people trafficked from, to, and through Hungary each year is missing. The lack of statistics gives the impression that trafficking was not much of a problem. This creates a vicious circle: the police fail to investigate trafficking because they perceive it as a minor problem; but their failure to investigate it contributes to the scarcity of information on trafficking.[21]

Hungary adopted its current law criminalizing human trafficking, Section 175/B, in 1998. According to this law, trafficking is a felony committed by "[a]ny person who sells, purchases, conveys, or receives another person or exchanges a person for another person, or appropriates one for such purpose for another party," punishable up to three years in prison. This law does not differentiate between the trafficking of persons into or out of Hungary from the trafficking of persons within Hungary. Importantly, the victim's consent is irrelevant to the determination of whether a crime constitutes trafficking under Hungarian law.[22] Hungary is a signatory to the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.

The government demonstrated some progress in law enforcement in 2009, increasing penalties for cases involving victims of human trafficking under the age of 12, and increasing the number of traffickers sentenced to time in prison. The government also allocated funding for a new shelter run by a

non-governmental organization. However, this shelter is allowed to provide assistance to only Hungarian victims and excludes the assistance to any potential foreign victims. Despite the reforms, the government's response to human trafficking remained insufficient. Victim support services remained inadequate. Police were frequently hostile toward the victims and antitrafficking legislation was enforced unevenly.[23]

Roma Women and Girls

Similar to other countries, Roma women and girls experience multiple discrimination based on sex, ethnic or cultural background, and socioeconomic status. In most of the social, political, and economic areas where Hungarian women encounter problems, Roma women and girls face additional challenges. About 40 percent have not completed primary school, which is considerably higher than the average for the Hungarian population and about 10 percentage points higher than for Roma men.[24] On average, every third Roma girl has her first child before the age of 18. Roma women have also been victims of coercive sterilization. In addition, they fall victim to violence more often than other women in Hungary. Finally, their life expectancy is about 10 years lower than the average life expectancy in Hungary.[25]

Transformation in the 1990s

The socialist state imposed specific roles of women as mothers and workers. In the puritanical attitudes of the late 1950s questions of sex were only addressed in public from a scientific perspective. The sexual revolution that had a profound impact on Western societies in the 1960s did not happen at that time in Hungary.

A profound transformation in women's social roles took place with the liberalization of the 1990s. In contemporary Hungary, women are again more strictly viewed as mothers and sex symbols, the latter emerging as a reaction to the repression of sex-related themes during the previous 40 years and the objectification of women in the new capitalist marketplace. This also led to the inundation of pornographic materials sold in the streets. In fact, the amount of easily accessible porn materials made a women's anti-pornography group print stickers that read "Porno—why do you only adopt the bad things from democracy?" and stick them over pornographic materials and sexist advertising.[26] A positive step toward curbing the spread of X-rated materials was the ban to display porn magazines in the vicinity of schools and churches.

In contemporary, post-socialist Hungary, there are two contradictory trends in the perception of gender roles. On one hand, gender roles are becoming more fluid. On the other hand, there is increasing polarization in the views on the appropriate behavior for women and men, and what results is hypermasculinization and ultrafeminization.[27] Women are often portrayed in a sexist, derogatory way, which is particularly manifest in advertisement. Advertisement billboards display half-naked women's bodies. There are sexist and degrading images in TV ads and on public displays, exploiting women's bodies to market merchandise. Advertisements by companies comparing naked female bodies to meat resulted in protest campaigns initiated by women's groups.

Abortion

After World War II, the communist government tried to counter falling birth rates. The performance of abortions in Hungary was illegal until 1953, except in special cases, such as danger to the mother's life or health. New legistlation in 1953 and 1956 expanded the list of reasons to justified family and social grounds and stipulated that a committee had to approve an abortion performed for health, personal or family grounds if a woman insisted. Abortions could be performed upon request so long as the pregnancy was of no more than 12 weeks' duration.

In 1973, these regulations were resticted again. Abortion remained legal for social reasons but the list of grounds was quite limited. In these cases, it was again up to the committee to decide whether to authorize an abortion. Pregnancy could be terminated within the first 12 weeks of gestation. New ordinances, issued two years later, made abortions more easily accessible than before. The committee approval was replaced in 1988 by the approval of a medical specialist, or a family and women's protection counselor. This caused anti-abortion groups to challenge the constitutionality of these ordinances. The protesters claimed that these regulations came in conflict with the law because the Constitution protected right to life. The Court invalidated the ordinances on procedural terms and concluded that the issue of abortion involved fundamental rights, and therefore must be dealt with by the National Assembly. The Court also indicated that only a middle position between banning abortions altogether and allowing them with no restrictions would be valid.

The government enacted a new abortion law in 1992. Emphasizing that abortion was not a form of family planning and stressing respect for the life of the fetus, the law permitted abortions on request during the first 12 weeks

of pregnancy in cases of crisis. The preconditions were counseling and waiting three days between the submission of the application for abortion and the abortion procedure. The law allowed abortions later in pregnancy for a number of other reasons, such as health problems, fetal defect, women's disability, and so forth. Pregnancy could be terminated at any time if it presented danger to a woman's life or if the fetus presented a serious malformation making postnatal life impossible. This law was also challenged by anti-abortion groups on the grounds that the law does not protect the life of the fetus, but the Constitutional Court rejected this argument. However, the Court found the law defective because it failed to define some key terms and requested the National Assembly to enact new legislation.[28]

As you can see in Table 4.6, Hungary's birth rate has been falling. Although Hungary does not have an explicit population policy, the population issue is of central concern, frequently mentioned and acted upon by various postcommunist governments. The government promotes childbearing by providing incentives to married couples, assisting women during pregnancy, and providing support after childbearing. Hungary offers an award to the most family-friendly employer and is the only country in Europe to count child care time as work for retirement purposes.

Clinics and pharmacies offer a variety of contraceptives. As a result, Hungary has achieved a relatively high contraceptive prevalence rate: 77 percent of women in reproductive age use contraception. According to the U.N. Population Fund, family planning services are integrated into national health services. Family planning prioritizes decreasing the number of abortions as well as providing prenatal and postnatal care and counseling. That said, there is need to increase the quality of sexual and reproductive health services, including through retraining midwives and nurses.[29] Still, the number of lives lost to abortion is high, and the highest numbers of abortions are performed on women between 25 to 29 years of age. In 2004, there were 55.7 abortions per 100 live births.[30] As modern means of contraception are still

Table 4.6
Ratios of Live Births between 1960 and 2000

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Number of live births	146,461	151,819	148,673	125,679	97,597
Total fertility ratio	2.02	1.97	1.92	1.84	1.33
Live births per 1,000 15–49–year–old women	58.9	56.6	57.6	49.4	38.1

Source: From United Nations Statistics Division, *Demographic Yearbook 2004*.

expensive for poor women, they revert to abortions, which under certain conditions are paid for by the social security system.

To save lives, hospitals have special incubators where mothers can place their babies if they do not want to raise them. Babies placed into these incubators are adopted through accelerated procedures if the parents do not call within six weeks to retrieve the child. This option provides impunity for women giving up their babies. However, these incubators are hard to locate and women who give up their children risk being caught.

HOMOSEXUALITY

The terms *homosexuality* and *heterosexuality* were coined in 1868 by the Austrian-born Hungarian philosopher, psychologist, journalist, and human rights campaigner Károly Kertbeny (1824–1882), also known as Karoly Maria Benkert. The sketch of the letter in which Kertbeny used this newly coined term can be found in the Hungarian National Library. For Kertbeny, the main question was not whether homosexuality is innate, but that the modern state should not intervene in people's private lives.[31] Although Kertbeny never admitted his own attraction to the same sex, his diaries hint at his own homosexuality.[32]

Like elsewhere, in Hungary homosexuality was seen traditionally as a threat to social norms, and the country's gays and lesbians hardly ever came out of the closet. Even the most educated and liberal individuals still seem to view homosexuality as unnatural.[33] It is noteworthy that the two lead characters in Károly Makk's film *Another Love*, drawing attention to the issue of lesbianism, were played by foreign actresses. Apparently, no Hungarian actress was willing to be associated with lesbian characters.[34]

Over the past few decades, there have generally been positive developments in the laws concerning gay and lesbian people. Homosexuality in Hungary was decriminalized in 1961. In 1996, Constitutional Court eliminated all discrimination in law between cohabiting hetero- and homosexual couples. Since 2002, after a bitter international legal battle, the age of consent for homosexual relationships is set at 14, which is the same for heterosexual couples. In 2004, an anti-discrimination law prohibited discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in employment, education, housing, health, social services, and access to goods and services. In February 2009, after numerous physical and verbal attacks on the Gay Pride Parade participants, new legislation introduced a new crime, "violence against a member of a social group," which covers homophobic and other hate-related incidents. The provisions were adopted by the Parliament in 2008 following the attacks on the Gay Dignity March in the two previous years. Prior to the introduction of this

Hungarian riot policemen arrest a right-wing protester who demonstrated against the participants of the annual Gay Pride march in Budapest, Hungary Saturday, July 7, 2007. Several hundred right-wing protesters followed the gay parade march while taunted the participants throwing eggs at the them. (AP Photo/Bela Szandelszky.)

provision, homophobic incidents were considered assault and resulted in significantly lower levels of punishment.

Since 2009, homosexual couples can register their partnerships. This regulation, offering some of the same rights and responsibilities as marriage, also imposes certain limitations: couples of the same sex are not allowed to take their partner's name and do not have access to artificial insemination. They also do not have the right to adopt, although partners are required to provide support to each other's children.

In response to appeals by non-governmental organizations, new legislation was enacted so that gays and lesbians are no longer obliged to reveal their sexual orientation when declaring their civil status. Still, social pressure forces some homosexual men and women to enter into alibi marriage. Despite the challenges that remain, homosexuality is now an essential, if often polarizing, part of the public political discourse.

Budapest is believed to have a more liberal climate and is more open to homosexuality than most other capital cities in Eastern and Central Europe. It is indeed known as the region's gay metropolis. The Budapest Pride, which is now called the Gay Dignity March, was the first festival of this kind in the

post-communist bloc and is still the region's biggest Gay Pride Parade. Hungary hosted the Mr. Gay Europe 2007 contest. In 2012, it will host the Eurogames, the European Gay & Lesbian Sports Championships.

The gay scene is mostly limited to Budapest, where there are gay bars and nightclubs, gay websites, and a few gay and lesbian publications. Locating Budapest gay bars is quite easy, because official tourist information materials include information on LGBT Budapest. GayGuide.Net Budapest provides information on gay-owned and gay-operated guesthouses, apartments, and private rooms, as well as gay guided tours. A gay traveler information hotline operates in Budapest several hours a day from April to October. In fact, many of these facilities and services target lesbian and gay expatriates.

Hungary's radio for gay audiences is Radio Pink, broadcast through web-based live streaming. Some of the major websites targeting gay audiences are http://pride.hu and http://www.gay.hu. For several years the gay magazines, *Masok*, *Navégre*, and *Szuper Erosz*, were published, but they are no longer active.[35] The mainstream media, which is rather liberal, also on ocassion, covers gay events. According to a report by the Media Diversity Institute (MDI), national television even tried to launch gay-friendly shows but this did not work as gays and lesbians were reluctant to disclose their sexual orientation.[36]

The idea of organizing the first gay pride event came up in the years following the political transition. The pride parade planned in 1992 was cancelled because of fear and unease and the organizers ended up having a gay picnic. The first gay film festival took place a year later. The region's first Gay Pride Parade took place in Budapest 1997 and since then it has taken place annually. Gábor Demszky, Mayor of Budapest, opened in the festival in 2002. Five years later, Secretary of State for Human Resources Gábor Szetey admitted he was a homosexual two days before the gay parade with the following words: "I am Gabor Szetey. A faithful Hungarian-European citizen, public official, member of the government. And gay." A range of other prominent political figures have helped draw the public's attention to gay issues by visiting gay parades: the wife of Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány, Klára Dobrev; Health Minister Ágnes Horváth; and Environment Minister Gábor Fodor.

Sadly, recent years have witnessed an increase in polarization around LGBT issues. On the one hand, there has been an intensification of aggression against the LGBT community, including cases of hate speech and violent attacks by ultra-nationalists, skinheads, and fascists. The attacks against the Gay Dignity March in 2008 attracted international attention. During the march Molotov cocktails were thrown into gay clubs, stones, bottles, eggs and bags of sand were thrown, acids were sprayed at the marchers, and several people were injured. The police had organized cordons for protecting the

participants of the parade, and they responded to the attackers with tear gas and water cannons. Several dozen anti-gay protesters were arrested.

On the other hand, and perhaps in response to this display of aggression, many supporters of LGBT individuals and organizations took part in the gay march to show support for gay rights. Several civil initiatives were launched after the attacks, under the slogan "We have had enough of violence against minorities!"[37] In 2008, the festival started with the Hungarian national anthem, in response to the extremist attacks against gay establishments and the attempts of the extremists to monopolize Hungarian identity. In 2010, neo-Nazis desecrated a symbolic site of the Hungarian LGBT community, the tomb of Károly Kertbeny. In response to these attacks, the Rainbow Mission Foundation, the organizers of the Gay Dignity March, wrote an open letter to the then-president of the Republic László Sólyom. The letter was a request to issue a statement expressing solidarity with the participants of the Festival and the Pride March and condemning extremist attacks.

Victims of discrimination on the basis of their sexual orientation can seek legal assistance from non-governmental organizations. The Budapest-based Háttér Support Society for LGBT People, the largest lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights organization in the country, operates a counseling hotline. The Hungarian Civil Liberties Union provides legal aid services to people living with HIV/AIDS. The Patent Association provides legal aid. Labrisz, a lesbian organization, conducts cultural and educational community-based activities. However, most non-governmental organizations providing counseling services and legal aid are severely underfunded.

According to the Eurobarometer survey conducted in 2006, only 18 percent of Hungarians agree with the statement that homosexual marriages should be allowed throughout Europe. In contrast, 82 percent of the Dutch respondents spoke in favor of homosexual marriages. The average figure for support of homosexual marriages in the European Union stands at 44 percent.[38] The proposition that homosexual couples should be allowed to adopt children also meets very little support in Hungary: just 13 percent as compared to 69 percent in the Netherlands.[39] The Eurobarometer survey conducted in 2008 shows that, as compared to the average European, the average Hungarian is much less comfortable with the idea of having a homosexual neighbor. The average Hungarian is significantly less comfortable with the idea of having a homosexual in the highest elected political position than the average European citizen. When the first lesbian NGO, Labrisz along with other human rights and gay rights organizations, offered to teach sex education, diversity, and tolerance towards homosexuals in high schools, the issue reached the Parliament and generated heated debates about gay rights in the media. Not surprisingly, much

of this discussion was homophobic and the coalition was not invited to present in high schools.[40]

Homosexuality has clearly become a polarizing issue within the Hungarian society; a growing number of people accept it and a growing number of people reject it. Most recently, in 2011, reflecting the surge of conservative sentiment, the Parliament passed amendments to the constitution that define marriage as a union between a man and a woman. Like elsewhere, tolerance toward homosexuality in Hungary is higher in large urban centers than in the countryside. The effect of age and education in determining attitudes towards homosexuality is evident. Tolerance is higher among young people, and it increases in line with the number of years people follow full-time education. Finally, people on the left of the political spectrum are far more supportive than are those on the right.

Notes

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5

Customs

Ever since their arrival on the European continent at the end of the ninth century, their origins, their language, and even their history set the Hungarians apart from the neighboring nations. Early European sources viewed Hungarians with suspicion and mistrust, confusing them with Huns and describing them as barbaric raiders and plunderers. With time, however, Hungary developed into a powerful and respected kingdom, the "defender" of the Christian faith against the Tatars and the Turks managing to preserve its national identity in the face of historic trials. Hungarian scholars, politicians, writers, and other public figures throughout history liked to ponder what it meant, intellectually and emotionally, to be Hungarian. The answer to that puzzle was anything but simple. At times, being Hungarian was equated in public discourse with the multinational, modernizing, and reformist trends in society, whereas at other times, nationalism and intolerance permeated these types of public debates. This interesting dichotomy is mirrored by many other phenomena in Hungarian society. Some of the most prominent historic and artistic personalities in Hungarian history, such as Miklós Zrínyi (1620–1664) and Sándor Petőfi (1823–1849), came from non-Hungarian ethnic backgrounds, yet felt themselves to be fundamentally and truly Hungarian. The realm of Hungary's first king, St. István, a multiethnic kingdom hospitable to non-ethnic Hungarians and newcomers, is the same land that produced the oppressive, authoritarian Horthy regime between the two World Wars. Landmark historic events, such as the 1526 Battle of Mohács, the 1920 Treaty of Trianon, and the 1956 Revolution left Hungarians with the aftertaste

of historic injustice, whereas experiences like the thirteenth-century reign of King Béla IV, the 1703 Rákóczi's insurrection against the Habsburgs, and the Revolution of 1848 brought them back to greatness. Hungarians have found solace throughout history in their strong sense of belonging to the common Hungarian nation, though this was occasionally interrupted by bouts of collective pessimism brought on by the perception of shared, historic trauma from occurrences such as the Rákosi regime, and Soviet tanks in Budapest.

Hungarian national traits of resilience, inclination towards self-reflection, distinct linguistic and ethnic origin, as well as a sense of "otherness," allowed Hungarians to preserve their identity, national unity, and attain a prominent role in Central European history. These immaterial elements of national identity are accompanied by tangible, highly recognizable symbols of the Hungarian nation. They are the red, white, and green flag, the national coat of arms with its double cross and the red-white stripes of the House of Árpád, and the sacred Crown of King István, which legitimized Hungarian rulers over the centuries. Moreover, their shared history, language, literature, music, and folk traditions and are an invisible but durable bond that binds all Hungarians. Although generalizations are not, by and large, enormously insightful, it is possible to assign two particular characteristics to Hungarins that reveal some of their national character. There is an occasional tendency towards the morose among Hungarians, with regard to their historic trials, as well as in their everyday lives.[1] On the other hand, their penchant for food, music and the popularity of such rituals as visiting the spas (Hungarian version of the Turkish baths) paints the picture of Hungarians as a people truly able to enjoy life. For centuries, there has been a distinction between rural and urban culture in Hungary. On the one hand, peasant customs, village life and folklore preserved Hungarian traditions in the countryside, whereas cities were centers of learning, intellectual life, and engines of growth. The urban-rural dichotomy became divisive when it was politicized by populists who propagated rural heritage as the only, true Hungarian tradition. In contrast, many of the proponents of the urban Hungarian culture looked to the West for progress and cultural identity. Though sometimes at odds with each other, all these different elements are the building blocks of Hungarian identity today.

Daily Life, Socializing, and Family

Traditionally, Hungarians put a premium on relationships and much of their individual identity was and still is formed through belonging to different groups, such as nation, region, city, village, family, friends, educational

institution, literary circle, political orientation, and workplace. These ties provide security and trust, which are important elements in Hungarians' everyday lives. Interestingly enough, despite this strong sense of personal relationships, which to an extent permeates Hungarian society, there is a prevailing tendency of suspicion towards strangers. Moreover, as a people Hungarians display a distinct sense of individuality and highly value personal achievements, more so than many of their surrounding Eastern and Central European neighbors. Quality education, artistic accomplishment, and sports triumphs are seen as admirable and worthy individual pursuits. Talent, expertise, and knowledge are traits esteemed in Hungarian culture. There is a historic legacy of appreciation for intellectual life, in particular literature, theatre, and music. Writers and poets were often revered as national heroes. The pursuit of profit and business savvy, on the other hand, is often looked upon with some suspicion. This is likely a remnant of communist times, as is the Hungarian dedication to economic equality and equal opportunity in society. Similarly to many other countries in the region, communism in Hungary reduced much of the social and economic differences that were legacies of the past. Though Communist Party officials and leaders were certainly privileged, class differences were not as pronounced or as visible during communism. After 1989, some in Hungary were better positioned to profit from privatization, property compensation, inflow of foreign investment, and occasionally erratic business opportunities. The introduction of market principles created a gap between the upper and lower echelons of society, more evident than at any other time since 1945 and inequality in society is commonly perceived by many Hungarians to be quite significant. Having said this, overall in Hungary, the reality of social inequality is far less pronounced and less of an issue than in many other countries.[2]

For most Hungarians, not surprisingly, work is an integral part of their everyday life, and there is great appreciation in their culture for education, professional expertise, and doing one's job well. The high growth rate in the early 2000s and the influx of foreign investments, since the end of communism and prior to the economic crisis, increased the demand for skilled workers in the growth industries of car manufacturing, IT, telecommunications, construction, and publishing. A young Hungarian just entering the workforce in the past decade or so would have done well to look for a job in these sectors. For most Hungarian workers, their standard workday begins between 8:00 and 9:00 A.M. and ends between 5:00 and 6:00 P.M. The Hungarian work year has on average about 8 to 10 paid days off for public holidays, and most employees have between 20 and 30 days of annual paid vacation depending on their age and years of experience. Whereas as a country, Hungary has a relatively low ratio of the active workforce (those working or actively looking for work) in

proportion to the working age population, Hungarians are generally hard workers and admired widely for their expertise and skills. Their sense of time is also valued, as they are normally quite punctual, both in business and social situations.

Socializing is another integral element in the Hungarian way of life. Hungarians are very hospitable and generally open and curious towards foreigners, though may come off as somewhat reserved and formal, at first. Strangers, acquaintances, hierarchical relations, and business contacts are addressed in a more formal manner and greeted with the appropriate handshake. On average, Hungarians are not quick to attach the label of friend to just anyone, as they take friendship very seriously and often have a small circle of friends who are treated like family. For the most part, it takes time for Hungarians to develop a friendship with someone and intimacy and trust are treasured commodities in interpersonal relationships. Hungarians are gracious hosts, happy to open their home to friends and family and treat them to one of Hungary's favorite pastimes—eating and conversation. Politics and religion are normally avoided as topics of conversation, whereas sports, music, food, and wine are common chit-chat that accompanies a meal. In the past, people met and socialized in one of the many coffee houses that were intrinsic to the Hungarian urban landscape and an integral part of many Hungarians' daily interactions, but since the 1990s, consumerism has permeated the Hungarian daily routines, with more and more people spending their time in the host of newly constructed department stores and shopping malls..

The traditional extended family (parents, children, grandparents, aunts, uncles, even godparents) was the heart of the Hungarian social fabric until the period between the two World Wars. This type of family provided a sense of physical, economic, and mental security for its members, as well as a source of identity. Family ties were particularly strong in the countryside, where living, working, surviving hardship, and celebrating was always communal. Radical forces of industrialization and collectivization, which transformed Hungarian society and economy during communism, fundamentally changed the Hungarian family. Younger generations left the villages and moved into the cities, a growing number of women entered the workforce and children spent less time with parents at home and more in organized activities, such as clubs and schools. Traditional gender roles became less fixed during communism, when the majority of Hungarian women worked outside of the home. In recent years, however, there has been somewhat of a backlash against this communist-era insistence on the working mother, with some women opting to stay home with the children. Furthermore, the more conservative political option in Hungarian society has been advocating for policies that would allow

mothers to stay at home with their children for longer periods of time (up to three years), in part as a measure to combat the falling fertility rates. Individual choices notwithstanding, household chores and child-rearing are these days a bit more of a shared responsibility between both parents, particularly among young urban families, though old habits do die hard. On the other hand, many Hungarians still cohabitate in more traditional multigenerational households, partly due to the legacy of communism-induced housing shortages and recent hikes in housing prices. Population decreases since the fall of communism and new construction have to an extent alleviated the difficulties in the urban housing situation for many Hungarians. The practicality of having a live-in grandmother stand in as a babysitter, however, is still appreciated by some younger Hungarians.

Marriage has been on the decline since the fall of communism, though it remains a key element of social cohesion in Hungarian society and a preferred source of security and support for people in hard times. Most Hungarians marry at least once in their lifetime, but by the 1980s every third Hungarian marriage ended in divorce and the rate of remarriage dropped significantly. The average age of first marriage by 2000 was 29 for men and 26 for women. These days, many of the younger generation forfeit marriage all together and having children out of wedlock in not an entirely uncommon occurrence. The birth rate is also on the decline and Hungary has been steadily losing its population in the past several decades. Hungarian attitudes towards sexuality have also changed over the last couple of decades. Though sex education has been part of the curriculum in Hungarian schools for decades, attitudes towards sexuality, particularly female sexuality, are still somewhat conservative. Nevertheless, most young women identify sex as a natural part of their relationships and most young people become sexually active around the age of 18. Hungary's legislation used to be among the most liberal in Europe with regard to homosexuality. It has been legal since 1961 and domestic same sex partners were awarded virtually the same rights as married couples. Hungary has experienced an increase in social awareness of different sexual orientations since 1989 and gay and lesbian community has gained a lot of visibility in the last two decades, especially with the annual Gay Pride Parade held annually since 1993. Having said this, several Gay Pride Parades in the late 2000s have been accompanied by incidents of violence spurred on by extreme right, anti-gay groups. Moreover, the provisions ammending the Hungarian constitution passed in the Parliament in the spring of 2011, defining marriage as a union between a man and a woman, have provoked an outcry from human rights groups in Hungary and abroad and reflect the growing tide of conservative social values in the country. [3]

Folkloric Tradition

Hungary has a rich folkloric tradition which reveals the popular belief in the mystical origins of Hungarians as a unique and ancient people. In earlier Hungarian history, folklore had the role of preserving a sense of origin and national continuity, whereas in more modern times, folk traditions were instrumental in cultural revivals, national awakening, artistic movements, and even revolutions. Traditionally, one of the oldest elements of Hungarian folkloric tradition was story telling, a particularly revered pastime of Hungarian peasants. In the evening hours after the long day of working in the fields and a meal shared with family, neighbors, and coworkers, folktales told by storytellers served to entertain, comfort, engage, and delight their listeners. Stories and tales of magic, of heroes of humble origins, of kings and princesses, as well as of people in ordinary everyday situations preserved the oral narrative through generations of mostly illiterate peasants eager to be transported, even for just an evening, from their often harsh reality. Beneath the stories of princes disguised as hedgehogs, babies born out of apple fruits to poor peasants, old women outwitting Death, and cauldrons of gold hid universal themes such as the struggle between the landed nobility and the village folk, poverty and the condition of the peasants, family relationships, and the position of women in society. These stories were told and retold embodying the wisdom and perseverance of Hungarian villagers in politically turbulent times. During the struggle for independence from Austria in the nineteenth century, city-dwelling intellectuals, such as the renowned poet and revolutionary Sándor Petőfi, embraced the traditional folktales and folk songs as an underlying inspiration for their revolutionary fervor. In this revolutionary period, Petőfi and others used folktales and poems as markers of a distinct Hungarian identity and ultimately a basis for the national (literary) awakening.

Hungary's rich heritage of folk songs is inextricably linked to traditional folk music and used to permeate many aspects of traditional village life. The most common songs are lyrical ballades and melodies for special occasions such as weddings, funerals, vintage, and harvest. Lyrical songs sing of love, mostly unhappiness of young lovers caused by their parting and parents' objections. Sometimes, folk songs dwell on the beauty and wonder of nature, particularly the soil, crops, rivers, flowers, and birds. Another element of folkloric tradition, Hungarian myths and legends have mostly been lost, but traces of them remain in folklore. Myths and legends weave a web of tales that retell, albeit in a fictionalized manner, accounts of historic events, speak of the origins of the *Magyars*, and explain ancient beliefs, and are thus among the most ancient forms of Hungarian folklore.

Traditional Hungarian dancers. (Corel.)

Embroidery and weaving has been a material expression of Hungarian folklore since olden days, as well as once upon a time, an integral part of the education of upper-class young women. The skillful and elaborate patterns woven on cloth, leather, felt, and linen have found a prominent place on Hungarian national costumes. Typical embroidery designs are proportional, with flower motifs and can be monochromatic or multicolored, with a delicate balance of design and color. The embroideries on men's costumes, such as coats, cloaks, and vests, were done by professional male tailors, whereas women's embroideries were done on cloth and were reserved for gowns and linens. The oldest known Hungarian embroidery is Coronation Robe, worn by Hungarian kings at their coronation, and made in Veszprém in 1031. Most other old preserved pieces of embroidery are in churches and on occasion in wealthy families, whereas peasant embroideries were mostly worn and thrown out.

Sports

Hungarian dedication to enjoying and following sports gained in popularity during communist times, although notable Hungarian sports achievements can be traced back to the first modern Olympic Games held in Athens in 1896 where Hungarians won two gold, one silver and three bronze medals. Many of the sports successes under the communist period can be attributed

to the popularization of different sports through various sport clubs and movements that spanned generations, as well as different regions, age groups, and both urban and rural populations. Many of these clubs remained active to this day and even though a lot of them primarily revolve around major soccer teams, they do typically include a range of sports.

In the 1950s Hungary had, what was considered by most, the best national soccer team in the history of the game. Led by fantastic Ferenc Puskás (1927–2006), Sándor Kocsis (1929–1979), and Nándor Hidegkuti (1922–2002), the "Magnificent Magyars" have set numerous records yet to be broken. Among them is the longest stream of consecutive victories, 32 games in the period from 1950 to 1954. This team beat England 6:3 and thus became the first "non British isle" team ever to have beaten England at home. As if this were not enough, the Hungarians beat them again the following year, only that time in Budapest, and with a score of 7:1. This is the greatest loss the England team has ever suffered. The Hungarian team then stormed through the 1954 World Cup unbeaten, only to lose to West Germany in the final. By the time the next World Cup came around in 1958, the "Golden Team" had already disbanded. This happened mostly because of the 1956 Revolution, after which some players, most notably Puskás and Kocsis, left the country, and consequently the national team. Even though this brilliant generation of soccer players never succeeded in winning the World Cup, they did walk off with an Olympic gold medal in 1952. After the demise of the "Golden Generation," Hungary remained a respectable team throughout the 1960s, reaching World Cup quarterfinals and European Championship semifinals. Even though there are still great Hungarian individual players, since qualifying for the finals of the World Cup in 1986, Hungary's team has not had any notable international achievements.

Aside from soccer, sabre fencing, water polo, and horse riding are among the most followed sports. For a long time sabre fencing was known as a Hungarian specialty with their athletes winning medals at every Olympic event for almost half a century. Hungary also dominated both the European and the Olympic scene in water polo, winning 12 European Championships and 9 Olympic gold medals in this sport. The Hungarian water polo players are the 2008 Olympic champions. Ever since the beginning of the modern Olympic Games in Athens in 1896, when Alfréd Hajós (1878–1955) won two gold medals in swimming, Hungarians have left a permanent mark on this competitive sport as well. Hungarian swimmers hold three silver medals from the 2008 Olympics. Horse riding is a traditional sport in Hungary, going back to the times of the *Magyar* horsemen, and many people take advantage of its popularity and the ability to engage in this activity. A popular destination for the patrons of this sport is the town of Szilvásvárad, famous for its Lipizzaner stud

farm. Other popular sports that Hungarians engage in recreationally, as well as professionally, are tennis, sailing, chess, canoeing, skating, and bowling.

Since their beginnings Hungarians participated in almost all summer and winter Olympic Games. The exception was the summer games in 1920, when Hungary was not invited, along with other World War I German allies, and in 1984, when Hungary joined the 17 other countries, mostly from the Soviet bloc, in the boycott of the U.S.-hosted games. As already noted, Hungarian Olympic successes span many disciplines, including sabre fencing, swimming, canoeing, wrestling, gymnastics, boxing, athletics, pentathlon, weightlifting, and water polo. As of 2010, Hungary ranks an impressive ninth among 211 nations in the number of medals won at Olympic Games, with a total medal count of 465, including 159 gold medals. At the same time, Hungary is the highest ranked in the number of medals among nations never to have hosted the games. A good illustration of their Olympic success is the fact that the 11 medals Hungarian athletes came home from Beijing in 2008 with was their lowest medal count since 1928. Attila Vajda (b. 1983) (Men's C-1 1,000 m), and Natasa Janics (b. 1982), and Katalin Kovács (b. 1976) (Women's K-2 500 m) are the 2008 Olympic champions in canoeing disciplines, just as the national water polo team. Hungarians also readily compete at the Paralympics, where they have, since 1972, won a total of 107 medals. Their most successful Paraolympian is swimmer Attila Jeszenszky, who won four gold medals in 1984.

Holidays and Celebrations

As in many other Catholic countries, in Hungary the most important religious holidays are Christmas and Easter. Christmas season generally begins with Advent and its wreaths and candles that are lit in a countdown until Christmas. On December 6, children leave boots or shoes in their windows for St. Nicolas (Mikolás) to bring small gifts. The Christmas tree is generally decorated in a small immediate family circle on Christmas Eve, when the presents are opened as well. On Christmas Day and December 26, families visit with each other, congratulate each other, and share meals. Most common Christmas foods are fried fish, stuffed cabbage and turkey, as well as sweet pastry rolled with walnuts and poppy-seeds. The other big religious holiday in Hungary is Easter. Two interesting folk customs connected to Easter have been well preserved in Hungary. In olden days, Hungarian boys and men would visit girls and women of the village and sprinkle water on them as part of Easter festivities. This ritual, remnant of ancient pagan rites, has survived except these days the sprinkling is much lighter and done with cologne and perfume. In return, the sprinkled women offer the men food,

The poppy seed roll, a traditional Hungarian pastry found in Budapest's Great Market Hall at the Pest end of the Liberty Bridge. The market offers all things Hungarian, from paprika, tokaji wine and salami to chess boards and dolls. (Courtesy of Oksana Buranbaeva.)

drink, and Easter eggs. The second surviving Easter ritual involves, as in many other countries in the region, egg painting. The eggs are most commonly colored by boiling them in water with onion skins, green walnuts, or wild pears to achieve natural coloration. Sometimes traditional folk patterns are traced on the eggs in wax before they are painted, yielding beautiful results. On Easter Sunday morning, often after mass, Hungarians will eat ham with horseradish and eggs.

Several non-religious state holidays are regularly celebrated throughout Hungary. The first such commemoration of the year happens on March 15, as a tribute to the 1848 Revolution. On this day Hungarians remember the events of the "Hungarian Spring" and the victims of its aftermath. On that day the Hungarian flag is prominently and proudly displayed around the country and many commemorative events are organized, such as the reenactment of the reading of Sándor Petőfi's national poem on the steps of the National Museum in Budapest that ignited the Revolution. The next noteworthy state holiday is Labor Day, somewhat reminiscent of communism, though celebrated on May 1, with festivities, speeches, food, and music organized by workers unions, often held in city parks. National day and the feast of St. Stephen are celebrated on August 20. During

communism the same date was celebrated as Constitution Day, the anniversary of the proclamation of Hungarian People's Republic in 1949, and was stripped of its religious significance. Since 1990, on this truly festive day, Hungarians again celebrate their first king and saint with festivals, religious processions, street parties, and fireworks. A somber commemoration occurs on October 23 every year when Hungary remembers the events of the 1956 Revolution. Since 1989, this day is also the anniversary of the proclamation of the democratic Hungarian republic, thus lending some cheer to this otherwise solemn holiday.

Food and Drink

Numerous forces that either passed through or stayed on the territory of today's Hungary have shaped this nation's cuisine, specifically the Crusaders, the Turks, the Tatars, and the Austrians. At the same time, some of the cooking styles and use of ingredients that date all the way to the *Magyar* horsemen of the ninth century managed to survive until present times. The culinary legacy of the nomad horsemen primarily refers to the slow cooking of meat in a heavy

Traditional Hungarian goulash or beef stew. (Shutterstock.)

iron pot, with the end result being *goulash*—the Hungarian mother of all stews. A prominent "foreign" influence in traditional Hungarian cuisine was Italy. In the fifteenth century, Queen Beatrice, Italian wife of the Hungarian King Matthias, introduced many ingredients into Hungarian cuisine, such as onions, anise, chestnuts, garlic, and pastries. She is also credited for inaugurating music as an accompaniment to meals, still popular in many Hungarian restaurants. In the aftermath of the Turkish invasion, Hungary was fragmented into three entities: one under Turkish rule, another under the Habsburgs, and the third an independent province of Transylvania. Each of these entities were exposed to new ingredients, spices, and cooking methods, and all these influences make up a unique combination of what is today's Hungarian cuisine.

The most important ingredient in Hungarian cuisine was brought along by the Turks, and is today an integral part of numerous Hungarian dishes. This is, of course, paprika—a bright red powder made by milling red peppers—which comes in two varieties, sweet and hot. Other important novelties introduced during the 150-year-long Turkish rule were strudels, tomatoes, eggplant,

Paprika for sale in Budapest's Great Market Hall at the Pest end of the Liberty Bridge. (Courtesy of Oksana Buranbaeva.)

cottage cheese, coffee, corn, and squash. During roughly the same time, Austrians first introduced Hungarians to French cuisine, and also permanently brought elaborate pastry cakes into Hungarian desserts. Hungary's unofficial national dish and one of the staple foods is goulash (*gulyás*). Goulash is a thick stew made of beef, onions, potatoes, paprika, and bacon, traditionally stewed in a cauldron over a fire. Goulash can also be made with other vegetables, such as sauerkraut, cabbage, and carrots. Pörkölt, goulash's potato-less cousin, is also made of pork or beef and onions and paprika. Another typical Hungarian dish is *paprikás csirke*, or paprika chicken, made with paprika, sour cream with garlic, tomatoes, and spiced chicken. Hungarians also like to eat Hortobágyi palacsinta, a savory pancake wrapped around stewed meat, paprika, and sour cream, as well as stuffed cabbage and stuffed peppers. Generally Hungarians are fond of soups and will happily and often start a meal with one. A meal ends with some of the most popular desserts, such as thin chocolate-filled pancakes, cherry strudel, or different Austrian-type pastry cakes.

Hungary inherited a two-thousand-year-old tradition of viticulture and winemaking that was first introduced in the region by one of the lesser-known Roman emperors, Marcus Aurelius Probus. During the times of peace, Probus employed his soldiers to plant vineyards in, among other provinces, Pannonia. To this day, winemaking has survived in Hungary against all odds. It was banned during the 150-year Turkish rule, decimated by the phylloxera and collectivized during the communist period. The fact that Hungarian and Greek are the only two European languages that don't have a Latin root for the word "wine" speaks to the old tradition that winemaking has in these cultures. Some evidence suggests that Hungarians first came into contact with winemaking in the South Caucasus, before they settled in their current European territory. Hungary holds its winemaking tradition in such a high esteem that even the national anthem bears the words "And let nectar's silver rain, Ripen grapes of Tokaj soon," Tokaj being one of the most important winemaking regions in the country.[4]

All Tokaji wines come from the hills in the Tokaj-Hegyalja region in the northeast of the country, a region with around 25 villages with ancient winemaking tradition. Tokaji wine is made in several styles, ranging from dry to richly sweet. The sweeter variety (Aszù) is made by adding to the wine base a grape paste, made from sun-wrinkled *aszù* grapes that are affected by noble rot and picked late. The label of the Tokaji Aszù wine will indicate the number of *puttony* (custom made baskets) of the paste added, which typically ranges from three to seven. The higher the number of *puttony*s, the sweeter the wine and the more pronounced its golden color. For centuries Tokaji was popular among the European royalty, including Louis XIV, Tsar Peter the Great, and Queen Victoria. Despite the setbacks from collectivization,

in recent years foreign investments did a lot to help restore Tokaji wines to their former reputation. Today it is still very popular, typically served as a dessert wine.

Egri Bikavér (Bull's blood of Eger) is the most popular Hungarian red wine, and is made from several varieties of grape grown in the volcanic soil in the Eger region. One of these grape varieties is *Kadarka*, brought to Hungary by Serb refugees fleeing the Turkish invasion in the sixteenth century. The name Egri Bikavér derives from a variation of popular legend which says that during a Turkish siege, Hungarian defenders were seen with thick red wine juice dripping from their beards, and presumed to have been drinking bull's blood (or mixing it with wine). This image fit perfectly the idea of "bloodthirsty Huns," so the Turks fled and abandoned their siege. Finally, pálinka is a generic name for a brandy and although not uniquely Hungarian and typical of the region, Hungarians take a lot of pride in their Barack Pálinka made from apricots. Unicum is a bitter herbal digestive liqueur, considered one of Hungary's national drinks and made from a secret formula that includes more than 40 herbs.

Notes

1. Hungary's suicide rate is comparatively high with only countries such as Belarus, Lithuania and the Russian Federation having higher incidences of suicide. Statistics are available on the World Health Organization's web site http://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/suicide/suiciderates/en/

2. Hungary's Gini Index for 2009 was 30 with a ranking of 43, ahead of countries like Netherlands, United Kingdom, and Ireland but well bellow Norway, Germany, and Japan. Gini statistics can be found on the UNDP website http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/indicators/161.html.

3. Carol R. Ember and Melvin Ember ed., *Encyclopedia of Sex and Gender: Men and Women in the World's Cultures Topics and Cultures A-K—Volume 1*. New York, NY: Springer, 2003, 484–86.

4. Stuart Walton, *The World Encyclopedia of Wine*. New York, NY: Barnes & Noble, 2007.

6

Media

It is perhaps fitting to begin the chapter devoted to Hungarian media with a curious parallel between the life's work of Joseph Pulitzer (1847–1911), one of the most famous Hungarian émigrés, and the situation with Hungarian media today. Pulitzer, the founder of Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism in New York City and the Pulitzer Prizes, was of Jewish-Hungarian origin, born and raised in a family of wealthy merchants in central Hungary. He left for America at the age of 17 and spent his professional life working in journalism and publishing. Pulitzer is widely recognized as a crusader for journalistic independence, investigative journalism, and for exposing systemic corruption, but also for introducing a focus on human interest stories and sensationalism into journalism.

The Hungarian media today is struggling with some of the same issues that Joseph Pulitzer encountered back in his time. In terms of its media space, Hungary is in many ways similar to other Eastern European post-communist media markets struggling with independence and political bias, journalistic competence, and the "tabloidization" of the media. Half a century of censorship and government-driven media under communism overturned the vibrant Hungarian journalistic tradition developed in the nineteenth century. Moreover, the recent economic crisis and the accompanying drop in advertising revenue hit Hungarian media particularly hard, adding globally driven challenges to a set of already-present national issues. Its relatively small size leaves the Hungarian media market vulnerable to the volatility of market mechanisms, residually dependent on the state and highly sensitive to regulatory changes.

Joseph Pulitzer, 1847–1911. (Chaiba Media.)

The compelling combination of the above factors presents an obstacle to the development of a thriving, fully independent, and robust Hungarian media.

History of Hungarian Media

Professional journalism began developing in Hungary at the end of the eighteenth century under the auspices of a thriving intellectual life in the Habsburg and later the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The first regular weekly newspaper, *Nova Posoniensa*, appeared in Hungary in 1721. It was published in Latin and was edited by Mátyás Bél, a Slovak-Hungarian Lutheran pastor and an accomplished scholar. Mátyás Rát, also a Lutheran pastor, started and edited the first newspaper in Hungarian, *Magyar Hirmondó* (*Hungarian Courier*). It began publishing in present-day Bratislava (Pozsony) in 1780 and had a couple hundred yearly subscribers during its short life span of eight years. *Magyar Hirmondó* included editorials and articles on the economy, commerce, agriculture, as well as culture, actively publicizing literature and scholarship in the Hungarian language. In the final decades of the eighteenth century, there were quite a number of Hungarian newspapers, periodicals, journals, and reviews,

but many of them were suppressed in the subsequent censorship and control coming from Vienna during the "unenlightened" absolutism of the beginning of the nineteenth century.

In the pre-1848 revolutionary years, *Pesti Hirlap* (*Pest Journal*), the twice weekly liberal paper edited by Lajos Kossuth, exploded into the public sphere and became one of the most prominent vehicles for the expression of revolutionary spirit. From 1841 until 1844, Kossuth's editorials, articles, and reports in *Pesti Hirlap* calling for reforms and social change provoked great interest and increased the paper's readership to around an estimated 100,000.[1] His journalistic efforts, though relatively short-lived, transformed the Hungarian press from a dry observer of events into an instrument for change and expression of political opinion and influence. Many of the most prominent poets and prose writers in the nineteenth century, such as Kálmán Mikszáth and Endre Ady, made their living as journalists. In their dual role as beacons of literary life, as well as reporters and commentators of current affairs, they often became a force for social change and awakening of the national spirit. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, there was a significant increase in press publication and Budapest became something of a press capital with many of its inhabitants practicing their favorite pastime of perusing newspapers in one of its numerous coffee houses. In fact, 39 daily newspapers were published regularly in Budapest in 1906 (as compared to 24 in Vienna).[2] By 1914, there were about 2,000 newspapers and periodicals in Hungary, ranging in format from political daily papers and progressive literary journals to annual almanacs and yellow press, with an impressive total circulation of about 250,000.[3]

World War I, and the subsequent repressive Horthy regime, curtailed significantly the thriving, free Hungarian press of the early twentieth century. The repression went as far as murdering political opponents: in fact, the editors of the Social Democrat daily *Népszava* (*People's Voice*), Béla Somogyi and Béla Bacsó, were executed in 1919 and their bodies were tossed into the Danube.[4] With the communist takeover in 1949 and the subsequent nationalization of all newspapers and publishing houses, the Hungarian press became even more homogenized and most free-thinking journalists and writers withdrew from public life and publishing. The most significant newspaper of the early postwar years was *Szabad Nép* (*Free People*), a de facto mouthpiece of the Communist Party which exercised full control over its editorial decisions. In many a Hungarian workplace, collective morning readings of the daily news from the *Szabad Nép* were organized to ensure workers were regularly immersed in official ideology.[5] There was a short respite in the state control of the media during the pre-1956 revolutionary years of the Imre Nagy administration. Many of the previously silenced journalists and writers,

as well as the younger intellectuals who stood in opposition to Stalinist Hungary, declared their allegiance to the reform efforts of Imre Nagy, infusing a breath of fresh air into the Hungarian intellectual public sphere. This was especially visible in the press, even in the editorials of the previously strictly party-line touting *Szabad Nép*.

After the 1956 revolution was put down by Soviet tanks, many of the journalists and intellectuals paid for their political outspokenness with their lives and their freedom. Tight control over the media by the Communist Party was reinstated. Until the end of the 1980s, the Hungarian media outlets were state-owned, state-run, and their content state-sanctioned. The press space was dominated by *Népszabadság* (*People's Freedom*), *Szabad Nép*'s successor as the official Party newspaper, *Magyar Nemzet* (*Hungarian Nation*), a paper representing non-communist, albeit state-sanctioned, popular front groups and *Esti Hirlap* (*Evening Paper*), the slightly more populist evening daily. Regular television broadcasts began in Hungary in 1958 with one weekly program and by 1962 there were already over a quarter million television program subscribers.[6] Liberalization of media content beginning in 1987 allowed for broad sections of the Hungarian society to become familiar with the existence and the activities of the newly formed opposition movements, alliances, and nascent parties, thus inciting the impetus for democratic change.

The relatively sudden introduction of market principles into media operations at the beginning of the 1990s, and the long shadow of communist heritage, defined the direction of development of Hungarian media under the new political and economic system. Two important forces stimulated the transformation of the Hungarian media landscape in this period: the shift from state to private ownership and the need for a fundamentally different concept of media content and reporting style in the new pluralist society. During the 1990s, there was a sharp increase in the number of new media outlets, ranging from serious dailies, through tabloids, weeklies, and specialty magazines to new electronic media. Though there were about 12 to 15 national daily newspapers in the 1990s, a relatively large number in relation to Hungary's total population, their circulation dropped from 1.69 million in 1987 to 865,000 in 1993 and their readership went from 81 percent in 1990 to 64 percent of the population in 1998.[7] Several other trends unfolded during the first decade of democratic transition. Having to now rely on their own sources of revenue, rather than state funding, publishers increased the price of newspapers dramatically in the 1990s. In the same period advertising revenues soared. However this additional income did not result in lasting financial sustainability for the competition-ridden media, particularly the press outlets.

Hungarian Media Landscape Today

The Hungarian media landscape today is dynamic and abundant, yet still faces some challenges. In 2009 there were 11 daily national newspapers, 21 regional dailies, 8 weeklies, 31 commercial television stations, 21 commercial radio stations, 7 public radio channels, and 4 public TV channels.[8] The majority of these media outlets is commercial, privately owned, and acquired in the process of privatization in the 1990s, mostly by foreign companies and investors, such as German Axel Springer and Bertelsmann AG, Swiss Ringier, British media tycoon Robert Maxwell, and French media mogul Robert Hersant. This new constellation of powerful foreign and multinational interests in the ownership of Hungarian media puts a constant strain on the editors and journalists to deliver readership numbers and chase advertising revenue, taking their focus away from producing quality, unbiased content. A powerful combination of money, deadlines, and tabloids has made the Hungarian media scene more superficial and rash than ever, according to many media commentators and critics.[9] In this environment, encouraging the development of thoroughly impartial and competent journalism which abides by a universal, professional code of ethics is an issue that gets significant coverage in many debates about the Hungarian media landscape.

The global economic downturn from 2008 to 2010 has not helped. In fact, the Hungarian media has been among the most severely hit sectors of Hungarian society. A slump in advertising revenues, circulation, audience shares, and readership has had an impact on all media outlets, affecting the printed press the most, with online media suffering the least. National political dailies are estimated to have lost up to 30 percent of their advertising revenues since 2007, whereas the estimates for political and economic weeklies go as high as 50 percent.[10] In 2009, these reductions in revenue were accompanied by layoffs in some of the press outlets. The public service media outlets have also felt a drop in their advertising revenue. Another significant transformative trend in the Hungarian media space (accelerated in recent years by the economic lows) has been the growth of new, online media. Increasingly, the printed press is losing readership to online media, though online content still tends to come primarily from newspapers and magazines.

Hungarian media has consistently received a rating of Free in the annual Freedom House rankings over the last decade, with a particularly positive and steady assessment of the media legal framework.[11] The amended Hungarian Constitution of 1989 guarantees freedom of expression and freedom of the press. It also prescribes the requirement of a two-thirds parliamentary majority for the appointment of the heads of public media, as well as for commercial electronic media licensing. In 1994 the Constitutional Court ruled that libel

Hungarian university students hold empty banners, symbolizing empty newspaper pages, during a protest against the government proposed new media law in Budapest, Hungary, Monday, December 20, 2010. International and local journalist organizations have already expressed concern at the new media law, highlighting that it would impose extensive fines against journalists and publishers if they refuse to disclose their sources or publish information deemed inappropriate by the government. (AP Photo/Bela Szandelszky.)

is unconstitutional and in 2000 that "deliberate spread of panic" is not a crime, thus removing both categories from the criminal code and in theory allowing journalists a greater degree of freedom. The 1996 Radio and Television Act set up the legal framework for the creation and development of commercial broadcast media in Hungary, as well as for the prevention of media monopolies. Media commentators note, however, that these laws are not always implemented to the fullest benefit of a free and independent media. The role of the media regulatory agency, the National Radio and Television Commission (ORTT), elected by Parliament, has also been perceived as controversial and politically invested. A couple of specific incidences in recent years highlight the potential issues with the media regulatory framework. In the fall of 2009, two commercial radio stations *Danubius* and *Sláger* (partially owned by a U.S. investor) lost their broadcasting licenses and frequencies to another station allegedly close to FIDESz, the political party victorious in the 2010 election. The head of the ORTT resigned amid accusations of political bias and controversy over the legal battles ensuing from the loss of licenses. In the

spring of 2010, a set of new media legislation on the parliamentary agenda proposed a controversial new mechanism of government supervision of public broadcast media and the national news agency. Many Hungarian and international observers, public figures, and journalists interpreted this as an attempt by the government to gain greater control over the independence of publically owned media. At the end of 2010, amended media legislation adopted by Hungarian Parliament instituted the Media Council, part of the National Media and Communications Authority (NMHH) and successor to the ORTT, with the power to fine private media outlets in breach of rules on "balanced" coverage, in particular for content involving sex, violence, and alcohol. The amended law prescribes fines up to over $900,000 for radio and television stations and allows for media outlets to be suspended or shut down. The new legislation provoked an outcry in Hungary and abroad with accusations of censorship and politicization of the media by the ruling party FIDESz. Hungarian students, civil society, and opposition politicians, as well as representatives from the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Freedom House, and the EU, openly criticized the Hungarian government for introducing these new measures and appointing their supporters to the NMHH and the Media Council, thus tightening government control of the media and jeopardizing media freedom. The government, on the other hand, has argued that the law's intention was merely to catch up with the new developments in technology and content, as well as to fill the gaps in old legislation, leaving room for potential amendments.

These recent developments have reinforced the long shadow already cast over the Hungarian media landscape by the question of independence of public service broadcasting and the pronounced partisan bias of most of the privately owned media outlets. This issue first appeared in Hungary in the 1990s but remains current to this day. Most Hungarian governments since 1990 have attempted through political, financial, and most recently legislative means, with varying degrees of success, to influence public broadcast media, primarily the Hungarian Television and Radio, to provide positive media coverage. Consequently, media commentators and some international observers express their unease about the degree of political independence in Hungarian public media. However, there are other reasons for voicing concerns about the public media, particularly public television, fulfilling its role in Hungarian society. Competing with commercial outlets, being exposed to the shifting winds of politics and bearing the high costs of operations are all formidable challenges for public media. Most of the commercial media outlets, on the other hand, have had a pronounced left or right political bend since the fall of communism. Many of them are aligned with a particular political option and their content clearly reflects it.

Press

Népszabadság, *Magyar Nemzet* (*Hungarian Nation*), *Magyar Hírlap* (*Hungarian News*), and *Népszava* (*People's Word*) are the four most influential national political dailies in Hungary. *Népszabadság*, the former mouthpiece of the Communist Party, is a leading daily newspaper covering mostly political news and current affairs with a left political bend. It was the uncontested market leader in the 1990s. However, its circulation and readership dropped significantly over the last 10 years. Its circulation at the end of the 2000s was just under 100,000, down from 225,000 a decade earlier. Nevertheless, its long tradition and journalistic excellence still makes *Népszabadság* a respected publication and an obligatory source of information on politics and public life of Hungary. Owned by German Bertelsmann for years since it was privatized, the majority stake of *Népszabadság* is now in the hands of the Swiss Ringier. *Magyar Nemzet*, another daily with a long tradition and the second-largest newspaper in Hungary, covers traditional topics of politics, foreign and current affairs, and some economy. *Magyar Nemzet* espouses conservative and self-proclaimed bourgeois values and is perceived as being close to FIDESz, the center-right party in power since 2010. It is owned by Nemzet Lapés Könyvkiadó (Nemzet Newspaper and Book Publishing Co.), a company in the hands of private, predominantly Hungarian shareholders. Its circulation has also been declining in recent years, reaching just over 60,000 at the beginning of 2010.[12] *Magyar Hírlap*, a daily formerly owned by Ringier, has a circulation of just under 30,000 and has experienced a tumultuous several years. It was discontinued by Ringier in 2004 due to regulatory concerns and declining circulation, but started up again a year later. It is now owned by industrialist Gábor Széles, possibly Hungary's only media tycoon. The paper covers standard daily content, and had in the past aspired to provide the most objective news and commentary in Hungary. In recent years, however, it started leaning to the right. The fourth most important daily is *Népszava*, a left-wing paper with past ties to trade unions and a circulation of about 30,000. Today its readership consists of those with a traditional socialist political orientation and the paper is perceived to be close to the Socialist Party.[13]

Sudden changes in the Hungarian print media landscape in the early 1990s, particularly the market saturation with political dailies, new profit-driven impetus in publication, foreign ownership, and globalization, facilitated the quick and sudden development of Hungarian tabloids. Two daily tabloids with unparalleled circulation figures in Hungary are *Metro* (*Metropol*) and *Blikk*. The Budapest edition of the free paper *Metro* launched in 1998, went national in 2000, and quickly became the daily with the largest circulation of just over 300,000. *Blikk*, an inexpensive tabloid owned and published by Rainier, has

a circulation of about 250,000. Not surprisingly, *Metro* and *Blikk*, with their tabloid content and business model, are quite distinct from most other Hungarian newspapers in terms of greater profitability and increasing readership.[14] Though lucrative, the Hungarian tabloid market is almost entirely foreign-owned and quite volatile with frequent and drastic changes in titles and circulation figures. Although the need for escapism and the declining living standards contribute significantly to the increasing tabloid circulation, tabloid readership in Hungary is quite mixed including many young people among its regular readers, as well as some in the higher-income bracket (who will often read a tabloid as the second daily paper).[15]

Hungary has an abundance of influential local, county, and regional newspapers, many of them owned by German and Austrian companies. There are two notable established and respectable weeklies: the political and economic magazine *HVG* and the business magazine *Figyelő* (*Observer*). Finally, there is an array of specialty papers and magazines, ranging from the sports daily *Nemzeti Sport*, the gossip magazine *Story*, to the local editions of international glossy magazines like *Playboy* and *Elle*.

Television and Radio

The transition from state-owned broadcast media to a market dominated by private television stations was a somewhat more gradual and more measured process than in the case of the Hungarian press. Until the Radio and Television Act was passed in 1996, the government controlled and ran all electronic media. The state-owned Hungarian television Magyar Televízió (MTV), which held a monopoly in television broadcasting, was joined in the early 1990s by another state-owned television Duna Televízió (Duna TV). Programming on this satellite channel targeted Hungarian minorities living abroad, particularly in neighboring countries. These public media outlets were set up like public foundations supervised by a board of trustees, whose members are appointed by Parliament and selected from the ranks of civil society organizations. In 1997, the newly formed regulatory body the ORTT granted concessions for the first time to two privately owned, commercial television stations thus opening a new chapter in Hungarian media history. The two new commercial channels TV2 and RTL Klub quickly and successfully vied for advertising revenues and viewership. By the mid-2000s, MTV's national channel and nine regional studios, faced with fierce competition from the new private channels, were burdened by low audience figures, financial difficulties, and political pressure.

Currently, there are about 30 television channels in Hungary, most of them available on cable and many of them regional and local. RTL Klub and TV2 remain the major private channels in Hungary. RTL Klub's largest share is

controlled by RTL Group (owned by Bertelsmann). The minority share ownership has been somewhat fluid, but as of 2010, about a third of the station's shares are controlled by Danish-Hungarian Infocenter.hu.[16] RTL Klub broadcasts its own content, American shows, and Hungarian in-house productions and remains the most popular television station in Hungary, particularly among the 18- to 49-year-olds. The second major channel is TV2, partly owned by Luxemburg-based, U.S.-owned SBS Broadcasting Group. TV2 broadcasts popular content, but is also (as RTL Klub) making an effort to produce quality information programs to compete with the public television. Another privately owned television station which has gained prominence in recent years is Hír-TV. This channel has right political leanings and has been trying to increase its profile as the television station of choice for those of a similar political orientation.

Hungary has significant similarities between the radio media landscape and the television media scene, especially with regard to the competition between public and private outlets. Hungarian public radio Magyar Rádió (MR) has three major stations Kossuth Rádió, Petőfi Rádió, and Bartók Rádió with an audience share of about a third of all listeners.[17] Much of the programming on public radio is somewhat outdated and reminiscent of the socialist past, but there have been recent initiatives to modernize its operations and content. Overall, listeners over 50 in Hungary display a clear preference for public programming, whereas younger ones tune into the private radio stations. Until recently, two of the most popular privately owned Hungarian radio stations were Danubius and Sláger Rádió, each with an audience share of about a third of all listeners.[18] In 2009, the ORTT denied broadcasting rights for the only two national frequencies to Sláger Rádió and Danubius Rádió and awarded the frequencies to two newcomer stations with alleged ties to two largest Hungarian political parties. The head of the ORTT, László Majtényi, refused to sign these new frequency contracts and resigned. Sláger and Danubius nevertheless went off the air in November 2009 and their owners, the U.S. company EMMIS Communications (Sláger Rádió) and German-Austrian Accession Mezzanine Capital (Danubius Rádió), sued the ORTT. In the summer 2010, the courts ruled in their favor, directing the ORTT to reinstate their broadcasting rights. These difficulties notwithstanding, the total number of radio stations in Hungary remains impressive, counting all the national, regional, local, non-profit, and commercial, as well as specialty stations.

Online Media

Quite a number of Hungarian newspapers, periodicals, and radio and television stations have current online editions, provide live streaming, and produce

targeted web content. Though segments of the population, particularly in some regions and demographic profiles, have very limited or no access to the Internet, overall, as of 2008, about 47 percent of all Hungarian households have a personal computer (up from 31% in 2003), and 38 percent have Internet access (up from 12% five years earlier).[19] As ever-increasing numbers of households are acquiring Internet access and computers, the available online content in Hungary is also expanding exponentially. There are several very popular Internet portals, such as Origo, owned by the national telecom company Magyar Telekom and Index, started in the mid-1990s and owned by Hungarian entrepreneurs. Though still smaller than Origo, Index has experienced significant growth in the past several years, with its advertising revenue spiking by 65 percent between 2006 and 2008 and even growing by 9 percent during the economic crisis (from 2008 to 2009).[20] The global shift towards online media can certainly be felt in Hungary. This trend, in combination with the recent economic difficulties, the decline in circulation of print media, low costs of online media, and increasing Internet penetration and literacy, makes online media increasingly more competitive and a force to be reckoned in the future of Hungarian media.

Notes

1. Paul Lendvai, *The Hungarians: A Thousand Years of Victory in Defeat*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003, 210.
2. Ibid., 331.
3. László Kontler, *A History of Hungary*. Hampshire, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, 314.
4. Paul Lendvai, *The Hungarians: A Thousand Years of Victory in Defeat*, 383.
5. László Kontler, *A History of Hungary*, 417.
6. Zoltán Halász, ed., *Hungary*. Budapest: Corvina Press, 1963, 386.
7. Liana Giorgi and Ronald J. Pohoryles. *Media in Transition: The Cases of Hungary, Poland and Czech Republic*. Vienna: IFS-Project EASTMEDIA, Austrian Ministry of Science and Research, 1994, 113–14.
8. József Péter Martin, *Footprint of Financial Crisis in the Media Hungary Country Report*. Budapest: Open Society Institute, December 2009, 7.
9. Ibid., 4.
10. Ibid., 3.
11. Freedom House, Freedom of the Press Index Hungary (2010). Accessed October 2010, from http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=251&year=2010.
12. Print publications' circulation information and figures can be found at the Hungarian Audit Bureau of Circulations (*Matesz*) website. Accessed on July 2010, from http://en.matesz.hu/data/.
13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. Ágnes Gulyás, “The Development of the Tabloid Press in Hungary.” In *Tabloid Tales: Global debates Over Media Standards*, eds. Colin Sparks and John Tulloch. Boston, MA: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2000, 119–20.

16. RTL ownership is a matter of public record and can be found on the websites of Infocenter.hu http://infocenter.hu/index.php?Itemid=61 and RTL Group. Accessed on October 2010, from http://www.rtlgroup.com/www/htm/ataglance.aspx.

17. Audience share figures can be found at the Wieninternational site. Accessed on October 2010, from http://www.wieninternational.at/en/node/12327 [free log -in required].

18. Ibid.

19. Hungarian National Communications Authority, Communication Statistical Database. Accessed on October 2010, from http://www.nhh.hu/hirk_stat/fejezet.nhh?&fejezet=6&nyelv=1.

20. József Péter Martin, *Footprint of Financial Crisis in the Media Hungary Country Report*, 2.

7

Literature

Throughout history, renowned Hungarian writers Miklós Zrínyi, György Bessenyei, Károly Kisfaludy, Sándor Petőfi, Endre Ady, and many others used their literary creations to lend a voice to the hopes and fears of the Hungarian people. These poets, novelists, essayists, playwrights, and commentators encouraged national pride; derided oppression, lack of freedom, and social injustice; advocated for national unity, progress, and social change, often in the face of peril, misapprehension, and oppression. This ability of Hungarian writers to channel national aspirations and fears, time and again, attracted popularity and persecution in equal measure on its subjects. The commendable goals of preserving national identity and defying tyranny have been prominent in much of what has historically been considered great in Hungarian literature. Thus, the substantial role of literature in Hungarian history and culture is widely acknowledged. However, the ability of Hungarian writers to move hearts and minds, naturally, did not hinge solely on evoking national sentiments. Numerous talented Hungarian authors introduced the beauty of lyrical poetry, skillful use and evolution of language, compelling stories and characters, innovation and experimentation into Hungarian literature becoming the engine of its progress and prominence. Despite its important place in Hungarian culture, for centuries Hungarian literature remained relatively unknown in the larger European context. An upsurge of interest on the part of English-speaking authors and scholars in the nineteenth century brought Hungarian literature onto the European and then the global scene. Today,

Hungarian literary heritage is appreciated worldwide and many of its writers are widely renowned.

Middle Ages

Hungarian literature traces its beginnings to the period before and just after the arrival of the Hungarians on the European stage at the end of the ninth century. At the time of their conquest of the Carpathian Basin, the cultural heritage of the Hungarian nomadic warrior was most likely rich in pre-Christian oral poetry, folk songs, and folktales. Though most of these pagan folk traditions were systematically eradicated by the introduction of Christianity beginning in the eleventh century, their traces can still be found in the rich folklore traditions of Hungary today. The tumultuous world of the recently arrived, marauding Hungarians was irrevocably changed by Grand Prince Géza and his son King István (Stephen), the first king of Hungary, who converted their subjects to Christianity. Early pagan Hungarians were suddenly made to concede to a single God and ruler, adapt to a sedentary way of life, and accept an entirely new understanding of the world. Out of this fundamental shift, the beginnings of Hungarian literature came to life. Nearly all preserved Hungarian medieval literary documents are in Latin, because this was the universal language of the early Christian Church, with two important exceptions. The first is the *Funeral Oration* (or *Halotti beszéd*), a 32-line funeral sermon in Hungarian written around 1200. Though this was likely a standard religious sermon translated from Latin, it nevertheless displays artistic skill and is the first continuous literary text in the Hungarian language. The second exception to the predominantly Latin early Hungarian literature is "The Lament of Mary," the oldest preserved poem in Hungarian written around 1300. The 12 stanzas of "The Lament of Mary" are a literary translation of a poem by Frenchman Geoffroi de Breteuil, revealing a surprisingly secular subject matter. Traditionally, the theme of "The Lament of Mary" refers to Virgin Mary grieving over the death of Jesus, but the Hungarian version of this poem speaks in striking verse and poetic skill about an ordinary mother's sorrow over the loss of her son.

Most of the rest of the preserved original literary pieces in medieval Hungary were written in Latin and are dedicated to religious and historical themes. Religious texts mostly portrayed the lives and actions of kings and saints who introduced and strengthened the Christian faith in Hungary, such as Saint István, and routinely had an apparent moral. Between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries, the other, secular segment of Hungarian Latin literature gained momentum. These historical chronicles or sagas were series of written accounts of royal succession, the origins of Hungarians and other historical

traditions written, revised, and supplemented over generations in accordance with the current political circumstances. The oldest such preserved chronicle is the *Gesta Hungarorum*, written in the final years of the twelfth century by an anonymous writer who is generally accepted by scholars to have been the notary of King Béla III. Offering a romanticized account of how Hungarians settled in the Carpathian Basin, this *Gesta* constructs the first preserved, moderately convincing historical narrative of the origins of the Hungarian Kingdom.

The next oldest chronicle was the *Gesta Hungarorum*, written around 1283 by Simon Kézai, a priest at the court of King Ladislas IV. In this chronicle Kézai traces the ancestry of the Hungarians to the Huns, a Central Asian nomadic people who established a powerful kingdom in Europe in the fifth century. Partially based on surviving oral traditions from pre-Christian times and partially from foreign sources, Kézai weaves a mythical tale of two brothers Hunor and Magor, descendents of Biblical Noah who follow a remarkable stag to discover fertile pastures, marry two sister princesses, and father the two related peoples, the Huns and the Hungarians. This influential, but mythological, tale served the purpose of establishing historic continuity of the relatively young Hungarian Kingdom by directly tying it to the centuries-old empire of cattle-herding warriors whose fierce ruler Attila led them to dominate the heart of Europe. The most famous of the Hungarian chronicles is the *Illustrated Chronicle* or the *Illuminated Chronicle* (also known as the *Viennese Illustrated Chronicle* after the Viennese Imperial Library where it was kept), compiled and edited by Márk Kálti in the mid-fourteenth century. This masterpiece of medieval Hungarian miniature painting and illustration is found today in the National Library in Budapest. Although literary accomplishments in their own right, these historical chronicles served an additional political and nation-building purpose. They were intended to record the deeds of Hungarian chieftains, princes, and kings for posterity, to render a favorable account of the conquest of the Carpathian Basin and establish the unbroken, historic lineage of the House of Árpád.

Renaissance and Reformation

The Kingdom of Hungary was at its peak in the second half of the fifteenth century during the reign of King Matthias I. A remarkable ruler by all accounts, Matthias I married Beatrix of Aragon, the daughter of the king of Naples, and thus opened up his court to foreign influences, primarily to scholars and artists from Italy. Under Matthias I, the first printers arrived in Hungary and one of them, András Hess, printed the first book in 1473. The king was a lover and collector of books and his library, the Bibliotheca Corviniana, contained several thousand volumes. His patronage extended to

many talented individuals and one of the most remarkable ones was certainly Janus Pannonius (1434–1472). He was born in a small village in Slavonia, a part of present-day Croatia. His uncle, an archbishop, arranged for the young boy to go to Italy for schooling where he soon displayed a extraordinary talent for writing poetry. He returned to Hungary in 1458, the same year King Matthias I ascended to the throne. In keeping with the Humanist tradition, Janus wrote in Latin and, although medieval poetry was mostly religious, Janos's poems celebrated secular themes such as man and nature, Hungarian wars against the Turks, even his own intimate emotions of suffering and sadness over the loss of his mother. Janus had a well-deserved reputation among his contemporaries in Hungary and abroad as a renowned poet, and is to this day claimed by Hungarians (and Croats) as their greatest Latin poet.

The flourishing artistic period of the Renaissance in Hungary marked by the art-loving King Matthias I and his Humanist court, as well as the great poet Janus Pannonius, came to an abrupt end with the crushing defeat of the Hungarian army at Mohács in 1526. This defeat and the ensuing Turkish occupation of much of Hungarian territory left an indelible mark on the national consciousness and by extension on Hungarian literature. An intense feeling of patriotism and love for the fatherland in distress coincided with increased religious fervor inspired by another significant occurrence—the spread of Reformation in the sixteenth century. One of the Reformation's key aspirations was to communicate and engage directly with the populace, thus increasing the demand for religious texts in the vernacular. The first fragmented translation of the Bible into Hungarian had been embarked on a century earlier in the 1430s by two priests, Thomas and Valentine, followers of the Czech religious reformer Jan Hus. In the sixteenth century, biblical scholars and preacher-writers involved in the Reformation produced numerous other translations of religious manuscripts from Latin, as well as original religious texts in Hungarian, aiming to reach much wider sections of society. One of these scholars, Gábor Pesti, assembled the first Latin-Hungarian dictionary in 1538 and another, János Sylvester, the first *Hungarian Grammar* in 1539. Their translations of the Gospels and the New Testament into Hungarian carry not only religious significance, but testify to their mission of cultivating and developing the Hungarian literary language.

Many of the priest-writers of the Reformation successfully used Hungarian to vigorously debate their points of view and in the process produced noteworthy Hungarian prose. One such preacher was Gáspár Heltai (cc. 1490–1574). Born in Transylvania and educated in Germany, Heltai became a pastor and established a printing house in the Transylvanian town of Koloszvár. Aside from the traditional translations of religious texts, in 1566 Heltai wrote his best-known work *A Hundred Fables*, a literary collage of

anecdotes, proverbs, dialogues, and folktales. Though based on Aesop's famed fables, Heltai's texts had a notably contemporary Hungarian interpretation to them with a strong element of social criticism. He wrote of the noblemen's misconduct and expressed clear empathy for the peasants. In his other works, Heltai criticized the Catholic clergy for their involvement in politics and blamed the nobility for the loss of Hungary's independence. A similar but slightly more radical cleric-author was Péter Bornemisza (1535–1584), born in a Pest upper-middle-class family who had to flee the Turkish occupation. He became a Lutheran pastor and in the 1570s published his major work *Sermons*, five volumes of collected sermons depicting Hungarian society while mixing a confessional literary style with a commitment to revealing social injustice. Reformation gave rise to the first efforts at writing religiously themed plays with elements of satire and irony such as *The Marriage of Priests* and *A Mirror of True Clergy* written by Mihály Sztárai in 1550 and 1559.

During the sixteenth century, Hungarian secular poetry began to develop with two genres, in particular, the *históriás ének* and the *széphistória*. The *históriás ének* depicted historical events and were often authored and performed by poet singers who wandered from court to court. The most famous such author and performer was Sebestyén Tinódi (1505–1556). Born into a serf family, most of Tinódi's songs such as "The Peril of Szeged" and "The Bravery of János Török" inspire patriotism and national unity while faithfully describing battles with the Turks and fearless defenders of the Hungarian lands. The *széphistória*, named after the Italian *bella istoria*, are poems of differing themes without a clear moral and more lyrical in nature. One of the greatest Hungarian lyrical poets, Bálint Balassi (1554–1594), came of age in this period and left an indelible mark on Hungarian literature. Of Protestant noble birth, education, and upbringing, Balassi's family fortune was lost and he became an adventurer, a courtier, and a soldier. Balassi's beautiful verses speak of courtship, yearning, beauty, and unfulfilled love in the "Júlia Cycle" of poems, but also of a soldier's life, hardship, and courage in the fight against the Turks in "In Praise of the Outposts" (1589). Often, Balassi's rhymes turned to the subject of God, but his religious poetry is intimate in nature, full of self-examination, and his tone is conversational and challenging of God. Aside from the thematic range of his poetry, Balassi's talent as a lyricist was evident in his technique as well. He created the *Balassi stanza*, an artfully skilled arrangement of nine lines in which three couplets were followed by a fourth rhyme.

Counter-Reformation and Baroque

The great Hungarian poets and authors of the sixteenth century wrote under the influence of the Reformation, but by the beginning of the seventeenth

century the country was caught up in the throes of the Counter-Reformation. Literary translations of religious texts and eloquent polemics revealed the theological and intellectual arguments of Protestant writers, such as Albert Szenczi Molnár (1574–1634) and Catholic scholars, such as Jesuit and Archbishop Péter Pázmány (1570–1637). The most notable representative of Hungarian literature of the seventeenth century, however, was the soldier aristocrat Miklós Zrínyi (1620–1664). Zrínyi came from an ethnic Croatian background and grew up in a noble family living on an outpost of the Hungarian Kingdom, a region seemingly perpetually involved in the fight against the Turks. Keenly aware of the Turkish treat and Hungarian nobility's reluctance to stand up to the Ottomans, Zrínyi turned to both his sword and his pen. Modeled on the classical and Renaissance epics, he wrote an epic poem about his great-grandfathers last stand at Szigetvár "The Peril of Sziget" (1645–1646). Written from the unique perspective of the defeated, this epic of 6,272 lines and 15 cantos has a well-developed story and ends with a powerful message. Zrínyi intended for the memory of the sacrifice of the Szigetvár heroes to reawaken national consciousness and encourage a unified national front against the weakening Ottoman Empire. His later works, "The Gallant General" and "Short Treatise on Camp Organization" show a mastery of prose in discussing military science, techniques of warfare, and administrative reform, whereas in the "Reflections on the Life of King Matthias" Zrínyi espouses his political views in favor of a strong national monarch and expresses his skepticism towards the Austrian Empire. Zrínyi also actively fought for the realization of his patriotic and political goals and became a revered general and the *Ban* (governor) of Croatia. His seminal work in prose was the "Remedy against Turkish Opium" (1660–1661). In this work, an already disillusioned Zrínyi writes a masterfully constructed and a deeply emotional, but dignified plea for the liberation of Hungary from Turkish rule. Zrínyi lost his life in a hunting accident only a few years after he wrote this prose masterpiece.

In a land torn between the battling empires of the Ottomans and the Habsburgs a semblance of (Hungarian) political independence remained in Transylvania for a time during the seventeenth century. Unlike their counterparts in the rest of the Hungarian territories who cherished and wrote poetry, the nobles in Transylvania devoted their literary energies mostly to historiography and memoires. The greatest memoirist of the period was Miklós Bethlen (1642–1716), an erudite politician and aristocrat. An admirer of Zrínyi's political and military efforts, Bethlen advocated for a peaceful economic and political development of the Transylvanian state. He was imprisoned by the Habsburg authorities and while in captivity wrote his *Memoires* (1708–1710). In the first part of this work, Bethlen describes his life before 1666 in

a confessional, honest, and revealing tone in the spirit of St. Augustine, whereas the second part is a testament to the political turmoil in and decline of Transylvania, as well as a justification of Bethlen's own role in these events. Bethlen wrote in colloquial Hungarian, but sprinkled his vivid descriptions of key historic people and events using phrases in Latin and with frequent references to the Bible.

With the expulsion of the Turks from the Hungarian lands the power of the Habsburgs grew and the force of Hungarian popular dissent turned against this newly strengthened occupying force. At the core of the Hungarian resistance in Transylvania was Ferenc Rákóczi II, the last Transylvanian prince who led an insurrection against the Habsburgs in 1703 in an attempt to preserve Transylvanian independence. His heroic, though ultimately unsuccessful, acts of resistance were an inspiration for folklike, popular poetry at the end of the seventeenth century commonly referred to as *kuruc* songs. *Kuruc* poetry, whose name comes from the Latin word *crux* (meaning "cross") and referred to Hungarian fighters for independence from the Habsburgs, sprang up among the disenchanted soldiers of the defeated Prince Rákóczy. It took various literary forms ranging from laments, marching songs, and political verse to prison and galley slave songs and heroic epics. Aside from expressing national and social grievances, many of the *kuruc* songs exhibited great artistic value and beautiful lyrical expression. These poems were recited, sung, and transmitted orally. Commonly preserved in handwriting on printed books and in manuscript song collections, many of the *kuruc* songs were first published in the nineteenth century. Another Transylvanian, Kelemen Mikes (1690–1761) wrote one of the most notable literary works of the early eighteenth century inspired by Prince Rákóczi. Mikes, a member of Rákóczi's court, was exiled with the prince following the 1703 insurrection. Mikes wrote his tour de force in the form of a series of 207 letters from his exile in Turkey to an imaginary aunt, Countess P. In *Letters from Turkey* (or *Törökországi levelek*), written between 1717 and 1758, Mikes speaks of the conditions in exile, of Rákóczi and his fate, and of his own personal and emotional impressions and experiences, in clear, colloquial Hungarian.

Enlightenment

With Hungary indisputably under the influence of the Habsburg Crown, the eighteenth century ushered the age of Enlightenment and a new era into its culture and literature. Progressive ideas of French rationalism and influences from Voltaire and the Encyclopedists first caught root among the Hungarian writers in a somewhat unlikely place—the Viennese court of the Habsburg Empress Maria Theresa. These Enlightenment writers emerged from the

ranks of the Empress's Hungarian Guard, an elite group of young men recruited from among the Hungarian nobility. These *testőr* writers, or guardsmen, were motivated by the desire to improve Hungary's social and intellectual lot and cast off the unquestionable obedience to authority of the past. Their most notable member and the founder of the *testőr* writers' literary circle was György Bessenyei (1747–1811). A one-time advocate of Reformation, later a Catholic and finally a recluse at his Hungarian estate, Bessenyi wrote plays, satire, prose comedies, philosophical poems, and pamphlets calling for the preservation of the Hungarian language, as well as the modernization of and improved access to education. Bessenyi's work, *The Tragedy of Agis*, or *Ágis tragédiája* (1772), is considered to mark the beginning of a new, more modern period Hungarian literature, whereas his most notable piece, *Travels of Tarimenes* or Tariménes utazása (1804), is regarded as the first Hungarian novel. Another significant literary effort of Bessenyi's is a comedy, *The Philosopher* (1777). It introduces the reader to a humorous character, a good-natured, but narrow-minded and traditional member of the Hungarian rural gentry, one whose worldview Bessenyi criticizes and one that embodies the conflict between modernity and the outdated feudal ways of old Hungary. The historical context of Bessenyi's contribution to Hungarian literature was his ability to inspire a broader vision for its modern development, for the founding of the Academy of Sciences, as well as for the importance of promoting education and culture.

Another important trend in eighteenth-century Hungarian literature developed under the banner of preserving Hungarian national heritage and protecting national interest, the position of its nobility and their traditional values, as well as shying away from foreign influences. The most prominent representative of this trend was József Gvadányi (1725–1801). Though originally an ethnic Italian, Gvadányi staunchly defended all things traditionally Hungarian in his satirical poetry and expressed strong opposition to changes brought about by Emperor Joseph II's absolutist reforms. Gvadányi's most notable work, a narrative satirical poem entitled "A Village Notary's Journey to Buda" (1790), glorifies time-honored provincial characters and mocks the foreign-looking and -sounding, trendy city dwellers through the eyes of a notary. János Batsányi (1763–1845), one of the greatest political poets of the time began his literary career defending the same ideas as Gvadányi, but evolved into an acceptance of both national resistance and progressive ides of the Enlightenment. Batsányi was arrested by Austrian authorities under the suspicion of involvement in the Martinovics conspiracy. His poem, "On the Changes in France" (1789), reveals Batsányi's revolutionary attitude towards the need for social change in Hungary, whereas in another poem, "The Seer" (1792–1793), he prophesies the coming of social justice

and freedom. In the service of national resistance, Batsányi co-founded and co-edited an important literary periodical called the Magyar Múzeum (Hungarian Museum).

The third important current in eighteenth-century Hungarian literature exhibited a tendency towards sentimentalism and early romanticism. These elements make an appearance in the works of later writers of the Enlightenment period, Gábor Dayka, and József Kármán among others, who freely expressed their emotions and delved into the inner working of the human soul. This period gave rise to one of the greatest Hungarian lyricists, a homeless wanderer poet named Mihály Csokonai Vitéz (1773–1805). Though showing early artistic and academic promise, Csokonai was dismissed from his assistant professorship at the College of Debrecen and proceeded to drift around the country attempting to live from writing poetry. In this effort, he was less than successful, dying at an early age of 32 from pneumonia. His earlier works identify with peasant, folk traditions, and are politically idealistic, socially critical, and anti-feudal, as well as hopeful for a cultural renewal in Hungary. His later poetry displays a lyricism imbued with strong personal emotions, rich verse, and musical qualities. His “Lilla Songs” (1805) is a cycle of love poetry which mixes traits of rococo and folk songs, vividly describing the moods and sentiments of a poet both enthralled and disenchanted by love.

Romanticism and the Age of Reforms

At the end of the eighteenth century, Emperor Joseph II’s attempt to introduce German as the official language in all the lands under the Habsburg Crown caused a political uproar in Hungary and prompted initiatives for language reform. Moreover, at the time, the Hungarian language lacked the elaborate vocabulary to express all the new, literary, and artistic ideas that were brewing in Hungary, causing writers and intellectuals to employ foreign words and expressions. The language reformers, led by one of its chief proponents, Ferenc Kazinczy (1759–1831), looked to replace foreign words, introduce dialect into the standard language, and reform spelling. Kazinczy advocated for the radical ideas of the French Revolution and bourgeois progress, while attacking traditionalist ideas of feudal preservation. Though not a creative artist in his own right, Kazinczy was a gifted translator and became the torchbearer of bold innovation and intervention into the Hungarian language. He reached out to most contemporary writers through letters filled with advice and friendly criticism, offering mediation on all matters relating to literary language and thus becoming the definitive authority on the Hungarian language. Many contemporary writers were exceedingly loyal to Kazinczy’s ideas and constituted his circle, but only one among them counts as a notable lyrical poet. This man

was Ferenc Kölcsey (1790–1838), a patriotic poet, literary critic, and politician whose poem, "Hymn" (1823), became the Hungarian national anthem. This poem contains elements of folk songs and is both a gloomy retelling of Hungarian national tragedies and a tenacious hope for a better future. Kölcsey was active in public life, most prominently as member of Parliament, where he advocated passionately for Hungarian national preservation in the face of foreign peril. Moreover, he saw the importance of his role as poet in the preservation of national heritage, as evident in his historical essays *Mohács* (1826) and *National Traditions* (1826). Kölcsey subscribed to the widely accepted view that the Hungarian language and literature were main vehicles for achieving social and political change, which in turn was the duty of poets and writers.

A lyricist and pioneer of romanticism, Dániel Berzsenyi (1776–1836) was a typical Hungarian nobleman who was born in a small Transylvanian village and lived out most of his life at his country estates. His work revealed a profound respect for Hungarian traditions and heritage, as well as for classical Latin forms. In his poetry, Berzsenyi drew his inspiration from themes of the decay of the individual, of the nation, and of nature, while extolling moral ideals and patriotism of Hungarian aristocracy. A notable contemporary of Berzsenyi's, Sándor Kisfaludy (1772–1844) also attempted to reconcile traditionalist ideas with the legacy of Antiquity. He came from an old aristocratic family from Transdanubia and wrote a famous two part cycle of love poems "The Loves of Himfy," consisting of "Bitter Love" (1801) and "Happy Love" (1807). In a sentimental tone and using his unique *Kisfaludy stanza*, the poet tells the tale of love and rejection while mourning the loss of the traditional, patriarchal way of life of the Hungarian nobility in clear divergence from Kazinczy's reformatory ideas.

The beginning of the nineteenth century brought a new era into Hungarian literature. With a quickly emerging middle class, Pest was becoming the literary capital of Hungary and more and more writers chose to make it their home. One of these writers, Károly Kisfaludy (1788–1830), the poet Sándor Kisfaludy's younger brother and a renowned playwright, became the first real representative of Romanticism in Hungary. His first play, *The Tatars in Hungary* (1809), was a historic, patriotically charged, and melodramatic work which achieved great success and popularity with literary circles and theatergoers alike. A blithe and unconventional character, Kisfaludy was the informal leader of the writers of Romanticism in Hungary. He wrote comedies, lyrical poetry, folk song imitations, and short stories in powerful language and beautiful theatrical style. In 1821 Kisfaludy founded and began editing the literary magazine *Aurora*, a sophisticated periodical where all the new and upcoming Hungarian authors could publish their work. The writers of the Aurora Circle dismissed advice from the likes of the language reform eminence himself,

Ferenc Kazinczy, and looked towards contemporary Europe for modernizing influences.

The most prominent member of the Aurora Circle, the greatest poet of the Reform Age, and one of the most important Hungarian lyrical poets was Mihály Vörösmarty (1800–1855). His literary career began with an unlikely work, an epic poem, "The Flight of Zalán" (1825). Aside from reviving the literary form of epic poetry, "The Flight of Zalán" accomplished a formidable task of creating a national epic that tells the story of the conquest of Hungary, the victory of Árpád over his enemy Zalán, the Bulgarian ruler. Vörösmarty displayed his exquisite creativity and unparalleled mastery of language in weaving this story, as well as in his later works. After writing epic poetry, Vörösmarty turned to narrative poems ("Fair Ilonka"—1833), playwriting (*Csongor and Tünde*—1831), and political poetry ("Fate and the Hungarian"—1845); however, he became best known for his lyrical poetry. Poems such as "Thirst" (1842), "Reverie" (1843), and "For Laura" (1845) reveal a remarkable depth of emotion and an outstanding skill in manipulating poetic form and style. With roused national aspirations and the Revolution of 1848 fast approaching, Vörösmarty became politically active as a member of the new Parliament and serving in public office in the Kossuth government. After the defeat of the Hungarian army in the summer of 1949, Vörösmarty fled Pest and lived as a fugitive in northern Hungary. He returned to Pest in ill health and died in 1955. His funeral was attended by tens of thousands of mourners acknowledging his great contribution to Hungarian literature.

Two other important trends developed in the age of Romanticism: the emergence of drama embodied in the person of József Katona (1790–1830) and the birth of the Hungarian novel. Katona wrote the first and timeless tragedy in the Hungarian *Bánk Bán* (1820). The gripping tale of Palatine Bánk is one of divided loyalties based on historical fact, while revealing a fascinating cast of literary characters. The works of the first novelists, such as politician-writer Count István Széchenyi's *Credit* (1830), *Light* (1831), and *The State of Affairs* (1833), as well as the first social novel *The House of Bélteky* (1832) by András Fáy arose from the general romantic mood of the time. Baron Miklós Jósika (1794–1865), in turn, was considered as the founder of the historical novel and became one of its most popular writers with works such as *Abafi* (1836) and *The Bohemians in Hungary* (1839). However, Baron József Eötvös (1813–1871), a gifted novelist and minister in the Déak government, is generally regarded as the first master of the Hungarian novel. His novel, *Village Notary* (1845), gives a detailed account of the state of contemporary Hungarian society, whereas *Hungary in 1514* (1847) describes the historical events of the bloody peasants' revolt in pre-Reformation Hungary.

The monument to the revolutionary poet and national hero Sándor Petőfi in Kaposvár, the capital of Hungary's Somogy country. (Courtesy of Oksana Buranbaeva.)

Both novels contain strong currents of social criticism, as they warn against oppression and have elements of critical realism.

The Age of Petőfi and Realism

The foundation of Hungarian literature in the 1840s was poetry, which echoed popular sentiments of national awakening and revolutionary spirit culminating in the Revolution of 1848.Both the presumed untimely end of the mortal life of Sándor Petőfi (1823–1849), as well as his eternal renown as a revolutionary poet, was minted in the Revolution of 1848. When he disappeared on the battlefield in July of 1849, he was widely known as a soldier, freedom fighter, national poet, advocate of national independence, progress by revolution, and proponent of democratic currents in literature. Even Petőfi's earliest volume of poems entitled "Poems" (1844) already revealed an effortless simplicity of his verse in the style of traditional folk songs. The same year he wrote "János vitéz" (1844–1845), an unconventional narrative poem that tells the story, in unforced rhyme and natural language of folk

tradition, of a shepherd Kukoricza Jancsi, an ordinary boy looking for love and a better life. Petőfi's narrative poem, "The Hammer of the Village" (1844), skillfully mocked the conservative and elaborate style of romantic epics. His descriptive poems "The Tisza" (1847), "Winter Nights," and "The Puszta in the Winter" portray captivating landscapes of his youth. As he matured, Petőfi's poetry became much more political and lyrical, speaking mostly about freedom and love. In 1847 Petőfi founded the Society of Ten, a gathering of likeminded young revolutionaries and intellectuals whose periodical *Scenes of Life* (*Életképek*) expressed their revolutionary aspirations. By the time 1848 happened, Petőfi's political poetry was quite radical in its expression. "The National Song" (1848), his poem and a call for liberty, became the torch that lit the 1848 Revolution and Petőfi was propelled into the heights of national heroism. His final poems were composed in battle in praise of soldiers and contain the foreboding of his imminent demise. Petőfi was presumed to have died in battle at Segesvár on the eve of the Revolution; however, recent revelations posit that he may have been captured by the Russians and taken to Siberia where he died in 1956. In his short life, Petőfi wrote over 900 poems, mostly in lyrical realism, leaving an indelible mark on Hungarian literature and national consciousness.

The other great poet of this age was a contemporary and friend of Petröfi's, János Arany (1817–1882). Like Petőfi, Arany drew his inspiration from popular folktales and ballades. Arany's best work was a narrative poem "Toldi" (1846), which follows the peasant life and adventures of a young man Miklós Toldi in the fourteenth century. His poetry, written in simple and comprehensible style, using colloquial speech of the people and often mixing satire and folklore, helped to establish the trend of folk realism in written poetry. Another notable writer who came out of Petőfi's circle was the novelist Mór Jókai (1825–1900). Jókai was a member of the Society of Ten and edited its periodical *Scenes of Life*. In his work, he was devoted to keeping the ideas and memories of the Age of Reform and the Revolution alive in the spirit of romantic patriotism. A prolific and popular writer, Jókai wrote around 100 works of fiction about numerous subjects ranging from the mystifying world of the Ottomans (*'Midst the Wild Carpathians*, 1851), the battles of the War of Independence (*The Baron's Sons*, 1869), and Hungarian society in the Reform Age (*A Hungarian Nabob*, 1853–1854), to the beginnings of social criticism inspired by the rise of capitalism (*Black Diamonds*, 1870 and *The Man with the Golden Touch*, 1872). His artistic prose and colorful style, with many different characters and captivating stories, made a mark on Hungarian and, through its numerous translations, on foreign literature.

The post-revolutionary decades following the unsuccessful War of Independence from 1848 to 1849 were a time of relative peace in Hungary,

but also a time of subjugation to Austria, muted political aspirations for independence, and passive resistance to Austrian rule. Influenced by this general mood of the country, the literary achievements of the time echoed pessimism; disillusionment; and sober, realistic, and even critical views of the Revolution. One author who displayed such tendencies was Zsigmond Kemény (1814–1875), a talented novelist and contemporary of Jósika and Eötvös. Kemény's work shared the realism of Arany but lacked the other contemporary writers' confidence in the Revolution. His works, *A Widow and Her Daughter* (1855–1857), *The Fanatics* (1858), and *Stormy Times* (1862), are all historical novels laced with glumness and full of characters trapped by fatalism and foreboding of tragedy. Imre Madách (1823–1864), a contemporary of Kemény's, mourned in his works the collapse of the traditional and religious foundation of Hungarian society. His work made a significant contribution to the developing critical realism in Hungary. Madách's play, *The Tragedy of Man* (1860), is the dramatization of the story of Creation which deals with the idea that mankind is condemned to move in circles and away from progress and freedom. The play was first staged in 1863 and has remained a classic with audiences since.

In the final decades of the nineteenth century, two opposing schools of thought in Hungarian literature became apparent. The first was represented by the "establishment" writers and members of the "old" classes (gentry and petty nobility) who defended nationalistic illusions and stood by conservatism and idealizing realism. Their opponents developed a new poetic sensibility as a result of disillusionment with the rigid system of values and the lack of imagination and innovation in literature. This generation of disillusioned poets was best represented by László Arany (1844–1898), the son of János Arany, with his epic poem "Hero of Mirages" (1873), which echoes the senselessness of the post-revolutionary age; and János Vajda (1827–1897), a loner disenchanted with the mediocrity that surrounded him who wrote passionate, self-tormenting lyrical poetry. Economic and social changes set in motion by the Revolution, the Compromise of 1867 and the creation of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, caused turmoil in the lives of the Hungarian gentry rendering their way of life virtually obsolete. One of the greatest and most widely popular prose writers of this period was Kálmán Mikszáth (1848–1910), whose opus reflected the deep social and class changes affecting Hungarian society. A journalist and member of Parliament, Mikszáth at first wrote vivid and humorous anecdotes and short stories about the life of peasants and ordinary folk. His later novels, such as *Strange Marriage* (1900) and *The Affair of Young Noszy with Mari Tóth* (1908), revealed with a highly critical eye the depravity, hypocrisy, and snobbery of the gentry and petty nobility. Mikszáth's social criticism is raised to the absurd in the *New Zrínyiad* (1898) which brings

back Zrínyi, the sixteenth-century national hero from the grave and places him in contemporary Budapest where he is snubbed and looked down upon by his pretentious new friends and colleagues. Mikszáth's particular style of realism diluted with romantic undertones represented well the literary transition between the nineteenth and the twentieth century.

Turn-of-the-Century Literature and the *Nyugat* Writers

The end of the nineteenth century witnessed an explosion of growth of Budapest, which was fast becoming a shiny, new, modern capital with increasing wealth based on industry, trade, and commerce. The urbanization and economic development of Budapest, however, was also accompanied by the expansion of a dark underbelly of the city, primarily social inequality and ethnic tensions. This changing, turn-of-the-century Budapest attracted an increased number of writers and a never-greater concentration of literary activity. In this vibrant atmosphere, a revival of literature was fermenting. An effort to create fresh, urban writing and move away from the conservatism, which stifled literature at the end of the nineteenth century, was spearheaded by the poet József Kiss (1843–1921) and his literary journal *The Week* (*A Hét*). Founded in 1890, *The Week* was an intellectual and eclectic outlet for all those writers who stood in opposition to the establishment literature. The journal mostly published work with urban overtones geared towards a middle-class readership. Kiss was an accomplished editor of *The Week*, and one of the first poets of distinctly Jewish origin to address Hungarian-Jewish themes in his work. Two of the most significant authors who evolved with *The Week* were Sándor Bródy (1863–1824) and Zoltán Ambrus (1861–1932). Bródy was a talented but uneven prose writer whose work was a herald of modern Hungarian literature, whereas Ambrus wrote skillful analytical novels and psychological plays modeled on French prose that earned him the respect of the younger writers of the *Nyugat* generation.

The periodical and literary review *Nyugat* (West) appeared on the Hungarian cultural scene in January 1908. Initially, it was an engine of modernization of Hungarian literature, upholding middle-class values against the traditional leanings of the gentry-writers. *Nyugat* and its notable editors and critics such as Ignotus, Ernő Osvát, Miksa Fenyő, Aladár Schöpflin, and Lajos Hatvany helped develop a modern, national literature with an eye to Western European trends. Over time, the freshness, creativity, and skill of *Nyugat*'s literary contributors established the review as the preeminent authority on the Hungarian literary scene. One of those writers whose name is closely tied to the *Nyugat* is Endre Ady (1877–1919), one of the greatest poets in the new Hungarian lyrical tradition. The son of an impoverished Calvinist lesser noble and a

political journalist, Ady, at the age of 26, fell in love with Léda, the wife of a Nagyvárad businessman. They maintained a relationship for over a decade and the young poet even moved to Paris to be close to her. This was the most prolific period in Ady's lyrical love poetry. His volume of poems, "New Poems" (1906), followed by a half a dozen others caused quite a stir on the Hungarian literary scene. Many contemporary critics found his unconventional and candid poetry, rich in imagination and language, controversial, particularly those detractors with an affinity for traditional national classicism. Aside from love poems, Ady wrote political poetry, money-themed and religious poetry. Ady's political poetry championed the cause of democratic change and revolt against the stifling remnants of feudalism; however, by the outset of World War I, he was a tired and diseased poet whose legacy of pre-war ideals outgrew his mortal persona.[1]

The second most notable author of the *Nyugat* era was Zsigmond Móricz (1879–1942), a renowned prose writer of peasant origin. It was perhaps because of his origin that Móricz wrote memorable prose about the peasantry, without the condescending class-consciousness or the anecdotal quality of such prose of the past. His earlier novels, such as *Pure Gold* (1910) and *The Torch* (1918), reveal a realistic portrayal of village life and are highly critical of the rigid class hierarchy and distinctions in Hungary. Móricz's historic trilogy *Fairy-Garden* (1922), *The Great Prince* (1934), and *The Shadow of the Sun* (1935) contains powerful characters and weaves the captivating story of the glorious age of Transylvania. His later works, *Until Daybreak* (1926) and *The Gentleman's Way of Having Fun* (1928), are brimming with social criticism of the gentry's lifestyle. Móricz's impressive oeuvre is ample and diverse, and his personal accomplishments remain quite exceptional. In the 1920s, he undertook a series of walking tours around the country, in an effort to catalogue the life in the countryside, whereas in 1931 he was branded a traitor and became a militant anti-fascist.

Among the other *Nyugat* writers, Margit Kaffka (1880–1918) is one of the most distinguished, not only because she was the first prominent Hungarian woman writer. A poetess, novelist, and short story writer, Kaffka and her work deal with the problems of modern women in Hungarian society. Another notable *Nyugat* writer, Mihály Babits (1883–1941), was an erudite and versatile poet and translator known for his liberal-conservative humanist attitudes towards literature, pacifism, and anti-war poetry. Among his best works, the novel *Sons of Death* (1927) is a psychological and analytical portrayal of the Hungarian intelligentsia. Babits's friend and colleague, Dezső Kosztolányi (1885–1936) was a virtuoso of language. He introduced Freudism into Hungarian literature and his poetry reveals sadness and concern for the transience of human life. Another colleague of both Kosztolányi

and Babits was Gyula Juhász (1883–1937), an emotionally vulnerable, isolated, and lonely poet. His *oeuvre* began with *kuruc* poems and impressionist pictorial poetry and continued with mostly dark and melancholy poems depicting the difficult life of the people of the Great Plain. Árpád Tóth (1886–1928), one of the most original poets of the period and a sensitive, awkward soul, left his mark with his sonnets, elegies, and odes filled with strong emotions, esthetic appreciation, as well as revolutionary fervor, and later resignation and defeat.

A consummate urbanite, humorist, and *Nyugat* writer, Frigyes Karinthy (1888–1938) produced a notable collection of short caricatures entitled *That's How You Write* (1912) where he revealed his sense of parody, skepticism, and a penchant for the grotesque. His choice of themes was eclectic and ranged from writing about the experiences of childhood to science fiction. Finally, a contemporary writer of note who was outside of the *Nyugat* circle but was nevertheless an innovator in his own right was Gyula Krúdy (1878–1933). His flamboyant lifestyle made him the talk of Budapest, but his disregard for the conventional continuity of narrative and a linear plot, as well as his favorite themes of sex, dreams, and death, made his prose memorable and enveloping. In his novels *The Travels of Sinbad* (1912), *The Resurrection of Sinbad* (1916), and *The Youth and Grief of Sinbad* (1917), Krudy's eternal and imaginary characters are anchored in his memories and own experiences

Interwar Years and Their Legacy: Conservatives, New *Nyugat* Generations, Populists, and Social Revolutionaries

World War I, the dissolution of Austria-Hungary, the crushed socialist revolution, the oppressive Horthy regime, and association with Nazi Germany all had a tumultuous effect on the dynamic, ground-breaking literary scene of early twentieth-century Hungary. Several different trends developed in response to and as a consequence of these momentous historic events. Loss of the Hungarian territories in the Treaty of Trianon in 1920, aspirations for the return to pre-1918 borders, as well as fear of Communism gave rise to a conservative, Christian and openly nationalistic literature which was supported by the Horthy administration. None of the pro-establishment, conservative writers, such as János Horváth, Cécile Tormay, László Mécs, and Lajos Zilahy, achieved the lasting renown or the quality work of the earlier *Nyugat* generation and a number of them exhibited openly intolerant and anti-Semitic attitudes. A different trend in Hungarian literature at the time took shape in the writings of the second and third generations gathered around the *Nyugat*. These writers differed from their predecessors, and yet still managed to preserve the progressive spirit of the *Nyugat* tradition.

The most notable poet of the second generation, as well as a gifted and prolific translator, was Lőrinc Szabó (1900–1957). Szabó was discovered as a young aspiring poet by Babits who recognized his exceptional talent and became his mentor. Szabó's earlier volumes of poetry, such as "Caliban" (1923), "Light, Light, Light" (1925), and "Masterpieces of Satan" (1932) resonate with rebellion, are full of contradictions, and highly expressionistic in technique and style. In his later works, however, such as "Separate Peace Treaty" (1936) and "Collected Verse" (1943), disenchantment and nihilism rule, and Szabó is sickened by human nature. Another important author of the second *Nyugat* generation was the novelist Sándor Marái (1900–1989). The consummate Western-oriented writer of the Hungarian middle class, in *Confessions of a Bourgeois* (1934) and *Jealous People* (1937) Marái writes with blunt frankness, exquisite language, and psychological insight about the lives of the middle class. In 1948 Marái left the now socialist Hungary and lived out the remainder of his life in exile in Italy and the United States. His *Diaries*, written between 1943 and 1976, and his memoir, *Land, Ahoy* (1972), exude nostalgia and recollections of an uprooted artist. Other prominent *Nyugat* poets of the time were László Fenyő (1902–1945), Lajos Áprily (1887–1967), and György Sárközi (1899–1945), whereas András Hevesi (1901–1940) and his novel *Parisian Rain* (1936) left a mark on the second-generation *Nyugat* prose. Fenyő and Sárközi were both killed by Nazis, whereas Hevesi lost his life in the French army. Of the later generation of *Nyugat* writers Erzsébet Kádár (1901–1946) deserves a mention as a talented prose-writer and the sole woman author of note during that period. Gábor Thurzó (1912–1979), a novelist and screenplay writer, was another author of this generation whose novel *The Saint* (1966) criticized the Church's role in manipulating the masses during World War II. Finally, the satirical writing of Emil Kolozsvári Grandpierre (1907–1992) and the stream of consciousness, experimental, unique style of Miklós Szentkuthy (1908–1988) conclude this brief overview of *Nyugat* tradition.

In the 1930s, a group of writers, who considered themselves to be speaking for the people, particularly the peasants, advocated a return to traditional Hungarian values of the countryside and stood in opposition to the progressive urban leanings of the *Nyugat* generations. An erudite schoolmaster proficient in French culture and a controversial figure, Dezső Szabó (1879–1945) was the predecessor of the populist movement in Hungarian literature. In his novel, *The Village That Was Swept Away* (1919), Szabó praises, in expressionist style, the life in the Hungarian village and assigns blame for the ills of Hungarian society to the imported ideals of capitalism and socialism. In his political writing, he explicitly espoused anti-capitalist, anti-democratic, reactionary views, eventually even turning to the rhetoric

of radical extremism, the preservation of the Hungarian "race," and anti-Semitism. During the 1930s, Szabó's attempts to formulate a "third way," an ideological alternative to Nazism and communism, influenced the contemporary populist writers. Originally a medical doctor, László Németh (1901–1975) was one of the most prominent populists. His novels, such as *Mourning* (1936) and *Revulsion* (1947), abound with memorable female characters, whereas his social criticism dismisses Marxist socialism and capitalism and hopes for a utopian Hungarian society based on associations of small producers. Another esteemed populist prose writer was János Kodolányi (1899–1969), whose gloomy preoccupation with the dismal life of peasants in Hungarian society was reflected in his short stories such as *Darkness* (1922). As a young man he identified with socialist thought but later receded into an obsession with Hungarian history and championed his own brand of nationalism. One of the greatest names in twentieth century poetry (and a populist) was Gyula Illyés (1902–1983). His early volumes of poetry, "Heavy Earth" (1928), "Swathe of Aftermath" (1930), and "Under Soaring Skies" (1935) speak of the destitute lot of poor peasants, whereas his epic poems such as "Three Old Men" (1931) revived that genre. Illyés's noteworthy prose accomplishment, "The People of the Puszta" (1936), explores the lesser known customs of the peasants living on manor estates and contains autobiographical snippets, sociological ruminations, and historical analysis. With various degrees of intensity, Illyés managed to remain active on the Hungarian literary scene for half a century and retain a keen interest in public affairs.

Finally, the last important trend in interwar Hungarian literature was fashioned by those writers of the literary avant-garde who championed revolutionary social change. The most significant, genuinely original socialist writers of this group were Kassák and József. Born and raised in a working-class family, Lajos Kassák (1887–1967) joined the socialist movement as a young man, but later became disenchanted with its leaders. He was an accomplished poet, prose writer, and an organizer of literary life, as well as a lifelong advocate for the rights of the working class. During World War I, Kassák edited the periodical *The Action* (*Tett)*, at first advocating pacifism and anti-war sentiment and later showing revolutionary tendencies. After the fall of the Republic of Councils, the disappointed Kassák was forced into exile in Vienna, where he produced some of his best poetry. One such poem, "The Horse Dies and the Birds Fly Out" (1924), is full of surrealistic imagery, working-class slang, and his experiences relayed in his own unique style. Kassák's best prose work, *One Man's Life* (1927–1935), a revealing and candid story of his early life and career, is one of the best Hungarian autobiographies. Though class rhetoric was an important element of his

work, Kassák always expressed his allegiance to pure artistic self-expression and remains one of the foremost Hungarian proponents of abstract literature.

Attila József (1905–1937), the other prominent representative of the socialist avant-garde, came of age in the 1930s. He published his first volume of poetry, "The Beggar of Beauty" (1922), at the early age of 17 after a particularly hard childhood. His earlier poetry speaks with emotional candor of yearning for love and compassion for the destitute. In the 1930s, József joined the communist underground, later giving up on the movement, but remaining faithful to the ideals of the working class and idea of Marxism. He even advocated for the unification of the parties on the political Left against the looming threat of fascism. In his verse, József experimented with surrealism and expressionism early on, whereas his awareness of the universality of socialist ideals became more discernible in his later meditative poems, such as "Fell the Tree-Trunks!" (1931), "Night in the Slums" (1932), and "On the Outskirts of the City" (1933). A few years before his death, József developed a mental illness, but still managed to produce memorable verse. His last volume of poetry, "The Pain is Great" (1936), marries his social consciousness and disenchantment with the methods of the communists with his own intimate, even painful, personal experiences. József's prolific writing career came to an end when he took his own life by jumping in front of a train.

Post-War Years, Stalinist Period, 1956 and Post-revolutionary Revival

In the immediate aftermath of World War II, Hungarian literature and literary life recovered relative quickly. Many of the previously disheartened and exiled authors began publishing again in the newly established and reestablished periodicals, such as the *Response, New Moon*, and *Forum*. This revival of literary diversity was however short-lived. By 1950 the Communist Party had consolidated its gains and extended its grip over all segments of society, including literature. Control and soon repression started and the sanctioned literature became uniform and reflected the official party line. Suppressing different periodicals and nationalizing the publishing industry, as well as forming the official Writer's Union, enabled the systematic exclusion of all "non-approved" writers and Union non-members from literary life. The Writer's Union, its monthly review *The Star*, and József Révai became the de facto arbiters of who gets to be called a Hungarian writer. A former contributor to Kassák's avant-garde periodical, Révai became disenchanted with what he perceived as purposeless art and joined the communist movement. As a critic, he extolled those writers whose works of social realism showcased stereotypical socialist characters and presented a hopeful message for the

future of a socialist society. Much of such work was unsurprisingly shallow and predictable. In this period, Hungarian literature was thus reduced to mostly ideological writing, children's books, translations, and some nonfiction. This began to change with the influence of the "thaw" coming from the Soviet Union after Stalin's death in1953, in combination with the liberalization policies of Imre Nagy, resulting in the loosening of state controls over intellectual life in Hungary. His policies won Nagy a significant following among writers and journalists and caused a flare-up of literary activity. Once again in Hungarian history, writers found themselves at the forefront of revolutionary events, this time in 1956.

One of the most prominent of these revolutionary writers was Tibor Déry (1894–1977). Déry was active in the communist movement, but turned into a critic of the Rákosi regime by the mid-1950s. Having written a novel about the history of the working-class movement, whose content was judged as unacceptable by the authorities, Déry was impelled to rewrite it. His short story, *Niki, The Story of a Dog* (1956), was the culmination of his critical reflections on the life in Stalinist Hungary and Déry was sentenced to nine years in prison for conspiracy against the regime. He was released in 1960 and returned to literary life. In the final decades of his life Déry wrote about dogma, morality, and other universal themes in *The Excommunicator* (1965) and *Face to Face* (1967), as well as about more current and mundane topics in works such as *Imaginary Report About an American Pop Festival* (1971) and *The Boy With One Ear* (1975). His autobiography, *No Verdict* (1968), explores the role of art in the service of the Communist Party, and in a way serves as a reckoning of his years before the 1956 Revolution and his imprisonment. Another rebellious writer of the revolutionary period was Gyula Háy (1900–1975). Háy was primarily a playwright and, having spent a number of years in Germany and later in a Communist writers' colony in Moscow, he came to Hungary in 1945. He achieved fame with his article *Why Do I Dislike Comrade Kucsera?* (1956), which talks about a dislikable *apparatchik* as a symbol of the dysfunctional and unjust regime. He was arrested after the 1956 Revolution and sentenced to six years for incitement against the state. Released in 1960, Háy moved to Switzerland where he wrote his later works of note such as the historical comedy *The Horse* (1961) and his autobiography *Born in 1900* (1971).

Opposed to the authors critical of the Rákosi regime stood those writers whose lives, work, and reputation reflected the unyielding devotion to Stalinist Hungary, such as Béla Illés (1895–1974), Sándor Gergely (1896–1966), and József Lengyel (1896–1975). Though the 1956 revolution was squashed, the restrictions on literary life from the Stalinist period did not return. In the post-revolutionary period many of the populist and *Nyugat* writers began

publishing freely again, foreign literature became more accessible, the imprisoned writers were released, and various new periodicals appeared such as *New Writing*, *Life and Literature*, *Present Age*, *Our Days*, and many others. Socialist realism was no longer blindly enforced and pragmatism was instituted as the approach in regulating of Hungarian literary life. In other words, as long as they stayed away from open criticism of the party and Hungary's general sociopolitical orientation, the writers were left alone to express themselves as they see fit. Partly as a result of these circumstances and party because of the natural evolution of literary style, Hungarian poetry in the second part of the twentieth century became more about personal self-expression and less about revolutionary change and social criticism. One of the most notable poets of the period was Sándor Weöres (1913–1989). An innovative and compassionate poet, Weöres's earlier poetry reveals traces of the *Nyugat* generations and his epics based on ancient myths received acclaim in the pre-revolution years. He was repudiated and ignored in the immediate post-revolution years and began publishing again in the 1960s. Among his most important works was *Psyché* (1972), a volume of poems by an imaginary Hungarian poetess from the turn of the eighteenth to the nineteenth century showing Weöres's mastery of imagination and language. Among other renowned poets from this generation are János Pilinszky (1921–1981) whose seminal volume of poems, "On the Third Day" (1959) reveals an immediacy and intensity of his poetry, and Ágnes Nemes Nagy (1922–1991) whose poems stay away from intense personal experiences or emotions and tackle more universal themes instead. Two other poets of the newer generation left their mark on twentieth-century Hungarian poetry: Ferenc Juhász (1928–) and László Nagy (1925–1978). Of working-class peasant origin, Juhász's early work demonstrated his devotion to socialism but his most acclaimed poem *The Boy Changed into a Stag Clamors at the Gate of Secrets'* (1955) reveals the inventive imagery and visionary quality of his poetry. Also of peasant origin and an early proponent of socialism, Nagy's later poetry centered on the theme of love and included traditional, rural references.

Lasting post-revolutionary revival of Hungarian prose began with Magda Szabó (1917–2007), a distinguished Hungarian woman novelist. She began writing poetry after World War II, but was silenced during the Stalinist period. She resumed her literary activities again after the Revolution turning her focus to prose. Her first novel, *Fresco* (1958), was received with wide acclaim. Unforgettable female characters and intricately woven family relationships depicted in her novels made Szabó popular with the public, as well as the critics. Another notable prose writer of this period was Miklós Mészöly (1921–2001). His unique, complex, and challenging writing style, as well as the lack of traditional elements in his prose, such as plot and description,

comes through in his novels and short stories. Gyula Hernádi (1926–2005), another prominent prose author, was a scriptwriter well known for his fruitful collaborations with the renowned film director Miklós Jancsó (b. 1921). Other significant prose writers who left their mark on this period were Ferenc Karinthy (1921–1992), the son of the prominent *Nyugat* writer Frigyes Karinthy, with his novels *Spring Comes to Budapest* (1953) and *Epepe* or *Metropole* (1970), as well as Ferenc Sánta (1927–2008) and his explorations of morality in *Twenty Hours* (1964) and *The Fifth Seal* (1963).

Recent Literature

The second half of the twentieth century was a dynamic and productive period in Hungarian literature, which reared many accomplished and promising writers. Hence, this section is by no means an exhaustive or an inclusive review of recent prominent Hungarian writers. In the surge of poetic creativity of the 1970s, Dezső Tandori (1938–) emerged as a talented new poet. His earlier collections of poems, such as *"A Fragment for Hamlet"* (1968), *"Clarification of Something Fund"* (1973), and *The Ceiling and the Floor* (1976), are characterized by self-irony, brave experimentation, skilled and humorous use of language. In fact, early on, many critics hailed Tandori's poetry as groundbreaking. His later works, the likes of Celsius (1984) and *The Loss to Be Gained* (1988), established Tandori as a renowned poet of lyrical realism and inventive language use. He remains a prolific and appreciated poet, essayist and novelist and has rightfully earned the status of a living classic.

György Konrád (1933–), a novelist and essayist of international renown, enjoys an unequaled status among Hungarian intellectuals and writers. A sociologist by training, Konrád participated in the revolutionary events of the 1956, became a dissident in the Kádár era and got politically involved in the aftermath of 1989. His first novel, *The Case Worker* (1969), is a narrative meditation based on his experiences with and reflections on the bureaucracy under the Kádár regime, while in *The Loser* (1978), originally published in *samizdat*, Konrád explores life in Hungary from the 1950s to the 1954 revolution. A consummate Central European intellectual, Konrád, in his later novel *Stone Dial* (1994) and collection of essays *The Melancholy of Rebirth* (1995), reflects on the legacy of World War II and the communist past and scrutinizes the future of a post-communist society. Another renowned Hungarian author who came of age at the end of the twentieth century was Imre Kertész (1929–). Born in Budapest, Kertész was 14 when he, along with many other Hungarian Jews, was deported to Auschwitz and later to Buchenwald. After the liberation and the end of World War II, he returned to Hungary and began working as a journalist. During the 1980s, Kertész and his *oeuvre* were still not

widely recognized, but the 1990s and the end of communism brought him international literary renown. His first novel, *Fateless* (1975), recounts the experiences of a 18-year-old boy in a concentration camp, though Kertész denies that it is an autobiographical work. *Fiasco* (1988) and *Kaddish for a Child Not Born* (1990) continue Kertész's exploration of the different aspects of the Holocaust and its aftermath on people's ordinary, every-day lives, as well as the larger, civilizational questions. The two novels conclude the trilogy that Kertész began with *Fateless*. In 2002, Kertész won the Nobel Prize for literature, as the first Hungarian to do so, receiving broad acclaim and appreciation from literary audiences worldwide. He divides his time between Berlin and Budapest, but continues to write in Hungarian.

One of the best-known names in contemporary Hungarian literature is Péter Esterházy (1950–), a novelist educated as a mathematician and physicist. He is the descendent of one of the oldest and once upon a time powerful Hungarian aristocratic families. One of his recent novels *Celestial Harmonies* (2000) traces the lineage and the rise of the Esterházy family under Austria-Hungary, while in another, *Revised Edition* (2002), Esterházy tackles the revelation that his father was an informant of the communist secret police. Esterházy is the recipient of numerous international literary awards and is one of Hungary's most translated and widely published authors. Another notable Hungarian contemporary novelist, playwright, and essayist, Péter Nádas (1942–), was orphaned at 16, when he lost his mother to cancer and his father committed suicide. Nádas studied photography and journalism as a young man, worked as a journalist and editor in Budapest for years before quitting and moving to the countryside to devote himself to literature full time. *A Book of Memories* (1986) is Nádas's monumental psychological novel, which took over a decade to write and is the reason why he is often compared to Proust. The three-volume *Parallel Stories* (2005) is another novel of Nádas's decades in the making, and the end result is a powerful and experimental account of the stories of two families, a Hungarian one and a German one. The interaction of compromised integrity and personal responsibility existing under totalitarian regime remain one of Nádas's persistent subject matters. Some, and by no means all, of the other important authors of recent Hungarian literature are Péter Hajnóczy (1942–81), László Garaczi (1956–), Szilárd Borbély (1964–) and János Térey (1970–).

Notes

1. Tibor Klaniczay, József Szauder, and Miklós Szabolcsi, *History of Hungarian Literature*. Budapest: Corvina Press, 1964, 192–99.

8

Cinema

Like some other artistic movements, Hungarian cinema was born in a café. By the end of the nineteenth century Budapest was a thriving city, and its coffee houses were central to the exchange of ideas. Patrons would stop by to read the paper, negotiate a deal, listen to a song, or view a floor show, all at no extra charge. Akin to the Grand Café on the Boulevard des Capucines in Paris, which gave the first commercial performance of the Lumieres films, or Berlin and Rome cafés welcoming filmmakers, it is the Café Velence in Budapest where Hungarian cinema originated. "Mr. Becsi, the head-waiter, let down a clean sheet in the middle of the café—the guests could enjoy the film from both sides—so nobody need change his table—brought out the projection machine, which he had learned to operate, under the table he placed a waste-paper basket where the shown reel could be caught as it came through the machine, and the performance began," writes film historian István Nemeskürty.[1]

In addition to showing moving pictures, the Velence owners sold and repaired cameras, and as time went by, they designated a special room for showing movies. One did not have to buy coffee in order to watch movies in this special room; one only needed to pay an entrance fee. The café owner Mór Ungerleider and a former stage performer József Neumann founded Projectograph, the first Hungarian company to run a cinema and trade in films. Projectograph's movies were shot outdoors, in apartments, offices, or on the spot. These were the humble beginnings of Hungarian filmmaking, a history that would soon put Hungarian films on the map of world cinematography.

Movie theaters were a lucrative business, and other café owners also converted their places into cinemas. However, other proprietors had neither the experience nor the money to make films. Catering to public demand, cinema owners bought Italian, French, American, or Danish films, which were more attractive to the public. This certainly did not speed up the development of the Hungarian film production industry.

Most early films were no longer than one minute in length, and the footage usually included real-life events. The film program remaining from Kolozsvár's cinema in 1899 provides an impression of early films: *Republic Square in Paris*, *A Scene in Kovacs' Workshop*, *American Boxing*, *A Woman on a Trapeze*, *A Street Scene in Winter*, *Five Princesses at Rifle Practice*, *Bicyclists*, *Eccentric Drummers*, and *A Train Arrives*.

The Urania Scientific Society is credited with the first Hungarian-made feature film, *Dancing* (1901), directed by Béla Zsitkovszky (1867–1930). The film included 23 episodes from the history of dance, featuring the Japanese clog and the Hungarian czardas alike. Sadly, *Dancing* was destroyed by fire.

The first Hungarian film studio was built by Hunnia theater in 1912. Due to both the inexperience of Hunnia's managers and the business practices of Projectograph, the Hunnia studio shut down in a year. In fact, most film studios established in those early years had a short existence.

The film techniques of the time left much to be desired. Hungary had no equipment or film stock manufacturers of its own (the latter was mostly imported from the United States), few people could do camera repair and maintenance, and there was little knowledge about lighting effects, which halted film production in the winter.

As elsewhere in Europe, the first film directors were photographers, actors, theater directors, or journalists. The first true director from today's point of view was Mihály Kertész (1886–1962), known internationally as Michael Curtiz. He made cinema his life and was one of the first to put an emphasis on the role of the director. He strongly believed that an actor's accomplishment was owing to the success of the director whose concept of the whole harmonized the cast's performance.[2] Kertész directed Hungary's first feature film, *Today and Tomorrow* (1912). Issue 35 of the Motion Picture News ran the following advertisement:

"The First Hungarian Dramatic Art Film.
Monday
October 14
Will be a memorable day
in the history of Hungarian cinematography.
The first Hungarian film drama played by Hungarian actors, in a Hungarian setting, with a Hungarian subject will be presented on that day."[3]

Hollywood Screen Star Orson Welles, right, brings his latest film script "Paris by night," to be examined by British film magnate Sir Alexander Korda, left, who is staying aboard his yacht "Elsewhere" at Antibes Harbour on the French Riviera, June 12, 1953. (AP Photo.)

Curtiz went on to make as many films in Hungary between 1912 and 1918 as during his three decades in Hollywood.

As time went by, cinema-going became part of daily life, and cinema production turned into an industry. A number of melodramas and romances were produced at this time, most notably by Alfréd Deésy (1877–1961) and Jenő Janovics (1872–1945). A highly regarded literary journal, *Nyugat*, claimed that cinema was an art, a view that became accepted very soon, and a young journalist Sándor Korda (1893–1956), who later became renowned as Sir Alexander Korda, established a film column in the daily paper *Világ* and a cinema weekly *Pesti Mozi*. A critic, director, producer, and owner of a film studio, Korda made two dozen films in Hungary before moving to the

United States and finally settling in Great Britain. Unfortunately, only one of these films, *Man of Gold* (1918), survived in full.

In 1919 the Republic of Councils nationalized the Hungarian film industry. Thirty-one films were made in this short period of time. However, the Communist government was overthrown after four months, and the period of White Terror began, leading to a massive exodus of filmmakers. Directors Korda, Kertész, and Pál Fejös (1884–1960), later known as Paul Fejos; actors Peter Lorre (1904–1964), Béla Lugosi (1882–1956), Paul Lukas (1895–1971), and the actress Vilma Bánky (1898–1991); scriptwriter Lajos Biró (1880–1948), scriptwriter and film theoretician Béla Balázs (1884–1949) all left the country. This massive escape led to the decline of Hungarian film production and its virtual disappearance by the end of the 1920s. The industry stayed in decline until the middle of the 1930s.

One important novelty in the interwar years was the introduction of synchronized sound. Sound was first used in the film *The Jazz Singer* (1927) by Warner Bros. The first Hungarian "talkie" was *There is Only One Girl in the Whole World* (1930) by Béla Gaál (1893–1945). Even though it was planned initially as a silent movie, Béla Gaál included synchronized sound using the system devised by the Fox Corporation. The first full-fledged "talkie," however, was *The Blue Idol* (1931) by Lajos Lázár (1885–1936). The arrival of "talkies" helped the film industry out of the crisis.

In the 1930s, Hungarian film came under the influence of foreign movies, which flooded the market despite an attempt by the government to introduce protectionist measures. Hollywood-style productions with happy endings came to dominate the film production scene. Despite lack of depth, the movies were a mirror of social priorities, manners and ideals of the time.[4]

The most popular films of the decade were *Hyppolit, the Butler* (1931) directed by István Székely (1899–1979) and *The Dream Car* (1934) directed by Béla Gaál (1893–1944), both featuring the famous comedian Gyula Kabos (1887–1941). *Hyppolit, the Butler* was so popular that a remake of this comedy was made by Barna Kabay (b. 1948) and Katalin Petényi (b. 1941) in 1999. The social satire features a butler who happens to be superior to his masters. Having served the old aristocracy, he attempts to impose upper-class mores on his new employers, a nouveau-riche family.

The Dream Car, a version of the Cinderella theme, was a mix of popular lower middle-class comedy and the sentimentalism of Hollywood career stories. The film's success shaped the Hungarian movie industry of the second half of the decade: the public wanted more and more of "The Dream Cars" and directors responded to the demand. As a result, over 70 comedies produced in the time between 1934 and 1939 followed the pattern of *The Dream Car*.[5] Virtually all of these films featured the same set of actors: Pál Jávor

(1902–1959), Antal Páger (1899–1986), Imre Ráday (1905–1983), Jenő Törzs (1887–1946), and the comedian Gyula Kabos (1887–1941), who was a guarantee of any comedy's success. In 1939 Kabos emigrated for the United States where he failed to succeed and died in New York just two years after. No female actresses enjoyed the same level of popularity in Hungary, with possible exception of Katalin Karády (1910–1990), which might be explained by the fact that most cinema goers were women.[6]

Two films by Paul Fejos, who made an attempt to return to Hungary, *Spring Shower* (1932) and *The Judgement of the Lake* (1932), belong to the finest films of the decade. These films were noted for their explicit social criticism, which caused a negative reception by the government and forced Fejos to emigrate for good.

Another important film of the period is *Life on the Hortobagy* (1936), directed by the Austrian Georg Hoellering with the help of the Hungarian writer Zsigmond Móricz (1879–1942). The film is set in the Great Plain of Hungary and features the way of life of the herdsmen.

The number of films produced in this period was astonishing for the country's size and language, and therefore had a limited market. However, by this time several million Hungarians had emigrated to the United States, which made Hungarian producers work as much for Hungarian emigrees as for Hungarian movie theaters. By 1937 Hungary ranked fourth in film imports to the United States.[7] Cleveland had the largest Hungarian population at the time, and the cinema in Gordon Square, seating two thousand people, screened several Hungarian movies a day.[8]

The outbreak of World War II was followed by an unexpected increase in film production. The import of American films was banned in 1942. Hungary now produced 40 to 50 movies each year, predominantly comedies, dramas, and thrillers. The movies produced in this period were nationalistic and were subjected to strict censorship. One great film produced at this time was *People on the Alps* (1942) by István Szőts (1912–1998). At the time the film was subject to so much criticism from all sides that Szőts was able to make another film, *Song of the Cornfield*, only five years later. This time, the movie was banned by the government and Szőts left for Austria in 1957.

The classic *Somewhere in Europe* (1947) by Géza von Radványi (1907–1986) is emblematic of post–World War II Hungarian filmmaking.[9] The film shows the wanderings of a group of children orphaned by war. Driven by survival instincts, the children fight, cheat, and steal; they are chased and shot at. The location is deliberately not specified. One day they find home in a ruined castle and develop a bond with an elderly musician living there. Eventually the authorities give the old man a permission to use the castle as an orphanage, which symbolizes reconstruction and the foundation for a

new future. In addition to location shooting, Géza von Radványi used archive footage of the war.

From 1948 to 1989 the state exercised full control over film production and distribution. The film industry was nationalized in 1948, and the so-called “houses of culture” sprawled throughout the country.[10] Graduation from the Academy for Theater and Film Art, established in 1948, became a condition to working as a director. Until 1959, directors could offer their services to only one studio, Hunnia (later called Mafilm). Socialist realism with its clear division line between “good” and “evil” predominated. *Treasured Earth* (1948) by Frigyes Bán (1902–1969) is one of the better creations of the time.

The government control eased after the death of Joseph Stalin (1879–1953), immediately leading to the production of a few worthwhile films, among them *The Birth of Menyhert Simon* (1954) by Zoltán Várkonyi (1912–1979) and Károly Makk (b. 1925), *Springtime in Budapest* (1955) by Felix Máriássy (1919–1975), *Merry-Go-Round* (1955) and *Professor Hannibal* (1956) by Zoltán Fábri (1917–1994), and *The Bitter Truth* (1956–1986) by Zoltán Várkonyi. The latter remained banned for 30 years because it addressed neglect and corruption by officials.

As true for the country’s history as a whole, the 1956 Uprising left a strong mark on Hungarian cinema. The establishement of the Béla Balázs Studio in 1959 allowed aspiring filmmakers to produce experimental short films. This, alongside the influence of neorealism, the French Nouvelle Vague, and the films of Ingmar Bergman (1918–2007), Federico Fellini (1920–1993), and Michelangelo Antonioni (1912–2007), led to the emergence of a new generation of directors. This generation, aware of the developments in the world cinema, inaugurating the grand period of Hungarian film.

From 1963 to 1989 Hungarian cinema achieved international success. The government supported and actively promoted the cinema industry. Four more studios were established in 1963. They were led by prominent filmmakers rather than bureaucrats. In the early 1960s, a certain amount of creative freedom of emerged, though scripts were still censored and some films were banned. Miklós Jancsó (b. 1921) made an international breakthrough and was probably at his peak in the 1960s with his films *The Round-Up* (1965), *The Red and the White* (1967), and *Red Psalm* (1971). István Szabó (b. 1938) came up with *The Age of Daydreaming* (1964) and *Father* (1966). Ferenc Kósa (b. 1937) won the award for Best Director at 1967 Cannes Festival for his movie *Ten Thousand Days* (1967) and Sándor Sára (b. 1933) directed *The Upthrown Stone* (1969), both focusing on collectivization. The film *Love* (1971), directed by Károly Makk (b. 1925), tells a story of a young Hungarian woman who tries to protect her frail mother-in-law, whose son is in prison, from the bitter truth by composing and reading letters supposedly

written by her son. The courageous film *Cold Days* (1966) by András Kovács (b. 1925) deals with the massacre of Jewish and Serb civilians by Hungarian soldiers in Novi Sad in 1942.

Sindbad (1971) by Zoltán Huszárik (1931–1981) depicts time and memory in an unusual way. Gábor Bódy's (1946–1985) final feature film *The Dog's Night Song* (1983) gives an unusual portrayal of everyday reality and features the director in the lead role.

In the 1980s, decreasing state support forced Hungarian directors to enter into co-productions with other countries. However, most of these co-productions did not become successful. István Szabó's *Mephisto* (1981), *Colonel Redl* (1985), and *Hanussen* (1988), which garnered enormous international success, were rather an exception.

The swift political changes of 1989 led to the weakening of the role of the state and the end of the state's control of the film industry. At the same time, the transformation resulted in diminishing state subsidies for film production. In order to keep making movies, directors needed to adapt and develop entrepreneurial skills. Nevertheless, most artists had difficulties adapting to this new reality. The privatization of the film industry was irregular. As elsewhere in ex-Soviet bloc, Hollywood productions flooded Hungarian movie theaters, video rental services, and television channels. Whereas court metrage films could still be shot cheaply, the number of domestic feature film productions dropped. Many directors failed to adapt to the free market and others turned to commercial productions. As a consequence, sex, violence, and crime filled the movie theaters. Only a levy on television profits aimed at supporting the film industry and the creation in 1991 of the Motion Picture Foundation of Hungary, which provided subsidies on a competitive basis, helped set the Hungarian film industry back on track. Some notable productions of the time are *My Twentieth Century* (1989) by Ildikó Enyedi (b. 1955), *Child Murders* (1993) by Ildikó Szabó (b. 1951), *Woyzeck* (1994) by János Szász (b. 1958), *Passion* (1998) by György Fehér (1939–2002), *Bolse Vita* (1996) by Ibolya Fekete (b. 1951) and *Dollybirds* (1997) by Péter Timár (b. 1950).

Women in Hungarian Cinema

Although socialist Hungary supported women's participation in professional life, women filmmakers have been struggling to find their place in the movie industry. Even though Hungarian women have been well represented in filmmaking as actresses, screenwriters, costume designers, and critics, the number of women directors has remained low.

Among those who broke the "glass ceiling" for women in film directing are Márta Mészáros (b. 1931), Lívia Gyarmathy (b. 1932), Judit Elek (b. 1937),

Ildikó Enyedi (b. 1955), Ildikó Szabó (b. 1951), and Ibolya Fekete (b. 1951). Most of these extraordinarily accomplished women would not, however, view themselves as feminists, which is a typical sentiment of women directors in Central and Eastern Europe. Márta Mészáros, whose films deal mainly with identifiably "female" concerns, rejects the feminist title that she is often given.[11] Director Lívia Gyarmathy addresses social issues; Judit Elek focuses on anti-Semitism. A continuous theme in Ildikó Szabó's work is the Roma. Ibolya Fekete's conscious choice to focus on men's concerns is a refusal to limit her oeuvre to the artificially constructed boundaries of gender.

Women were frequently portrayed in Hungarian cinema by male directors. In fact, the depiction of a mother struggling "between the private and the communal"[12] was a major theme in socialist Hungary's film. Regrettably, the fast transition to capitalism has had an adverse effect on the portrayal of women in Hungarian films. One-dimensional characters have replaced strong women, and the depiction of women is focused primarily on their sexuality.

Jews and Roma

Although Hungary is home to large Jewish and Roma populations, relatively few films have dealt directly with these two communities. István Szabó's *A Taste of Sunshine* (1999), a sweeping epic of a Jewish Hungarian family, is arguably the best portrayal of the fortunes and misfortunes of several generations of Jews in Hungary. Szabó's *Father* (1966) and *Colonel Redl* (1985) also address the question of Jewish identity.

In the 1990s, Miklós Jancsó made many documentaries about Roma and Jews. His documentary, *The Message of Stones* (1994), shows Jewish monuments in neighboring countries and synagogues now used for other purposes. The documentary *Remnants* portrays the last Jewish couple living in a village in Máramaros (Maramures) and their Roma friend.

Many of the films made about Roma are documentaries depicting their traditions and customs. The most notable films representing the life of Roma are *Gypsies* (1962) by Sándor Sára (b. 1933), *Earthly Paradise* (1983) by Pál Schiffer (1939–2001), *The Forest is Green, the Mountain is Green, Luck Comes and Luck Goes* (1996) by Miklós Jancsó (b. 1921), and *You are Crying for Hungary, Cry Then!* (1999–2002) by Béla Szobolits (b. 1946).

However, no film like *A Taste of Sunshine* exists about the Roma. Traditionally, the inclusion of Roma into feature films was meant to bring a folksy touch and, as a result, the lives of Roma were not well represented in feature films. One film about the Roma that stands out is *Child Murders* (1993) by Ildikó Szabó, a macabre story of social outcasts. Zsolt is a 12-year-old boy caring after his alcoholic grandmother in their tiny apartment in Budapest. Teased by his

peers, Zsolt befriends Juli, a young pregnant Roma woman who ran away from a juvenile center and lives in an abandoned railway car. After Juli has a miscarriage, she and Zsolt throw the body into the Danube. Later Juli commits suicide. Another notable film is *Paramicha, or Glonci the Rememberer* (1993) by Julia Szederkenyi (b. 1963), which received the Best First Film Award at the Hungarian Film Festival. *Paramicha* is a spoof documentary featuring a poor old Roma man named Glonci as the artist's other self.

Documentary

Hungarian film industry began to produce increasing numbers of documentary films after World War II. Documentaries made prior to the war were mostly travelogues or essays featuring various aspects of Hungarian industry. Following the war, the government supported the production of documentaries with instructional value. These films praised socialist values, collectivization, and the Party and were closely related to Social Realist feature films. In the two decades following World War II, Hungarian documentaries were strongly influenced by the Soviet film industry. Some Hungarian directors were trained in the Soviet Union.

The situation slightly changed in the 1960s when the approach to making documentaries became less dogmatic, and directors started examining the past. The Béla Balázs Studio produced some important documentaries during this decade, such as *Dangerous Corner* (1961) by Péter Bokor (b. 1924) and József Moldoványi, and *Éva A. 5614* (1964) by Lázsló Nádasy. Both films focused on human destinies during World War II. Zoltán Huszárik's *Elegy* (1965), often called a *film poem*, focuses on a cycle of life and death of the horse, showing the horse in the past as a free animal and ending at slaughterhouses. The film starts a new era in visual thinking in Hungarian cinema. *The Educational Series* is a fusion between documentary and fiction. It is a complex sociological panorama which focuses on the life of a Hungarian family and deals with the daily social problems the family faces.

The Budapest School in the 1970s produced many documentaries and the so-called "pseudodocumentaries" "in which an actual incident was recreated using none-actors whose own lives resembled those of the original people involved."[13] The most notable pseudo-documentaries are *Film Novel* (1977) by István Dárday (b. 1940) and *Family Nest* (1979) by Béla Tarr (b. 1955). A few directors turned back to the 1950s in the subject matter: Pál Gábor (1932–1987) in his *Angi Vera* (1978), Pál Sándor (b. 1939) in *Daniel Takes a Train* (1983), Péter Gothár (b.1947) in *Time Stands Still* (1982), and Márta Mészáros's first diary film *Diary for My Children* (1984). Károly Makk deals with lesbianism in *Another Way* (1982) and Zsolt Kézdi-Kovác (b. 1936)

addresses incest in *Forbidden Relations* (1983). Several important documentary films were produced in the 1980s and 1990s, dealing with the social tranformation: *The Factory is Ours I-II* (1993) by Tamás Almási (b. 1948), *Welcome to Hungary!* (1992) by Judit Kóthy, *Chinese in Hungary* (1992) by Tamás Tolmár (b. 1950). Some recent productions are a documentary about prostitution *Slave Market II* (2003) by Kriszta Bodis (b. 1967), a historical film *My Castle, My Shelter* (2003) by Szilveszter Siklósi (b. 1944), and a portrayal of businessmen in *So What, We're Capitalists* (2003) by Ágnes Sós.

Animation

Hungary's animation industry dates back to 1914 when István Kató-Kiszely produced a cartoon using paper cutouts. The art of animation was advanced by the school of advertisement and proportion of Sándor Bortnyik (1893–1976). The school brought together János Halász (1912–1995), Felix Kassowitz, and Gyula Macskássy (1912–1972), widely regarded as the father of Hungarian animation. The three formed a studio and began making promotional cartoons, among others, *Family Coffee Substitute*; an advertisement of the herbal liqueur Unicum *Lucky Jim*; and promotion of Tungsram light bulbs *Glowing Love*. István Volker experimented with mixing live acting and cartoon animation.

Even though a Cartoon and Puppet department was established at the Newsreel and Documentary Studio, a real breakthrough came when Macskássy established an animation studio at Pannonia, which brought together animators, designers, and artists. The first colored animation, *The Little Cockerel's Diamond Coin*, appeared in 1951. Other notable productions by Pannonia's animation studio are *Pencil and Eraser* (1960), *The Duel* (1960), *The Red-Spotted Ball* (1961), *Passion* (1964), and *Frakk* (1971, 1972, 1978). Twenty years into its existence, Pannonia employed 23 directors and 150 animators, designers, and cameramen.[14]

A new generation of animators emerged in the 1970s: György Kovásznai (1934–1983), Attila Dargay (1927–2009), Marcell Jankovich (b. 1941), and Sándor Reisenbüchler (1935–2004). Dargay produced the first Hungarian full-length animation, *Mattie the Gooseboy* (1976), which ran 77 minutes. The International Organization of Cartoonists set up its headquarters in Budapest. New studios opened in Kecskemét and Pécs. The 1980s were perhaps the most successful. Ferenc Rófusz (b. 1946), Csaba Varga (b. 1945), Mária Horváth (b. 1952), and Szabolcs Szabó (1927–2003) won numerous prizes. Rofusz received the Academy Award for *The Fly* in 1981. Today Hungarian animation is particularly acclaimed for the quality of hand-drawing techniques.

After 1989 state subsidies for animation were almost fully withdrawn and Pannonia fragmented. The current umbrella organization, Hungarian Cartoon, raises funds from abroad, especially from the European Union. The bi-annual Kecskemét Animation Film Festivals (KAFF), established in 1985, consists of two parallel festivals: the festival of Hungarian animation films and the international festival of European animation cinema and television feature films.

HUNGARIAN FILMMAKERS

Film comes alive through the vision of directors. Hungary has produced a number of remarkable directors that have achieved remarkable international acclaim.

Miklós Jancsó (b. 1921)

Miklós Jancsó studied law, ethnography, and art history before entering Budapest's Academy of Dramatic and Film Art and embarking on a career in filmmaking. Jancsó's best-known films are noted for a distinctive approach to montage editing: lengthy camera movements, long sequence shots, and stark black-and-white photography. His central theme is the conflict between oppressors and oppressed, and most of his films portray different moments in Hungarian history, or human destinies often using historic events as a backdrop. In the 1980s, Jancsó's films became more self-referential and he even appeared in his films as himself.[15]

The epic films *The Round-Up* (1966), *The Red and the White* (1967), and *Silence and Cry* (1968) received particularly high critical acclaim. The *Guardian's* film critic Derek Malcolm wrote: "When *The Round-Up*, his third film, came to London in 1965, the broadsheet critics almost dropped their pens in surprise. Here was a deeply serious, decidedly uncamp and certainly not musically-minded middle European Busby Berkeley, who made formal patterns on the screen with humans and horses in order to illustrate the betrayals of his country's history."[16] *The Round-Up* gives an account of the oppression of a group of Magyar freedom fighters imprisoned in a fortress in the Great Plain. *The Red and the White* is set during the Russian civil war of 1918 to 1919, with a focus on the role of Hungarian volunteers helping the Bolsheviks to fight the White counter-revolutionaries. *Silence and Cry* portrays Hungary in the aftermath of the short-lived Communist government in 1919.

Among Jancsó's works are also *Cantata* (1963), *My Way Home* (1965), *The Confrontation* (1969), *Winter Sirocco* (1969), *Agnus Dei* (1971), *The Red Psalm* (1971), and *Hungarian Rhapsody* (1979). Jancsó also made several

productions in Italy, using Italian locations, casts, and subject matter. Among his Italian films are *The Pacifist* (1970), *Technique and Rite* (1971), *Rome Wants another Caesar* (1973), an Italian-Yugoslav production *Private Vices, Public Virtues* (1976). The Hungarian-Italian co-production *The Tyrant's Heart* (1981) was shot in Hungary with a predominantly Hungarian cast.

István Szabó (b. 1938)

István Szabó is perhaps the internationally best-known Hungarian director. Szabó tells stories, in which great ideas clash in a hostile or simply mundane world and the human condition as a succession of compromises is a central theme. He was awarded an Oscar for *Mephisto* in 1981. His Canadian co-production *A Taste of Sunshine* (1999), an English-language film, won European and American film awards.

A graduate of the Academy for Theater and Film Art in Budapest, where he was taught by Félix Máriássy (1919–1975), Szabó was first noticed for his short films, particularly for *Concert*. In 1964 he directed his first feature film, *The Age of Day-Dreaming*, which received both domestic and international acclaim and prizes. This is a story of the yearning and enthusiasm of four young Budapest students moving into adulthood.

The film *Father* (1966) shows the national trauma of postwar years and, according to Szabó himself, is the autobiography of a generation. The young boy Takó is obsessed with his father, who recently passed away. Takó turns the father into a myth, imagining him as a partisan fighting the fascists, and fantasizing that his father's portrait is carried by the crowds in May Day parades. Moving into maturity, Takó visits his father's village, where he discovers that his father was a decent but a rather ordinary man.

Love Film (1970) shows the drama caused by the events of 1956 and the dilemma that many Hungarians faced after the success of the counter-revolution: to stay in their homeland or to leave. Szabó looks at the consequences of people's choices. The film tells the story of a young man Jancsi and his relationship with Kata, with whom he separates unwillingly in 1956. Jancsi remains in Hungary and Kata leaves for France. When later Jancsi visits his loved one, they see how much they have grown apart. Neither of the two is willing to leave the country where they live.

In the 1980s, Szabó starts to use international actors and actresses and he works on co-productions and generally targets international audiences. Three extremely successful films appeared, all starring the Austrian actor Klaus Maria Brandauer (b. 1944): *Mephisto* (1981), *Colonel Redl* (1985), and *Hanussen* (1988). These epic films are noted for their realism, elaborate settings, and the use of international cast.

Mephisto won the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language film and is Szabó's greatest international success. The film is based on a novel by Klaus Mann (1906–1949), and tells a story of the writer's one-time brother-in-law, outstanding German actor Gustaf Gründgens (1899–1963). The main character, aspiring actor Hendrik Höfgen, is a vulnerable and aggressive personality. Höfgen joins the prestigious State Theater in Berlin and socializes in different milieus, from left-wing cabaret to upper-class soirees. He takes the part of Mephistopheles in Goethe's *Faust* and becomes obsessed with the character and has his greatest triumph in this role. Blinded by ambition, the actor enters into compromises with the Nazis. He sacrifices his wife, his friend, and his mistress.

Colonel Redl deals with the interplay of politics and moral choice. The film is based on several literary sources, including works by Stefan Zweig (1881–1942) and John Osborne (1929–1994). Redl is born to a poor family in Galicia in the Austro-Hungarian Empire but, due to his intelligence and adaptability, he makes a career in the army. The way to the top is full of lies: Redl invents an artistocratic background and hides his homosexuality. Eventually, he becomes a scapegoat and is forced to commit suicide.

Hanussen is another story about talent exposing someone to the destructive interest of those in power. The main character, Schneider, is wounded and treated by a doctor, who discovered in him a remarkable ability for hypnosis and clairvoyance. Schneider moves to Vienna and Karlsbad and becomes famous. He then moves to Berlin, where he gets drawn into the turbulent world of politics. Finally, the Nazis see that he might be dangerous, and do away with him.

Other important works by István Szabó are *25, Fireman's Street* (1973); *Budapest Tales* (1976); *Confidence* (1979); *Meeting Venus* (1991); *Dear Emma* (1992); and *Sunshine* (1999). Szabó has won numerous international awards, including the Academy Award, the British Academy Award, the Visconti Award, the Silver Bear in Berlin, the Jury Prize at the Cannes Film Festival, and the Grand Prix of Moscow Film Festival. He was nominated for the Academy Award four times. Apart from films, Szabó directed several operas and theater plays in various European cities.

Zoltán Fábri (1917–1994)

Zoltán Fábri was one of the best directors in postwar Hungary and had one of the most spectacular careers among Hungarian filmmakers. For many years, he was the country's most acclaimed director and the best-known representative of Hungarian cinema abroad. For almost a decade, he was artistic director of the Hunnia Film Studio. In 1958 he became president of

the Hungarian Cinematographers' and Television Artists' Association, a position he held for 23 years.

In his works he managed to portray the complexity of life while staying within the limits acceptable to the authorities. Fábri's first important feature was the film *Fourteen Lives Saved* (1954), a dramatic account of a mine disaster with skillful technique and deep psychological insight. His *Merry-Go-Round* (1955) is one of the gems of Hungarian cinema. It tells a story of a farmer's daughter who falls in love with a young man working in a farmers' co-operative. Attached to his own land, the farmer tries to convince his daughter to marry someone else. She resists. In the end, her father joins the co-operative. *Professor Hannibal* (1956) tells the story of an individual called to extreme nationalism in the 1920s.

Several of Fábri's productions are adaptations of contemporary Hungarian novels. Among these films are *Anna* (1958), *141 Minutes from the Unfinished Sentence* (1974), and the Ocsar-nominated Hungarian-American co-production *The Boys of Paul Street* (1968), based on a youth novel by Ferenc Molnár (1878–1952). World War II is the central theme in his films *The Last Goal* (1961), *The Toth Family* (1969), and *The Fifth Seal* (1975).

Károly Makk (b. 1925)

Károly Makk joined Hunnia Film Studio in 1944 and worked with Géza von Radványi on *Somewhere in Europe* (1947). Since his directorial debut with the comedy *Liliomfi* (1954), Makk produced many heterogenous films in a variety of genres. His works are noted for their dynamic, well-constructed plot.

The House Under The Rocks (1958) is a drama portraying a man, Ferenc, who returns from war to find his wife dead and his son and house cared for by his hunchbacked sister-in-law, Tera, who wants to keep control of the household as well as of Ferenc. However, Ferenc falls in love with Zsuzsa and marries her, but Tera attempts suicide and forces the couple to take her in. Tera makes the couple's life unbearable and in the end, Ferenc pushes her to her death from a rock above the house. Tera is the embodiment of the past—the past that haunts.

Makk's international breakthrough came with the deeply moving story *Love* (1971), which won the Hungarian Film Critics Award and the Special Jury Prize at Cannes. The main character, János, becomes a political prisoner in the 1950s. In order to protect his sick mother, his wife pretends that he happily lives in the United States, and she writes letters under his name and reads them aloud.

His film *Another Way* (1982) was the first Eastern European film to address lesbianism. The film is based on a semi-autobiographical novella by Erzsébet

Galgóczi (1930–1989) and portrays Éva, a female journalist and a lesbian who tries to survive in a hostile social environment. In the end, Éva breaks and commits suicide by approaching a border with barbed wire fences and disregarding the warning of the guards who shoot her.

The other best-known works by Makk are the comedy *A Very Moral Night* (1977) portraying life in a whorehouse, the drama *The Deadly Game* (1982), and the political drama *Hungarian Requiem* (1990), which deals with the aftermath of the 1956 uprising. The three productions point once again to the highly heterogeneous character of Makk's oeuvre.

Pál Sándor (b. 1939)

Pál Sándor is an original director, a long-time teacher of the Theater and Film Academy, actor, and the founder of the production firm Filmstreet. Since 2003 he has been the Managing Director of Hunnia Filmstudio, the largest film production company in Hungary. Pál Sándor holds the most prestigious Hungarian film awards, such as the Kossuth Prize, the Béla Balázs Prize, and the Outstanding and Excellent Artist Award, along with 24 international awards, such as the Silver Bear from Berlin, the Fipresci Prize from Cannes, the Silver Hugo from Chicago, and the Critics' Prize from Karlovy Vary.

Sándor's feature films include *Clowns on the Wall* (1968), *A Strange Role* (1976), *Daniel Takes a Train* (1983), *Love Emilia!* (1970), *Sarah, My Dear* (1971), *Football of the Good Old Days* (1973), *Salomon and Stock Show* (1981), *Deliver Us from Evil!* (1978), *Miss Arizona* (1988), and *Noah's Ark* (2007).

Clowns on the Wall is a story of coming of age, intergenerational conflict, and first love. Three boys in their teens hide from the rain in a house at Lake Balaton. Startled by the sudden return of the owners, the boys try to flee but one of them, Kiki, gets stuck in the larder. While Kiki is waiting for his chance to run away, scenes from his memory keep flashing through his mind. These are the scenes of farewells and reunions, the scenes of his first romantic date and his first rebellion against the world of grown-ups. Kiki's pals come back to pick him up in the morning, and the three teens continue their holidays.

Football of the Good Old Days tells the story of Ede Minarik, a laundry owner in early twentieth-century Pest. In dire need of a team, Minarik dreams of establishing a soccer team that would make it into the top league. To achieve this dream, Minarik fights against the whole world: the referees, stooges, bailiffs, and even the players. All of a sudden, the goalkeeper of his team is lured away before the decisive game. However, as Minarik needs a team and he never gives up, he starts everything all over again.

A Strange Role is set in 1919, after the defeat of the Hungarian Soviet Republic. János Kövesi, a persecuted communist, tries to escape by disguising

himself as a woman and applying for a job in a sanatorium. Under a fake name, he plans an escape, assisted by Nurse Zsófi. However, right-wing extremists murder Zsófi, and János has to also take another wanted communist across the border. While waiting, János takes care of patients and falls in love with an Italian woman. In order to protect his female identity, Kövesi has to kill. Soon after, he and his comrade are assassinated in their sleep by their persecutors.

Sándor's most recent feature film, *Noah's Ark*, portrays Ede Stock, an old Budapest resident raising his grandchild all by himself. He signs up to participate in a TV show where he can win five million forints. The apartment block, where residents hated each other, unites in the support to Ede Stock. Stock wins and rides away on a Harley Davidson into infinity.

Márta Mészáros (b. 1931)

Márta Mészáros was born in Budapest and raised in the Soviet Union. Her father, László Mészáros (1905–1945), was a famous sculptor who vanished into the gulag in 1938. Soon after that, her mother died of typhoid. Márta Mészáros returned to Hungary in 1946 but then moved back to study filmmaking in the Soviet Union's top film school, VGIK. One distinct feature of her oevre is that its subject matter is largely based on her past.

Having started her career as a documentarist, Mészáros made her first feature, *The Girl*, in 1968. In this film she portrays a young orphan girl who traces her mother, only to learn that she is an embarrassment to this woman. *The Girl* establishes a pattern for many of Mészáros's movies: concern for the world of women and their place in Hungarian society, low-toned and unobtrusive in manner, and centered on the relations between a daughter and her parents.

Adoption (1975), which won the Golder Bear at the Berlin Film Festival, portrays a widow, Kata, an older woman working at a furniture factory. Kata would like to have a baby but her lover, Jóska, who is married to another woman and has two children, attempts to dissuade her. One day Kata meets Anna, a young girl from the institution for children at risk. They become close friends and, although Anna refuses to be adopted by Kata, the older woman takes an active part in Anna's life. Her conviction to adopt a child only becomes stronger through these experiences. The film ends with Kata walking towards the bus with a little girl that she decides to adopt from an orphanage.

The four semi-autobiographic diary films are widely considered the highlight of Márta Mészáros's career: *Diary for My Children* (1982), *Diary for My Loves* (1987),*Diary for My Father and Mother* (1990), and *Little Vilma—The Last Diary* (1999). These films portray the life of Juli Kovács, whose character is partly based on the director.

Diary for My Children (1984), an acute portrayal of the Stalinist era, won the Special Jury Prize at Cannes. Juli, a teenage orphan, returns to postwar Budapest, where she meets her grandfather's younger sister, Magda Egri, a successful figure in the new, communist Hungary and a Stalinist loyalist. Magda works as a prison officer. Juli rejects Magda's efforts to bring her in the Communist Party fold, and sneaks off to the cinema. She befriends János, a former friend of Magda, and his handicapped son, András. In this first diary film, Juli keeps asking questions about her father and other relatives but remains unaware of her father's fate.

Juli only discovers the truth in the second film, *Diary for My Loves*. Just like the director, Juli enters the Moscow Film School, VGIK, and the action alternates between the two capitals. It is in Moscow that she learns about the Uprising of 1956. *Diary for My Mother and Father* takes Juli back to Budapest. Rejecting the possibility of fleeing to Austria, Juli and János remain in Hungary. János is arrested, tried, and executed. *Little Vilma—The Last Diary* takes Juli back to Kyrgyzstan, where she spent her childhood years. Here she tries to find out the truth about her father's death. The director's granddaughter, Cleo Ladányi (b. 1987), plays the young girl.

The other films by Márta Mészáros include *Nine Months* (1976), *The Two of Them* (1978), *Just Like at Home* (1978), *On the Move* (1979), *The Heiress* (1980), and *Mother and Daughter* (1982).

Judit Elek (b. 1937)

A graduate of the Academy for Theater and Film Art, Judit Elek made her first works for the Béla Balázs Studio. Elek was influenced by the leading figures of the New Wave: Francois Truffaut (1932–1984) and Jacques Rivette (b. 1928). Elek's films are rich in visual appeal and drama.

Judit Elek's first feature, *The Lady from Constantinople* (1969), portrays an old lady who wants to exchange her spacious apartment for a smaller place, only to learn that one cannot escape loneliness by simply moving to another place. *Maria's Day* (1984) is a countryhouse drama portraying the relatives of the poet and revolutionary Sándor Petőfi after his death at the Battle of Segesvár. The family, living a comfortable and dull life, lives in a shadow of the revolutionary poet and suffers from the burden of expectations. The poet's son, Zoltán, is, in a way, the quintessence of this degeneration: at the age of 18, he is a syphilitic, drunken gambler. Elek is particularly apt at portraying female relationships, such as the love-hate relationship of the sisters, Júlia and Mária.[17]

Memoirs of a River (1989) is arguably Elek's best-known film. It tells the story of the trial at Tiszaeszlár in 1882 from a Jewish perspective. After a girl's body is found in the river Tisza, the woodcutters are arrested and under

torture make false confessions that the girl fell, victim of a Jewish ritual at Passover. Eventually they withdraw their statements and the charges against the Jews are dropped but they remain persecuted and many of them leave for America.

Elek's oeuvre includes the films *A Hungarian Village* (1974), *A Commonplace Story* (1975), *Maybe Tomorrow* (1980), and *Awakening* (1995).

Péter Gothár (b. 1947)

Gothár studied agriculture and catering, made a name as a still photographer, worked in television and as a theater stage manager.[18] He directed over 20 feature films, fiction with political or social motives, where reality blends with fantasy. His first feature, *A Priceless Day* (1979), gives an account of housing problems encountered by many Hungarians, and the resulting distress. *Time Stands Still* (1981), which some consider Gothár's best feature film, is an account of adolescence and the 1956 events. *Just Like America* (1987) is set in the streets of the Big Apple, and portrays the life of Frigyes who, after arriving in New York from Hungary, gives up family life to be a street bum. *Melodrama* (1991) gives an account of Hungary's involvement in the Prague Spring events, when Hungarian troops assisted the Soviet army in suppressing the uprisal. *The Outpost* (1995) is a political drama set in Eastern Europe in the 1980s.

Béla Tarr (b. 1955)

Béla Tarr is one of the most influential Hungarian film directors. His first three films—the epic *Family Nest* (1979), *The Outsider* (1982), and *The Prefab People* (1982)—are portrayals of people in hard circumstances, often socially marginalized. *Family Nest* features the trademarks of the Budapest School—handheld cameras, black-and-white photography, a lot of improvisation, and the use of amateur actors. *The Autumn Almanac* (1985) shows an apartment of an old woman whose family is waiting for her to die. *Damnation* (1988) is a bleak film portraying a drunk's affair with a married night club singer. The epos about post-communist Hungary, *Satan's Tango* (1994), is seven hours and fifteen minutes long. Lengthy camera takes allow scenes to progress. Like his other films, *Satan's Tango* is grim; it portrays a group of people on a run-down state farm, the consequences of a crime, and betrayal. His next film, *Werckmeister Harmonies* (2000), is an international production which, just like the previous two films, is based on the work of László Krasznahorkai (b. 1954). *Satan's Tango* and *Werckmeister Harmonies* are cult films, even though the slow pace and the bleak atmosphere of some of his movies makes them less appealing to the general public.

Jury member, Hungarian director Bela Tarr, answers a question during the official presentation of the international jury of the 55th International Film Festival of Locarno, on Friday, August 2, 2002, in Locarno, Switzerland. (AP Photo/Keystone, Martial Trezzini.)

Hungarian Film Industry Today

Hungary's most important national film festival is the Budapest Hungarian Film Week, established in 1965. Initially, the festival was held in Pécs. In 1983 it moved to Budapest, where it is still held annually in the first week of February, immediately before the beginning of Berlinale. Since its inception, this showcase of the best of Hungarian production has been attracting more and more international visitors. Another festival aspiring to become a major Central European film event is CineFest, established in 2004. CineFest takes place in the northern Hungarian city of Miskolc.

In recent years, Hungarian cinema has experienced a revival, particularly after the passing of the new film law. The exponential growth in domestic productions has trickled down into the programs of international film festivals. In the past 15 years, Hungarian films have been the most represented in Cannes after Russian productions among Eastern European countries, and were the second most popular in French cinemas.[19]

Hungarian audiences still have a strong preference for foreign films. In 2009, the market share of local films was at 10 percent, with 88 percent of the market still taken by U.S. productions.[20] Although James Cameron's (b. 1954) *Avatar* (2009) alone sold more than one million tickets in Hungary, only two to three Hungarian films pass 100,000 admissions each year.[21] The most successful local production in 2009 was the musical feature *Made in Hungaria* by Gergely Fonyó (b. 1966). Set in 1963 Hungary, the film tells the story of Miki, whose family returns to communist Hungary after spending a few years in the United States. Miki has to adapt to the new setting and win back his childhood sweetheart. *Made in Hungaria* is a humorous and nostalgic excursion into Hungary's recent past. Other recent Hungarian productions that brought people to the cinema are *Polygamy* (2009) by Dénes Orosz (b. 1977), *Bilbiotheque Pascal* (2010) by Szabolcs Hajdu (b. 1972), and *Question in Details* (2010) by Zsombor Dyga (b. 1975).

Still, the Hungarian film industry is facing some challenges. Even though strong support comes from the government, filmmakers would like more funding. In addition, there is a divide between government spending on the film industry and the still-low popularity of Hungarian films inside the country. The majority of movie theaters are outdated, and some show films only on weekends or once a day.

In its efforts to become an international film hub, Hungary initiated the Korda Studios project, an international center of excellence in filmmaking. As the studios' website reads, "Prepare to adjust your focus, because the international film production map is about to be redrawn."[22] The Korda Studios is a brand-new, 91 million euro film studio complex 15 miles outside of Budapest. It is located on 86 acres in secluded rural surroundings among hills and vineyards. The studio boasts world-class sound stages and production infrastructure, capable of meeting the growing demands for large sound stages and support facilities. The complex partners with the best film service providers in Hungary. With Korda Studios, which opened for business in 2007, Hungary aims to satisfy the growing demand for high-end production services.

In its effort to attract international filmmakers, Korda Studios lists on its website a number of reasons to film in Hungary. One of the top reasons is the availability of experienced crews who work as independent contractors, 12-hour working days, and a 6-day workweek. Production and post-production equipment is available for rent from local companies. Budapest's diversity is certainly another major reason—the Hungarian capital is on par with almost any European city. A variety of diverse filming locations are in close proximity to each other.

In another move to make Hungary an attractive destination for film productions, Hungary has introduced considerable financial incentives. The current Film Law offers up to 25 percent cash back to international productions filming in Hungary.[23] When Kevin MacDonald (b. 1967), the director of *The Last King of Scotland* (2006) and the grandson of Emeric Pressburger (1902–1988), was introduced to what the Hungarian film industry has to offer, he reportedly declared: "I have never made a movie in Hungary, but I promise I will."[24]

Notes

1. István Nemeskürty, *Word and Image: History of the Hungarian Cinema.* Budapest: Corvina Press, 1968, 10.
2. Quoted in Nemeskürty, *Word and Image: History of the Hungarian Cinema*, 25.
3. Nemeskürty, *Word and Image: History of the Hungarian Cinema*, 19.
4. László Kontler, *A History of Hungary.* Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002, 361.
5. Nemeskürty, *Word and Image: History of the Hungarian Cinema*, 89.
6. Ibid., 90.
7. Ibid., 94.
8. Ibid., 95.
9. Anikó Imre, ed., *East European Cinemas.* London: Routledge, 2005, 93.
10. László Kontler, *A History of Hungary.* Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002, 416.
11. Dina Iordanova, *Cinema of the Other Europe.* London: Wallflower Press, 2003, 123.
12. Ibid., 126–38.
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15. Horton, "This Silly Profession. Miklós Jancsó Interviewed," http://www.kinoeye.org/03/03/interview03.php.
16. Derek Malcolm, "Miklos Jancso: The Round-Up," *The Guardian*, October 10, 2000.
17. Bryan Burns, *World Cinema: Hungary.* Trowbridge, UK: Flicks Book, and Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Press, 1996, 152.
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19. Fabian Lemercier, "Focus on Europe: Hungary. Interview with Joël Chapron," *Cineropa,* July 10, 2006, http://cineuropa.org/interview.aspx?lang=en&documentID=65464.
20. Country Profile: Hungary, *Cineropa,* June 14, 2010, http://cineuropa.org/cfocusprofile.aspx?lang=en&treeID=1631&documentID=62868.

21. Zsolt Gyenge, "Less Screenings, More Income—Box Office Trends in 2010 in Hungary," *Film in Hungary*, August 17, 2010.

22. Korda Studios, http://www.kordastudio.hu/?scr=news,rf&maint=shownews&id=22.

23. Nick Holdsworth, "Hungary Gets EU OK on Tax Breaks," *Variety,* July 16, 2008, http://www.variety.com/article/VR1117989058.html?categoryid=13&cs=1.

24. Korda Studios, http://www.kordastudio.hu/?scr=news,rf&maint=shownews&id=24.

9

Music

After spawning a great number of important and influential composers, such as Franz Liszt (1811–1886), Béla Bartók (1881–1945) and Zoltán Kodály (1882–1967), Hungary has earned an international reputation for its music. Based on the Central Asian five-tone scale, Hungarian music is completely foreign to the country's geographic surroundings. "The Hungarians are the outermost branch of the millennial tree of the great Asian musical culture, which has its roots in the soul of a large number of different peoples from China, through Central Asia, all the way to the Black Sea," said Kodály.[1] Hungarian melodies are traceable to Transdanubia and Transylvania, the Maris and the Chuvashs, the Kalmyks and the Mongols, to Khantys and Mansis, to Tatars and Bashkirs.

The first reference to a Hungarian song comes from the Legend of Gellert, written by a chronicler sometime between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries. Bishop Gellert was traveling from Venice to Hungary together with the priest, teacher, and choir-master named Walter. The two stayed overnight at a farm on the steppe. At night they heard the noise of a hand mill and a song sung by a maid. Gellert asked the choir-master if had heard hear that Hungarian symphony and what kind of song it was. Walter replied that it was just the way they sang. No musical notation of early secular music has been preserved.

The first notation of Hungarian music dates back to the eleventh-century Gregorian chant related to Frankish, north Italian, and St. Gall repertories. The chant arrived with the musical culture of Western Christianity adopted

A street musician in Ezstergom, the first capital of Hungary in the eleventh century. (Courtesy of Oksana Buranbaeva.)

by Hungarian kings. Churches and monastery schools started teaching the singing of the Gregorian chant and the choral. Canonical schools taught singing as the main subject of instruction. As a consequence, Hungary's medieval sacred music was much better documented.

As for popular songs, they were not always peaceful; at the time of the pagan revolt, shamans used songs to incite crowds to destroy churches and kill the clergy. The traveling minstrels kept pagan memories alive, and in the late thirteenth century the church took a stand against the songs that it did not approve. This led to the condemnation of secular songs.

The court culture under the Árpád dynasty was essentially Hungarian. After the extinction of this dynasty in 1301, the court reoriented itself towards France. King Béla III, connected to the French court through his wife, sent Hungarians to study music in Paris. King Emeric received French troubadours. Later on, cultural influences came from Italy, Flanders, and Germany. Under King Matthias I (Mátyás), the courtly culture reached its culmination. A major legacy of the visiting foreign musicians of the

Renaissance period was the revival of the interest in instrumental music. Hungarian students traveled to Germany and Italy to study music.

Western courtly culture gave a prominent role to instrumental music. The oldest Hungarian instruments were wind instruments. The first documentation of instrumentation in Hungary dates back to the whistle in 1222. Kobzos was the second documentation, in 1326. The bugle and the fiddle were documented three decades later. The first mention of the bagpipe dates back to the turn of the fifteenth century. The lute and the trumpet were first mentioned in 1427 and 1428, respectively. Buglers, whistle-players and trumpeters had the honor of living in separate settlements. The fiddlers, lutenists, and whistlers became particularly prominent in the course of the fifteenth century. The first references to the organ date back to 1437. Splendid organs were installed in the Buda and Visegrád castles of Matthias. Eger, Esztergom, Kisszeben, and Bártfa were renowned for their organs from the early sixteenth century.

Free of Turkish occupation, Transylvania became the center of Hungarian music in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The most important minstrel was the lutenist and epic poet Sebestyén Tinódi (1505–1556). He recorded historical songs and published his *Cronica* in 1554. Another prominent musician of the Late Renaissance period was the lute virtuoso and composer Bálint Bakfark (1506/7–1576). The dance tunes and folk melodies compiled and intabulated for organ by the Franciscan monk and composer János Kájoni (1627–1698) are also of essential importance.

Late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries are the era of *kuruc* songs. These songs were named after the rebels leading an anti-Habsburg freedom fight for 40 years between 1671 and 1711. This epoch produced the *taragot*, a double-reed woodwind instrument with six finger holes and a sharp sound. The instrument was used in the military for various purposes, from scaring off the enemy to entertaining soldiers. After the suppression of the anti-Habsburg insurrection, the Imperial forces forbade the taragot as the symbol of the resistance movement and ordered all taragots to be burned. The old type of taragot, now often referred to as the "historical taragot," disappeared by the 1830s. At the end of the nineteenth century, Hungarian musicologist Gyula Káldy and instrument maker V. J. Schunda developed a single-reed taragot with an Albert fingering, which made this taragot very similar to the clarinet. Káldy and Schunda exhibited the instrument at the World Expo 1900 in Paris. This type of taragot gained popularity and is still used today in villages and by Roma musicians.

A watershed moment in Hungarian musical history was the appearance of *verbunkos* at the end of the eighteenth century. It was the birth of a very distinctive music style. In order to increase the appeal of military service,

the imperial army recruiters traveling across the country engaged small instrumental Roma bands. The music that they played became known as the *verbunkos* (from the German verb *werben*—"to recruit"). These melodies were rooted in the music of the Hajduk and carried traces of Islamic and Slavic music. They were often based on simple folk songs interpreted in a highly ornamental style.

The most prominent interpreter and composer of the verbunkos was János Bihari (1764–1827), a self-taught Roma violin virtuoso. He left over 80 compositions. Bihari is credited as the author of the famous *Rakoczi March*, based on *kuruc* themes and transcribed later by Franz Liszt and Hector Berlioz (1803–1869). János Bihari even played through the entire Congress of Vienna in 1814. Since verbunkos were in vogue with the nobility, Bihari's talent and popularity allowed him to lead a wealthy lifestyle. Even though a hand injury somewhat decreased his popularity and he ended up dying in poverty, masses of people attended his funeral.

Many composers turned to verbunkos themes while composing music. Ferenc Erkel used verbunkos in his operas. Verbunkos are the first movement in Béla Bartók's three-movement work *Contrasts* (1938). Bartók's Violin Concert No. 2 is another example of verbunkos style. Béni Egressy (1814–1851), Gusztáv Szénfy (1819–1875) and Kálmán Simonffy (1832–1881) also used verbunkos in their works.

A new version of verbunkos emerged; these folk-style songs were called *notá*. The most important composers of notá songs were, among others, Béni Egressy, Márk Rózsavölgyi (1789–1848), and Lóránt Fráter (1872–1930). *Notás* were composed songs that became popular because of their simplicity. Roma bands played an important role in the popularization of these songs. On the other hand, the success of notás contributed to the predominance of Roma performers in popular music.

A spectacular revival of folk music and dancing, and a revival of traditional culture in general, was under way more than a century later, in the 1970s. The revival was a backlash against, and alternative to, state-supported folklore. This movement popularized *táncház*, which originated in Transylvania and spread to Hungary. The word *táncház* stands for dance house and reflects the Transylvanian tradition of holding dances in people's homes. It usually starts with verbunkos and is followed by czárdás. Following the footsteps of Bartók and Kodály, the Sebő Band musicians, Ferenc Sebő (b. 1947) and Béla Halmos (b. 1946), went out to the countryside to learn from the people. They went to remote Transylvanian hamlets to collect folk songs and to learn to play instruments the way villagers had done for centuries. The táncház musicians retained the improvised, raw nature of the folk music. This kind of folk music and dancing is still popular among young people in cities and towns.

Classical Music

Western trends emerged in Hungarian music in the mid-eighteenth century. At that time, the aristocracy was deeply influenced by Vienna, and preferred to communicate in German and French rather than in Hungarian. Hungarian musicians imitated Western tunes. The French minuets and rondeaux were particularly en vogue. Prominent foreign musicians, such as Michael Haydn (1737–1806) and Karl von Dittersdorf (1739–1799), were employed by Hungarian aristocrats. Johann Georg Albrechtsberger (1736–1809), Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791), Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827), and Franz Schubert (1797–1828), also visited Hungary. Joseph Haydn (1732–1809) became the chief conductor at the Eszterházy estate in Eisenstadt. The influence of German musicians continued to be strong through the nineteenth century.

This cultural exchange also left a lasting effect on music outside Hungary. The visiting musicians borrowed Hungarian motives: Joseph Haydn in "Rondo all'Ongarese" from the Trio No. 1 in G major, Franz Shubert in his *Divertissement a la Hongroise* (op. 54) and in the Sonata in B flat, op. 30, and Ludwig van Beethoven, among other works, in the Symphony no. 3 "Eroica." Such terms as *style hongrois*, *airs hongrois*, *a la Ongarese*, or *Ungarisch* became widely known throughout Europe.

The trend toward romanticism in Hungarian music emerged around 1860. The most renowned romantic composer was Mihály Mosonyi (1815–1870). Influenced by German Classicism, Mosonyi developed national aims in the course of his career. His better known works are *Funeral Music* and *The Feast of Purification*.

One of key figures in romanticism was Franz Liszt. He was one of the greatest piano virtuosos, and one of spiritual leaders of his time. Liszt was born to a Hungarian father and an Austrian mother in the German-speaking village of Doborján. Although he did not master Hungarian, he declared himself part of the Hungarian culture: "Although, unfortunately, I don't speak Hungarian, I want to remain Hungarian in heart and mind from cradle to grave. I want to work for the development of Hungary's musical culture."[2] He first visited Hungary in 1939 after the flooding of Pest and was received as a national hero. In Vienna, he gave several concerts for the benefit of flood victims, and his was the largest donation the victims received.

Liszt's parents noticed his extraordinary musical talent when he was a child. His father, Adam, who played the cello in a local orchestra, was his first piano teacher. A secretary in the estate of Prince Esterházy, Adam asked for an extended leave and moved his family to Vienna to ensure the best possible education for Franz. In Vienna, he studied composition with Antonio Salieri

Franz Liszt, a late-19th-century Hungarian composer and pianist, began his career as a child prodigy. As an adult, he redesigned musical composition and created a new form of orchestral music. (Library of Congress.)

(1750–1825) and took piano lessons from Karl Czerny (1791–1857), whose reputation as a piano instructor was unsurpassed. After Czerny admitted that there was nothing more Liszt could learn from him, the family moved to Paris where he met Frederic Chopin (1810–1849), Hector Berlioz (1803–1869), and Nicolo Paganini (1782–1840). Inspired by Paganini's virtuosity, Liszt set a goal of becoming "the Paganini of the piano."

From early on, impresarios booked Liszt on European concert tours. A cosmopolitan, he disregarded frontiers. As a pianist, he conquered concert halls worldwide, and many consider him to be the greatest pianist of all time. In addition to technique, he had a huge repertoire and revolutionized the culture of piano performance by playing from memory. Importantly, Liszt united the elements of European romanticism with Hungarian music tradition. Most of his works of Hungarian character were composed outside of Hungary. Among Liszt's innovations are symphonic poems. He first thought

of a title—*Years of Pilgrimage*, *Love Dreams*, *Consolations*, *St. Francis Preaches to the Birds*, and so forth—and then composed music to it. The first pianist to give a solo concert, Liszt enjoyed performing and popularity. The flamboyant virtuoso cast a spell on audiences, particularly on women, leading German poet Heinrich Heine (1797–1856) to coin the term *Lisztomania*.

The Hungarian Academy of Music

The Hungarian Academy of Music experienced growth in the late nineteenth century. A new department training opera singers was established. The department of orchestral instruments was expanded. Cellist and composer David Popper (1843–1913) and violinist and composer Jenő Hubay (1858–1937) taught string instruments. Virtuoso István Thomán (1862–1940) taught piano playing. His six-volume *Technique of Piano Playing* is still used today. The success of the Academy gave rise to a whole wave of artists who garnered international reputation. In composition, the Academy graduated Béla Bartók (1881–1945), Zoltán Kodály (1882–1967), Leó Weiner (1885–1960), and Ernő Dohnányi (1877–1960). Graduates who earned fame in operetta were Jenő Huszka (1875–1960), Imre Kálmán (1882–1953), Albert Szirmay (1880–1967), and Viktor Jacobi (1883–1921). Jacobi's musicals were a success on Broadway. Albert Szirmay immigrated to the United States where his friend circle included Cole Porter (1891–1964), George Gershwin (1898–1937), Richard Rogers (1902–1979), and Jerome Kern (1885–1945). In New York, Szirmay was vice president of Chappell Music Publishing Ltd. Among the opera singers who graduated from the Academy were Maria Basilides (1886–1946), Olga Haselbeck (1888–1961), Anna Gyenge-Roselle (1894–1989), Ella Nemethy (1895–1961), and Erzsi Sándor (1885–1962). Renowned musicians who studied under Thomán were concert pianists Ernő Dohnányi (1877–1960) and Béla Bartók. Jenő Hubay's students included Ferenc Vecsey (1893–1935), Stefi Geyer (1888–1956), Jozsef Szigeti (1892–1973), Géza Kresz (1882–1952), Imre Waldbauer (1892–1952), and Ede Zathureczky (1903–1959).

Operetta

Thus, the Academy of Music at the turn of the twentieth century was producing graduates who would gain international reputations. The Hungarian Royal Opera House and concert halls attracted international stars. However, the audience was limited to elite circles. The general public had a preference for Roma music, cabaret songs, or operettas. Operettas enjoyed extreme popularity at the turn of the twentieth century. The international fame of the Hungarian operetta rests on the compositions of Ferenc Lehár

(1870–1948) and Imre Kálmán (1882–1953). Lehár placed each operetta in a different geographic place, attempting to render the musical ambiance of each location.

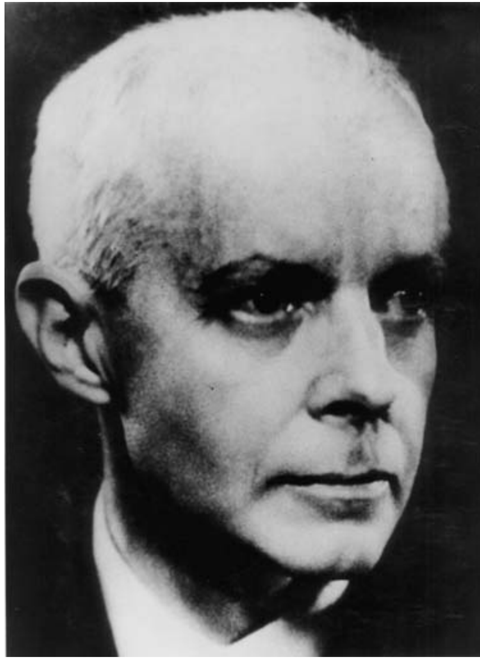
Gypsy Love is placed in Hungary, *The Land of Smiles* in China, and *The Merry Widow* in Montenegro. Imre Kálmán is famed for *Czardas Queen*, *Countess Marica*, and *Circus Princess*. Jenő Huszka (1875–1960), Pongrác Kacsóh (1873–1923), and Ákos Butykay (1871–1935) are other important composers of Hungarian operettas. Huszka's *Baroness Lily* and *Prince Bob* and Kacsoh's *John the Hero* are popular with Hungarian audiences. Some other Hungarian composers who wrote operettas, such as Viktor Jacobi (1883–1921), Pál Ábrahám (1892–1960), Szabolcs Fényes (1912–1986), and Ferenc Farkas (1905–2000) wrote works in the Viennese style.

Bartók and Kodály

At the turn of the twentieth century, Western European composers were searching for new forms of expression. Two young men, Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály, who started their studies at the same time and became very good friends, would leave an imprint similar to that of Claude Debussy (1862–1918) or Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971). Both of them were dissatisfied with the contemporary state of Hungarian music and searched to create a new style—one that would appeal both to the elite and to the general public. By combining characteristic Hungarian elements with the European standards, they strove to unite tradition and progress.

In their searching, Kodály and Bartók turned to peasant songs. They spent several summer vacations in faraway villages trying to capture old peasant songs on the verge of extinction by recording them on wax cylinders. Along the way, the musicians fought diseases, fleas, and other hardships. Today, as a result of their efforts, thousands of songs are preserved at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

Of this duo, Zoltán Kodály is more popular in Hungary and Béla Bartók, often also called a *musician's musician*, is more admired abroad. Bartók is widely recognized as one of the greatest composers ever and the greatest Hungarian composer of the twentieth century. While Kodály's most important works are vocal and choral, Bartók was mainly an instrumental composer. Kodály's music remained essentially Hungarian, but Bartók never ceased to allow other people's music tradition into his own musical languages. Bartók once said: "My own idea [. . .] is the brotherhood of peoples, brotherhood in spite of all wars and conflicts. I try—to the best of my ability—to serve this idea in my music; therefore I don't reject any influence, be it Slovakian, Romanian, Arabic or from any other source. The source must only be clean, fresh and healthy."[3]



Bela Bartok, 1881–1945. (AP Photo/Roehnert.)

Béla Bartók studied composition with German composer Hans Koessler (1853–1926) and piano with renowned piano teacher István Thomán (1862–1940) at the Academy of Music in Budapest. In his early years he was influenced by Johannes Brahms (1833–1897), Richard Wagner (1813–1883), Richard Strauss (1864–1949), and Franz Liszt. In addition to collecting folk songs in Hungary, Bartók collected songs in the neighboring countries, in North Africa, and in Turkey. In 1907 he was appointed professor at the Academy of Music.

At the dawn of World War II, Bartók, who was strongly opposed to Hungary's support of Nazi Germany, left for the United States and settled in the Bronx. In his newly found home, where serialism was turning into a dominating force on the music scene, Bartók was relatively unknown and received little work. He grew unapproachable and rejected help from his friends. A stint at Columbia University as a research fellow in anthropology, mainly entrusted with the transcription of Serb folk song recordings at the university library, secured some income until 1942. This was followed by the composer's financial collapse. The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers supplied Bartók with some money, although he was not even a member, claiming that it came from royalties. Limited concert appearances did not provide

sufficient income. Financial troubles coincided with an onset of leukemia, which required expensive medical treatment. Bartók died in obscurity at the age of 64, disillusioned and poor. He was buried according to his wishes, without ceremony or speeches, in Hartsdale, New York. His remains were brought to Hungary in 1988 and reburied in the family tomb on the Buda side of the Danube, in the same cemetery where his close friend, Zoltán Kodály, rests.

Bartók remained an explorer until the end of his life. Many agree that his highest achievements are the six quartets he composed between 1908 and 1938. His other most prominent works are a cycle of 153 pieces for piano, *Mikrocosmos*; a one-act opera, *Prince Bluebeard's Castle*; a dancing play, *The Prince Carved out of Wood;* and a ballet, *The Miraculous Mandarin*. Among his other works are *Three Piano Concerti*, and orchestral works such as *Dance Suite, Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*, and *Cantata Profana*. Bartók's last masterpiece, *Concerto for Orchestra*, commissioned by the Russian-born composer and music director of Boston Symphony Orchestra Sergei Koussevitzky (1874–1951), expresses the misery that Bartók experienced just before death. *Concerto for Orchestra* is Bartók's longest orchestral work. It is also one of the few twentieth-century works that are part of the standard repertory.

However, most Hungarians would say that the title of the greatest Hungarian composer of the twentieth century belongs to Zoltán Kodály. Perhaps one of his greatest successes is that he managed to reach out to and be understood by the general public. His most outstanding work is *Psalmus Hungaricus*, which laments the fate of Hungary and was written to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the union of Buda and Pest in 1923. Critics met *Psalmus* with unanimous praise. In just 20 years after its creation, *Psalmus Hungaricus* was sung in eight languages in 200 cities outside Hungary. The great Arturo Toscanini (1867–1957) conducted *Psalmus Hungaricus* in Milan. Among Kodály's other most prominent works are choir works *Jesus and the Moneymongers, To Ferenc Liszt*, and *Evensong*; chamber and orchestral works *Dances of Galanta, Marosszek Dances, Variations on a Hungarian Folk Song, Sonatas for Cello*, and *Trio Serenade*; and theatrical works *Hary Janos* and *Szekelyfony* (*Szekely Spinning Room*).

Without a doubt, Kodály had a profound influence on many prominent Hungarian musicians. However, his great achievement lies also in the introduction of general music education in Hungary. Unhappy about the top-down character of Hungarian musical culture, he wanted to do away with musical illiteracy and bring music education to the general population, including to the people in the countryside. For almost a quarter of a century he led a crusade in which he argued that musical education was as important for the body and soul as was physical education. He studied the folk songs that he collected and incorporated them into the general cultural awareness

by means of school education. As part of his educational efforts, Kodály also composed musical works that had a didactic purpose.

Ernő Dohnányi (1877–1960) shared Bartók's and Kodály's desire to renew Hungary's musical life. A prominent piano recitalist, Dohnányi spent a long time heading the Academy of Music and the Budapest Philharmonic Society and is noted for propagating the works of Kodály and Bartók. The political environment in Hungary made the composer leave the country in 1944. After several years in Austria, he settled in the United States in 1949 where he taught at Florida State University, performed, and composed. Dohnányi was strongly influenced by the German romantic tradition. His *Variations on a Nursery Theme* for piano and orchestra form a regular element in concert programs.

Leó Weiner (1885–1960) was an important music educator and a composer strongly influenced by Romanticism. He composed variations on Hungarian folk songs, a Hungarian folk dance suite, five divertimenti for orchestra, a symphonic poem, two violin sonatas, one concert for piano and orchestra, three string quartets, and piano music. A professor at the Academy of Music for 52 years, he acquired an international reputation as a teacher of chamber music. The reputation of Hungarian musicians for accuracy and depth of interpretation in chamber music is often credited to Weiner. He received the Francis Joseph Prize in 1907, the Coolidge Prize in 1922, and the Kossuth Prize in 1950 and 1960.

One of the most important Hungarian composers of the generation following Kodály and Bartók is Sándor Veress (1907–1992). He was a composer, a musical folklorist, and a pianist. Having studied piano with Bartók and composition with Kodály, Veress spent five years teaching at the Academy of Music. Still in Hungary, he composed The St. Augustine Psalm, Violin Concerto and Threnos, an orchestral work in memory of Béla Bartók. However, the political interferences into musical life by the communist regime in the late 1940s forced some noted composers to leave the country; Sándor Veress was one of them. In 1949, he refused the prestigious Kossuth Prize and moved to Bern where he began teaching at the Conservatory of Music. The oeuvre of Veress includes arrangements of songs for choirs; chamber music; concertos for violin, piano, oboe, clarinet, strong quartet, two trombones; and two ballets. In addition, he was the teacher of the two most important Hungarian composers of the postwar generation, György Ligeti (1923–2006) and György Kurtág (b. 1926), who met in the hallway of the Academy while waiting for the entrance examination to Veress's composition class and became close friends.

Ligeti was one of the most important music innovators of the second half of the twentieth century. His main contribution to modern music is the

development of choral techniques based on clusters, creating an ethereal sound. Ligeti's work is best known to the general public through the movies by the American director Stanley Kubrick (1928–1999): *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), *The Shining* (1980), and *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999). Ligeti's musical terms of reference were exceptionally diverse—from Renaissance polyphony to American individualists such as Harry Partch (1901–1974) or Conlon Nancarrow (1912–1997).[4] He also found inspiration in world music, such as Indonesian percussion orchestras called *gamelans*, or Afro-Caribbean dance bands.

Ligeti's compositions reflect the artist's personal experiences, suffering as a young man and developing as a musician. György was born into a Hungarian-Jewish family in Transylvania, Romania. At the age of six he moved with his family to Kolozsvár where he received his initial musical training. When Northern Transylvania became part of Hungary, György, as a Jew, had to join a labor brigade, and his immediate family members were sent to concentration camps. György and his mother were the only survivors of the Holocaust in the immediate family. After the end of World War II, Ligeti entered the Academy of Music in Budapest. Unhappy in Hungary under Soviet repression, he fled to Western Europe two months after the anti-Communist revolution of 1956.

Ligeti remained at the forefront of the avant-garde for many years. During the 1950s and 1960s, he was close to the key figures of the European avant-garde, such as Karlheinz Stockhausen (1928–2007) and Pierre Boulez (b. 1925). Ligeti had heard Stockhausen's *Gesang der Juenglinge* and *Kontrapunkte* on November 7, 1956; during the revolution the station jamming radio waves coming from the West did not function. Later, it was Stockhausen who helped Ligeti get a scholarship for a stay with the electronic music studio of the West German Radio (WDR). Thus, after leaving Hungary, Ligeti spent three years working in and around Cologne and Darmstadt, Germany, where he learned that there was a different type of music, more contemporary musical styles, and methods—from Stockhausen, Gottfried Michael Koenig (b. 1926), Oliver Messiaen (1908–1992), Mauricio Kagel (1931–2008), Bruno Maderna (1920–1973).

The composer gained recognition with his orchestral work Apparitions, performed at the ISCM Festival in 1960. In 1961 he wrote the orchestra piece Atmospheres. This was followed by *Adventures* and *New Adventures*, miniature operas in which singers express themselves with musical gestures rather than with words. In the *Requiem*, the composer dealt with death as ominous certainty and a dark joke. Ligeti's two-act opera, *The Great Macabre*, focuses on the end of the world and mortality. The principal character is Death, impersonalized in the character of Nekrotzar. Originally written

in German, *The Great Macabre* has been performed in many languages. Language flexibility was built in by the composer at the time of writing. Very few notes need to be changed for this opera to be performed in other languages. Ligeti's other works include the orchestral work Lontano and Lux Aeterna, a piece for 16 solo singers. He also composed a series of Etudes, a Horn Concerto, and a piece for solo voice and four percussionists, *With Pipes, Drums, Fiddles*.

György Kurtág (b. 1926) is perhaps the greatest living Hungarian composer. He studied composition with Veress and Farkas and piano with Pál Kadosa (1903–1983) at the Budapest Academy of Music. In 1957 he went to Paris where he attended courses led by Darius Milhaud (1892–1974) and Olivier Messiaen and entered intensive psychoanalysis with the art psychologist Marianne Stein. Ten years later he was appointed at the Academy. The early compositions of Kurtág demonstrate the influence of Kodály and Bartók—Kurtág even called Bartók "his mother tongue."[5] Later, with his first string quartet dedicated to Stein, Kurtág started using serial techniques. Kurtág's oeuvre includes the concerto for soprano and piano, The Sayings of Peter Bornemisza for soprano and piano, Kafka Fragments, Quasi una fantasia, Samuel Beckett: What is the Word. . . ."I consider all my works to be like autobiographies," said Kurtág in an interview to the *Boston Globe*'s Jeremy Eichler. "They are in different masks, but always confessing my life."[6] Kurtág was awarded the Kossuth Prize and three Erkel Prizes.

László Lajtha (1892–1963), who collaborated closely with Bartók and Kodály in the collection of folk songs, is also Hungary's most important composer of symphonies. At the same time, he was strongly influenced by the French impressionists and, apart from Liszt, was the only Hungarian member of the French Academy of Fine Arts. Lajtha was a member of the International Commission of Popular Arts and Traditions of the League of Nations and the International Folk Music Council based in London. He also served as director of music for Hungarian Radio and director of the National Music School Society. In 1947 he headed to London in order to compose music to the film *Murder in the Cathedral* (1957) by the Austrian film director Georg Hoellering (1897–1980). Having spent a year in the West, he was evicted from his posts by the communist regime. Lajtha protested by refusing to compose. In 1951, Lajtha's achievements in folk music research were recognized with the Kossuth Prize. To celebrate the centenary of Lajtha's birth, the Hungarian government proclaimed 1992 "Lajtha Year," to draw attention to the composer's legacy.

Lajtha's orchestral music includes nine symphonies and suites derived from ballets or film scores. His chamber music includes 10 string quartets and several works for various chamber ensembles. His piano music includes *Des*

Ecrits d'un Musicien, *Contes*, *Trois Berceuses*. The latter was written for his grandchildren in the United States and England when the composer was banned from travel abroad. Lajtha also composed an opera buffa, *The Blue Hat*, and three ballets: a one-act ballet *Lysistrata* and the ballets *The Grove of Four Gods* and *The Capriccio—Puppet Show*.

Ferenc Farkas (1905–2000) studied composition with Leó Weiner (1885–1960) and Albert Siklós (1878–1942) at the Budapest Academy of Music and with Ottorino Respighi (1879–1936) at the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome. Farkas spent close to five years in Austria and Denmark where he wrote music for Paul Fejos. Upon returning to his native Hungary in 1936, Farkas devoted himself to teaching, directing, and conducting. He spent 26 years teaching composition at the Academy of Music.

Among his students were György Ligeti, György Kurtág, Emil Petrovics (b. 1930), Zsolt Durkó, Sándor Szokolay (b. 1931), Attila Bozay (1939–1999), and Zoltán Jeney (b. 1943). The oeuvre of Ferenc Farkas includes over seven hundred titles. It spans a broad range of genres: operas, musicals, ballets, incidental and film music, orchestral works, concerti, chamber music, masses, oratorios, cantatas, choruses, and Lieder. The work of Farkas spans a variety of genres and is based off, on one hand, the Hungarian and the Italian musical traditions and, on the other hand, the 12-note technique. His work is noted for an outstanding sense of rhythm and an extraordinary gift for melodic invention, cosmopolitanism, and the desire to reconcile tradition and modernity. Farkas was a recipient of great cultural awards, such as the Kossuth Prize in 1950 and 1991, Gottfried von Herder Prize in 1979, and Cavaliere dell'Ordine della Repubblica Italiana (1984).

Péter Eötvös (b. 1944) is a highly acclaimed composer, conductor, and teacher. He studied composition at the Budapest Academy of Music and conducted in Cologne, Germany. For several years he performed with the Stockhausen Ensemble and collaborated with the electronic music studio of the West German Radio in Cologne. For several years Eötvös served as musical director of the Ensemble InterContemporain, founded by Pierre Boulez. Eötvös performed as a guest conductor with top-class opera houses, such as the Royal Opera House Covent Garden in London, La Scala in Milan, Theater du Chatelet in Paris, La Monnaie in Brussels, and Festival Opera Glyndebourne. He also worked with leading orchestras, such as Wiener Philharmoniker, Berliner Philharmoniker, Muenchner Philharmoniker, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Ensemble InterContemporain, BBC Symphony, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, and NHK Orchestra Tokyo. Eötvös's compositions include the operas *Three Sisters*, *Le Balcon*, *Angels in America*, and *Love and Other Demons*; orchestra works Atlantis and zeroPoints; the work Jet Streams for trumpet and orchestra; a memorial for Columbia Shuttle

astronauts *Seven*; and concerto for acoustical piano, keyboard, and orchestra CAP-KO, dedicated to Bartók.

Ferenc Fricsay (1914–1963), in the course of a career spanning only two decades, became one of the most acclaimed conductors of his generation. His style was influenced by Arturo Toscanini (1867–1957), who emphasized strict adherence to the score, technical precision, and vigorous beat. Soon after his international breakthrough at the 1947 Salzburg Festival, Fricsay moved to Berlin. Apart from a short engagement with the Houston Symphony Orchestra, Fricsay served as a guest conductor throughout Europe where he was best known as an operatic conductor, and was particularly acclaimed for his interpretation of Mozart and Verdi.

János Starker (b. 1924) was born in Hungary but never acquired Hungarian citizenship. Having survived a Nazi camp during World War II, he became the principal cellist of the Budapest Opera and the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra. In 1948, he immigrated to the United States and became, consecutively, the principal cellist of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, the Metropolitan Opera, and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. In 1958 he joined the faculty of Indiana University and resumed a solo career, performing in front of millions. A performing musician with outstanding communicative power and superb technical mastery, he has also earned distinction for his work as a teacher. Starker was awarded the *Grand prix du disque* in 1948 and the Grammy Award in 1997.

Opera and Ballet

Opera has been performed in Hungary for almost 300 years. For many years operas were performed by Germans and Italians invited to aristocratic homes. Several aristocratic theaters were founded in the eighteenth century. The most famous were the operas established in the residences of Prince Esterházy. The Kismarton residence was home to Joseph Haydn for 30 years. As a result, several of Haydn's operas were premiered there. Some of the well-known opera stages were of Count János Erdődy in Pozsony, the Rondella in Pest, the Castle Theater in Buda, and the German Theater in Pest. The first opera in Hungarian, *Prince Pikko and Jutka Perzsi'*, by József Chudy (1753–1813), was performed in 1791.

The nineteenth century saw the awakening of national consciousness in Europe. Mikhail Glinka (1804–1857), Aleksandr Dargomyzhsky (1813–1869), and The Mighty Five[7] were creating a national school of Russian music. Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901) was an inspiration for the Italian nationalist movement. Richard Wagner (1813–1883) was an enthusiastic supporter of the nationalist movement in Germany. Stanisław Moniuszko (1819–1872) focused on national themes in Poland. The Czechs Bedřich

Smetana (1824–1884) and Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904), the Norwegian Edvard Grieg (1843–1907), and the Finn Jean Sibelius (1865–1957) strived to reflect the national spirit in their music. Opera lent itself easily to national themes. Experiments were increasingly made to create Hungarian opera.

The founding father of Hungarian national opera is Ferenc Erkel (1810–1893), who made his appearance as pianist and conductor. Erkel was the first to use the Hungarian language in opera. He built his operatic forms from the material of the Italian and French opera literature on one hand, and the verbunkos and the popular Hungarian songs on the other hand, therewith merging Hungarian national themes with the formal types of contemporary opera. Erkel was the first music director of the National Theater that was opened in Pest in 1837 and the first conductor of the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra founded in 1853. He was the director of the Hungarian Academy of Music until 1886, and the musical director of the Hungarian State Opera House. Erkel's most prominent operas—*Hunyadi László* (1844) and *Bánk Bán* (1861)—are a permanent part of the Hungarian Opera repertoire to present day. *Bátori Mária* (1840) was the first Hungarian tragic opera, and it was remarkably popular with the public. His other operas are *Sarolta* (1862), *Dózsa György* (1867), *Brankovics György* (1874), *Névtelen hősök* (1880, *Unknown Heroes*), and *István király* (1885, *King Stephen*). Together with Ferenc Doppler (1821–1883) and Károly Doppler (1825–1900), Erkel wrote the opera *Erzsébet* (1857). The opera *Kemény Simon* remained in fragments. Manuscript scores attest to the increasing participation of Erkel's sons —first in instrumentation and later in composition.

Hungarian ballet started developing in the National Theater at about the same time as opera. Since its beginning, there have been four main influences: national traditions based on the work of Gyula Harangozó (1908–1974), the Russian school, post-Harangozó choreography, and contemporary European and American art.

Like opera, the first ballet performances took place in aristocratic mansions. In 1847 the theater engaged Viennese Frigyes Campilli (1820–1889) as ballet-master. For the following 40 years, Frigyes was the choreographer of the National Theater and the new Opera House. The Hungarian Royal Opera House became the center of Hungarian ballet life. In those early days, the corps de ballet included 60 dancers, all of whom were female apart from one male dancer from Milan. At the beginning, Hungarian ballet was strongly dominated by Italian and Viennese schools.

Later, Gyula Harangozó founded what is now regarded as the Hungarian national ballet, masterfully combining elements of classical ballet and Hungarian folk dance. *Scene in a Country Tavern*, performed in mid-30s, is still considered to be a landmark. However, his most famous piece is a one-act

pantomime ballet performed to Béla Bartók's music *The Miraculous Mandarin*, which has been performed internationally. His other pieces, such as *Coppelia*, *Tricky Students*, *Sheherezade*, and *Promenade Music*, are a permanent part of the repertory of the Hungarian National Ballet.

After the era of Harangozó, Hungarian ballet was led by László Seregi (b. 1929), whose works are now performed throughout the world. Among them are *Sylvia*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and a one-act work, *Variations for a Nursery Song*.

The Russian school, noted for the combination of excellent technique with deep artistic interpretation, had a profound influence on Hungarian ballet from the mid-twentieth century. Starting in the 1970s, Hungarian national ballet opened up to American and European influences. The repertory was enriched with the works by George Balanchine (1904–1983), Maurice Béjart (1927–2007), Sir Frederick Ashton (1904–1988), Hans van Manen (b. 1932), Alvin Ailey (1931–1989), Jiří Kylián (b. 1947), and Robert North (b. 1945).

Most recently, the Hungarian Ballet Company has been directed by Gyula Harangozó Jr., who invited such choreographers as Myriam Naisy and Renato Zanella (b. 1961). Among top Hungarian choreographers are Lilla Partay, most noted for her works *Anna Karenina*, *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart*, and *Gone with the Wind* and Attila Egerhazi, known for contemporary one-act pieces. Gábor Keveházi, whose works include the full-length ballet *Zorba*, is the current director of Hungarian National Ballet. He is one of the greatest Hungarian ballet dancers. His management philosophy dwells on bringing young ballet dancers, preserving the classical repertoire, promoting the Hungarian ballet repertoire, and being open towards contemporary trends. One such example is *The Karamazovs*, a ballet based on the novel *The Brothers Karamazov* by Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1821–1881). The piece is choreographed by the Russian Boris Eifman (b. 1946), an internationally acclaimed and divisive figure of modern ballet whose primary interest lies in the conflict of characters rather than the plot.

At the time of writing, the Hungarian State Opera House commemorated its 125th anniversary. On September 27, 2009, an evening gala repeated the program of the opening night 150 years ago: Act I from *Bánk bán* and Overture from *Hunyadi László* by Ferenc Erkel and Act I of *Lohengrin* by Richard Wagner. The 125th season's program included 193 operas and 76 ballet performances. The program featured eight premieres and five revivals. Among the premieres were *Bluebeard's Castle* by Béla Bartók, *Spinning Room* by Zoltán Kodály, and *Solar Eclipse* by Jázsef Sári (b. 1935). The latter work was inspired by the *Darkness at Noon* by Hungarian-born author Arthur Koestler (1905–1983). The list of this season's Hungarian operas included, in addition to the three mentioned above, *The Wooden Prince* by Béla Bartók,

Bánk bán by Ferenc Erkel, *C'est la guerre* by Emil Petrovics (b. 1930), *Variations on a Children's Song* by Ernő Dohnányi (1877–1960), *The King's New Clothes* by György Ránki (1907–1992), and *Blood Wedding* by Sándor Szokolay (b. 1931). The Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra commemorated the 125th season with 12 concerts.

In 2009, Pécs and Budapest hosted Operalia, a renowned international opera competition for young opera singers. The World Opera Competition was founded in 1993 by the Spanish tenor and conductor Placido Domingo (b. 1941). The final was held at the Opera House in Budapest. The finalists were accompanied by the Pannon Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Maestro Domingo.

Jazz

Although the first musicians playing jazz emerged in Hungary in the first decades of the twentieth century, the jazz scene started developing only in the 1970s. After the 1956 liberalization, the framework of three Ts—toleration, prohibition, support—set in, and the first battle took place over jazz. The battle was won by forward-looking composers who argued that jazz was the folk music of the oppressed in the United States. Among the internationally renown Hungarian jazz musicians are György Szabados (b. 1939), Balázs Berkes, Károly Binder (b. 1956), László Dés (b. 1954), Csaba Deseő (b. 1939), Antal Lakatos, Aladár Pege (1939–2006), Béla Szakcsi Lakatos (b. 1943), Rudolf Tomsits (1946–2003), and György Vukán (b. 1941). Some of the top jazz bands are the Super Trio, the Benkó Dixieland Band, and the Kőszegi Band. Among the most prominent bands of the younger generation are the Hot Jazz Band and the Bohém Ragtime Jazz Band.

Popular Music

Operettas, cabarets, and Hungarian Roma music marked the beginning of twentieth-century Hungarian popular music. However with the settlement of the communist regime, popular music was heavily refocused towards Russian communist rallying songs. The situation stayed much the same until the liberalization of 1956.

Rock music encountered opposition as it was regarded and persecuted as a product of Western capitalism. The rock scene emerged in the early 1960s. With the growth of the amateur movement, almost every school or university had its own group that gave performances free of charge. Performances were often disguised as club meetings. This circumvented official interference or harassment, at least in the early days.

In this context, many rock bands emerged and disappeared after having recorded a couple of singles. However three major rock groups appeared: Illés, Metro, and Omega. By the end of 1968, all three groups produced at least one album. In 1968, Illés received almost all prizes at the Táncdal Festival. However, following a show trial on trumped-up charges, the authorities banned Illés from performing for a year. The band was also prohibited from performing on radio and television and from producing records. In the meantime, the other two top rock bands also underwent a major transformation. Metro split up. The drummer and keyboard player left Omega, and the remaining group members embarked on an international career. They became so successful that they filled stadiums in Hungary and Germany, and the Scorpions were their warm-up in the late 1970s. Thus, Omega became perhaps the only Hungarian group to date whose records are sold in record shops in the West, and especially in Germany.

Gusztáv Kosztolányi classified the groups in Hungary at that time into four categories: completely commercial showbiz groups, the Golden Oldies, Progressive Rock Bands, and Disco Bands. The first category, such as M7, Corvina, or Apostol, did not pose ideological problems to the political leadership. The second category included groups such as Illés (which was renamed Fonográf in 1973), Omega, mega-group LGT, Skorpió, Bergendy, and Zorán. The third category, which produced music of the highest standard, included such bands as Panta Rhei, East, and Color. Among the disco bands of the time were Neoton Familia, Szűcs Judit, and Beatrice. The latter combined rock, punk, and folk music and gave impromptu, uncensored performances at every concert. In addition, their gigs often featured verbal sparring matches between the lead singer and the bass guitarist. Apart from Beatrice, four more major bands stand out: P. Mobil, Hobo Blues Band, Bizottság (Committee), and Edda művek. After 1978, these bands were indicative of the way in which rock music developed.

Neoton Família was, in fact, an official creation of the political leadership. In 1988, the group's female vocalist performed the official song of the Seoul Olympics in a duet with the singer of the German group Ghengis Khan. However, in spite of access to unlimited resources, the group only lasted a few years.

Music Festivals

Hungary has a multitude of festivals throughout the year. Many historic or scenic sites host performances, particularly in the tourist season. Because festivals are big business, it is unsurprising to observe their proliferation. There are music festivals of every description, able to satisfy widely divergent tastes.

An outdoor concert in Pécs—one of the three European Capitals of Culture 2010. (Courtesy of Oksana Buranbaeva.)

Some of these events are small and charming; others are full-blown affairs attracting crowds from all over the world.

The largest cultural festival is the Budapest Spring Festival. It has developed into one of Europe's major cultural events. The Spring Festival offers a broad range of programs, including opera performances, church concerts, chamber evenings, dance shows, theater pieces, musicals, and exhibitions. The two-week event takes place annually in late March–early April and draws thousands of visitors from Hungary and abroad.

The Fringe Festival is a side-runner to the Spring Festival and is held on the last two days of the latter. The Fringe Festival aims to introduce less known, underground artists, both from Hungary and other countries. According to the organizers, it is "something like a huge Talent Show at the cost of the production price."[8] Performers advertising their shows during the festival create a spectacular atmosphere.

Budapest Music Weeks is the capital's oldest festival. It dates back to the 1958 Bartok Festival, at which time it attracted such international stars as Yehudi Menuhin (1916–1999) and Svyatoslav Richter (1915–1997). Since then, the roster of performers has included Benjamin Britten (1913–1976), Riccardo Muti (b. 1941), Lorin Maazel (b. 1930), Kurt Masur (b. 1927), Claudio Abbado (b. 1933), Vaclav Neumann (1920–1995), Mstyslav Rostropovich (1927–2007), Isaac Stern (1920–2001), David Oistrakh (1908–1974),

Arthur Rubinstein (1887–1982), Maurizio Pollini (b. 1942), and Nicolai Gedda (b. 1925).

In 2009, the Hungarian State Opera initiated its annual Mayfest Opera Festival in Budapest, reflecting the ideas of its musical director Adam Fischer (b. 1949). With the help of Mayfest, the Hungarian State Opera aspires to bring together renowned opera singers and aficionados from all over the world for about 10 days in May. The first Mayfest featured such world opera stars as the virtuoso mezzo-soprano Cecilia Bartoli (b. 1966) and tenor Marcello Giordani (b. 1963). The BudaFest Summer Opera and Ballet Festival is held annually in the summer. Performances take place at the Hungarian State Opera House. The festival features prominent Hungarian and international performers presenting a program that includes performances, exhibitions, and auctions.

The Szeged Open-Air Festival is the country's greatest national theater festival and the largest open-air event. Opera, ballet, musicals, and dance are performed on a large stage in front of the cathedral of Szeged. The tradition dates back over three quarters of a century when poet Gyula Juhász (1883–1937) came up with the idea. The artistic effect is intensified through unique acoustics of the Votive Church square. Since 1994, a mobile auditorium for 4,000 people has been set up each year for the days of the festival. The sectors of the auditorium are named after the European capitals that helped Szeged during the flood of the Tisza in 1879: Berlin, Brussles, London, Paris, Vienna, and Rome, as well as Szeged's twin cities: Darmstadt, Turku, Parma, Nice, Odessa, Toledo, and Szabadka.

Held in August, the Sziget Festival is the largest open-air pop-rock festival in Central Europe and is one of Hungary's signature events. Starting with a low-profile student event in 1993, the festival grew into a multicultural event that boasts over a thousand performers every year. Headliners have included such international superstars as Radiohead, Chemical Brothers, Faithless, The Cure, Iron Maiden, Gogol Bordello, Massive Attack, R.E.M., The Prodigy, Placebo, Manu Chao (b. 1961), Sinead O'Connor (b. 1966), and Alanis Morisette (b. 1974). Sziget tries to reach out to diverse audiences and covers almost all branches of the arts: from street performances to fine arts exhibitions, from dance to drama.

The European Wine Song Festival is definitely among the highlights. Since 1993, the only European festival for male choirs and male vocal ensembles has been held in Pécs. The European Wine Song Festival takes place on the last weekend of September. Within this festival, the Wine Song World Festival has taken place every fourth year since 1996. Under the motto "wine and song go hand in hand in every culture," the festival attracts several thousand visitors every year. An important objective of the event is to protect the

culture of wine and the traditions connected with it, and to strengthen the international reputation of Hungarian wines by means of art. Participating nations share their wine-related traditions. The festival concludes with all the choruses singing together in the main square of Pécs.

Since 2003 Hungary's most significant jazz event is the annual Jazz Festival Budapest held in the fall. The goal of the festival is to present Hungarian jazz in the European context. The event features the greatest Hungarian jazz musicians and international performers. In addition to the Jazz Festival in Budapest, Debrecen Jazz Days in early September features jazz performers at individual concerts and jam sessions.

The Budapest Autumn Festival, held in October, focuses on contemporary art. This festival is one of the major new-art events in Central Europe. It strives to bring the recent developments in the art scene to a wide audience. The festival features film, theater, jazz, photography, dance, sculpture, video art, and so forth. It is particularly inviting as it features artists looking for new ideas, unusual forms, and challenging their audiences with new approaches.

Many of Hungary's festivals combine musical experience with special settings. The greenfield festival Balaton Sound, one of the largest European music festivals featuring live acts and DJs, is held on the southern bank of Hungary's largest lake in July. The fall Budapest Baroque Music Festival, which focuses on a different composer every year, takes place in the Baroque church of St. Michael, a spectacular setting with superb acoustics. From mid-July until mid-August the Summer Music Festival takes place in Vajdahunyad Castle, located in Budapest's largest city park beloved by visitors and locals alike. The castle hosts a series of classical music, swing, and Roma music concerts. In the first half of October, there is a Gödöllő International Harp Festival with harpists from around the world playing in the Royal Palace at Gödöllő, one of Hungary's most attractive tourist sites.

Testifying to the importance of music in the country's cultural life, many institutions are dedicated to the advancement of Hungarian music. The Liszt Academy of Music provides advanced training in all aspects of music. The Hungarian Academy of Science has an Institute of Musicology. The Béla Bartók Musical Training College provides intermediate-level training and is affiliated with colleges outside Budapest. Other important institutions include the Folk Music Research Group founded by Kodály in 1953, the Kodály Memorial Museum and Archives, and the Liszt Memorial Museum and Research Center founded in 1986.

Active performing organizations, many based in Budapest, include the State Opera (1884), the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra (1853), the Budapest Concert Orchestra MAV (1945), the Hungarian Radio and

Television Symphony Orchestra (known internationally as the Budapest Symphony Orchestra, founded in 1943 by Ernő Dohnányi), and the Hungarian Radio Chorus. There are also a number of chamber groups, such as the Liszt Chamber Orchestra (1981), various string quartets, and groups for traditional music, such as the State Folk Ensemble (1951) and the Budapest Gypsy Symphony Orchestra (1985).

In 1996 trombone player and academy professor László Gőz (b. 1954) founded the Budapest Music Center (BMC). The center plays an important role in collecting information about Hungarian classical and jazz musicians and contemporary compositions and making this information available free of charge to the public. BMC supports a permanently updated music database and a library that contains approximately a hundred thousand books, notes, and records. BMC's traveling pavilion popularizes Hungarian music culture both in Hungary and abroad. In addition, BMC organizes classical, contemporary, and jazz events. Most recently, it co-organized the large yearlong festival Extremely Hungary, which was held at several halls in Washington and New York. BMC Records publishes Hungarian classical, contemporary, and jazz musicians, and it has been instrumental in building up international recognition for a number of Hungarian musicians as well as contributing to collaboration between Hungarian and international artists.

An important role in the development of Hungarian music culture belongs to the public Hungarian Music Council, a successor to the Association of Hungarian Musicians founded in 1949. HMC also represents the interests of Hungarian music abroad, including the International Music Council (IMC) and the European Music Council (EMC).

Notes

1. Stephen Sisa, *The Spirit of Hungary: A Panorama of Hungarian History and Culture*. Morristown, NJ: Vista Books, 1993, 299.

2. Ibid., 302.

3. Bartók to Octavian Beu, January 10, 1931, in Bartók, Béla. 1948. *Levelek, fényképek, kéziratok, kották*. ("Letters, photographs, manuscripts, scores"), ed. János Demény, 2 vols. A Muvészeti Tanács könyvei, 1.–2. sz. Budapest: Magyar Muvészeti Tanács. English edition, as *Béla Bartók: Letters*, translated by Péter Balabán and István Farkas; translation revised by Elisabeth West and Colin Mason. London: Faber and Faber Ltd. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1971.

4. Paul Griffiths, "Gyorgy Ligeti, Central-European Composer of Bleakness and Humor, Dies at 83," *New York Times*, June 13, 2006.

5. Jeremy Eichler, "The Purist," *Boston Globe*, November 11, 2007.

6. Ibid.

7. The Five is a group of five Russian composers César Cui, Aleksandr Borodin, Mily Balakirev, Modest Mussorgsky, and Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov—who in the 1860s banded together in an attempt to create a truly national school of Russian music, free of the stifling influence of Italian opera, German lieder, and other western European forms.

8. Official website of the Fringe Festival, http://budapestfringe.com/?p=whatisthis&l=en.

10

Architecture

Earliest Architecture

A survey of Hungarian architecture begins during the Roman Empire, well before the arrival of the Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin. The earliest architectural monuments on the territory of present-day Hungary can be found in the Roman provinces of Pannonia and Dacia. In the first century CE, along the River Danube a number of roads, military fortifications, and camps, such as Arrabona (Győr), Brigetio (Szőny), and Aquincum (Óbuda), sprang up as part of the Empire-wide system of border defense. Some of these military camps were turned into more elaborate stone fortifications that housed military commanders and headquarters. As the administrative center of the Pannonian province, Aquincum was endowed with one such military fort, as well as the governor's palace; an elliptical amphitheatre, the largest in the region; a temple; and many civilian buildings. The marauding tribes of the first wave of the Great Migration passed through the Roman provinces at the end of the second century CE, devastating many of the Roman settlements and structures. After these incursions, a period of architectural revival ensued, with many Roman structures restored and newly built, particularly in the Pannonian province. In 194 CE Aquincum became a *colonia*, the highest rank awarded to a town in the Roman Empire. This new status brought with it a wave of new construction, including a new temple and baths, stone houses with hot-air heating, and a 5-kilometer aqueduct. The civilian part of town was also surrounded by a wall with square towers and four gates.

During the renewed prosperity in the third and fourth centuries CE, new urbanized centers of Roman administration developed at Savaria (Szombathely) and Sopianae (Pécs), with impressive new buildings like the elaborately constructed imperial palace in Savaria. This urban development was accompanied by a boom in the construction of larger estates where many luxurious villas were built and decorated with statues, mosaics, and murals. Some of these decorative mosaics and statues, as well as remnants of underground sanctuaries, can still be seen today at archeological sites at Baláca in Veszprém County, Szombathely in Vas County, and Pécs. The final period of Roman rule in the Carpathian Basin coincided with the expansion of early Christianity and witnessed the building of first churches and cemeteries. In the mid-fourth century in Aquincum, an early double Christian church was built, reminiscent of the one erected by Bishop Theodore of Aquileia. The design of the church was simple, without an apse and with a curved row of benches for the priests. Church building continued even after the Roman influence in the region declined. Many Christian churches, often made of wood with one nave and a stone choir screen, were built and consecrated in the period before the arrival of the Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin. The people following the Roman withdrawal brought their own architectural influences, most of them disappearing over time. Avars, for example, built elaborate wooden houses, whereas the Slavs constructed some fortifications of timber-framed wattle.

Medieval Architecture

Hungary's medieval architecture began to take shape at the end of the tenth century, about a hundred years after the arrival of nomadic Hungarian tribes on the European stage, when Grand Prince Géza converted to Christianity and brought missionaries into his realm. Christianity spread quickly in the Hungarian lands and, consequently, much of the noteworthy architectural heritage of medieval Hungary can be found among its ecclesiastical buildings, primarily churches and monasteries. The recently adopted sedentary way of life, as well as the newly mandated religious practices, demanded more lasting and permanent places of worship. Thus, many of the early Romanesque churches were built in stone, often using a simple layout of a rectangular nave and a large semicircular apse, with two aisles separated from the nave by rows of columns. Because of the novelty of the requirements of church building at the time, early Hungarian churches were often modeled after those in northern Italy and southern Germany, whereas the style of ornaments were borrowed from Byzantine influences.

The early center of the Hungarian Kingdom and site of the royal residence, the town of Esztergom, contained one of the best examples of early royal

castle architecture. A complex structure, built on a hill by Prince Géza and added to by St. István, the castle consisted of a walled fortification, a residential palace, and a round chapel. Exemplars of early medieval church architecture in Hungary, such as the church at Feldebrő and the Benedictine abbey at Szekszárd, revealed a mix of both Western and Byzantine influences in ornamentation as well as layout. However, by the beginning of the twelfth century, the Romanesque style began to take precedence in Hungarian architecture. The Esztergom Cathedral, with its design of a nave with two aisles, three apses, and two pairs of towers, was an important example of this trend. Moreover, the west portal of the cathedral, the Porta Speciosa, though destroyed in the eighteenth century, was a work of notable artistic quality with its inlaid figures carved in red and white marble. The Pécs Cathedral, reconstructed during the twelfth century, had a somewhat similar basic layout as the Esztergom with the nave, two aisles, three apses, and two pairs of towers. Among its most notable characteristics were the staircases leading to the crypt, the oldest part of the church, which were decorated with elaborate reliefs. Finally, the Gyulafehérvár Cathedral, constructed on the foundations of an older church, is one of the best preserved examples of the architecture of the time. Many of these Romanesque architectural monuments contained Italian and French influences.

The Hungarian prosperity during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was reflected in the abundance and style of architecture, particularly in the influx and blending of different influences such as the elements of late Romanesque and French early Gothic styles. This prosperity was, however, suddenly interrupted by the Mongol invasion in the mid-thirteenth century, which destroyed many of the more prominent Hungarian medieval structures. In the wave of rebuilding at the end of the thirteenth century, many notable architectural feats were accomplished. Examples of thriving urban development and town planning could be found in Győr, with its network of planned main streets and the central square marketplace, Sopron and its town walls, as well as the numerous monasteries erected in urban and commercial centers. By 1277 there were 30 Dominican monasteries in Hungary and, by 1300, 41 Franciscan ones.[1] Many of the houses in towns were becoming more standardized in terms of size and materials. The period of urbanization following the Mongol invasion witnessed the development of town of Buda, in particular one of its more memorable buildings, the parish Church of Our Lady (also known as the Matthias Church). This church, in the German part of town was constructed in the late twelfth century. The building began in the Romanesque style, but later included elements of the High Gothic, such as the west portal and its rose window. The church contained the nave and a main apse, with side apses and two cross-vaulted aisles. Under the growing influence of the Gothic style, in the second half of the thirteenth century

and the fourteenth century, the straightforward layout of the churches was replaced by more elaborate designs and stone carvings, whereas the palace and castle plans became more regular.

Late Gothic, Renaissance Architecture, and the Tripartite Era

The ascension of Matthias to the Hungarian throne in 1458 and his marriage to Beatrice of Aragon, the daughter of the king of Naples, in 1474, left an indelible mark on Hungarian culture, including architecture. Early in his reign, anxious about the Turkish peril, Matthias devoted his attention to military architecture inviting Italian engineers, architects, and masons to Hungary. However, with the arrival of his wife and her Italian entourage, the influence of the Italian Renaissance and humanism spread more widely in the Hungarian court and among the patrons of the arts. At first, the architecture at the court of King Matthias was strongly rooted in the Gothic tradition. The royal late Gothic workshop was originally tasked with palace reconstruction. With the arrival of the Italian masters, however, a royal Renaissance workshop was established and began to cooperate with the Gothic masters on the rebuilding and renovation of the Royal Palace at Buda Castle. Though the contributions of the two workshops to the palace cannot easily be separated, the most notable additions in the Renaissance style could be found in the Court of Honor, the second palace courtyard encircled by two-story arcades connected by balustrades. Unfortunately, most of these and other period additions to the palace have since been destroyed. Among the most notable commissions of the king's late Gothic workshop was the rebuilding of the Summer Palace at Visegrád and the construction of new chancel for the Székesfehérvár Cathedral, the coronation and burial site of Hungarian kings. Though predominantly in Gothic style, some of the late fifteenth-century additions to the Summer Palace, such as the semicircular loggias in the Court of Honor, reveal clear Renaissance influences. Similarly, the work on the Székesfehérvár Cathedral testified to the blending of Renaissance and Gothic elements.

The Bakócz Chapel, on the south side of the Esztergom Cathedral is one of the greatest examples of Renaissance ecclesiastical architecture. It was built at the beginning of the sixteenth century as a sepulchral chapel for its patron Tamás Bakócz, the archbishop of Esztergom. The Bakócz Chapel, with its red marble interior, the Greek cross plan, and an iron dome was the earliest centrally conceived chapel north of the Italian territories. King Matthias's patronage of the arts encouraged many notable Hungarian aristocrats, bishops, and archbishops to fund the reconstructions, additions, and building of castles, villas, churches, and cathedrals. Some of these projects were a

Székesfehérvár, known by the name Alba Regia in the middle ages, is one of the oldest Hungarian towns. For centuries Székesfehérvár was the traditional place of coronation and burial site for the Hungarian royalty. (Courtesy of Oksana Buranbaeva.)

new chapel in the church of St. Elisabeth in Kassa funded by Bishop György Szatmári, the Lázói Chapel in the Gyulafehérvár Cathedral commissioned by Archdeacon János Lázói, and additions to the castle of Siklós owned by palatine Imre Perényi. Even though the late Gothic style was still predominant in provincial Hungary at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Renaissance was steadily spreading outside of the urban centers and large estates.

After a third of the territory of the Hungarian Kingdom was incorporated into the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century, Turkish influence began making its way into Hungarian architecture. The Ottomans built several bridges, the most prominent of these was the bridge over the Drava River near Eszék, built by Mimar Sinan (ca. 1489–1588), Sultan Suleiman's chief architect. Architect and military engineer Sinan probably also conceived the Turkish modernization of the Esztergom Castle, occupied in 1543, adding supplementary gun towers, bastions, and walls. Four corner bastions added to the fort of Szigetvár after its capture in 1566 are the only examples of Ottoman

fortification preserved to this day. During their occupation of the Hungarian lands, the Turks converted many Christian churches into mosques and built new ones. Once again, Sinan, in a masterful feat of architecture, converted the Esztergom Cathedral into a mosque. The Turks built most of the mosques in Hungary in a similar square layout covered with a shallow dome propped up on pendentives. Two beautiful exemplars of Turkish mosques can be found in Pécs: the Pasha Yakovali Hassan Djami with its intact minaret and colorful ornamental interior and the mosque constructed by Pasha Gazi Khasim, located on the Pécs main square and one of the largest Turkish buildings still remaining. The final and generally best preserved pieces of the Turkish architecture in Hungary are the baths. Of the nine thermal baths built by the Ottomans in Buda, four are still in operation, with Király Baths being one of the better preserved ones. In a typical bath layout the bathing chamber's outer walls are square, whereas the interior is octagonal and covered by a dome.

Although a third of the Hungarian Kingdom lived under the Ottomans, a third of its territory became part of the Habsburg Empire. Many prominent architects received royal commissions from the Viennese court to work on fortifications in Hungary. One such architect was Pietro Ferrabosco (1512–1599) who designed the castles and fortifications at Komárom, Győr, and Kanizsa, mostly influenced by Italian Renaissance military architecture. Though the royal commissions for building the most important defenses in Hungary were reserved for the most renowned architects, many of the lesser known architects worked for the Hungarian nobility designing residential castles commonly in the Renaissance manner. Among the most notable Hungarian patrons of the arts and architecture in this period was Miklós Esterházy (1583–1645) who rebuilt his Lakompak and Fraknó castles in the early seventeenth century in the Renaissance style, though they already displayed early Baroque elements. Under the Catholic Hapsburg monarchy and as a response to the growing Reformation, the Jesuit Order rose in prominence and its influence spread quickly throughout the Empire. In Hungary, the Jesuit presence and power became quite noticeable in the seventeenth century through their building projects. The first Jesuit church was built in Nagyszombat in the 1630s and was modeled after the Order's principal church of Il Gesù in Rome. The relatively open and spacious floor plan consisted of a nave with four chapels on each side and a square sanctuary on the one end. The most noticeable elements of the church facade are its two towers, prominent horizontal ornamental moldings, shallow pilasters, and arched windows. The Nagyszombat church was one of the first examples of the Baroque in Hungarian architecture and became a model for Jesuit and other churches built in Hungary in this period. Much of the earlier secular baroque architecture in Hungary under the Habsburgs was under the

influence of the Viennese royal court and concentrated on family estates, such as the Köpcsény Castle, modernized in 1668 as the first of the Hungarian family castles to be adapted in the Baroque style.

Eighteenth-Century Architecture

The Ottomans' final defeat and departure from Hungary left much of the land reeling in their wake. The enormous need and opportunity for rebuilding, as well as advances in the architectural profession in Hungary, provided fertile ground for a new phase in architecture. With the ever-present threat of Turkish invasion removed, architects and their patrons turned their efforts away from castle fortifications and towards building country houses. One such country home is Ráckeve, built on Csepel Island for Prince Eugene of Savoy in the early eighteenth century. Designed by renowned architect Johann Lucas von Hildebrandt (1661–1745), the mansion served as a retreat for the Prince from his courtly and public duties and is a remarkable example of the Baroque. Its U-shaped layout, with a banquet hall covered by a dome and symmetrical public spaces, became rather common in eighteenth-century Hungarian architecture. Another notable country house was designed around the same time by Anton Erhard Martinelli (1684–1747) for the Croatian palatine József Esterházy (1714–1790). Also U-shaped, this house at Cseklész appears to have a single floor, but is in fact a three-story structure with one conspicuous element quite unusual for secular buildings—three towers. Martinelli also planned and supervised the building of another notable eighteenth-century secular building, the Palace of the Invalids in Pest, the central Austro-Hungarian veterans' hospital. A rectangular structure with four courtyards and an ornamental façade, this was a massive and stately affair and testament of period architecture.

These secular architectural accomplishments aside, the majority of the post-Ottoman Baroque rebuilding in Hungary focused on ecclesiastical structures. Restructuring focused mostly on the existing ruined and damaged objects, but in the case of the Kalocsa an entirely new cathedral was constructed. It was most likely designed by András Mayerhoffer (1690–1771), one of the finest architects in Hungary at the time. With its nave lined with four chapels and a façade with two towers, this church mimicked the design of the typical early Baroque Jesuit church at Nagyszombat. A beautiful example of diversity in design is noticeable in another Mayerhoffer creation, the Pauline church in Pest, especially in its elaborately ornamented portal. With their oval floor plans and their straightforward façades, the Church of Holy Trinity in Pozsony designed by Franz Jänggl (1654–1734) and the Carmelite church in Győr by Martin Wittwer revealed an interesting innovation in sacral architecture of

the time. The Jesuits were prolific builders of churches and monasteries in eighteenth-century Hungary. Though much of these structures were conventional in design, the Jesuit church in Esztergom with its atypical façade stands out as an original accomplishment. The curved, protruding centre of the church façade and an interrupted pediment over the high oratory window make for a stunning counterbalance to the two elegant towers.

A remarkable example of eighteenth-century advanced Baroque architecture in Hungary and a new phase in palace style is represented by the reconstructed Royal Castle at Buda. Since the liberation of Buda from the Turks, members of Hungarian nobility lobbied the Empress Maria Theresa to return the royal seat to Buda. Though it would ultimately not be used as a royal castle, in 1749 the work on the reconstruction began. An impressive U-shaped edifice, the Royal Palace consisted of two rectangular side sections connected by a large main central block forming a three-sided courtyard in the middle. The plans for the castle reconstruction were drawn up and executed by a succession of imperial architects Jean-Nicolas Jadot (1710–1771), Nicolas Paccassi (1726–1790), and Franz Anton Hillebrandt (1719–1797), the chief architect of the Hungarian Treasury. Jadot and Paccassi also took part in the modernization of the Pozsony Castle, at the time the seat of the Hungarian palatine. A new façade with regularly spaced windows, pilasters above the entrance and square towers, as well as a new rectangular chapel and a new central staircase, graced the refurbished castle by the end of the eighteenth century. The final element in the development of eighteenth-century architecture in Hungary involved the improvements in ecclesiastical building, in particular the great cathedrals in towns of Esztergom, Nagyvárad, Vác, and Szombathely. Though planned as an elaborate Latin cross with two towers, the Esztergom Cathedral was in the end built as a Greek cross with one central tower used for military as well as sacral functions. It was demolished in 1821. Nagyvárad Cathedral is a large, imposing baroque edifice modeled after the classic Jesuits churches with one strikingly different features, namely the two towers jutting outwards diagonally from the façade. The cathedral in Vác was finished in 1777 and designed by Franz Anton Pilgram (1699–1761). Its massive entrance, sturdy towers, and simple façade clearly reflected French influence, a novelty in Hungarian architecture at the time. Designed by Melchior Hefele (1716–1794), the Szombathely Cathedral has a traditionally baroque exterior, but boasts an interesting, spacious, and grand interior.

Nineteenth-Century Architecture

By the turn of the nineteenth century neoclassicism was emerging in Hungary as the new architectural style. It first made an appearance in private

estates and country houses of the Hungarian aristocracy who were the first to embrace and support the new building style. Among the most notable of these patrons was Prince Miklós Esterházy. He commissioned architects Thomas de Thomon (1754–1813) and Karl von Moreau (1758–1840) to design the modernization of the Esterházy family estate at Kismarton. Though the full extent of the plans was not realized, the house at Kismarton, with its impressive double colonnade on the garden façade, remains one of the best examples of early neoclassicism in Hungary. Another interesting neoclassical country home is Count Antal Festetich's estate at Dég, designed by Mihály Pollack (1773–1855), one of Hungary's leading architects at the time. Its most novel features are the oval banquet room and the imposing porticos on both façades. In this period, innovation was becoming visible in sacral architecture as well, though at first mostly in building projects sponsored by private patrons. Miklós Esterházy financed, Karl van Moreau (1758–1840) designed, and architect Josef Franz Engel (1776–1827) supervised the construction of one such project, the Nagyganna parish church. This neoclassical church, with its circular crypt, columned and vaulted corridor, and the garden pavilion, was a pioneering effort in ecclesiastical architecture. Another innovative church building project, the parish church in Pétervására funded by Count Károly Keglevich, reintroduced Gothic elements into architecture before it became a more widespread practice.

Soon these innovative church building practices began to be applied to larger cathedral construction projects. Though initially planned as a neoclassical structure, the remodeled Pécs Cathedral was rebuilt by Mihály Pollack as a Gothic Revival edifice. The Esztergom Cathedral, on the other hand, was a beautiful example of neoclassicism. The plans for the reconstruction of the cathedral were drawn by a succession of renowned architects: Pál Kühnel, János Packh (1796–1839), Pietro Nobile (1774–1854), József Hild (1789–1867), and József Lippert (1826–1902). The end result of these efforts was one of the most imposing and well-balanced structures of neoclassicism in Hungary. The cathedral, consecrated in 1856, has a large central dome surrounded by columns, a striking portico on the front façade with eight enormous Corinthian columns, and two side towers connected to the main structure by arched bridges. József Hild, one of Hungary's greatest neoclassical architects, designed another contemporary cathedral in the same style. The Eger Cathedral, erected in the 1830s, displayed some similarities to the one in Esztergom, such as the sheer monumentality of the façade, the columned portico, and the central dome. The differences, particularly in the church interior, however, reveal the Eger Cathedral's less-than-conventional design and some parallels to Ste.-Geneviève in Paris and San Marco in Venice. Amidst the nineteenth-century ecclesiastical architecture it is important to

The Chain Bridge, 1230 feet long, was the first permanent bridge to connect Pest and Buda in 1849. (Courtesy of Oksana Buranbaeva.)

mention the churches built by the Protestant denominations: the Calvinist Great Church at Debrecen and the Lutheran one in Békéscsaba.

Most of the large-scale secular nineteenth-century architectural projects were cultural and administrative buildings that played an important symbolic, as well as practical role in the process of Hungarian nation-building. The Hungarian National Museum, constructed between 1837 and 1844, is a great example of neoclassicism and an important symbol of national culture. This monumental structure with a protruding columned portico entered Hungarian history in 1848 as the site of the reading of Sándor Petőfi's national poem to the gathered crowd of protestors, thus igniting the Revolution of 1848. A surge in the building county halls, the seats of local administrations, in the first half of the ninetieth century signified a new phase in the development of Hungarian civic architecture. The Szekszárd county hall, designed by Mihály Pollack (1773–1855), with its broad columned portico and a symmetrical, massive façade, was a typical example of how national aspirations embodied in architecture trickled down from large urban centers to the different Hungarian regions. Though built in Renaissance style and more as a monument of technical achievement, the Chain Bridge (Lánchid), completed in 1849, connecting Pest and Buda was an important period structural innovation. The nineteenth century in Hungary witnessed important advances in urban planning and more uniformed development of towns. One such planned effort was the construction

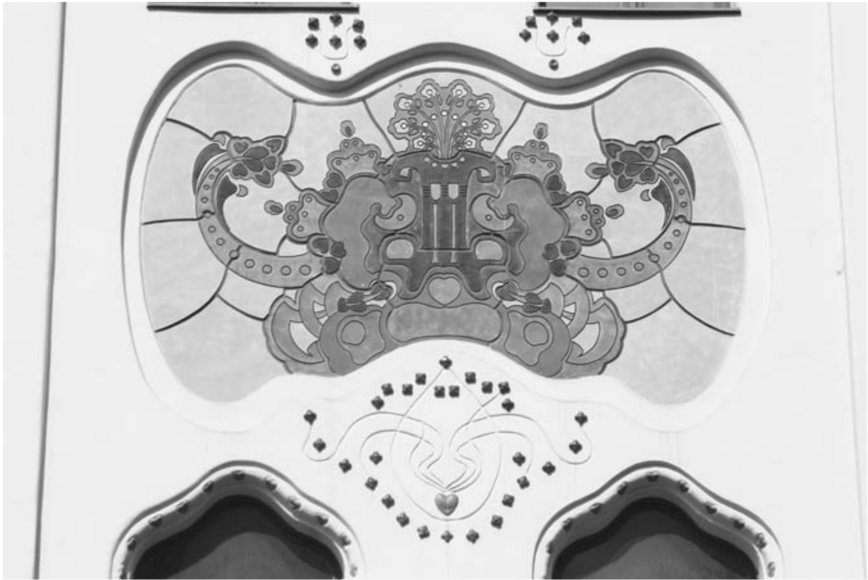
of Lipótváros, a new neighborhood for the well-off in Pest. The streets, squares, and buildings were plotted and built in a systematic and unified manner resulting in beautiful and harmonious neoclassical urban landscape.

The second half of the nineteenth century was marked by neo-Gothic and neo-Renaissance architectural styles, as well as persistent debates in architectural circles about the development of a Hungarian national style. Among the most renowned architects who left their mark on this period were Miklós Ybl (1814–1891) and Frigyes Feszl (1821–1884). One of Feszl's more memorable buildings was the Assembly Rooms (Vigadó), built in Pest in the 1860s. Reminiscent of Venetian palace architecture, the Assembly Rooms contain elements of the Romanesque and traditional Hungarian folk ornamentation. Also built in Pest in the 1860s, the Hungarian Academy of Science, designed by the Prussian architect August Stüler (1800–1865), was the first significant neo-Renaissance edifice in Hungary. After winning the first prize in the competition for the design of the new opera, Miklós Ybl bequeathed Budapest a grand, new Opera House. Built in the 1870s and 1880s, the richly decorated building exterior has a beautiful portico-like, covered entrance approach. The interior boasts a striking central staircase, as well as a royal staircase and the loge designed with Emperor Franz Joseph in mind. Another one of Ybl's outstanding designs in Budapest is the Basilica of St. Stephen. Built at the very end of the nineteenth century, the Basilica, with its portal arch, the imposing, steep dome and tall towers is an inspiring structure. Though originally conceived as the Lipótváros parish church, the immense Saint Stephen's soon became the principal church in Budapest. The Matthias Church in Buda section is one more of Budapest's iconic churches reconstructed in this period. Proficient in restoring medieval architecture, architect Frigyes Schulek (1841–1919) remodeled the church in the original Gothic style with a few neo-Romanesque elements, such as the nearby Fishermen's Bastion, an ornate fortress flanking the church. This brief overview of nineteenth-century ecclesiastical architecture should not leave out the Pest synagogue, at the time, the largest one in Austria-Hungary. The synagogue is distinguished by two tall narrow towers with onion-like cupolas, a multicolored highly ornamental brick façade and a richly decorated interior designed by Frigyes Feszl.

At the end of the nineteenth century many modern cities and towns in Hungary were taking shape. Urbanization and urban expansion resulted in large-scale reconstruction and renewal, particularly in Budapest and Szeged. A multitude of apartment houses, streets, boulevards, and public buildings were being built in this period. In Budapest, one of the most significant and homogenous urbanization projects, was the construction of Sugárút. Later renamed Andrássy út, Sugárút, it is a two-kilometer long boulevard flanked

Inspired by the Palace of Westminster, Hungarian architect Imre Steindl (1839–1902) aspired to build the world's most magnificent parliament house. Stretching 879 feet along the Danube, the Hungarian Parliament is one of the most spectacular sights in Budapest. (Courtesy of Oksana Buranbaeva.)

by neo-Renaissance multistory apartment houses, mansions, and palaces, many of them designed by Miklós Ybl. Another important urban structure erected in the 1870s was Budapest's Western Railway Station (*Nyugai pályaudvar*). At the time, the largest railway station in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, *Nyugai pályaudvar* had a novel iron-framed train shed, plenty of glass on the main façade, and was overall a graceful edifice. Amidst this wave of late nineteenth-century urban development and propulsive architectural undertaking, two momentous symbols of Hungarian statehood—the Parliament House and extensions of the Royal Palace on Castle Hill—were constructed in Budapest. In 1883 architect Imre Steindl (1839–1902) won the competition for the design of the new Parliament building. His proposed design was neo-Gothic and a bit of an anomaly in the wave of secular neo-Renaissance architecture. The building began in 1885 and was completed by 1904. The elaborately beautiful long front façade with its intricate Gothic stone ornamentation facing the Danube makes the Parliament House one of the most impressive buildings in context of Budapest, Hungary, and even Europe. The additions to the Royal Palace, on the other hand, were designed by Ybl and Alajos Hauszmann (1847–1926). Ybl's most noteworthy addition



Designed by Géza Márkus in 1902, the Cifra Palace is a masterpiece of Hungary's Secessionist style, or Art Nouveau. Today the building houses the Kecskemét Art Gallery. (Courtesy of Oksana Buranbaeva.)

was the Castle Grand Bazaar, a neo-Renaissance decorative edifice on the south slope below the Palace, whereas Hauszmann designed a new, neo-Baroque wing as the north extension of the Palace. Upon completion in 1905, the Royal Palace was one of the biggest castle complexes in the world.

Twentieth-Century Architecture

Early twentieth-century Hungarian architecture was without a doubt marked by the work and legacy of Ödön Lechner (1845–1914), the founder of Art Nouveau in Hungary and its most influential Hungarian architect. Lechner's most prominent accomplishments were the Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest and the Budapest Postal Savings Bank. His designs for the Museum of Applied Arts revealed Eastern elements, more specifically arcades in the Moorish, Indian, and Islamic styles, whereas the ornamental patterns on the façade of his Budapest Postal Savings Bank display elaborate, colorful folk-style floral and animal motifs. Lechner's innovative ideas revolved around his addressing structural and functional problems in architecture through the use of ornamentation and decorative elements associated with Hungarian folk art. The elaborate colors and forms of his designs fused with

Hungarian folk and Eastern elements combined to establish Hungarian Art Nouveau as the new architectural style. Though he was attacked by government officials and denied government commissions, because of his support for the Hungarian secessionist style, Lechner's influence on Hungarian architecture grew significantly as he developed a following among younger architects. Moreover, elements of his design, such as decorative brickwork and ceramics, made their way into private middle-class, provincial, and rural architectural designs.

A noteworthy contemporary of Lechner's and even something of a devotee of his was István Medgyaszay (1877–1959). Medgyaszay delved into Hungarian folk art and architecture looking for inspiration for his works such as the design for the National Pantheon. On the other hand, another key early twentieth-century tendency was national romanticism, which materialized in the work of a group of young architects who called themselves *Fiatalok* (Young Ones). They exhibited together publicly for the first time at the Budapest Technical University in 1904. Their designs espoused ideas of architectural purity and sincerity based on traditional structural forms and materials drawing on medieval art, while shying away from elaborate ornamentation. The most prominent representative and theoretician of this group was Károly Kós (1883–1977). Among his more notable designs were the buildings of the Budapest Zoo and the parish church in Zebegény.

Hungarian architecture in the interwar years was characterized by two different tendencies, one pulling towards modernism and another towards conservatism. Resistance to new trends resulted in the revival of neo-baroque, neo-Gothic, and neoclassical architectural styles often adopting nationalist labels and setting aside the innovative ornamentation and folk motifs of Lechner's earlier work. The architects gathered around the Hungarian section of the International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM), on the other hand, were, not surprisingly, at the forefront of the Modern Movement in architecture and urban planning. Farkas Molnár (1897–1945), a member of the first generation of the Bauhaus architects, was the leader of this group and founded in 1929. The basic goal of modern architecture, according to CIAM members, was not so much style as moral principles and social responsibility. As architects, they worked to address social problems, particularly the question of housing shortages, by advocating for solutions like promoting high-rise, affordable apartment buildings and rationally planned cities. While part of the CIAM group, Molnár realized many interesting projects such as the inventive and modern Dálnoki-Kovács Villa and Tyroler House. Though much of the expression of modern architectural design was realized in the building of apartment houses and residential urban blocks, some architects

like Bertalan Árkay (1901–1971) designed modern sacral structures, such as the church of the Holy Heart of Jesus in Budapest.

Though much of the postwar architecture in Hungary reflected socialist realist tendencies, particularly during the Stalinist period, often exposing architects to political oversight and control, the second half of the twentieth century also allowed for architectural experimentation and innovation. The most influential and internationally renowned architectural trend in this period was Hungarian organic architecture, best represented by the oeuvre of Imre Makovecz (b. 1935) and György Csete (b. 1937). György Csete was the founder of the Group Pécs, a gathering of creative young architects active in the 1970s who rejected angular designs and turned to natural motifs and vestiges of early cultures. Inspired by tradition, these architects fused modern aspirations with national identity rooted in history and nature, using natural shapes and materials. The designs of Group Pécs for the modifications of mass-produced, standardized estate houses in Paks, utilizing, among other elements, tulip-like ornamentation, provoked strong criticism, and sparked the famous "Tulip Debate" in 1975 and 1976 about the role of national identity vis-à-vis modernity in Hungarian architecture.[2] In the spirit of the Group Pécs philosophy, Csete's most notable and representative design is the restaurant Ciprus Csárda in Szarvas. This imaginative structure with a high and undulating roof, built in 1982, though it appears otherworldly, fuses flawlessly with its natural surroundings.

Imre Makovecz, the seminal representative of Hungarian organic architecture, founded his own office in 1984, a cooperative named MAKONA. Their and Makovecz's work, though vaguely similar to the Group Pécs, reveals a key conceptual difference. Though he utilized an abundance of vernacular motifs in his work, Makovecz did so in a more conceptual manner, while his interpretation of organic architecture went beyond the folkloric and the national, striving for universality. One of Makovecz's more extraordinary designs is the mortuary chapel at the Farkasrét Cemetery in Budapest, built in 1977. The fascinating interior design of this chapel, with its wooden ribs joining at the ceiling axis, creates a remarkable sensation of being enveloped inside a large, dark animal. Makovecz impressive oeuvre and original approach to architecture earned him many accolades and disciples in the last several decades. Since the breakdown of communism, Hungarian architecture has received a new impetus in the form of capitalist investments in large tourist and commercial infrastructure projects, as well as smaller-scale projects such as restaurants, bars, and shops, many of which were executed with elements of late modern, post-modern, and deconstructionist styles. In the new millennium, Hungarian architecture remains a dynamic discipline with much room for innovation and progress.

Notes

1. Dora Wiebenson and József Sisa, *The Architecture of Historic Hungary.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1998, 27.

2. Virág Molnár, "Tulips and Prefabrication: Hungarian Architects in the Bind of State Socialist Modernization in the 1970s." *The Contours of Legitimacy in Central Europe: New Approaches in Graduate Studies*. Oxford: European Studies Centre, St. Anthony's College, 2002, 5–11.

Glossary

Czárdás: Traditional Hungarian dance.

Egri Bikavér: Popular Hungarian red wine made from several varieties of grape grown in the volcanic soil in the Eger region.

Pálinka: Generic name for Hungarian brandy.

Gulyás: Thick stew made of beef, onions, potatoes, paprika, and bacon, traditionally stewed in a cauldron over a fire.

Kobzos: One of the oldest Hungarian wind instruments.

Kuruc: Rebels leading an anti-Habsburg freedom fight between 1671 and 1711.

Magyarization: Language-based policy of assimilation of minorities under Hungarian rule into a unitary Hungarian state.

Notá: Popular folk-style songs noted for their simplicity; Roma bands played a significant role in the popularization of notá.

Nyugat: Literary journal and review that appeared in Hungary in January 1908 and became an engine of modernization of Hungarian literature and with time became the preeminent authority on the Hungarian literary scene.

Pörkölt: Stew made of pork or beef and onions and paprika without potatos.

Táncház: Literally means "dance house," reflecting the Transylvanian tradition of holding dances in people's homes. Experienced a spectacular revival in the 1970s.

Taragot: A double-reed woodwind instrument with six finger holes and a sharp sound.

Tokaji: Sweet wines coming from the hills in the Tokaj-Hegyalja region made from grapes affected by noble rot.

Verbunkos: A music style which appeared in the eighteenth century. Verbunkos were used by imperial army recruiters to make military service appear attractive. Often based on simple folk songs interpreted in a highly ornamental style.

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