

## ABSTRACTS

### Kovács, Ákos András – Szűcs, Zoltán Gábor: How to read the Hungarian political literature of the eighteenth century?

The authors of the paper argue that it might be worth rethinking some aspects of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Hungarian political literature from several points of view, mostly based on new approaches and results of the international historiography.

After a short introduction and some methodological reflections on the relevance of some results of the Hungarian and international historiography, the article focuses on the most characteristic features of the complex social and political conditions of Hungary in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, since this complexity contributed heavily to the nature of the political discourses of the epoch. Among the most important factors are for instance the confessional separation, education, and other aspects of the local social-cultural influences and conditions. Furthermore, this chapter aims to focus on the possibilities of using and combining some findings of the so-called contextualist and conceptual history methods.

In the empirical part of the article, the authors demonstrate the main discursive strategies of early-modern nationalism in the period which marks an early phase of Hungarian nation-building. The second example focuses on the key concepts of the political order, showing the pertinence of the question from the angle of the history of ideas. These examples are presented through a mostly unpublished collection of political writings of the eighteenth century.

The article accentuates the peculiarities of the discursive space of the region, the complexity and ambiguity of certain concepts, or, in other words, some important dilemmas of the genesis of the modern socio-political vocabulary in early-modern Hungary.

### Nyisztor, Tinka: The Everyday Nutrition of a Farming Family in Moldavia

Within the field of the ethnographic study, this essay is an attempt to describe the nutrition of Moldavian Hungarians from an ethnographic angle. The food culture of Moldavian villages is little known, which necessitated an initial survey and description of nutritional data. The place and role, trouble and joy of eating is presented in real-life situations, providing passages from the discussions with the ethnographer and with one another. These are recorded by the anthropological method called 'thick description'.

The time period examined in this essay displays a sharp dividing line in the zone of the 1960s and 1970s in this region. As in other areas of work and lifestyle, the succession of changes in food culture accelerated significantly in this period. To this date no comparative study has been conducted in ethnographical descriptions, although there are sporadic references to European-Hungarian parallels in literature. However, the study of food culture in the Moldavian region has implications in wider European contexts for two main reasons.

On one hand, the region has been maintaining a continuity of earlier European strategies which are elsewhere known only from written sources, thus the practice and place of these within the entire structure of nutrition are still accessible to study. Such characteristics are the medieval European two-meal system, the preference for sour flavours, the proportion of cooked and baked grain dishes, and so on. On the other hand, the most important period of transformation in Modern Europe is happening right in front of the researcher's eyes. It becomes possible to follow the order of integration of external, often close urban patterns and observe the aspects that were ready for a change in the villages, the social layer which initiated these changes, and the tensions created by them.

### Tóth, G. Péter: Objects, Worms, Demons. The natural and magical miracle as material evidence in the demonological literature of early modern Hungary

Both demonology and medical learning wanted to define what material evidence they were to use in order to alleviate the politically rooted disease-symptoms of the early modern period. Finding the proper therapeutic treatment required the apt description of the pathology, revealing the causes and consequences, and making the right diagnosis. In relation to these requirements several key questions were formulated. Is it possible to infer the existence of demons from the fact that everyday objects (pots and dishes) started to shake? And vice versa, can the inexplicable "behaviour" of these objects indicate the existence of demons, devils or Satan himself, and their temptations? Is it possible to explain the strange illnesses that bear peculiar characteristics similar to that caused by the operation of witches or, on the contrary, do the odd and "miraculous" symptoms prove witches' activity? Are demons capable to establish physical, sexual relationships with human beings, especially with women, to beget children as a tangible result of such relationships? If such children, that is, monstrous or deformed beings are born, are they indicative of Satan's involvement in their conception? Can ghosts returning from Purgatory, or the living dead attest to their temptations or their presence in this world with material evidence? Or should we better interpret these phenomena the other way round, supposing that the material objects concerning the temptations of this world may indicate the existence

of Purgatory or the activity of the living dead? Are there any prophetic signs about the end of the world or are they known only from Biblical traditions and prophecies? Or is the opposite true? If eschatological signs appear, are they to be interpreted as evidence for the impending end of the world? Most of the questions formulated this way are based on such a formal syllogism that responds to the normative requests of disciplines that include law, theology and medicine; and whose formal elements became valid within the systems of fulfilment that these disciplines have themselves. In this paper I attempt to introduce the scholarly literature based on these formal logical criteria that address material evidence, omens, prophecies, oracles and miracles. I conclude my essay with the overview of how this debate in European secondary literature has been received in Hungarian scholarship.

### Tötszegi, Tekla: Wardrobe and status in Méra in the Kalotaszeg region

This essay examines the relationship between clothing and values, and between clothing and status, through the study of the traditional female wardrobe in a Transylvanian settlement, generally defined in folklore scholarship as belonging to the Nádas valley of the Kalotaszeg region. It also focuses on the role of garments in the coding of family memory, maintaining relationships, and the public display of kinship network.

The examination of fifteen traditional female wardrobes in the first part of the study draws attention to the variety of factors that determine the qualitative and quantitative variation of garments in the life-long wardrobes, which the women of Méra received in a set before their wedding. Such factors include the current and previous financial situation and status of the family, the presence of a strong and generous female kinship, or the lack thereof, the merits of the mother and daughter (standards, skills, creativity, diligence), and the personal attitudes towards clothing within the family. On one hand, the qualitative interpretation of garments requires knowledge of the families' economic situation, structure (extended or nuclear family household, number of siblings, especially sisters), and lifestyle strategies. On the other hand, the temporal attributes (how long each garment is considered new and fashionable, and when a type of material or feature wears out of festive status), the prestige and availability of materials are also important factors.

The second part of the essay concluded by a case study, traces the possible career of the garments in a wardrobe through accounts that shed light on the kinship network of blood- and affinal relations, as well as the customs of the community with regard to certain garments. Besides newly made garments, pieces handed down or borrowed from mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, or

other relatives are, to a varied extent, definitive in the composition of the wardrobe of a marrying daughter. Individuals are mere 'curators' of their garments: links in the chain of the generations of female family members using those before and after them. During married life, this wardrobe is complemented by garments presented to the new wife by her mother-in-law, and later on also by clothes gradually handed down by mothers as they stop wearing them after a certain age. Both multigenerational and new garments are sources of self-esteem for the family. The pretext of kitting out a marrying daughter strengthens and animates kinship as a system of relations assumed and maintained by the family members. The creation and use of garments reflect a rich and multilayered web of relations, which permeate the community's whole life, feast days and week-days alike.