

## ABSTRACTS

### Judit Benda: The Silent Hinterland: Work Opportunities for Women in Medieval Buda

The study briefly summarises what surviving written sources tell us about medieval women and their work, using sources from between the 1270s to the mid-sixteenth century.

The structure of women's work was relatively simple in the cities of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary. Besides the prevalent traditional homemaker role, the number of opportunities where women replaced men in the workforce steadily increased.

Women were of medium height, approximately 160cm (5ft 3"). Girls living beyond their tenth year had an average life expectancy of 40–60 years. The court of archduchess and regents comprised of 15–20 women led by the lady senechal, followed by the ladies in waiting and chamberlains, down to laundresses, servants and maids. Women living in monastic orders were accompanied by lay sisters and servants running the household. In the early days, the consecrated nuns performed a variety of jobs including menial tasks.

In urban society widows were keen to remarry as soon as possible to avoid temporary financial insecurity. Following the death of the husband, inheritance dictated that all his movable and immovable property went to the widow and his children. Until remarrying, the widow had complete control over the building inherited in part or total. Guild regulations stipulated that widows of guild members either marry another member of the same guild or the late husband's apprentice. Similarly to artisans, merchants' widows were allowed to continue their husband's trade temporarily. The most frequent work opportunity for women in medieval Buda, however, was market trading. Their number, ethnicity, place of work and range of goods sold were all strictly regulated. They were referred to as fruit, pottage, cheese, poultry, game, vegetable or salt traders according to the goods they sold. The presumable presence of procuresses, prostitutes and witches in Buda is attested to only by entries in the Lawbook of Buda.

### Ildikó Dömötör: Hungary through the Eyes of an English Lady: Julia Pardoe's Travelogue from 1839–40

The study explores a travelogue chronicling the journey of Julia Pardoe, an English gentlewoman, in nineteenth-century Hungary. Dömötör focuses on the

picture Miss Pardoe paints of contemporary Hungary for her predominantly English female audience, placing the work in the context of nineteenth-century travel literature and the characteristics of the social segment defined as ‘gentlewomen’ in England at the time. To determine the extent to which Julia Pardoe adhered to the social expectations of the time in this particular work of hers, Dömötör examines whether the themes, places and people featuring in the book fit into the so-called feminine thematic dictated by the nineteenth-century norm for published female travellers. The analysis suggests that Miss Pardoe’s precise and detailed picture of contemporary Hungarian life and society often breaches the societal boundary between the worlds of men and women. Although she often wrote on ‘masculine themes,’ she successfully maintained her image as a lady author and was much acclaimed both in England and Hungary.

### Olga Granasztói: The Patriotism of the Fairer Sex, Or How Two Ladies Saved Hungary in 1722

There is an oil painting (1797) of inferior quality in the Csáktornya Castle Museum, the copy of an early eighteenth-century fresco which no longer survives. It depicts an allegorical scene in which contemporary Hungary, having faced the imminent threat of losing its constitution and independence in the 1720, emerges unscathed. The allegory alludes to the story in which Holy Roman Emperor Charles VI (Charles III, King of Hungary) planned to abolish the Hungarian constitution and turn the country into another *Land* of Austria. The plan was averted by Anna-Maria Pignatelli, wife of Mihály Althan and alleged mistress of the emperor, and Eleonóra Strattmann, wife of Ádám Batthyány, with the help of her alleged lover, General Eugene of Savoy. Although the delicate episode was not embraced by historiography, it was nevertheless preserved in the oral tradition of the aristocratic and intellectual circles of the western counties of Hungary. Later, in the early nineteenth century, writer Ferenc Kazinczy wrote the story down and disseminated his own written version through his extended correspondence. The copy of the fresco, as well as the literary adaptations, conceived during the 1848/49 War of Independence and the 1867 Compromise, commemorate an episode which was originally strongly associated with the tension and sense of uncertainty created by the Hungarian recognition of the 1713 *Pragmatica Sanctio*. However, from the end of the nineteenth century onwards, the story of the two ladies’ plot was largely forgotten and consequently it failed to become part of the ‘edited’ corpus of the country’s historical memory.

## Gyöngyi Farkas: The World According to Irén: The Stories of a Szatmár Peasant Woman

Through the personal stories of the eighty-three-year old Irén from Szatmár in north-eastern Hungary, the study examines the ways of constructing the past, including the 1930s-40s, and the rural life in the Rákosi and Kádár era, as well as her own role in shaping the events of the past. Observed in hindsight (the present being in the years following the change of regime in Hungary), the past appears in a nostalgic light in the narrative, where the golden age of a bygone era stands in stark contrast with the decaying world of the present. Although the sharpest break in the timeline is the collectivisation of the village in, 1960 instead of this period the narrator maintains that the present is the ultimate stage of decline. Instead of presenting herself as a mere passive observer of a decaying world, her narrative portrays her as an active protagonist who does not allow her life to be dictated by powers beyond her. The rebel-righteous attitude is a salient feature in her self-image. The most characteristic manifestations of this attitude are the so-called 'justice stories', which comprise the most interesting episodes of Irén's narrative. Irén felt the need of retrospect narrative justice primarily in stories about the collectivisation and the first years of the cooperatives, as if she was trying to get even for past offences on a narrative level in the present. For example, her stories recounting the forced collection of crops do not focus on the practice of exploiting peasant farms, but the individual standing up against it to protect her farm and family by cunning subversive actions to evade crops collectors.

## Zoltán Tóth: Zoltán I Tóth's View of Society

The essay is published in the memory of Zoltán Tóth, the eminent social historian, the member of the Korall advisory board, our professor and friend, who passed away on 16 March 2015 at the age of 72. Zoltán Tóth's most recent work was the social historical biography of his father, Zoltán I Tóth (1911–1956), an outstanding historian, who was killed in the 1956 revolution. The present essay, based on a conference paper, was part of this research. Zoltán I Tóth came from Temesvár (now Timisoara) and graduated at the University of Kolozsvár (now Cluj Napoca), where he read history, geography and Protestant theology. Following his studies, he worked as a teacher in Szatmárnémeti (now Satu Mare). He began his work at the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest only after the end of the Second World War. Besides the strong influence of Croce, his view of society was determined by the multiethnic realities of his homeland. His entire oeuvre was openly political apologetics for the peaceful and dignified cohabitation of the societies and ethnicities of small nations in the central European region.