

Media and Literature in Multilingual Hungary (1770–1820). Edited by Ágnes Dóbék, Gábor Mészáros, and Gábor Vaderna. Budapest: Reciti, 2019. 285 pp.

Media and Literature in Multilingual Hungary (1770–1820) presents the proceedings of a conference held under the same name in April 2018, organized by the Momentum Research Group Literary Culture in Western Hungary, 1770–1820 (Institute for Literary Studies of the Research Centre for Humanities of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences). The volume is bilingual, with the contributions written either in English or German. The eighteen studies comprising the book reflect the various research interests and goals of the Research Group, making it clear to the reader the study of the culture of historical western Hungary at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries constitutes an academically relevant if challenging scholarly endeavor.

After the Holy League defeated the Turks in 1687 and thus brought the more than 150-year-long dominance of the Ottoman Empire in Hungary to an end, the Habsburg Monarchy (which had ruled the western third of the country since 1526 as a result of a marital contract with the Jagiellonian dynasty) felt entitled to claim the liberated Hungarian territories. The end of the seventeenth century thus marked another turning point for Hungary, with Austria extending its political power over the country and adding another layer to its already immensely rich culture. It was during the reign of Maria Theresa that the Age of Enlightenment (ca. 1750–1820) came, and new ideas swept through Hungary. As Gábor Vaderna explains in the introductory study of the volume (“Language, Media and Politics in the Hungarian Kingdom between 1770 and 1820”), this era was characterized by remarkable cultural innovation, which brought about the strengthening of Habsburg Hungary both as a political and as an economic power in the region. Development naturally triggers institutional changes, one of which was the expansion of the press and its synergy with other literary media. The period witnessed the emergence of new journalistic genres and the specialization of the press: alongside the conventional economic and political newspapers, readers now had access to scientific periodicals covering specific disciplines. As the press enabled greater accessibility to information, new types of readers and reader behaviors appeared, as did novel forms of editorial attitudes and strategies. Interestingly though, these changes were fueled by the interests of the aristocracy, in part simply because the bourgeoisie was virtually nonexistent in Hungary at the time. In other words, as the smallest yet most

privileged and dominant social class of the country, the aristocracy made it possible for the literate population to access information.

One can see from this brief overview that the political and cultural atmosphere in Enlightenment Hungary was peculiar by European standards and, at the same time, unique in that it represented great diversity. The principal aim of the volume is to investigate how media developed and functioned in multilingual and multicultural western Hungary in the approximately fifty years of this period. Such complex research calls for the crossing of disciplinary boundaries. It is therefore natural, if not necessary, that the contributions to this volume focus on the different aspects of life on which the revolutionization of journalism left its mark. The major themes covered in the volume include cultural development (generalization of information, periodicals, and dictionaries), regional outlooks (Croatia, southern Slovakia), language planning, political journalism, literary criticism and publishing, and, last but not least, religion.

Cultural development and the foregrounding of Hungarian identity were tightly connected to the promotion of Hungarian dictionaries and Hungarian-language periodicals. The question of language choice was particularly important in a country in which the official language of administration and education was Latin and German was starting to take over this role. There was an increasing need to write and publish in Hungarian and to balance out the dominance of Latin and German in the media. István Fried's study, entitled "Mehrsprachigkeit in den ersten Jahrzehnten der ungarischen Zeitschriftenliteratur" examines multilingualism in the press in western Hungary in relation to nationalist movements and language planning endeavors in the 1810s. He concludes that multilingual publishing promoted the use of Hungarian and the spread of knowledge in the regions which were parts of historical Hungary. In a similar vein, Réka Lengyel ("The Newspaper as a Medium for Developing National Language, Literature, and Science"), Margit Kiss ("Magyar Hírmondó and Dictionary Proposals"), and Eva Kowalská ("Die erste slowakische Zeitung Presspurské nowiny zwischen Journalismus und Patriotismus") all highlight the importance of disseminating information in the vernacular in the strengthening of national identity. The rise of nationalism in the non-Hungarian speaking regions of the kingdom is further discussed in Suzana Cocha's discussion of journalism in the Croatian territories ("History of Journalism in the Croatian Lands from the Beginnings until the Croatian National Revival").

Language planning went hand in hand with a desire for cultural revival. It is thus no surprise that Hungarian intellectuals were striving to enable the

broader diffusion of Hungarian cultural and scientific products. Gábor Vaderna emphasizes József Péczeli's (1750–1792) merits in organizing intellectual life in Komárom (today Komárno, Slovakia) and publishing *Mindenek Gyűjtemény*, which is considered by many as the first Hungarian scientific journal (“Möglichkeiten der Urbanität in der ungarischen Zeitschrift *Mindenek Gyűjtemény*”). Further contributions made by, among others, Rumen István Csörsz (“The Literary Program of István Sándor and the Periodical *Sokféle* [1791–1808]”), Olga Granasztói (“The Paper *Hazai Tudósítások* and the Beginnings of the Cult of Monuments Through the Lens of Ferenc Kazincy's Articles [1806–1808]”), and Béla Hegedűs (“Literary History as an Argument for the Existence of Literature. Miklós Révai's Call in *Magyar Hírmondó* and *Költeményes Magyar Gyűjtemény*”) all provide evidence of the fervent and productive cultural work that was taking place among the Hungarian upper circles at the time. Speaking from a more literary perspective, Piroska Balogh gives an account of the emergence of critical journalism at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and Katalin Czibula reflects on German-language and Hungarian-language theater criticism in western Hungarian newspapers. Norbert Béres presents the most frequent distribution strategies of novels (“Roman, und was besser ist, als Roman. Über die Vertriebsstrategien des Romans”), providing insights into advertising and selling literature as a form of cultural product. Ágnes Dóbék takes a glance at how the western Hungarian press viewed European journalistic practices, and András Döbör analyses political articles by pro-Enlightenment publicist Sándor Szacs vay in “Magyar Kurír” (Sándor Szacs vay's Underworld Dialogues as Political Publicisms in the 1789 Year of the Enlightenment-Era Newspaper *Magyar Kurír*). From a more Austria-focused perspective, Andrea Seidler investigates the presence of the imperial couple in the *Preßburger Zeitung*, a German-language newspaper in Bratislava (Pressburg, the capital city of today's Slovakia), published twice a week from 1764 (until 1929). The final contribution to the volume, Zsófia Bárány's “Catholic and Protestant Union-Plans in the Kingdom of Hungary between 1817 and 1841,” provides insights into the emergence of what we today call “public opinion” in relation to religious tolerance and freedom in the region.

The versatility of the papers published in *Media and Literature in Multilingual Hungary (1770–1820)* bears testimony to the complexity and richness of the subject. Through close and detailed examination of how the press evolved and functioned in western Hungary in the fifty years that were crucial to the unfolding of the ideas of the Enlightenment in the region, one can understand the role

the press played in the wide distribution of knowledge and the promotion of national identity. With its illuminating contributions, the volume serves as a helpful source of information for any scholar or student venturing into this vast territory of Hungarian cultural studies.

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