

East Goes West: *Kavalierstours* of Hungarian Aristocrats in the Seventeenth Century. By Bálint Ugrý. Budapest: HUN-REN Research Centre for the Humanities, Institute of Art History, 2024. 307 pp.

Bálint Ugrý's monograph on the *Kavalierstours*, or educational journeys of young Hungarian aristocrats, which is based on his dissertation (defended in 2023 at Eötvös Loránd University), fills a significant lacuna in Hungarian historical research. Ugrý examines the travel-based learning strategies of the early modern Hungarian aristocracy, focusing on the most important families of the political elite from the seventeenth century within a broader European context. He is the first historian to approach *Kavalierstours* from a more comprehensive perspective, focusing both on the educational and travel aspects of these tours and also on their mechanisms (routes and locations, background organization). Ugrý draws on fundamental archival research and rigorous study of critical source editions and secondary literature. Over the course of the past decade, he has published various chapters of his dissertation in Hungarian as case studies. With the publication of this monograph in English, he now provides a comprehensive overview and critical discussion of Hungarian understandings of and approaches to the Grand Tour for an international readership. In doing so, he examines not only the journeys themselves but also how the aristocracy and court society received, interpreted, and responded to the *Kavalierstours*, identifying broader European patterns and analogies.

After a short introduction, the monograph is structured into four chapters, each of which examines the *Kavalierstours* from a different point of view. The illustrations and maps are integrated into the text and serve as aids to the reader. The appendix includes the itineraries compiled by the author, a comprehensive list of sources and works cited, and two indices (lists of names and places). The structure of the book is clear, and its language is dynamic and engaging.

The first chapter begins with a summary of the international and Hungarian secondary literature. Ugrý then explains the terminology used and introduces the methods and the main figures of the journeys, with a special focus on the routes and the most frequented educational institutions. We are given a complex picture not only of Hungarian but also of East European trends in early modern *Kavalierstours*. Young aristocrats were motivated by the desire to acquire academic (language, law, arithmetic) and empirical knowledge (riding, dance, music), and they traveled to various famous attractions and important sites of

power and culture (courts, private residences, and collections), in part to engage in networking. The contacts they established with the imperial elite and their presence at audiences and ceremonies arranged by their parents or guardians facilitated their political careers. This chapter offers a detailed, clearly structured summary, which serves as an informative introduction to anyone interested in the cultural transfers of the Baroque era. Furthermore, it also provides a framework for the research undertaken by Ugrý.

The second chapter discusses the journeys taken by the members of the most important Hungarian aristocratic families (Batthyány, Draskovich, Erdődy, Esterházy, Nádasdy, Pálffy) in alphabetical order. This chapter is useful first and foremost as a repository due to its data-driven character. It draws a broader picture of education through travel between 1573 and 1743 based on 28 trips made by Hungarian noblemen, with an overview of trends within the Transylvanian aristocracy. Ugrý's aim is to reconstruct the network of relations within the Hungarian political elite and identify family patterns by examining several trips taken by members of the same family, especially across different generations. The main question is simply whether the *Kavalierstours* were necessary for a successful political career and the later welfare of the family. The tours are examined in the context of youth education, and the analysis is based mainly on archival sources, including school and university registers, bills, reports, letters, and travelogues. By using an extensive amount of secondary literature, Ugrý places his work against a backdrop of scholarship on early modern social and educational history. Here, the line of argument is coherent. The case studies contain several intra-textual references, and the proportion and length of the quotations are appropriate.

In the case of the Erdődy family, the sources offer an opportunity to examine the *Kavalierstours* of György Erdődy (1613–1663) in Douai and Paris between 1631 and 1635. Erdődy planned to study abroad for two years and then undertook an extensive tour through France, Spain, and Italy. He ordered not one but two thesis prints during his stay in Antwerp, yet he ended up in Douai for years, waiting for money from his family to pay his debts. Through this example, Ugrý vividly illustrates the financial aspects of the organization and execution of a journey, and he demonstrates that a *Kavalierstour* was not necessary for later success. Despite his failed journey, Erdődy's career gained momentum after his return. In 1646, he began to serve as a royal chamberlain and in 1655 as an imperial chamberlain. His outstanding political career was cut short by his death a year after his appointment as royal master in 1662.

In the third chapter, Ugrý focuses on the typical elements of the *Kavalierstours* described in the second part of the book and compares the journeys made by different families. He examines the various elements and considerations that influenced travelers' interests: travel literature (works on *ars apodemica*) or local aspects, more specifically the general or the individual curiosity of Catholic noble travelers from the Kingdom of Hungary. To answer this question, Ugrý examines three travelogues from the same decades of the seventeenth century: Pál Esterházy's travelogue from 1653, István Zichy the Younger's travelogue from 1665, and Kristóf Batthyány's noble valet's from 1657–1658). He also examines three bodies of correspondence from a more extensive period: Ádám Erdődy's letters from 1661–1663, Zsigmond Széchényi's letters from 1699–1700, and Antal Erdődy's letters from the 1730s. Ugrý identifies the most frequented places and objects and their roles as symbols of power, culture, and erudition, and he also refers to the first instances of institutionalized tourism. This can be observed, for instance, in the constant route through the interior and exterior spaces of the residence of the Duke of Bavaria in Munich, the common curiosity concerning public armories, such as the Zeughaus in Augsburg and the Arsenale in Venice (a curiosity which was closely linked to the military titles and duties of Hungarian nobles), and the introduction of Giovanni Alto for visitors, a Swiss guardsman and guide in Rome, whose tours responded to interest in sacred spaces, including churches, relics, and objects of piety.

Following the examination of groups of sources, in the remainder of the chapter, Ugrý explores two further themes. The first concerns the recurring allure of the Cappella dei Principi, which was visited as a site that offered a clear embodiment of the influence and prestige of the Medici dynasty. After assessing the guidebooks available to contemporaries about Florence, Ugrý explains how Hungarian travelogues and letters fit into this tradition: they reported the beauty of the unfinished mausoleum and the impression made by the variety and richness of its gems. These factors lay behind the popularity of the Cappella dei Principi and explain why it became an essential site for a noble to visit. Finally, Ugrý focuses on an individual, János Szunyogh, and his *Kavalierstour* in Italy, during which Szunyogh acted as a patron of the arts and participated in symbolic and ceremonial activities. Based on the engraving by Giacomo Lauro of the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, published at Szunyogh's expense in 1618, Ugrý identifies an entire circle of young *Kavaliers* as patrons and formulates a hypothesis about business partnerships as well. The case studies in the third chapter complement one another and provide a comprehensive picture of the

defining characteristics of early modern Hungarian *Kavalierstours*, while also demonstrating Ugrý's familiarity with historical and art historical methodologies.

The final chapter provides a brief summary, in which Ugrý categorizes the *Kavalierstours* into different groups based on the level of documentation, the institutions visited, or the events attended. Among knightly academies, the Collegio dei Nobili in Parma was both an outstanding and an exclusive destination between 1670 and 1720. The participation in Habsburg coronation ceremonies in Augsburg emerges as a recurring pattern among members of the Esterházy family. Ugrý highlights that southern German territories and Italy were the most frequently visited regions by Hungarian travelers, and that the outstanding significance of Rome was due to the city's ecclesiastical importance, owing to the fact that relatives of the young Hungarian noblemen often studied theology at the Collegium Germanicum et Hungaricum. The model for the organization and execution of these trips, as well as the ways in which financial support was provided for Hungarian *Kavalierstours*, followed patterns provided by the aristocracy of the Holy Roman Empire and the Habsburg Monarchy but was also shaped by local characteristics.

This thoroughly researched and admirably detailed book offers a comprehensive account of Hungarian noble *Kavalierstours* in the seventeenth century, with an outlook on the afterlife of the method of "education through travel." The volume uses a broad range of archival sources and supports its argument with source editions and secondary literature on early modern travel and education. Ugrý consistently makes clear which findings are based on his own research and which rely on the work of others. The quotes are well selected, and they are neither repetitive nor excessively long. There are some minor inconsistencies in the placement and method of translations. The illustrations and maps based on itineraries compiled by Ugrý support the text without distracting the reader.

Ugrý places his research within the framework of social history. The volume engages with the works of Norbert Elias and Jeroen Duindam on early modern court society and confessionality. However, these theoretical strands recede behind the source-oriented narrative, especially in the second and third chapters. Although the text is very tight in structure, some disproportionalities remain. The excursus on Florentine travel literature is detailed compared to the short summaries offered in some sections. Since subchapters III.2 – III.6 are written from the same perspective (focusing on the allure of various sites based on travelogues and correspondence), it would have been preferable to combine these sections and present them as a case study, as in subchapter III.7 (Capella dei

Principi, which discusses the main allure of Florence in early modern period) and III.8 (János Szunyogh in Rome). Furthermore, the volume explores additional venues for future research, as demonstrated by the subchapter on the strategies used by the Medicis to express their influence. The research on Dutch towns and the German territories shed light on the specific curiosities and learning methods of young Hungarian travelers. These few critical remarks notwithstanding, Bálint Ugrý's monograph provides a long-awaited and comprehensive analysis of Hungarian *Kavalierstours*. It serves as a methodological model for the analysis of early modern travelogues, bills, reports, and correspondence produced during travel. Offering the first source-based account of its kind, the book constitutes a significant contribution to historical and art historical scholarship, particularly (but not exclusively) for scholars interested in the Baroque era.

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