

Patterns, ideologies, networks of memory, and the Kazinczy commemoration

The basics: Ferenc Kazinczy, the first modern Hungarian literary hero

1859 has recently been discovered in Hungarian literary history as a premier in matters of literary events: the first occasion with most enthusiasts of literature, forms of literary communities and communicative strategies that had never been seen before.¹ The large-scale celebration of the hundredth of birthday of Ferenc Kazinczy was the first literary event which seemed to magnetize tens of thousands of people, and placed literature in the forefront of public life. There is no complete inventory of the events, but the series of 120–150 commemorations opened in Pest on the 27th of October, and lasted till the end of January of the following year.

The central figure of these unprecedented events was born in 1759 into a noble family, he followed the typical life of a late 18th-century literate, combining several political and administrative duties with a strong literary interest. Appointed to the supervisor of the schools of several Hungarian administrative regions, he began an intensive literary networking in the second half of the 1780s. These literary connections led to the founding of two major Hungarian pioneering periodicals, the *Magyar Museum* and the *Orpheus* in the same period. Fallen out of favour with the imperial administration, he concentrated to his literary projects, beginning a prolific life of writing, translation, and literary networking characteristic to the republic of letters of the time. Under the inspiration of the French Jacobins, a group of Hungarian noblemen and literate founded a complex network to propagate their views. But things went wrong, the leaders of the group were exposed and executed, Kazinczy himself was charged with the translation of a seditious propaganda

¹ The most important contributions to this rediscovery are: Dávidházi 1989, Dávidházi/Karafiáth 1994, Praznovszky 1998, Dávidházi 1998.

book, and he served a long sentence of imprisonment between 1794 and 1801. Following his liberation, he retired into the country, and gradually became a central, but also a more and more controversial figure of the emerging new literary field. As one of the initiators of the Hungarian neologist movement, he became entangled in some of the most fierce and passionate debates of Hungarian literature on national cultural policy, the nature of national (language) and language reform. In the late 1820s his figure was somewhat shadowed by the founding of the Hungarian Academy and the more and more central position of Pest in the literary life. He died of cholera in 1831.

Three decades later, Kazinczy was rediscovered and reimagined as the first modern Hungarian literary hero. My paper will try to deal with five different types of environments, networks, ideological contexts and actors of the Kazinczy commemorations in order to shed light on two intertwined fundamental questions: how did the commemorations forge communities of memory, and what novel type of strategies did it use to make Kazinczy the central figure of Hungarian literature posthumously?

Cultural ritual into commodification, commodification into cultural ritual

Arjun Appadurai's famous argument on the circulation and exchange of commodities in social life brought to the forefront the idea that objects turned into "commodities, like persons, have social lives".² At a certain point of his ground-breaking essay, he turns on to critically reassess what he terms "the exaggeration and reification of the contrast between gift and commodity in anthropological writing"³ that used to oppose small and large, premodern and modern communities. Most often the alleged binary contrast suggested that, as opposed to the *gift-giving* small communities, large communities were thought to be distant, individualistic, impersonal, capitalistic, calculative, far from any kind of *Gemeinschaft* (as used by Toennies), and without any chance to change their nature. This would imply that any

² Appadurai 1986, 3.

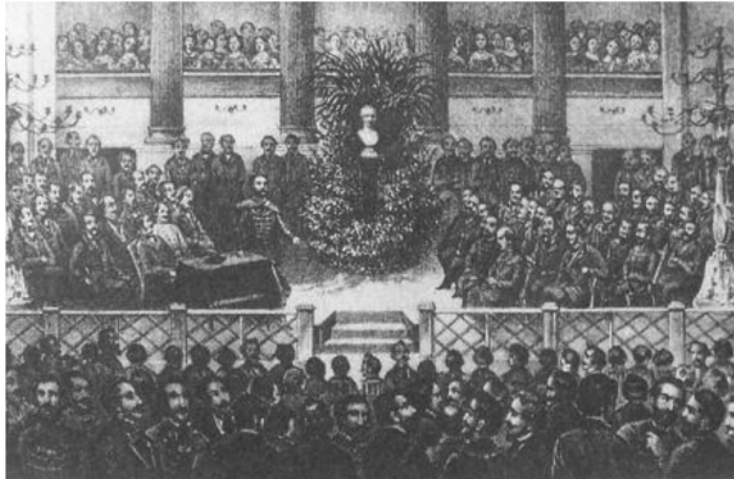
³ Ibid., 11.

object or phenomenon turned into commodity became impersonal and devoided from any intimate social feeling, framework and network. Appadurai critically reassesses this oversimplified vision of commodities, and a series of interlinked terms and phenomena, including the issue of modernity, and developed a culturally sensitive view of “things”. I recall his argument since the commemorations centred around Ferenc Kazinczy foreground both the *commodity potential* of literature (a potential that was recalled and recycled by the commemorative events) and the way (the same) commodities came to *forge an intimate community* (with rituals, networks, strong feelings etc.) around the commodified figure of Kazinczy and other literary figures and phenomena, respectively the social values represented by these. Even though commodity and community, commodification of literature and the intimacy of the literary field has often been contrasted, these commemorations offer a striking example that the relationship could be much more intricate and layered.

The commemorations evoking Kazinczy on the centenary occasion of his death implied not only an unprecedented number of people gathering and recalling the figure of the literate, but also an unprecedented type and number of objects commissioned for, occasioned by and associated to the events. Most of these were part of the commemorative events or could be viewed as generating memory sometimes even before the event itself would take place. Let us take a look at some of the most eloquent cases.

The central event of Pest served as a direct model for more than half of the commemorations, helping to establish the town as a new centre of literature, and was centred around the bust of Kazinczy. Placed above the audience, on a podium full of garlands and flowers, the bust was wreathed in a furor at the peak of the programme.⁴ In Miskolc, the commemorative occasion hosted by the local theatre was centred completely around the half-length portrait of Kazinczy. As a first moment of the coreography, the whole personnel of the theatre sung the *Szózat* of Vörösmarty, a kind of “second national anthem” written in 1836, in front of the half-length portrait having an altarlike place in the midst of the stage.

⁴ Akadémiai emlékkönyv, 5.



The Kazinczy commemorations in Pest (The Kazinczy Album, 1860)

In Gyöngyös the bust of Kazinczy was placed onto a plinth made of flowers and the wreathed sculpture constituted the centre of the whole commemorative rite. According to an eyewitness, in the town of Jászberény the local small theatre hosting the events faced blank unbroken silence for long minutes after the curtain rose and the audience glimpsed the wreathed bust of Kazinczy, bought as a copy from the Academy.⁵ In Dunaszerdahely the locals bought and placed a copy of *The Apotheosis of Kazinczy* painted by Ferenc Plachy and placed it into the centre of the stage of a theatre that had never been lighted in such an extraordinary manner before. The copy of the painting was a dynamic presence throughout the whole celebration. As an offset, dressed in “Hungarian clothes”, the whole staff of the theatre gathered in front of the painting in a half-circle and pointed at it, while ten angel-like small girls dressed as genii were holding a wreath over the painting amidst prolonged moments of general silence.⁶

It seems that in these and in many other cases the commercial networks inside and outside the scholarly world, originally fuelled by

⁵ *Vasárnapi Újság* 1859. november 24.

⁶ *Hazánk* 1860, 301–323.

the announcements of the Hungarian Academy on the issuing of copies of the bust and of the painting, created a strong network of commodity culture around several objects related to the commemorations; the local communities even competed to buy copies of the original objects used at the other major locales of the commemoration. Already the newspaper announcements of the programme of the Pest events consisted not only of an enumeration of the events to occur, but also a plain and undisguised advertisement of the memorabilia linked to and used throughout the events:

The gold, silver and brass medals produced by the Academy and engraved in the workshop of Antal Ábris, one of the most important engraver of our times, can be purchased for 120, 12 and 2 forints. A gypsum version of the bust to be displayed and the lithographic copies of the historical painting will be available from private entrepreneurs. - they wrote.⁷

But we should not hasten to categorize this phenomenon of commercialization plainly and solely as the modern beginnings of commodification of Hungarian literary life, since exactly these commodified objects had a strong catalysing effect of ritualization throughout the whole series of commemorations. The various visual representations, and the busts arose, catalyzed, concentrated, channelled a whole repertoire of individual and group feelings. Thus they can be seen not as simple objects with a static role, commercial elements that are far 'outside' the literary, but dynamic parts of forging literary and cultural memory. For instance, the ritual and cultural experience of prolonged and utter silence, otherwise hardly to be found in a Hungarian theatrical culture that favoured rather vociferous presence of the Hungarian theatrical audience at plays, was forged in theatrical and quasi-theatrical settings partly due to these objects representing Kazinczy. In most of the cases, these busts and paintings were passing over to other communities, preparing to celebrate the literate, not only a coreography of how to lionize, but also the strong link between representations of the writer and the forging of almost religious feelings in the presence of these representations. They became a kind of "reusable objects" that created a sense of broad

⁷ *Budapesti Szemle* 1859, 139.

community. It is a noteworthy effect that the more commodified these objects became and the larger population they were distributed to, the larger their performative effect grew in forging intimacy, mobilization and strong feelings of national (but also of the regional and local) community.

That is why it would be a mistake to oppose the performativity and performative effect of the quickly commodifying and commodity-based diffusion of these objects; the spirit of capitalism and the intimacy and mobilizing-effect of nationhood, the market culture of capitalism and the metaphysics of nationalism went hand in hand, generated and reinforced each other. On the one hand, the performativity, the intimacy and community-building of the national, on the other hand the business and economy of the national were interwoven, and it would be fruitful to view their far-reaching relationship not as opposition, but as a mutual tie behind the growing commemorating community. For instance, the often contrasted religiosity and capitalism, deconstructed in a pioneering way already by Max Weber⁸, could be given a new twist in this framework, since these commodified representations of Kazinczy often worked as settings reminding to religious contexts. The presence and central placement of these objects in the middle of the commemorations, and the presence of the copies in several enterieurs, recalled the Catholic cults of sainthood.⁹ This connection would partly account for the religious-like feelings arose by the objects and their placement in the private sphere of a large part of the population amidst of religious paintings, inscriptions, tapestries.¹⁰ Not only was the discourse of these events full of metaphors of adoration, referring to Kazinczy as “national saint”, “national prophet”, “creator of the national language”, and merging the vocabularies of nationhood and religiosity, but the commemorations centred around these objects functioned as epiphanies. “It is not working day and game time today, but high day. But the priests of the altar are the speaker, the artist, the poet: for all of

⁸ Weber 2003.

⁹ For an excellent literary anthropological interpretation of this transformation: Dávidházi 1998.

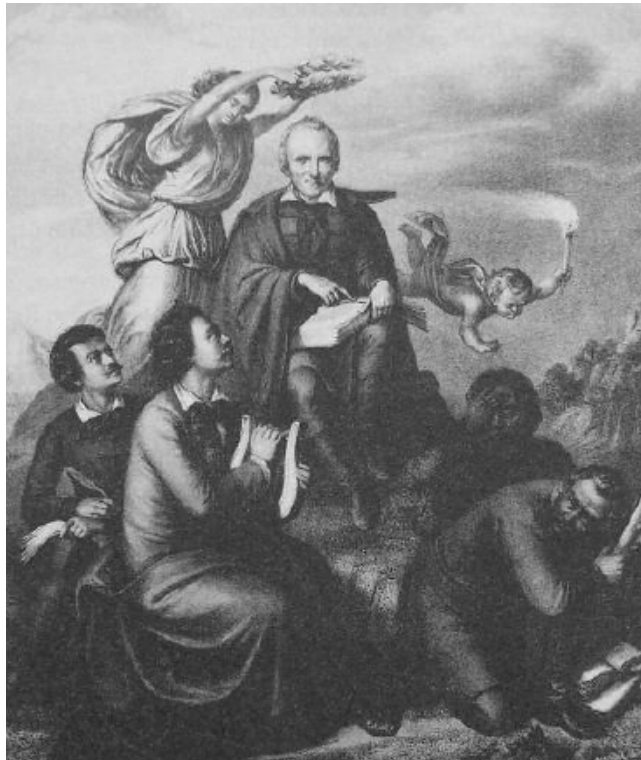
¹⁰ Kunt 1995.

them it is game time like for the priests in high days.”¹¹ – wrote one of the leading journalist of the time, ringing in the Pest events to take place on the same day. And several newspaper reports from the most various places spoke of the “unusually long and church-like silence” that accompanied the sight of the centrally placed busts or paintings of Kazinczy. A most telltale sign of this effect came from Pest where part of the huge crowd could not enter into the building of the National Museum. Yet they stayed calm, and in spite of not hearing anything, joined into the regular cheers of the more fortunate who succeeded in entering the premises; it was the sight of the enthralling inner ornamentation and of a large-scale painting of Orlai Petrics Soma that seemed to successfully compensate the lack of the auditory experience. This is a clear sign that the paintings, the bust of Kazinczy and the symbolically enriched visual environment were decisive factors in forging a ritual and arousing feelings of belonging.

This rich visual experience was clearly modelled along the cult of saints. Already four months before the commemorations the newspaper *Hölgyfutár* issued a highly successful litograph presenting *The Apotheosis of Kazinczy*, fusing the traditional iconography of famous men, and the also well-known iconographic elements of the biblical representations. Surrounded by the more or less recently died Petőfi and Kisfaludy, Kazinczy was wreathed by an angel, while pointing at the Book of Life, the book where, according to Christian and Judaic tradition, God recorded the name of each and every person to enter heaven. Another half of the litograph was occupied by the angel (in this case most probably a childlike Cherubim) mentioned in The Book of the Apocalypse as the one to bring forth the apocalypse and admonish those condemned to suffer eternal damnation. Thus Kazinczy was portrayed as a judge of literature and life, a deputy of God, being above all worldly knowledge and values. The litograph was not only sacralizing / sanctifying the figures of the newly emerged national literature, placing them in a decisive position of a culturally strongly embedded narrative of future, but it was obviously using the

¹¹ *Vasárnapi Újság* 1859. október 27.

most popular, trans-confessional biblical visual narrative of the Hungarian Baroque.¹² While being illiterate¹³ and having rather vague notions on literature or the figures of the emerging national literature, the large masses of the population present at the Kazinczy commemorations were highly literate in Biblical narratives and in visual representations of the Bible and the saints.



Plachy Ferenc: The Apotheosis of Kazinczy (1859)

¹² Knapp/Tüskés 2003a, 174–178. For a partly rewritten version of the original book in English see: Knapp/Tüskés 2003b.

¹³ After the unsuccessful attempts of the Habsburgs to introduce compulsory education (through the so-called first and second Ratio Educationis in 1777 and 1806, then through the so-called Entwurf of Leo Thun), in Hungary the compulsory primary education took effect in 1868.

That is why the visual representations and environments loaded with well-known cultural models and iconographies of Christianity and sainthood could so effectively forge rituals, intimacy and perform strong community feelings. These translated and recycled hybrid models of visual representations transgressed social and cultural boundaries, were comprehensible for a far broader public than the literate public. This is one of reasons why even peasant communities were so eager to hold the commemorations; to paraphrase Eugen Weber's well-known phrase, the objects and visual elements alluding to sacred narratives helped to make peasants into Hungarians.¹⁴

This is even more palpable if we take into account that the central visual coreography of the Pest events with an altarlike construction was turned into a litograph portraying Kazinczy as the good sacrifice offered to God by the nation. The litograph clearly hinted at Abel's "good" sacrifice¹⁵, and positioned the Hungarians and those present at the commemorations as an elected community. It had a success a litograph had scarcely ever had till then.

It was sold in tens of thousands of copies, it served as a background for several local commemorations, and it appeared within religious representations of the saints in diverse private interiors.¹⁶ This circumstance helps us to understand better not only the intricate and entangled channels through which the new commemorative models, the new cultural canon and the role of literature was spread, but also the somehow paradoxical situation when mass commodification of objects and visual representations with a core of recycled religious master narratives helped to perform, to ritualize and to take even to the private sphere a peculiar religious type of feeling linked to literature. This was a commemorative framework where rising capitalism and cultural ritual, literary commodity and intimate feelings went hand in hand, became deeply intertwined. Through the first wave of literary commemorations, Hungarian literature seemed

¹⁴ Weber 1976.

¹⁵ Hebrew 11:4.

¹⁶ Kunt discovered such situations in photographs of interiors taken during the second half of the nineteenth century. Kunt 1995, 124–132.

to offer a palpable and novel sense of community that was able to unite ritual with capitalist feeling.



The lithograph reinterpreting the visual background of the Pest commemorations

„Sacred joy”?¹⁷ Patterns of conviviality and the slowly emerging dilemmas on the convivial elements of the Kazinczy commemorations

Even though the Hungarian literary history of the Kazinczy and other mid-nineteenth century literary (and later political) commemorations disregarded the role of the feasts and “commemorative suppers”, these were standard elements of the commemorations, and sometimes they even came to incorporate the latter wholly.

The various representations of Kazinczy – most of them busts and paintings modelled after the one presented at the commemorations of Pest – were present also in the feasts. In Buda-Pest the very same bust wreathed at the National Museum was taken to the dining room of the Europe Hotel (*Európa Szálloda*), where one of the most famous Gipsy bands of the period played the music to which the 200 chosen participants of the dinner and feast were dancing well into the evening.

But in most of the places it was not possible to separate the feast and the solemn poetical-theatrical-musical part of the commemorations. Moreover, most of these communities *did not even want to separate them*, perceiving the various parts as divisions of one and the same commemoration. Very diverse forms of conviviality and solemn forms of remembrance went hand in hand together without the tiniest perplexity.¹⁸ For instance, in Kalocsa the same casino staged both a theatrical commemorative event and the dance that lasted till next morning; the background for the whole evening and night was the large wreathed portrait of Kazinczy. This same large and richly wreathed portrait with sacred allusions served as a background both for a short revival of the literary texts from the Pest-based commemorations, and the toasts (recalled as “our ancient heritage”) and dance till early in the morning. In Eger

the dancing room of the casino was turned into the church of Thalia. In the background, the coat of arms of Hungary was placed, sided by the mask of Melphomene and the lyre of Orpheus [...] We saw the

¹⁷ *Sárospataki Füzetek* 1860, 700.

¹⁸ For an innovative analysis of this complex interplay in the commemorations dedicated to Walter Scott, see Rigney 2012, esp. 176-184.

improvised curtain rise and the half-length portrait of Kazinczy appear in the midst of a forest of flowers and surrounded by the sun, the moon and several stars. Vociferous cheers arose.¹⁹

After the enthralling and grave theatrical moment the improvised theatre was turned back into a lively dancing room, and almost the same environment came to be the scene of an overnight ball. Following the success of the far and wide commemorations, in Gyöngyös a Kazinczy ball was proposed, that would fuse the diverse elements already known from the former occasions. After a poem written on the occasion and the *Szózat* of Vörösmarty, a wreath was planned to be placed on the bust of Kazinczy, the latter being the invariable background for the feast of the whole night. The overlapping and fusion of these elements was invariably recurrent in poorer places where it was completely impossible to find a theatre or the similarly representative building of the local casino. Thus the commemoration was often held in the local inn. In Nagykanizsa this resulted in Kazinczy being portrayed by a local artist based on newspaper reproductions, that reached them till the date of the event, and the short moment of poetry was followed by a night-long cheers, dance and toasts.

The invariable presence of the feasts, the balls, the toasts, the dance and moderate drinking within the commemorations – be it in a functionally separated form, or usually overlapping and entangled with the more solemn parts – can be a strong evidence that the new forms of cultural remembrance were integrated into long-lasting former patterns of conviviality.²⁰ What I formerly called “feast” is actually an umbrella term for quite different forms of conviviality: the banquet, the ball, the salon meeting, the gentlemen’s club (*kaszinó*), the popular feast seem the most important of these.

The recycling and reframing of these institutional form of conviviality within the commemorations can partly shed light on why the cults of the literate could involve so many people from all of the social strata; exactly because these institutions, forms and occurrences of conviviality constituted a powerful interface among older cultural practices and the new type of remembrance forms. But at the same

¹⁹ *Vasárnapi Újság* 1859. december 4.

²⁰ For a groundbreaking analysis of the phenomenon, see Ozouf 1991.

time, a closer and more attentive look at these forms and practices of conviviality might reveal the inner cleavages among these practices, and thus the inner border-lines of those participating at the events.

These participants at the Kazinczy commemorations have been considered a more or less homogenous crowd, and far more attention was dedicated to highlight the unprecedented number of this community than the subtle inner borders that divided them from one another. But viewed from the different forms and social traditions of conviviality they used to commemorate Kazinczy, these inner differences become palpable. At the central event of Pest, the feast was highly exclusive; only around 200 carefully chosen invited guests were welcome, the toasts were recorded and published, and the whole event resembled an exclusive aristocratic reception so familiar to the midst of the nineteenth century (probably with the notable exception of the over-representation of writers). In Szatmár the feast was also exclusive and the 150 people invited (most of them from the members of the local nobility) dressed according to a very strict and expensive dress code. The local banquet, that followed the theatrical moment and was labelled by the people of Miskolc as being “huge”, hosted around 200-250 men and women in the local gentlemen’s club (*kaszinó*). This was restricted exclusively to the members of the club, too.

In the small town of Visk, the “frugal feast” followed by the “marry-making”, organized in one of the schoolrooms of the local Reformed grammar school, had clearly a different and less exclusive audience than the preceding ones. A local organizer reported to one of the most popular journals that in Kalocsa the ceremonial reading of several poems was followed by a “friendly feast” hosted by the local gentlemen’s club. The peculiar syntagm of “friendliness” was probably meant to convey the more democratic and less exclusive / restrictive character of the feast in comparison with other events organized by fellow gentlemen’s clubs. But the feast of Széphalom with most of the 4,000 people returning from the grave and former dwelling place of Kazinczy was probably the most different in terms of social stratification from the one organized in the highly exquisite and acclaimed restaurant Európa of Pest. According to the eyewitnesses it was probably an unusually large popular feast that had very

little to do with the exclusive banquets, balls, dinners, salon events with the exception that it was also devoted to the memory of Kazinczy.

So it may prove useful to look not only at the invariable presence of the feasts in the Kazinczy commemorations and their role in forging a sense of liminality and community, but also to the inner stratification and different patterns of these occasions. A salon dinner or an aristocratic ball with strict dress code and exclusive invitation clearly hosted other type of commemorative communities than the room of a gymnasium, an inn or the feast in a public square. The different historical and social patterns of feast integrated the remembrance of the Hungarian writer into different, but entangled forms of conviviality. At the same time, a closer analysis of these various forms reveals not only the way the feast constituted a common historical-cultural-ritual framework linking the most different communities in a huge common event, but they also maintained strong social borders among people belonging to different social strata.

But the feasts ("the sacred joy" as one of the participants euphemistically and apologetically called them) and the more ceremonious parts of the commemorations were not so harmoniously overlapping in each and every case. It is a telltale sign, that for some of the eyewitnesses and participants the commemorations, they seemed a puzzle with parts that were not easy to put together. Most of these accounts and reflexive apologies bring into discussion the role the feast played, or ought to have played, in the whole of the commemorations, highlighting the alleged cleavage between the patriotic, highly theatrical and ceremonious and grave spirit part and the other half that often ended in a long session of toasts, drinking and dancing. For instance, the eyewitness reporting from the small town of Balasagyarmat was apologising in the name of the whole community for not being able to refrain themselves from feasting, drinking and dancing:

I would still have to report on the feast (*dáridó*), but probably this is hardly fitting to the grandeur of the commemorations. Please, apologise us, but as Hungarians cannot live without public life and events accompanied by feasts, after ten years of prohibition we take every opportunity to live life as full as possible.²¹

²¹ *Vasárnapi Újság* 1859. november 17.

The apologetical argument of the local eyewitness is the exception, the unreflected fusion of lofty commemoration and feast seems to be the rule. That is why the former scarce cases are so useful in noticing the emergence of a new cultural border and taxonomy distinguishing the feasts from the commemorations, apologising for the “interference” and “overlapping” of dance, popular music, toasts and drinking with the occasions governed by poetic works, rhetorical speeches, theatrical representations and evocations (including the *tableaux vivants*).

These are clear signs of the sacralization of culture and of the slowly growing distance among cultural practices that at a certain moment of literary and cultural modernization seemed to be perceived together.²² By associating these practices to one another, the huge impact and success of the Kazinczy commemorations slowed down the separation and cleavage between what were to become elite and popular literary / cultural practices. Nevertheless it is clearly visible that the more isolated and less urban / large spaces and communities, with less specialised institutional life (including less specialised cultural institutions), were the ones where it was more usual for these cultural practices to overlap. The casinos and inns of the small towns and the villages hosted the odes, the wreath-giving ceremonies, the overnight dancing and toasting under the same roof. The specialization and differentiation of cultural institutions and the cleavages they introduced into the various cultural practices of the commemoration were most visible in Pest. The National Museum hosted only the scholarly commemorative speeches and poetical readings, the restaurant was the occasion of an elite and exclusive, but fairly relaxed feast with regular toasts and vivid Gypsy music, and the National Theatre closed the day with an artistic melange of *tableau vivant*, poetry and fragments of national drama. These multiple scenes of commemoration, implying a wider network of specialized cultural actors, led to hardly interchangeable sceneries and cultural roles and clearly paved the way for the dilemmas we saw in the case of the small town of Balassagyarmat the dwellers of which wondered

²² For an in-depth case-study of this process with far-ranging methodological conclusions: Levine 1988.

whether it was “suitable” and “correct” to remember Kazinczy and the foremost figures of the national canon also with dancing, toasting, drinking, loud popular music. Certainly these dilemmas can sometimes be viewed from another perspective, too. The commemorations introduced a novel coreography of remembrance. This is why some of the communities living more or less in isolation were perplexed due to lack of immediate, valid and perfectly fitting patterns and models. For instance, a community of the small town of Sátorajújhely (closest to Széphalom, the last dwelling place of Kazinczy) excused oneself publicly for delaying the commemoration till the last day of 1859. They apologised by bringing into discussion also the alleged lack of the norms of how to behave in such a situation:

In the beginning *we had no idea whatsoever how to organise and behave at such a celebration*. We thought it could not be without a kind of theatrical formality. It never occurred to us that we could just visit the grave of the famous man in large number, the same way we did before individually.²³

Even though in the the majority of the cases the new type of events of cultural commemorations fused with and built upon older and traditional forms of conviviality, the Kazinczy commemorations brought also forth the way this relationship began to be embedded into wider dilemmas regarding the nature of national cultural memory – and thus the nature of (modern national) culture itself. This new, emerging definition of culture and literature that can be noticed in the dilemmatic comments and apologies led slowly to the sacralization of national culture and literature and to the institutionalization of the cleavage between “highbrow” and “lowbrow” culture and literature.²⁴ The Kazinczy commemorations seem to offer a rare glimpse to this dynamics of this process of cultural and literary modernization, to the way modern literary nationalism is emerging.

²³ “Kazinczy-ünnepély Széphalmon”, *Vasárnapi Újság* 1859. december 30. [emphasis mine – L. T. Sz.]

²⁴ Levine 1988, 104.

Fictions of consensus: the Kazinczy commemorations and the making of the modern Hungarian literary intellectual

The Kazinczy commemorations were also the play- and battleground of a newly emerging group that was seeking status and stability among the other modern professions: the Hungarian literary intellectuals.²⁵ Caught into a multiple and multi-layered fierce competition for scholarly status, truth and validity both within and outside the scholarly world, both with other professions and within the literary one, the Kazinczy commemorations were devised and orchestrated by literary intellectuals with multiple scenarios that were trying to answer this complex challenge. Viewed from this perspective, the Kazinczy commemorations circulated and canonized a series of concepts, roles, stereotypes, narratives on literature and the new strata of modern literary intellectuals, of course, situating them in the centre of public attention and public discourse. This unprecedented public attention was a new situation also for the literary intellectuals themselves. Therefore, on its turn, the commemorations helped to coagulate an emerging group with various identities, aspirations, values and strong dilemmas of identity.

The Kazinczy commemorations offered themselves and were perceived as narratives on the role, position and fate of “the Hungarian writer”. That is why the biographies and the visual representations of Kazinczy were so often recycled to fit an alleged image of an alleged “national writer”. For instance, the lifecourse of Kazinczy was constructed as a martyrdom, a ceaseless fight for the national language, foregrounding his role in the so-called disputes of neology.

²⁵ For a broader transnational discussion of this process see Charle 2001. For the basic discussion on the sociological processes of nineteenth-century professionalization, see: Wehler 1980, 326–348; Kovács 1994; Perkin 1990; Perkin 1996. For the case of Hungary and Eastern Europe in general from a social historian’s point of view: Mazsu 1997.



Instead of using diverse visual representations of Kazinczy, the commemorations obsessively employed the image of an old and sick man, highlighting his alleged martyrdom for the nation. On the left: the popular lithograph of the commemoration by Rohn Alajos after the painting of Heinrich Thugut. On the right, a portrait never used during the commemorations: János Donot, *The portrait of Kazinczy Ferenc* (1808).

This led to the tacit stigmatization of his former opponents and presented him and his ideas as natural “winners” of the disputes on the character and future of Hungarian language. At the same time, his old age, his alienation and death (in Széphalom, far from Pest) were portrayed not as a consequence of several factors (including the structural change, the professionalization and centralization of the literary life), but as the fate of Christ or prophet, not understood by his worldly contemporaries, and revived by a later, more sensitive generation. Of course, this led also to a somewhat paradoxical case; he was not commemorated as an excellent writer, but as a chosen figure, most often called “The Mózes of the Magyars”²⁶, to show and reconstruct national language for “a nation that has lost it in the pre-

²⁶ A detailed analysis of the metaphor: Margócsy 1997.

vious centuries". This narrative and conceptual solution strengthened the paradox of the whole literary commemorations, that made forget him as a poet and a prose-writer for almost one and a half century. The politics of editing, that played a paramount role in the commemorations, foregrounded him as the author of articles and essays on matters of language, and as a leader of the Hungarian language reforms, and less as an excellent creator. This recycling effect, fuelled by the Hungarian fears of the 1850s from the loss of the national language and a symbolic struggle on language usage in 1859, constructed, developed, diffused strong patterns, models of the literary intellectual that were to haunt many decades onwards.

Foremost, the Hungarian writer was imagined as a public intellectual, a chosen figure and leader of its nation (with strong metaphorical allusions to the recycled biblical image of the chosen nation), often tragically misunderstood by his disloyal contemporaries, and waiting to be rediscovered in the heydays-to-come of the nation. Certainly this perspective had much more to do with the writers planning the commemorations, than with Kazinczy and his decades. It was the self-image of the literary intellectuals of the 1850s, who imagined themselves as leaders of the intellectual market and agenda, and viewed literature as the foremost of the new emerging modern professions, tragically misunderstood and left in oblivion for centuries. Therefore they presented a history of Hungarian literature to be commemorated as the series of the (godly) chosen, but frequently misunderstood public intellectuals, often suffering in poverty and oblivion for the good case of a whole nation, waiting to be rediscovered. The Kazinczy commemorations constructed a Kazinczy that disclosed much more information about new economic, social and even political aspirations, visions, fears of the organizers and commemorators than about Kazinczy himself.

One of the most important and well-sold object of the commemorations, a visual narrative focusing on Kazinczy, could make this even more palpable and obvious. The painting of Orlai Petrich Soma, entitled *The meeting of Kazinczy and Kisfaludy Sándor* was commissioned by a group of aristocratic benefactor ladies. It was planned by the organizer of the Pest commemoration and the secretary of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the literary historian Toldy Ferenc himself. The large painting was displayed in the foyer of the National

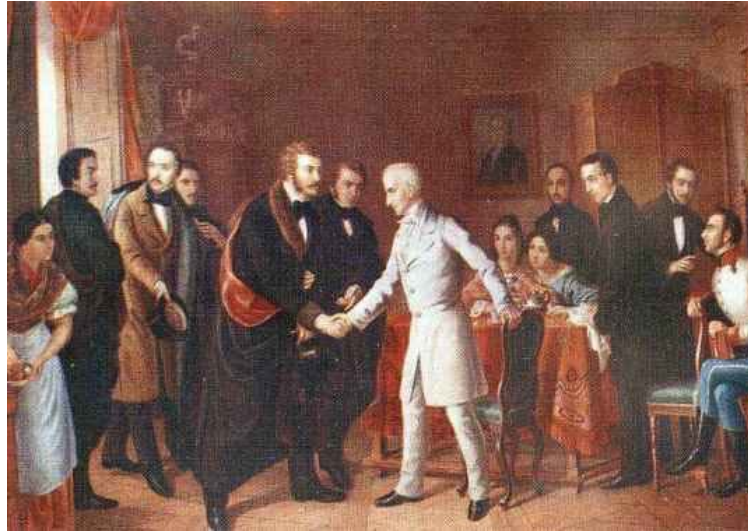
Museum during the whole ceremony, being the first element of the commemorative scenario that welcomed the guests. Shortly afterwards it was donated to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Following the central commemoration, it was reprinted in thousands of litographic copies. The impressive painting was actually a piece of fictitious literary history; even though the meeting of the relatively old Kazinczy and the young Kisfaludy certainly had taken place, all the philological evidences show that none of them, or nobody from their environment, layed store to it in 1828.²⁷ Out of this simple and insignificant meeting a symbolic generational shift and a transmission of literary power was constructed where – instead of the battle of *les anciennes et modernes* – an older generation seemed to offer its powers and tribute to a younger one. But in the centre of the painting, modelled along the strong iconografic tradition offered by *The Surrender of Breda (La rendición de Breda)* of Velázquez, stood not Kazinczy or the representative of the younger generation, but Toldy himself, being portrayed as the chief negotiator and link between two generations.

The iconographical tradition taken over from Velázquez would suggest a gesture of surrendering²⁸, but as a commissioner Toldy reinterpreted it into a gesture of friendly and peaceful generational shift. In his brief interpretation attached to the litographic version, Toldy suggested that, in fact, the painting represented the first major generational shift in Hungarian literary history. The gestures of Toldy, one of the most important literary figures of mid-nineteenth century and the chief organizer of the Pest events, was clearly linked to placing himself and his generation into the midst of literary life, and built a legitimizing tradition to sustain it. By portraying himself and his generation as eyewitness, friend, mediator and heir of Kazinczy, the literate organizers of the 1859-1860 commemorations actually inscribed their figures, stories and identities into the forefront of the commemorations. The buyers of the litographs and the lookers-on of the painting actually commemorated the commemorators themselves.

²⁷ The philological deconstruction of this fictitious moment of Hungarian literary history came only after more than one and a half century: Szilágyi 2008.

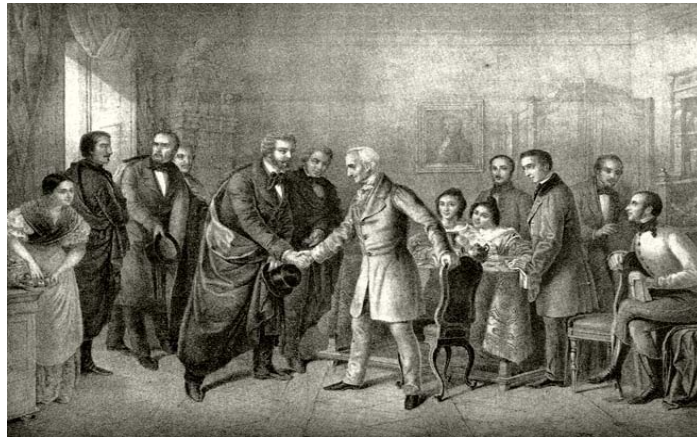
²⁸ Révész 2011.

Through positioning himself and his older fellows in the midst of an allegedly major event in the life of Kazinczy, Toldy was giving an answer to the new generation that began to challenge his position and the status of his generation within the literary establishment.



Orlai Petrich Soma: *Kazinczy Ferenc és Kisfaludy Károly találkozója* [The Meeting of Ferenc Kazinczy and Károly Kisfaludy] (1859)

But the strong visual gesture was not solely an internal literary business. Through the image of the alleged legendary meeting, Toldy built and helped to propagate a sharply contoured fiction on the past and present role of the literary elites, a narrative that was reiterated along the commemorations, gave a strong foundational identity for an emerging profession and helped to consolidate its status. According to this, in 1828 the literary elite and literary intellectuals gave a memorable lesson of solidarity and consensus to the Hungarian nation, when instead of rivalry, they chose a peaceful and friendly solution. This fiction of peaceful consensus, staying at the basis of a nation without divisions, came to forge the ideal of the national that should be governed by literary intellectuals, since they are the rare social group that is able both to reach and to forge consensus.



The lithographic version of the painting

This idealizing picture and self-interpretation of the literary establishment occurred in the midst of a series of intellectual debates on the consequences of not having an independent state – Hungary still being a part of the Habsburg Empire. These debates of the 1850s opposed the notion of society to that of the state, and argued that the state was not a must for a nation as long as societal structures and social life flourished. The huge and unexpected success of the Kazinczy commemorations strengthened not only the scenario of a successful societal life that came to be perceived as sign of a flourishing nation, but also the alleged consensus-forging role of the literary intellectuals who organized the series of events. Thus the Kazinczy event became a strong interpretive framework for the birth and initial ideologies of the modern civil society that was seen to be wisely governed by literature and the literary profession. The Kazinczy commemorations helped the new literary profession to establish and position itself to the forefront of civil society and nation-building by reflecting and conceptualizing these fears regarding statehood vs. civil society. Even though Hungarians did not have an independent state of their own, the civil society governed by the ‘wise’ literary and artistic intellectuals was seen as a proper temporary substitute. Ob-

jects and especially visual elements were organic part of this framework; from the painting of Orlai Petrich to widely circulated lithographs and albums, dedicated to the memory of the series of events, all were telling stories on the emerging modern literary intellectuals, their roles, their model lives. Then, it is no wonder why the number of those who declared themselves literary intellectuals rose exponentially from the census of 1853, the first Hungarian census that used socio-professional categories instead of overtly feudal taxonomy, till the next ones. After the Kazinczy commemorations, it was a fashionable thing to be and to declare oneself a writer and a literary intellectual.

The transnational as model and rival: on the mobility of the commemorative patterns

The magnetizing appeal of the Kazinczy commemorations, and especially its extraordinary success among those not in touch with the literary scene, cannot be accounted for in a solely national (literary) context. If done so, a methodological nationalism would hide the transnational wave that had a snowball effect on the planning, the coreography and the discourse of the first important Hungarian literary commemorations. This is not a mimetic type of relationship, but more like a double-edged cultural recycling process Joep Leerssen described in modelling the transnational “viral” emergence of modern nationalisms. As he put it:

national thought is *mobile*. It is not just the reaction, within a give country, to the sociological conditions of that country, but it moves over the map like weather system or an epidemic [...] the development of the European nations took place in a flux of shifting self-identifications amidst a widespread and intense exchange of ideas.²⁹

This meant also that the same transnational patterns came to be turned into completely different, often competing arguments and ideas within the different national and local frameworks. A similar

²⁹ Leerssen 2006, 19, 22. For an extensive reflection on the metaphor of “viral nationalism” see Leerssen 2010.

flux of patterns governed the Kazinczy commemorations, much of the flow of the events being more or less discretely channelled and moulded by a series of transnational references that have not been taken into consideration yet.

Already one of the first initiator of the commemorations, János Erdélyi found it natural to fall back primarily on a cross-national comparison, when he publicly proposed the organization of what was to become the largest Hungarian literary event of the time. In 1857, reporting on the surprising intention of the Reformed College of Sárospatak to buy back the mansion of Kazinczy for commemorative purposes, he resumed the gesture of his institution with a telltale comparison: “This great man was born in 1759, almost a hundred years ago. *Should we be overseas, panegyric words could already be heard from all sides.* I wonder whether we hear the words of the piety in us, so as to devote a solemnity to his hundredth birthday.”³⁰ Two years later, looking back proudly to his initiative, Erdélyi recalled his role in a similar manner, situating the Kazinczy event in a comparative, transnational cultural and geopolitical scene:

it is me, who suggested for the first time this centenary commemoration. Then the more wide-spread journals of our literature made it so avowed, that hundreds and thousands of hearts were filled with great ideas. The world who sees this, should reverence us for it.³¹

The evocation of “the world” is definitely a telltale sign that the Hungarian events were part of a transnational network of multiple commemorations in an age that brought about “the cult of the centenaries.”³²

But how did *the world* as a point of reference look like in the dynamics of the Hungarian commemorations? How was it constructed, and what can it show us about the transnational character of the Kazinczy commemorations? Certainly, *the world* was not a vapouring or an empty metaphor at János Erdélyi. The famous professor of philosophy and literature at the Reformed College in Sárospatak

³⁰ Erdélyi 1857.

³¹ Erdélyi 1859.

³² Quinault 1998.

already had had a long career met with a warm response, before he withdrew to Sárospatak after the outcome of the 1848-49 revolution. His fulminant career from the preceptor of noble families to one of the most well-known cultural journalist of the 1840, a young member of the Academy and, for a short time before the revolution, even the director of the Hungarian National Theatre, Erdélyi was a successful writer with a great breadth of view. In the first half of the early 1840s, he set out twice for grand (European) tours, and, out of the many enthralling events and circumstances he reported, he was especially attracted to a series of commemorative occurrences and events, be it literary or not. For instance, in December 1844, he was thrilled not only by what was done, but also what was to be done in the future with the memory of Napoleon:

On the very same December 16, the church of the military infirmary was the scene of the commemoration dedicated to the anniversary of the return of Napoleon's ashes. Every old soldier who could be there, was there, even if some of them were unable to walk. What an epoch, *what a remembrance!* The plinth for the sculpture of Napoleon is already visible. *What a celebration for and in Paris, when the sculpture will be unveiled.*³³

It is clearly visible that Erdélyi was not only attracted to the lives and memory of great men, but he was even more enthralled by the new forms and especially the appeal of the modern commemorations. From this angle, it is completely understandable why he became so attracted to the idea that commemorations are the best forms of national self-representation and the palpable ways of the unity of a nation. When in the 1850s he proposed the commemoration of Kazinczy, the emphasis was not only on the figure of Kazinczy, but on a cultic appeal of the literary cults themselves.

A year ago our *Pesti Napló* brought to the attention of the literary world that the hundredth birthday of our Kazinczy is forthcoming. During the last year, many Hungarian newspapers followed us in urging that also we, Hungarians, should commemorate our most outstanding figures. Like Germany commemorates Schiller and Goethe

³³ Erdélyi 1985 [emphasis mine – L. T. Sz.].

each and every year, like Italy commemorates his Dante with fresh wreath each and every year, similarly should Hungarians evoke those geniuses, who created literature, and whose pathbreaking footsteps are followed by our generation,³⁴

wrote the journalists of the *Pesti Napló*, already seizing the double-sided character of the transnational cults for their Hungarian counterpart; they worked both as a transnational model to follow and a rival cultural gesture to compete with.

Thus this transnational appeal of the literary commemorations was not only a pattern that made commemorations a perfect form of national memory for some leading Hungarian intellectuals, including Erdélyi, and the main ‘coreographer’ of the events, Ferenc Toldy, the leading Hungarian literary historian of the mid-nineteenth century.³⁵ The appealing transnational European pattern of cultural memory soon became part of a vindicative model that saw the first major Hungarian literary commemorations as a symbolic answer to (and against) foreigners looking at the state of the Hungarian nation. Thus the commemorations often were regarded as part of a symbolic European, and especially Hungarian-Germanic/Austrian, cultural struggle for self-affirmation. The transnational appeal and cult of the literary cults was turned into an ethnonational vindicative pattern, aimed especially at the *Schillerfest* that was still being held in various part of Europe, including Hungary, at the time of the Kazinczy commemorations.

“The people of Pozsony (Bratislava) are holding the centenary of Schiller’s birthday on November 10. Will they also hold Kazinczy’s centenary?”³⁶ pointedly asked a well-known journalist in the midst of the preparations. Soon, the local and global commemorations of Schiller became a kind of inner benchmark for many of the organizers, being pushed to constantly compare the two commemorations. But these comparisons were not unilateral. When reporting on the Hungarian events, the Viennese *Die Presse* overtly ironically compared Schiller and Kazinczy. Of course, Kazinczy became the underdog:

³⁴ *Pesti Napló* 1858.

³⁵ For the similar transnational networks of Toldy, see Leerssen 2010.

³⁶ *Vasárnapi Újság* 1859, 523.

It is a real riddle who this Kazinczy was, for whom so many people have been getting together in the past weeks. Our Brockhaus betrays us in this case, so Kazinczy should have been unknown for many of the Hungarian patriots till now. It seems that some patriots wanted to have a commemoration against the German Schiller-enthusiasm, and since no other name could be used for this purpose, Kazinczy became the catchword of the day.³⁷

The Budapest-based correspondent, most probably a local native German, in reaction to both the Hungarian ethnonationalism and the anti-Viennese tone of the period, touched upon the most delicate side of the commemorations; Kazinczy was a canonic figure in-the-making, and the commemorations emphasized not necessarily his literary strengths, but his alleged role in the making of the modern Hungarian language. That is why the Hungarian comparisons with the *Schillerfeier* were always either general, or they were stressing the surprisingly huge masses and network of events that allegedly stayed for the strength of Hungarian culture. Out of the former representations, the most important is the recurrence of the Goethe-Schiller monument of Weimar. The visual reproduction of the recently unveiled sculpture was presented in the Hungarian press as the master example of the most up-to-date commemorative practices. “The first double statue on German soil”³⁸ clearly stood in the background of the already-mentioned Petricevich Horváth Lázár painting on the philological fiction of Kazinczy yielding his place to the younger generation, i.e. to the organizers of the commemoration. Thus the double statue of Schiller and Goethe was instantly turned into a powerful vision of peaceful generational shift in Hungarian national literature.

On the other hand, the same Schiller, and the centenary commemorations dedicated to him, became part of a vindicative strategy. The immensely popular *Vasárnapi Újság* reported ‘chock-a-block’ on the Kazinczy commemorations of the small town of Rimaszombat and the Viennese commemorations of Schiller, along those held in London, Paris, Turin and Naples. The report on the latter ended with a barely hidden comparative comment that “he was not forgotten in

³⁷ *Die Presse* 1859. Quoted in Angyal 1925, 481.

³⁸ Pohlsander 2008, 118.

Hungary either, his admirers holding a banquet in honour of him on the 12th of this month in the Tigris Hotel”³⁹ While the Western *Schillerfeier* were seen as models how to commemorate the literate properly, the local *Schillerfests* were viewed as betrayals of the Kazinczy commemoration. For instance, the small town of Eperjes was heavily criticized, when they organized only a small-scale commemoration in the local gymnasium, while a larger *Schillerfest* was planned:

We did not have a real public Kazinczy commemoration, but we will have a Schillerfeier. It is unpleasantly surprising that we do not honour the man of our mother country, we do not bow in front of the brightest stars of our national sky [*sic*], but we adulate the heroes of foreign countries.⁴⁰

In this matrix Schiller was already not the universal “great man”, but the great man of the Germans, and literary value became intimately and definitely linked to national belonging.

It is no wonder why the press regarded the large network of commemorative event both in Hungary and abroad – Kazinczy commemorations were organized also in Vienna, Iasi, Bucharest, Galicia, Jena, Italy, Prague and Istanbul – as solid ground for national self-legitimation especially in the context of postrevolutionary Hungarian-Viennese tensions. Along the very same Kazinczy commemorations, the Schillerfest could easily become not only a model, a benchmark, a ground for comparison, but also a strongly allusive political metaphor pointing towards the Viennese government. For instance, the Academy was criticized, because it “did not erect the national monument in honour of the great man at the right time, when they could have demonstrated to the germanizers and centralizers there, in Vienna, that the Hungarian nation was still living”⁴¹ Following the *Ausgleich*, ten years after the commemorations, the same *Vasárnapi Újság* recalled the events as an overtly political act:

On the 27th of October, ten years will have passed from the day when the Hungarian nation *as nation* celebrated its hundredth

³⁹ “Commemorating Schiller in Vienna”, *Vasárnapi Újság* 1859, 563.

⁴⁰ *Vasárnapi Újság* November 13, 1859, 547.

⁴¹ *Zemplén* November 21, 1886.

birthday. After 1849 this was the first self-respecting, manly step to change his depressing conditions. The nation remembered the noble struggles of the past, the merits of a reformer, and demonstrated against the present, for the sake of a better future.⁴²

Even if this was a late perspective, radically rewriting the events along a single, political motivation, the protest character of the Kazinczy commemorations cannot be neglected.⁴³

The Kazinczy commemorations were not only part of the modernization of a Hungarian national memory project, but also of a complex transnational and transregional memory flux. The Western commemorations proved to be both the drive behind and the rival against which they could configure themselves. In this process the transnational and the national were not something entirely different and segregated, but shifting parts of the same complex memory flux.

The Kazinczy ‘twitter effect’: the cultures of fame between traditional Pantheonization and the memory forged by modern networks

Much of the work done regarding the Kazinczy commemorations insisted on the paramount influence of the initial Pest commemoration that was seen to have set the model for hundreds of other events to follow. Therefore the “local” innovations and patterns have been largely neglected. One of these was visible at the commemoration held in Széphalom. This was not a proper settlement, but a family mansion Kazinczy retreated to after 1790, and labelled it with a suggestive name meaning “beautiful hillock” (with a strong allusion to the belles-lettres). It clearly fell into oblivion by the time of the commemorations, and originally there was no attempt to organize any

⁴² Vasárnapi Újság 1869, 588.

⁴³ Not only the transnational and the transregional commemorations were used in such a way, but also the local events of the Kazinczy commemorations behaved in a similar manner. The commemorative standard and model for the various local communities was established by the events in Pest. The provinces not only followed, but also measured their commemorations to one another; the model became a rival at the same time.

commemorative event at the mansion. But weeks after the start of the commemorations, a group of Sátorajáújhely, the closest town to Széphalom, chose a symbolic moment, the last day of the year, for an innovative gesture in the context of the previous commemorative events. The procession to the grave and former mansion of Kazinczy turned the landscape into a cultic experience. According to the published comments of one of the organizers

[t]here is a straight road from Újhely to Széphalom that does not resemble to the former curved and swampy one Kazinczy took to come to us [i.e. to Sátorajáújhely]. Is not this a symbol of the bumpy and curved road he had to take to smooth our paths? But look at the beauty of the whole countryside he used to live in [...] I often pass by this place, and wonder whether it is the memory of the great man that enthralls me when I look at it, or it is the beauty of the countryside that makes me pay tribute to the memory of Kazinczy. [...] Let God give us his blessings and prosperity so as this countryside could appear in steel and other types of engravings and panoramas. Then the world will finally see that the realm of Rhine is not unrivalled at all.⁴⁴



The commented lithograph on the grave and mansion of Kazinczy

⁴⁴ "Kazinczy-ünnepély Széphalmon" [Commemorating Kazinczy in Széphalom], *Vasárnapi Újság* 1860, 16-17.

The organizer reported on the procession as a cultural pilgrimage to a countryside that partly became valuable through the figure, the life and death of Kazinczy. But his question and remark regarding the “enthralled countryside” that makes the memory of Kazinczy easier to perform, and would rival even the Rhine if represented on engravings, was a glocal comment that inscribed the cultural pilgrimage partly into the emerging contemporary tourism. The grave and former mansion of Kazinczy (almost a ruin by the time of the commemoration), and especially the countryside leading to them, were compared with a contemporary touristic landscape.⁴⁵ It is telltale that the commemoration at Széphalom did not even try to link the mansion and the surroundings to the poetic and literary oeuvre of Kazinczy.⁴⁶ Instead, they forged a link between the beauty of the landscape and the memory of the writer.

The other innovative shift of the locals, partly due to their endeavour to outshine the other communities, integrated the Kazinczy mansion into the framework of the emerging modern national heritage. It was not just the nationalization of space⁴⁷, but a coherent discourse on the importance of turning the neglected ruins into part of the national heritage and the modern heritage industry. On the long run, this was the starting point of the reconstruction of Széphalom, being reimagined and rebuilt as a Pantheon in Arcadia. This spectacular turn actually masked a long-term dilemma on cultural heritage: should it resemble the original, or should it be transformed to fit Western traditions and patterns of contemporary musealization?

⁴⁵ On the modern Hungarian touristic networks and their diverse and ideological uses in nineteenth century see my former contribution: T. Szabó 2009.

⁴⁶ This is the most frequent strategy described by Watson 2006.

⁴⁷ Playing with the similarity of the names the occasional poem of the commemoration immediately inscribed the place into an alleged two-thousand-year national history: “Pannonhalom and Széphalom – There Árpád, here Kazinczy”.



The reconstructed and pantheonised mansion of Kazinczy

The turning of Pantheonization into the politics and strategies of modern heritage making was palpable also in some other cases, when the typical object of the commemorations, the bust was perceived as part of a small-scale new type of national Pantheon. For instance, in Miskolc it was exactly the bust of Kazinczy that the local community, commemorating the literate in the beautifully ornamented Reformed high school, was missing. A well-known and respected burgess of Miskolc immediately promised to buy and donate it for them. The complaints of having a commemoration without a bust was a clear answer to a cultural scenario that came to be fairly standardized in a few weeks, and used either the bust or an iconographically intricate representation of Kazinczy to create a symbolically enriched ritual in almost all of the cases we know about. But in Miskolc the locals were not satisfied with the recently bought and circulating copy of a painting representing Kazinczy. They referred to the missing bust as a means of “immortalizing the event” (so not necessarily the figure of Kazinczy, but the commemoration itself!). Thus in comparison with the other “elusive” elements of the commemoration, the bust was seen as a stronger and more long-lasting

piece of the commemoration. The people of Miskolc actually integrated their memory strategy into the much larger emerging national Hungarian memory project where the various pantheonization patterns foregrounded the open-air, strategically organized bust / sculpture parks as foremost forms of representation of the national heroes. This type of memory was seen as lasting and irreversible, something that could be able to allegedly save and immortalize the ephemeral commemorations.

The nationalization of the mid-nineteenth century Hungarian public space took a strong turn also due to the Kazinczy commemorations that often made visible and offered such novel models for the ritual reinterpretation of public space. For instance, in Széphalom allegedly four thousand people took torches and “processioned through the main street so as to consecrate it in the memory of Kazinczy”. This was one of the first instances of renaming a street after a hero of the national canon and clearly sheds light to the larger emerging framework of modern national memory politics the various commemorations were part of. From this point, it seems that it was no coincidence that the organizers of the Pest commemoration chose the building of the National Museum to host the event.

It is clear that the Kazinczy commemorations enhanced shifts, reinterpretations, recycling of the various elements of the existing commemorative practice. Perhaps one of the most radical shifts was the swift integration of the figure of Kazinczy into a contemporary celebrity culture and thus making him part of the networks of celebrity and notoriety⁴⁸. “The commemoration is the most popular gossip of the moment and it is really hitting the news.” – noted one of the journalists of the time. And the centennial event dedicated to Kazinczy was not only a major source of gossip⁴⁹, but also produced and framed *on large scales* objects related to his figure and to the celebrations commemorating him. Gusztáv Heckenast, one of the major Hungarian editors of the period announced proudly that his printing house published a new and successfully done portrait of the

⁴⁸ For an overview of the intellectual debates regarding the emergence of celebrity culture see Rojek 2001.

⁴⁹ For the role of gossip and rumour in forging mediated identities, gossip communities and notoriety see Kapferer 1990.

belated Kazinczy and he hopes that “the admirers of the celebrated figure will not hesitate to acquire it”.⁵⁰ Almost all the newspapers reported on Debreczeni Ignác, a Szeged-based photographer who, based on former paintings, succeeded to produce a technologically innovative photography of Kazinczy and offered it to those interested for “a most reasonable price of one forint”. Many of the objects were related to the private life of Kazinczy showing the new market and hunger for peeping at the personal lives of the literary intellectuals (and of course, not only into theirs). Porcelain statuettes of Kazinczy, Kisfaludy, István Széchenyi, Sándor Petőfi and Dániel Berzsenyi were offered for sale and advertised as “a possibility to take the commemoration to your home”⁵¹ Another entrepreneur working in Vienna, Antal Száll started producing metal statuettes of Kazinczy and several other writers: Vörösmarty, Petőfi, Arany, Kisfaludy and Jókai. But one of the still living writers, János Arany was horrified at being portrayed in such a way. It was not the idea of fame and notoriety that frightened him, but he regarded such gestures as fitting only the deceased:

the matter is quite noisy. It feels as if it were not me, as if all these were happening after my death. There is something deadly in it. I fear me if I will enter Szalonta again how will the younger generations gaze at me – exactly as if I were a mummy.⁵²

⁵⁰ Among other occurrences: “*Kazinczy új könyomatú arcképe*” [The new lithographic print of Kazinczy], *Vasárnapi Újság* 1860, 176.

⁵¹ For the role of miniatures in forging memory see Otto/Pedersen 2004.

⁵² The letter of Arany János to Ercsey Sándor, in Arany 2004, 75.



Advertisement of a life-size portrait of Kazinczy (1860)

As Arany's reaction shows these techniques of fame were different from former processes and topoi of *fama* and *gloria*.⁵³ Modern notoriety became part of new conventions, and the culture of objects related to the Kazinczy commemorations unveils them. But the commemorations were interwoven not only by those type of objects we already met in the previous part of the paper. A new type of *attila*, a kind of braided gala coat, was produced for women and labelled *Kazinczy attila*. This entered the name of Kazinczy as a brand into the world of fashion. Toiletries for women were named after Kazinczy by Viennese entrepreneurs.⁵⁴ The successful review for women, *Nővilág* reported of several instances when restaurants introduced courses into their menu and named them after Kazinczy; for instance, the Schuch restaurant of Pest was selling the Kazinczy roast, while

⁵³ Cf. Sinkó 1995, 15–18.

⁵⁴ "Kazinczy-piperecikkek" [Cosmetic articles named after Kazinczy], *Vasárnapi Újság* 1860, 95.

the Komlókert restaurant renamed its wine from Schiller to Kazinczy, unveiling the symbolic memory struggles also at another level.⁵⁵

Kazinczy (and other literary figures) became (a) brand(s) and the objects representing them came to be present as souvenirs and appeared also independent from the commemoration. They took the figure of Kazinczy and the commemorations outside the narrower commemorative frameworks, and inscribed the memory of these literary figures into everyday practices. As Ann Rigney has recently put it: memory was „on the move”. It was still rather a memory site than a museum piece, a migrating phenomenon⁵⁶, an organic part of everyday life, a ceaseless negotiation of a literary figure among many sides, institutions, social groups and traditions, that turned the literary Pantheon into a novel type of memory framework. But how did this diffusion and translation work along the seemingly diverse social groups, many of whom never read literature neither before and after the event, but knew Kazinczy and the literary figures were ‘important figures to be remembered’?

In his influential train of thought entitled *The strenght of weak ties* the sociologist Mark Granovetter highlighted the paramount efficiency of weak ties in diffusion processes.⁵⁷ Even though strong ties are often thought and celebrated as “real”, “essential”, “palpable” and allegedly forging long-term relationships, Granovetter speculated on weak (and not strong) ties being “bridges” of social networks in the diffusion of information. According to him and to his many followers, the weak ties are those which make networks grow, since they are able to interconnect the inevitably smaller communities based on strong ties (i.e. the family relationships, the ties of close friendships etc.). Therefore weak ties have been thought to shrink society to a level at which the flow of information becomes extremely fast and efficient. Even though interconnected networks based on many weak ties are not necessarily characteristic of modern societies, some scholars are inclined to refer to them as parts and engines of modernity.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ *Nővilág*, January 2, 1860.

⁵⁶ Rigney 2013, 13.

⁵⁷ Granovetter 1983.

⁵⁸ For instance, see: Barabási-Albert 2003.

The Kazinczy commemorations are usually celebrated in Hungarian literary history since they seem to involve an unprecedented number of people acting in a similar manner in most dissimilar places around the country. This view assumed that the unprecedented crowd of people was the sure sign of emerging strong literary and cultural audience. But hardly ever has been taken into account that this was not a homogenous community, gathered in a single place, but rather a loose network of people, commemorating Kazinczy in various, often surprising spots of historical Hungary, Transylvania and even overseas. If we look at these people not solely from the perspective of their order of magnitude, but from the perspective of networks and social cohesion, the many people involved in these commemorations imply the forging of unprecedented weak ties. This would account both for the new status of literature acquired through the commemorations and the role commemorations played in making a new field of cultural canon and consum(er)ism emerge. Thus one of the major consequences of the Kazinczy commemorations was not solely the large number of people it involved, *but the large number and extremely various types of weak ties it succeeded to forge using literature and around literature*. These unprecedented number of weak ties situated literature, the literary work and the author in contexts, networks and made it available for audiences that have never been available for literature before. As we have seen, for instance, weak ties and modern cultural consumerism fuelled each another; that is why literature became so efficiently part of everyday practices through a new cultural economy of celebrity, and the new cultural economy of celebrity was easily built into vivid memory through the many weak ties it was able to forge.

The many new types of loose networks the Kazinczy commemorations forged, and the novel forms of networking itself, stood behind the huge impact of the events. These various networks, connected with loose ties, functioned as a kind of nineteenth-century 'twitter', setting the trends in a fast and concentrated form, without having one's hands tied. The literary work and the literary author seemed omnipresent, but a closer look reveals the astonishingly multiple uses of the figure and oeuvre of Kazinczy from literary criticism to the local businesses, from the literary elite to the unlettered.

Conclusions

The 1859 Kazinczy commemoration was not just a series of complex literary and cultural events mediated by the newspapers, it was not just an imagined community, but the first modern Hungarian cultural spectacle framework that shaped citizenship through performance.⁵⁹ This complex social performance fundamentally changed the identity politics of what was thought to be Hungarian, and constructed new communities, novel sociabilities and fresh forms of social memory.

The commemorations proved to be successful since they fused cultural ritual and rising capitalism. Objects and visuality with a huge appeal to large social groups, some of them unfamiliar with literary matters, became ritualized commodities. They created, spread and strengthened values, narratives and even feelings circulated during the commemorations.

But the Kazinczy commemorations succeeded to forge new communities also because they built upon former patterns of conviviality. By reshaping them, the novel narratives of identity regarding nationhood, literature and social stratification gained ground and were diversely reinterpreted in the most various places and by the most diverse groups.

The same commemorations helped to reimagine social stratification and to forge new communities by proposing strong narratives on the role of the modern intellectuals, including the writers. These proved to have a particular appeal to many partakers of the commemorations due to their highly seductive narratives on the nature of the national and the role of the new cultural saints: the writers.

Even though the Kazinczy commemorations seem to epitomize the national, their magnetizing and community-binding power is also due to the way they took part in the transnational flow of commemorative fashion of the 19th century. The commemorations used the transnational both as a model to identify oneself with, and a rival to define oneself against. Thus, for instance, Schiller could become both a world literary genius to be emulated, and a *German* writer who should be competed with. This multiple interplay and use of the

⁵⁹ Methodologically I owe the argument to Rigney 2013, 176.

transnational led to an enthralling multiplicity of shifting identifications and communities that successfully circulated complex narratives on the relationships between the national and the transnational.

And last, but not least, the Kazinczy commemorations could become so effective thanks to the multiple loose networks they created and maintained. This network of networks proved viable due to its openness to continuous reinterpretations, shifts that fit the various communities taking part in the commemorations.

There is a common interface for all these strategies, patterns and forms of community formation. All of them were extremely novel in the Hungarian context of the 1850s, and their novelty was appealing to many who participated in them. Joep Leerssen was extremely inspired when he spoke about viral nationalism or the viral spread of nationalism in the nineteenth century⁶⁰: the modern nation was a fresh, fashionable, almost hip thing. The Kazinczy commemorations bear witness that its mobility, its viral spread and shifts were due also to its fusions with similarly modern, fresh and fashionable values, narratives and strategies from modern consumerism to social mobility, from the rise of the knowledge elites to modern transnational communication, from modern celebrity culture to the rise of extremely large modern loose networks.

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⁶⁰ Leerssen 2010.

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