

Civic Gentry in Sáros County in the 19th Century. The History of Hazslinyszky Family, Part I

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Middle Nobility and Civic Values, an Introduction

For many people the concept of Hungarian middle nobility, impoverished in the 19th century or earlier, is connected to the idea of “dzsentry”. This word of English origin is mostly used in literature and everyday life for those rollicking, irresponsible type of men, who doesn’t care about anything, not even with his own fate, and especially not with the affairs of the country; who lives in a world of illusions, even if his administrative position requires responsible decisions. The largest part of middle nobility, losing its estates, had chosen official careers in the 19th century indeed, the least bad if they had to work for the living. Our associative capability is extremely lively if it is about Sáros County, where the novels and short stories of Mikszáth take place.

The financial differentiation of nobility begun as early as in the 18th century and laws, made in the reform era, only provided that process as long as they raised taxes even to the poorest strata of them.¹ Before 1848 the lands of Sáros County were shared between six dominium, 35 medium and 147 small estates. They were the

¹ L. T. VIZI, *A magyarországi és az erdélyi nemesség a XVIII–XIX. században*, in: K. SZALAI (ed.), *Magyarság, fehérvári polgárság*, Székesfehérvár 1996, pp. 8–32, p. 22 and especially about the question of insurrection and its legal situation in this period: L. T. VIZI, “*Kövesd példajokat vitéz eleidnek...*” *A magyar nemesi felkelés a francia háborúk időszakában, különös tekintettel Székesfehérvár és Fejér vármegye inszurrekciós szerepére*, Székesfehérvár 2014, pp. 102–110.

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parents of Mikszáth's beaus, and largest part of them had less than hundred acres. Due to the fragmentation of lands and changing economic and market situation, middle nobility members responded differently to the new situation in the 1840s. One part retreated to his estate another part tried to defense his feudal rights, but a significant part of them already recognized the unsustainability of the situation and stood by civil transformation. They hoped that, eliminating feudalism and even risking their lands, they had a chance to transform those to agricultural plants and save at least a small part of them. But those noble owners of small lands, who wasn't farming, and most of middle sized estates were unable to support themselves already in the 18th century. As a consequence, along or instead of farming, they became craftsmen. Even larger dominium had no chance for prosperity in agriculture that time. Therefore, modest lifestyle wasn't new for the middle and low ranked nobility in the reform era. Gentry's inflow into politics and administration started also in this era, partly as a parry of proportional inheritance to fend out the further fragmentation of lands. But, as a consequence, administration started to swell.² At the same time this is important to note that small-land owner gentry took part of civil transformation bringing the ambition for rise, intention for education and aptitude for cultural transmission. All of these created a colorful and specific lifestyle and mentality during the first half of the 19th century, when the basics of modern Hungarian national culture developed.³

As a result of these processes a new class of gentry evolved by the end of the century, and became the most disputed social formation. On the one hand the social group was complex and the number of those, who were forced to offices, due to the lack of own land, increased. During two decades, following 1848, the number of land owners halved.⁴ On the other hand the originally prevailing nobility among officials changed to mostly intellectuals without noble origins by the turn of the century. The profession appeared already at the beginning of the 19th century as independent jobs

² K. VÖRÖS, *A magyarországi társadalom (1790–1848)*, in: Magyarország Története, Vol. V, 1983, pp. 485–508.

³ L. KÓSA, "Hét szilvafa árnyékában". *A nemesség alsó rétegének élete és mentalitása a rendi társadalom utolsó évtizedeiben Magyarországon*, Budapest 2001, p. 268.

⁴ P. HANÁK, *Magyarország társadalma a századforduló idején*, in: Magyarország története, Vol. 20, 1978, p. 450.

with right to office management on dominium and in central offices, and certainly there were the county offices alike. But, at the same time, eliminating subgroups in this strata is difficult, because when an intellectual came into office he have been in a very different social status. They fell under a different perception than those remained on free services. Furthermore the official population was highly heterogeneous in terms of income and social perceptions.

The situation became more complicated by the era of Dualism, partly because the administrative careers' division by origins increased, partly because many officials were well integrated to market sphere in this part of the country: for instance they had private praxis as a doctor or a lawyer. This is true that some of the gentry, who didn't excel in innovation or modernization, continued his career as a civil servant; and this is also true, that this position, due to its relationship to royal or government power, in a certain sense, was "genteel" itself.⁵ But this is not certain and demonstrable, that kinship or being gentleman would have been more important viewpoint at selection and in operation than actual savvy or competence. Associating selection with noble origins and extended social networks would be especially doubtful, because the rate of gentry in offices was highly decreasing during the Dualism.⁶

By the turn of the 19th century the situation was so complicated, that definition of "gentile middle class" is quite difficult. The loss of lands, providing power and prestige previously, and the acquirement of office jobs, granting new kind of authority and appreciation, but coming with low income, created status-inconsistency. Those, with noble origins, whose self-respect or opinion about their own social status was determined by their grandparents' position,⁷ were dissatisfied with their fate in this new, more disadvantageous situation. Reactions and behavior can be interpret by this. Belonging to the gentile middle class was formed along this dichotomy. Someone could reckon among gentlemen, if he came from old, noble family, but, in case of

⁵ P. HANÁK, *Elitképződés és társadalmi mobilitás a századforduló Magyarországon*, in: *Rubicon*, 8, 1997, pp. 9–12.

⁶ T. HAJDÚ, *Nemesi tisztikarból polgári tisztikar*, in: *Történelmi Szemle*, 4, 1996, pp. 343–351.

⁷ P. HANÁK, *Életmód és gondolkodásmód – történelmi összefüggésben*, in: *Magyar Tudomány*, 2, 1980, pp. 84–90.

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having high income and associating social influence, an office with gentle status or a newer noble title might have been enough. Those, having neither a great deal of revenue nor potency, only descended from old, noble families, certainly tried to vindicate the latter as a grouping criteria against those with higher income and less elegant origins. Direct power and proximity to this naturally triggered higher esteem than anything else, especially because a significant part (three-quarters) of gentile middle class, mainly filled with officials, even had no noble origins.⁸ In addition, many of them “inherited” liberal, civic values from the previous generation. Sweeping, powerful modernization stood behind Budapest’s development to a European capital, and Hungarian liberal nobility’s embourgeoisement, entrepreneur bourgeoisie’s Magyarisation and the two forces’ consolidation of interests supported this process.⁹ Opinions of gentry therefore can’t be formed only by the strata which, due to its status-inconsistency, didn’t care anything else but overrepresentation already during the time of the Compromise.¹⁰ To learn more about this complicated situation I’m going to present the fate of a noble family, lost its possessions long ago.

The Hazslinszky Family

They origin from Sáros County too and were already liberated in the 14th century. Their first known ancestor, Ferenc Soltis¹¹ won a charter from György Rákóczi for free possession of a land at Zerdahely¹² and a diploma of privileges for the profession of soltész¹³ at Hazslin (Hažlín) in April 20, 1550.¹⁴ The family, originally called

⁸ P. HANÁK, *Társadalmi struktúrák a 19. századi Közép-Európában*, in: *Történelmi Szemle*, 2, 1997, pp. 159–179.

⁹ P. HANÁK, *Előszó*, in: K. JALASOVSKY – E. TOMSICS (eds.), *Császári Bécs – Királyi Budapest: fotográfiák a századforduló idejéből. Kaiserliches Wien – Königliches Budapest: photographien um die jahrhundertwende*, Budapest, Wien 1996, pp. 2–3.

¹⁰ L. TÖKÉCKI, *Mi volt a baj a dualizmusban? A “feudalizmus” vagy a “liberalizmus”?*, in: *Kortárs*, 2, 1999, <http://epa.oszk.hu/00300/00381/00021/tokeczki.htm> (retrieved: March 16, 2015).

¹¹ Their name doesn’t origin from their profession but Hazslin village’s name was originally Soltészvág.

¹² Today Nyitraszerdahely (Nitrianska Streda).

¹³ An entrepreneur of supporting the inhabitation of sparsely populated areas in early ages in Hungary.

¹⁴ Spisšká kapitula (Szepesi káptalan levéltára), Kiváltságlevél a hazslini soltászságra,

Keve, got their estates in Hazslin¹⁵ and around as soltész. They were among those rare exceptions, who were not German but Hungarian. Their privilege was confirmed by Pál Rákóczi in 1622 for Kristóf and György Soltis and later by count György Erdődy and his wife, Erzsébet Rákóczi in May 16, 1672.¹⁶ Their diploma with coat of arms was issued by King Leopold I. in Ebersdorf for János and wife, Anna Grifkova, together with their children: György, Mihály, János és Anna in September 15, 1698. The book was proclaimed on November 15, in the same year by Sáros County.¹⁷ The coat of arms contains green field with gold grass and a gold wheat-sheaf in a blue shield and is amended with a crest, depicting a two-tailed lion.¹⁸

Their nobility was first confirmed by Pál and László Rákóczi together with their new name of Hazslinszky.¹⁹ Namely they compromised themselves during the Rákóczi War of Independence, thus they became indictable for the Royal Court, and as a consequence, they were forced into hiding. Even after the war it proved to be more advisable not to use their own name. In such circumstances this is quite reasonable, that their anti-royal behavior was punished by confiscation of possessions. The lineage, descended of György and Mihály, even didn't improve their situation with that they changed their denomination from Protestant to Catholic. After they lost all of their possessions, the family became stateless and fled to France, but kept the name Hazslinszky, which reminded them to the noble past. Miklós, the son of János, finally returned from France and settled down in Eperjes (Prešov). His son, Tamás, was born there in 1786, and was newly baptized Lutheran. He had two brothers: János without descendants and András, whose son, János, who died in 1902, was the last of that lineage.

Tamás Hazslinszky moved to Késmárk (Kežmarok) at the beginning of the 19th century, where he settled down as a saddler. He also painted oil paintings with such

Protocollum (28691).

¹⁵ 10 km east of Bártfa (Bardejov).

¹⁶ Original is in possession of Márton Szluha.

¹⁷ Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára (hereinafter MNL-OL), Címeres nemeslevél Soltis János részére, 1698. szeptember 15. 1954/1904 sz.

¹⁸ B. MELIORISZ, *A heraldika köréből*, Eperjes 1899.

¹⁹ *Magyar nemzetiségi zsebkönyv, II. part.* Nemes családok, első kötet, B. KELEMEN (ed.), Budapest 1905.

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a success, that the city council invited him to teach drawing. This was very typical among citizens, composed of artisans, merchants and intellectuals everywhere in Europe that time: artistry was part of everyday life. Many great musician, from Haydn to Dvořák, came from such families for instance. When in 1828 they arrived to Késmárk, 325 artisans, four saddlers, lived in the city of 3890 inhabitants. This high rate of craftsmen (8.35%) is exceptional even among the cities of Szepes County.²⁰ Noble craftsmen worked everywhere in the country in the first half of the 19th century, this is not accidental that they were also in novels.²¹ Tamás married the stepdaughter of the Catholic Badányi family: Zsuzsanna Kuchta. They had four sons, baptized to Protestant and four daughters, baptized to Catholic. The family spoke German, but not in the Késmárk dialect, and lived like good Christians: prayed every day and read the Bible every Sunday.

The Hazslinyszky family represented a peculiar, in a certain sense independent, way both in the fate of the gentry, both in Hungarian embourgeoisement, namely the family members, repatriated from abroad, were closer to minor German citizenry than to their ancestors. To represent this, I'm going to describe the following generation in details. On the one hand one of the son's life is interesting itself, on the other hand this is just that generation whose sons were called "dzsentrí". The negative opinion was formed about them. This is the era, when many of the impoverished gentry had chosen office position only to create a livelihood. Many of them were thought about, that they considered the state's fate less important than personal success, although just in this period, at the beginning of the century, when Hungarian bourgeoisie could be barely found, it was needed to find mass base both for modernization both for economic and political life exactly in them. Reclusive middle nobility, taking a small role in public life and protecting feudalism, and also their sons a generation later were believed to be an impasse in Hungarian embourgeoisement, but this is important to know that not all of them were like this, not every member of the gentry participated the declining and retrograde "dzsentrí". With other words, not everybody represented

²⁰ I. BOGDÁN, *Magyarország kézművesmesterei 1828-ban*, in: *Történeti Demográfiai Füzetek* 6, 1989, pp. 7–65, pp. 29 and 34.

²¹ KÓSA, pp. 38–41.

such values which we could see most pronounced among Mikszáth's waggish but flippant characters, not even if they were seemingly similar. We can find cities just in the Felvidék (Hungarian Highlands now Slovakia), of which had a predominating German-speaking citizenry, who transformed settling small and middle nobility to their own form. For instance the assimilating power of Lőcse (Levoča), the "black city", didn't reduce for the 19th century.

A smaller portion of nobility was strenuously striving to make homeland better already in the Reform Era, and their sons lived modest life even if they had the opportunity to luxury. They represented accurately those civic values, which were so absent from the other. I'm introducing this old noble family – as a complement to the list of László Kósa²² – exactly for this. Their members had no longer any income from lands in the 19th century, and, despite many aspects of their nobility was remained, they represented a quite different way in Hungarian history than their beau "dzsenti" counterparts.

The First Generation: Frigyes Hazslinszky

One of the sons, born in the Hazslinszky family in January 6, 1818, was named to Frigyes Ágost.²³ Since the children in this family had had no contact with other children, he studied at home until the age of eight: first drawing, naturally, for what he lied in wait from his father's students. In 1825, when he entered to the primary school, more than hundred drawings were gathered, and he could already read, he had learnt by copying titles written at the bottom. At this age he made paper-animals and patterns engraved to slate and used to casting tin objects. He learned to play the piano during these four years and reading and writing Hungarian in the first class. He even took on the teaching drawing of apprentices older to him and the daughter of Senator Dubonics in the second class.²⁴ Later he taught his younger brother Tamás writing and the Hungarian Language. In the following year (1833) he changed to

²² Ibidem, p. 258.

²³ S. MÁGÓCSY-DIETZ, *Hazslinszky Frigyes élete és működése*, in: *Természettudományi Közlöny*, 31, 2, 1899, pp. 50–64.

²⁴ His own remembrance in Colleg. con. visitat. Protocol of year 1885.

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garden-tillage, and borrowed an herbalist book from their family doctor. He spent the year 1834 in Debrecen, and when returned to Késmárk, his interest to poetry begun, and insomuch he received some income from writing poems for occasions. He spent the money for botanic books. He carried out the arts course in Késmárk, while dealt with teaching, botanic and mineralogy. The Lutheran school in Késmárk was a full Lyceum, ergo they had arts, law and theology courses in addition to its regular eight high school classes (donatus, grammatica, syntaxis, rhetorica). Vocational subjects were taught, which provided qualifications for particular jobs. The school had 396 students in 1825, and some teacher's name is worth to mention; significant persons who taught Hazslinszky: János Benedicty, István Kalovánszky, János Schneider, Dániel Mihályik.²⁵ These teachers were all very qualified, studied in prestigious foreign universities, were members in scientific associations, published scientific works like the last, for example, who studied in Jena.²⁶

Frigyes was constantly driven by the thirst for knowledge: when he dealt with plants, he pressed on paper sheets, dried and organized them, knew their Hungarian, Latin and German names, however the school spirit of the era, no matter how surprising today, looked askance at such activities. When Frigyes was interested in minerals, not only their beauty enchanted him, and not only adventure of trips attracted him, but he was eager to get knowledge. One winter he added 254 crystal pattern of linden, which went to the Collegium of Eperjes later. Minerals, based on nineteen crystal shape, were organized to the same number of exercise books. The effort of a sixteen-year-old boy, to be overcome the nature with his knowledge, is astonishing.²⁷ His adventurous experience in March, 1837 was had a symbolic importance for him: he fell from a rock to the deep and fainted at the limestone mountains of Szepesbéla during his excursion to Mészárszék. When he was brought to his senses, he found his bag, with his botanic book in it, under his head. Science saved his life!

²⁵ I. PALCSÓ, *A késmárki lyceum története*, Késmárk 1893, pp. 47–68.

²⁶ J. SZOMBATHI, *Historia scholae seu collegii ref. Sárospatakiensis*, Sárospatakini 1860, p. 219.

²⁷ S. MÁGÓCSY-DIETZ, *Hazslinszky Frigyes emlékezete*, in: MTA emlékbeszédek, 9, 10, 1896, pp. 259–287.

In the School-year 1838/39 he went to Sárospatak to study law, and became the tutor for the son of Karsa family. Despite of his good results he soon left legal studies, answering for his teachers' question that he had not too much to learn as a lawyer in his life. During his studies in Sárospatak he wrote a 724-pages book according to Linné with 177 of his own drawings.²⁸ Returning to Késmárk he enrolled to Theology, nevertheless he worked also as an assistant teacher for the first two classes of elementary, and he even taught Hungarian language. He received exoneration for visiting lectures during these occasions and had only to take exams; his first Hungarian certificate is from 1841. He took his first long tour with his friend, Károly Mauks²⁹ this time. They departed from Bártfa in June and travelled through Eperjes, along with River Tisza to Eger, than to Pest, where they visited the Botanical Garden and went forward to Lake Balaton. They journey ended in Fiume, Croatia. On the way back they went through Varasd (Varaždin) to Pozsony (Bratislava) and through Nyitra (Nitra), Selmecebánya (Banská Štiavnica) and Liptószentmiklós (Liptovský Mikuláš) back to Késmárk. I described every details and station of the trip deliberately, because this was not only about enquiry after nature but more.

Before the 19th century Tatra, and in general the conquest of nature, was rare experience of travelers and adventurers. The romantic feeling in the 19th century compelled people to go to high mountains,³⁰ and, at the same time, looked for mysticism and religious devotion. Scientific understanding of nature came into view really only in its second half. This time already sports spread as conscious preservation of health; citizens visited thousands of popular tourist centers and routes.³¹ Many tourist brochures were published, mostly German Führers and some Slovak and Hungarian

²⁸ Unpublished textbook: F. HAZSLINSZKY, *Das Linneisch-Houttuynisches Pflanzensystem. Compendium florae universalis*, Sárospatak 1839.

²⁹ Became doctor in Késmárk later, Mauks was born in Késmárk, in 1824. He received his diploma at the university in Budapest and became first a doctor of the army. He was also an amateur ornithologist; died in Késmárk, in 1904. G. HORVÁTH, *A magyar orvosok szerepe Magyarországon állatvilágának kutatásában*, in: *Állattani Közöny*, 27, 1–2, 1930, pp. 1–6.

³⁰ Ch. GENERISCH, *Reise in die Carpaten mit vorzüglicher Rücksicht auf das Tatra-Gebirge*, hrsg. von Bredetzky, S. GESTINGER, Wien, Triest 1807.

³¹ E.g. *Tátrai kirándulások*, in: *Turisták lapja*, Budapest 1899.

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prospectuses. Health resorts and baths became popular for wider audience,³² caves begun to be explored,³³ spelunking and mountain climbing became sports³⁴ and botanists appeared in Tatra that time. The character and importance of touring in nature or around the country changed just then, and became organic part of civic values, partly as a conscious decision of lifestyle partly as effort for accumulating knowledge. This phenomena was in connection with the general progress, which led to the separation of private and public spaces and to the development of micro-spaces with special functions around Europe during the 19th century.³⁵

Becoming a Teacher

In the 1840/41 school-year, when Frigyes Wrote his first independent botanic work,³⁶ two teachers in Késmárk became his paying private student in botany. He sorted the 7000-piece mineral collection of Keresztély Genersich³⁷ in the same year. On the summer of 1842 the Lyceum sent him at their own expense to Besztercebánya, to the Doctors and Nature Explorers Hungarian Grand Assembly, where two of his articles were welcome.³⁸ After the theology course he sold his books to the school and spent the money to travel to Debrecen and study chemistry in the famous Reformed Collegium. He went out for excurses to different places by this time, from Nagyvárad (Oradea) to Árva County, about which he wrote a topographic work. Hazslinszky

³² S. HEKSCH, *Tátra-Füred (schmecks) Éghajlati gyógyhely és vízgyógyintézet*, Budapest 1878.

³³ S. WEBER, *A szepes-bélai cseppkőbarlang. Tátra-Barlangliget és környéke*, Késmárk 1886.

³⁴ *A Magyar-Tátra részletes kalauza, Vol 1. (hegymászókalauz)*, in: G. KOMARNICZKY – J. SERÉNYI (ed.), *Túristaság és alpinizmus*, Budapest 1926.

³⁵ F. BEDARIDA – A. SUTCLIFFE, *The Street in the Structure and Life of the City: Reflections on Nineteenth-Century London and Paris*, in: *Journal of Urban History*, 6, 1980, pp. 379–396.

³⁶ F. HAZSLINSZKY, *Botanische Terminologie is Abrissen* (unpublished).

³⁷ Famous mineralogist, teacher at the Lyceum, brother of Sámuel, botanist and János, historian. Z. RADVAŇSKA-PARYSKA – W. H. PARYSKI, *Wielka encyklopedia tatrzańska*, *Wydawnictwo górskie*, Poronin 1995, p. 319; J. MELZER, *Biographie berühmter Zipser*, Kaschau 1833, p. 314.

³⁸ F. HAZSLINSZKY, *Novum systema regni vegetabilium; Javaslatok a magyar botanikai terminológia tárgyában*, cited by S. MÁGÓCSY-DIETZ, *Hazslinszky Frigyes élete és működése*, in: *Természettudományi Közlöny*, 31, 2, 1899, p. 54.

worked so much, he had only two hours left to sleep in the night; this hard work and irregular meal weakened him and finally forced to bed in the autumn of 1842. For the next year he recovered and, despite he couldn't sell his books in Debrecen, he headed Vienna.³⁹

In this period it was very usual, for those Protestants, who wanted to study, to go to a German university, although its realization encountered obstacles. In the 1840s the suspicious and overwhelming spirit of Metternich influenced the country. A student could get passport with difficulties, and if they received, it was issued only for one university to visit. Some universities were prohibited because of their liberal thoughts. For circumventing the provisions they often acquire certificates from master craftsmen or journeymen. Although Hazslinszky had excellent letters of recommendation, to be able to cross the border and to avoid the harassment, he had to obtain a journeyman certificate from a saddler master. In Vienna such patrons were waiting, who supported him with accommodation, food and acquired students. He taught even the wives of the Kaiser's physician assistant and the rector of the university. Frigyes studied mathematics, physics and chemistry at the Institute of technology in Vienna, while gained high proficiency in social life.

In Vienna Hazslinszky refused to go to teach in Felsőlvő (Oberschützen) but applied for a position in his native town's Lyceum. Despite the job was suggested by János Benedicty, director,⁴⁰ he didn't succeed against Ferenc Fűrész, who was a friend and schoolmate of such protector as Pál Hunfalvy, teacher in the Lyceum.⁴¹ The fiasco, just in his homeland, exasperated him so much that he even burnt his earlier manuscripts, lest anything bounds to native land. He didn't accept the offer of the more prestigious Technical School of Buda (the first of its kind in Hungary), but stayed in Vienna, where his well-illustrated – always with living plants – lectures became more and more popular. His situation improved gradually: social relations

³⁹ MÁGÓCSY-DIETZ, *Hazslinszky Frigyes*, pp. 54–55.

⁴⁰ PALCSÓ, p. 75.

⁴¹ K. SZELÉNYI, *Lutheran Lyceum teacher, letter to Sándor Mágócsy-Dietz*, February 9, 1899.

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increased and he got close to be habilitated to a university professor. In 1845 Hungarians, living in Vienna, started to arouse his patriotic feeling, which led to his decision to accept the invitation of Ferenc Pulszky, manager of the institution and Pál Szirmay to teach in the Lutheran Collegium of Eperjes. The letter in April 20, 1846 promised friendship, patronage and defense, the offer contained free accommodation in the building of the Collegium, 120 forints salary⁴² and the one sixth of the higher classes' tuition fees. This salary was low, despite all amendments, like the so called onomasticum, a kind of costly gift – or “endearment” as they called – for name day from students,⁴³ but was enough for living as long as high number of students granted high tuition dividend. All of this was complemented with a cabbage land, he received from the Collegium, and the 120 forints allowance, he received for leading the Szirmay Library and five fathoms wood extra aid from the city.

Due to its high standard education, dynamic development and democratic ethos, the Collegium reared many significant writers, scientists and politician. Lajos Kossuth, Artúr Görgey, Arisztid Dessewffy, Michal Hodža, representative of Slovak national movement, Ferenc Pulszky, Dániel Irányi, Jonáš Záborský, playwright, Jozef Srnka and Ján Hvezda, Slovak poets, studied there, among others.⁴⁴ So the Hazslinyszky family returned to its original homeland, Sáros in 1846, and Frigyes succeeded to become financially independent at least. Before long he received a Plöss microscope as a gift from his former students and admirers, mostly from rector Günther and his wife, in Vienna. This was a very rare and expensive instrument that time, it cost 222 forints, and Frigyes became one of those, who used such gauge for the examination of the plants foremost in Hungary; even the Botanical Department of the university at Budapest had not one.⁴⁵ By this time he wrote more textbooks about mineralogy, chemistry and geology.

⁴² With 40 forints benefit and 120 forints salary as a librarian in the Collegium, two fathoms wood, since 1862 more 120 forints salary as a treasurer.

⁴³ J. HÖRK, *Az eperjesi á. h. ev. ker. Collegium története*, Kassa 1896.

⁴⁴ P. KÓNYA, *Prešovské evanjelické kolégium v prvej polovici 19. storočia*, in: Ludovít Markušovský a jeho doba, Prešov 1993, pp. 209–218.

⁴⁵ The microscope from Nürnberg, he used earlier was rather a toy than a serious scientific instrument.

Eperjes was not a big city, its population was only 9550 in 1850 what only increased to 14 447 by 1900. Most of the cities in the area remained quite small and preserved their early modern age social structure during the 19th century. Artisans and lawyers lived together in the city houses, only a few things changed, like Jews were admitted to the town after the Revolution. Sons of old German merchant families entered to administration and other offices: became doctors, lawyers, judges and engineers. The city was built like Czech towns with its oval form of avenues. Many higher educational institute operated there, in addition to the Collegium, but Eperjes was a Lutheran and Orthodox religious center too with plenty of churches and a synagogue. Since the 16th century Eperjes had an important role in trade between Hungarian cities and Poland. It was on the route of wine trading and artisans sold their products even as far as Constantinople, but by the beginning of the 19th century merchandise moved to Kassa. Some signs of industrialism showed progress after all, like new factories and the development of infrastructure, but structures didn't change in depth; trade never became the same, despite all those new markets, new owners found in Austria and Germany for new products like flour and textile. Guilds also decreased gradually until the general demolishing of them in the whole country by the Act of 1872/8.⁴⁶

The leading strata of Eperjes in the 19th century was composed of the employees of county bar, district tribunal, the officials of financial administration and state agencies, but those, more than eighty teachers, living in the city, were also part of the middle class. When Hazslinszky arrived to the Collegium youth was under the influence of the two Vachotts, Sárossy, Kerényi, Tompa and Petőfi, and kept patriotic Hungarian meetings regularly. Three teachers were their leaders: Antal Munyay, András Csupka and András Vandrák;⁴⁷ the new young teacher joined them immediately.

Frigyes Hazslinszky married Terézia Putz, daughter of Sámuel Putz, merchant in Eperjes and Zsuzsanna Jermy, in December 26, 1846. Best men were András

⁴⁶ S. DZIÁK, *Eperjes topográfiai növekedése és társadalmának átalakulása 1850-től*, Budapest 1915.

⁴⁷ J. SZINNYEI. *Magyar írók élete és munkái*, Budapest 1893.

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Munyai and András Vandrák.⁴⁸ His wife came from a German Lutheran trader family, her father's and grandfather's assets were proverbial in town, and her mother was a daughter of a silversmith from Késmárk; her sister, Frederike, married to an ironmonger in Ungvár (Ужгород), Gusztáv Dietz, whose son was Sándor Mágócsy-Dietz, who also became a significant botanist whom thirteen plants were named.⁴⁹ Her another sister married to a pharmacist in Késmárk.

In 1848 the Revolution was greatly supported by the institution; its democratic atmosphere and such personalities, studied there previously, as Kossuth, Dessewffy, Irányi, Pulszky and Görgey guaranteed this. Education was paused for months and a guard was formed of teachers and students, what Hazlinszky also joined.⁵⁰ He took part in the battle of Kassa on 10–11 December, but he was so frightened when one of his colleague fell just next to him that fled to home. Frigyes didn't fight with guns anymore, but fought peacefully against the royal edict among other Protestants later.⁵¹ The Revolution fell, the city was occupied first by Russian intervention then by the forces of Vienna and the Collegium was in difficulty. Its building was damaged and the institution had been suffering from administrative obstructions for the next decades. The elimination of subsidies first, the abolition of Kossuth banknotes, the burning of securities of the National Bank of Pest, whereupon the Collegium lost all of its assets, later almost hamstrung its operation. Csupka died in 1851, the Law Course had to be closed, but Hazslinszky and all teachers, despite received offers from other institutions, remained. Protestant institutions and Hungarians were seriously discriminated, but the Collegium of Eperjes kept its prestige; one fourth of students were catholic,⁵² and the teachers, including Hazslinszky, confessed themselves Hungarian subsequently.

⁴⁸ Štátny oblastný archív v Prešove (hereinafter ŠOAP), Matriky, č. 920: *Eperjes, Evangélikus a. v. német-magyar halotti és házassági anyakönyv 1842–1861.*

⁴⁹ P. KOUDELA, *Mágócsy-Dietz Sándor: mindennapi történet egy egyetemi tanárról*, Budapest, 2010.

⁵⁰ HŐRK, Register of guard members in the Annex, 51.

⁵¹ *Vasárnapi Újság*, 43, 48, 1896, pp. 797–798.

⁵² ŠOAP, EKP 249: *Eperjesi Egyházkerületi Collegium Anyakönyve. 1840/41–1870/71.*

The Painstaking Work for an Institution, Science and Homeland

After 1855 the Government alleviated the barriers, salaries were raised,⁵³ but the highest aids still came from the Diocese and the Gustave Adolf Association. Hazslinszky was also a treasurer in the Collegium, so he had to travel around the neighboring counties, while he also collected donations. These latter were mostly small amounts but rather wine and other goods. In a case, in the April of 1858 he received two barrels of wine instead of money and, in accordance of the school's decision, the teachers had to buy it. But he had to solve such difficulties as the succession of Károly Pulszky and other financial issues of the Pulszky family (most important supporter of the institute).⁵⁴ In many cases he was responsible for both the decision, both the results. In 1856 their application for state aid was refused and Hazslinszky decided to vote himself hundred forints to go to Vienna for searching financial protection. He succeed and such support asking journeys were continued to Germany and even for the British Protestants by Kossuth.⁵⁵

The situation was gradually consolidating, despite the number of students decreased constantly,⁵⁶ the law Course started again, and the Collegium decided to reconstruct its building. For gaining support Hazslinszky took the advice of a former student in Melbourne and opened a fair of symbolic objects reminding the Collegium and its past in Vienna. This venture, just like the following idea to organize a lottery, failed and the Pulszky family was neither in the situation to give money for the renovations. Despite all failures in amending financial sources reconstruction started in 1866 with the church and finished for the bicentenary celebrations in September 10. Hazslinszky continued his indefatigable work for improving financial situation by raising capital, earning subsidies.⁵⁷ Salaries reached those of state schools' teachers,⁵⁸ theology expanded to four years, but Haszslinszky received only 600 forints for all

⁵³ ŠOAP, EKP 266: *Informationes de Professoribus 1853/54.*

⁵⁴ F. HAZSLINSZKY, Levél Pulszky Ferenchez, Kézirattár, (hereinafter OSZK), Fond VIII/407.

⁵⁵ J. HÖRK, *Kossuth Lajos Eperjesen*, Eperjes 1894.

⁵⁶ ŠOAP, EKP 249.

⁵⁷ E. MAYER, *Articles*, in: *Evangélikus egyház és iskola* March 19, 1896 and December 10 issues.

⁵⁸ ŠOAP, EKP: *A professzorok fizetésének kimutatása az 1885/86 és 1886/87 években.*

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this work and small cabbage land. Despite his income was quite low even with the 150-gold supervisor supplement and with the 200-gold bonus for being rector that time, he refused the job for leading the Botanical Department at the university in Pest.

When Hazslinszky started his career in Eperjes his collection of 376 different species of plants was presented there, on the Annual Meeting of the Association of Hungarian Doctors and Nature Explorers, of which each pieces were gathered around the city.⁵⁹ The society was organized according to the German example by Ferenc Bene and Pál Bugát in 1841, and worked almost for a century (1841–1933), but its organization differed greatly. It had a constantly working central committee, lectures were organized to professional groups and since the 1840s an archeological and a sociological group worked too. During its long operation forty meetings were organized, both in different cities. That was the period when in science, and especially in Hazslinszky's interests, fungi were being prompted. However initial failures dissuaded him for a while, thus he worked his juvenile collections up first,⁶⁰ and then commenced the realization his dreams: processing the whole Hungarian Flora. His effort, despite persistent and painstaking, was crowned with success. With early use of microscope he became pioneer in exploring Hungarian cryptogam flora. Due to his students' encouragement he wrote the monograph: Flora in Northern Hungary in 1864 and another: Botanical Handbook of Vascular Plants in Hungary in 1872.⁶¹ The previous is the first real Hungarian Guide to Plants. Alga of Hungary and its Neighboring Countries was published in 1867 and during the following two decades he wrote several significant books of botany. Since 1864 he mostly researched fungi publishing seven bigger monographs and several smaller articles on the theme. He discovered more than hundred new species, although this wasn't an outstanding result in the era, and was striving to the greatest perfection in descriptions. He once wrote

⁵⁹ Semmelweis Orvostörténeti Múzeum Levéltára (hereinafter SOML), A Magyar Orvosok és Természetvizsgálók Társaságának vándorgyűléseinek iratai (1841–1912) A VII. Vándorgyűlés iratai (Kassa, Eperjes 1846, augusztus 9–17.)

⁶⁰ F. HAZSLINSZKY, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Karpathenflora*, in: *Verhandlungen der k. k. zoologisch-botanischen Gesellschaft in Wien, Früher: Verh. des Zoologisch-Botanischen Vereins in Wien*, 9, 1864, pp. 7–26.

⁶¹ F. HAZSLINSZKY, *Északi Magyarhon viránya*, Kassa 1864; F. HAZSLINSZKY, *Magyarhon edényes növényeinek fűvészeti kézikönyve*, Pest 1872.

in a letter to Lajos Jurányi the following: “*because knowing in every details a species causes more joy to me than to discover hundred new*”.⁶² He carried out experiments for breeding across the country and organized his results, the number of published works of his half century career exceeded hundred. He donated his mineralogical, animal and other collections to the Collegium, his fossils went to the Geological Institute and his plant collection of 11 200 species became the property of National Museum.

The Character of an Intellectual Gentleman

Hazslinszky always helped others with his work, or even tried to support economic life with his articles,⁶³ but often ceded the financial benefit; scientific success was enough for him. He announced already in 1860 that he could find investors for cement production and millstone mining in Upper Hungary. He characterized his own professional career modestly: “*I can hardly say anything about my pursuit, because I can deal with science only furtively along my countless profane activities, to what my several official duties force.*” Over his occupation as a teacher he was elected to rector ten times and to the director of the gymnasium twice. He taught very different subject, if it was necessary, like history, German and Latin language, drawing, economy and even also Hebrew. He did so because the Collegium didn’t have money for teaching staff and could preserve the institution of closing down only this way. He remained in high school teacher status all the time and received scanty salary even with that he got for leading the Szirmay Library.⁶⁴

He started formal addressing (honorific and kind) as early as in the fifth class, unlike the usual, but was familiar (patronizing and condescending) with a student even in the eight class, whenever the pupil was not prepared properly. Inaccurate knowledge caused being out of favor until the lesson was learned correctly. However, if a student was interested in any part of the curriculum, he gladly dealt with him

⁶² Determining species, along with morphological criteria, he had taken into account the characteristics of ontogeny, thus smaller morphological differences were listed into one species.

⁶³ His articles are examples in the numbers of Economic Papers (Gazdasági Lapok) in 1866.

⁶⁴ 120–120 forints for both.

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even outside the classroom. He made excursions with them or showed those plants he received from abroad to identify. Hazslinszky was not a good rhetorician, but everybody loved his lessons, because he considered important not the quantity of knowledge but the understanding; often colored his lectures with anecdotes and was at pains to raise them to autonomy. *“A good teacher does as much as his talent and capacity let him, or he is not a teacher!”* – were his own words.⁶⁵ He placed emphasis on the development of thinking and emotions and that’s why he became one of the main attractions of the Collegium along with András Vandrák. He died in November 16, 1896 in heart attack, but he was working even in his latest hours. He never looked for fun, his only hobby was his small garden, a repository of his own collections and breeding. Hazslinszky lived a moderate life, liked simplicity in food, drink and dressing, developed slowly his conviction, but insisted on it. Scientific debates inspired him, but always dodged, is any personal mingled into. He found harmony and traces of eternal divine thought in the love and closeness of nature; Nature was the “great temple of world” for him. Although sometimes his pantheism was accused with irreligiousness, however he wrote to the survival of the Theology in 1874: *“In tough times, against mighty enemy our ancestors established this institute, and ensured its well-being, and would we, in more favorable circumstances, when we are protected by sacred, inviolable law, under the aegis of the freedom of religion, declare ourselves much less, inadequate or even unable to care the inheritance received? Verily, verily, the real reason of such nonsense lies rather in our intellectual poverty, the lack of benevolence and in our guilty indifference for the sacred cause of Protestantism than in material indigence.”*⁶⁶

Although he never took part directly in politics, public affairs of the city and county, his patriotism and vocation for science manifested together in a letter to Lajos Jurányi in 1873: *“the country is poor, badly poor, because they don’t see that only the superiority of our scientific erudition will be able to conquer the checkerboard of nationalities.”* Hazslinszky incessantly labored to defeat the “insurmountable

⁶⁵ E. MAYER, *Hazslinszky Frigyes emlékezete*, in: *Az eperjesi Ág. Ev. Ker. Collegium értesítője*, Eperjes 1897.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*.

*indifference, which surrounds the scientist with stifling atmosphere, and which is not recognized enough by leading sons of society, and which they don't care about the healing of".*⁶⁷ These latter words were of Gyula König, mathematician and member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, about Farkas Bólyai, also mathematician and father of János Bólyai,⁶⁸ and also cited by Sándor Mágócsy-Dietz in his Necrology on Hazslinszky. Frigyes also attempted to develop a Hungarian nomenclature in botany, where, that time, Latin and German languages were general. He was significantly less successful in this field, maybe, according to his German mother tongue, he had no sense to Hungarian, or he just lived far from the center of neology. As a teacher he didn't follow the strict Prussian concept yet, but used, anticipatively, demonstrative methods, and probably he was the last, who taught without textbooks. He derived equations on blackboard and expected students to elaborate tasks, school notes at home: instead of cramming books he sought to promote understanding. Despite of his modest lifestyle and because of avoiding financial profiteering, in 1873 he was compelled to sell his unique paleontological collection, what he worked for twenty seven years with, *"because his indigence doesn't stand buying literature anymore, because he is indebted and forced to repay"*.⁶⁹ He offered it to the National Museum and received 1500 forints, although he obviously put more money and energy in the more than 1500 fossils including unmatched Eocene and Miocene pieces. Four of them were discovered by and named after him. Later he had to hand over to the Collegium one of his herbariums for an exiguous perpetuity. His financial status meliorated only in the 1880s, when his salary, due to pay raise, was 1353 golds and 96 Kreuzer.⁷⁰

His name was well known abroad since his articles were published German, English⁷¹ and French journals. He had a mighty correspondence with European,

⁶⁷ G. KÖNIG, *Bolyai "Tentamen"-ének új kiadása*, in: Akadémiai Értesítő, Vol. 8, 1897, pp. 412–416, p. 413.

⁶⁸ János Bólyai doesn't need to be introduced, but worth to mention that also descended from an old impoverished noble family.

⁶⁹ F. HAZSLINSZKY, letter to Ferenc Pulszky, OSZK Kézirattár, Fond VIII/407

⁷⁰ ŠOAP, EKP: 173.

⁷¹ He learned to speak English only at the age of 55 just to be able to read articles in original.

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American and Australian colleagues who he gifted with plants and sometimes with a microscope. As early as in November 14, 1846 he was recommended by Ágoston Kubinyi, director of National Museum, to be a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, but he became correspondence member only in January 13, 1863 and member in May 24, 1872.⁷² He was also invited to be member in the Association of Natural Sciences in 1886,⁷³ in the Hungarian Geographical Association in February 1, 1888. He was a founding member of the Société Mycologique de France and many other scientific association invited him.⁷⁴ His role in botany can only be compared to Kitaibel's, fourteen species were named after him.

He lived silently, hardworking, and, as he promised to his parents in childhood, he never kept himself a scientist. Concluding his character and life this is hard to say if anything was similar to the "dzscentri" type in Mikszáth's novels, whose values and lifestyle was far from constructive diligence. Although in November 16, 1890, Franz Josef confirmed the family in nobility and authorized the usage of "hazslini" prefix,⁷⁵ but its significance is far less than to be paralleled the literary view of retrograde 19th century gentry, especially because Hazslinyszky even didn't considered himself noble. In addition his literacy he spoke German, Latin, Slovak, Greek, Hebrew, French and English.⁷⁶

⁷² Announcement in: *Országos Középiskolai Tanáregyesületi Közlöny*, 30, 9, 1896, p. 180.

⁷³ *Természettudományi Közlöny*, Vol. 17, 1886, p. 102.

⁷⁴ 1846: Honorary Member of the Sáros County Economic Association, 1847: Member of the Royal Hungarian Association for Natural Sciences, 1852: Member of the Zoologische-Botanische Gesellschaft in Vienna, Corresponding member of the Naturhistorische Verein in Prague, Corresponding member of the Botanic Association in Regensburg, 1855: Corresponding member of the K. K. Geologische Reichs-Anstalt in Vienna, 1856: Corresponding member of the Verein für Naturkunde in Pozsony (Bratislava), 1863: Honorary member of the Vining Association of Hegyalja, 1872: Corresponding member of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Kassa, 1874: Member of the Committee of the Hungarian Carpathian Association, 1879: Corresponding member of the Schlesische Gesellschaft für vaterländische Cultur in Breslau, 1889: Honorary member of the Youth Association of Law and Theology Academy at the Collegium in Eperjes.

⁷⁵ Diploma: Vienna, June 21, 1904, Liber Reg. LXXI. 305.

⁷⁶ ŠOAP, EKP: 150.

Some Notes on the Relevance of a Lifespan

All of his life's significance lies in that Frigyes Hazslinszky and everything he represented was not exceptional. He was part of a well-defined and existing social entity, part of a Hungarian noble strata representing civic values in the cities of Upper Hungary. The peculiarly humanistic atmosphere of the Collegium in Eperjes, certainly, cannot be considered as average, and therefore this is easy to find teachers and students with similar values. Miklós Bánó, former student of the Collegium, was also a humanistic, educated fellow, representing European civic culture, despite he descended from an eight centuries old noble family from Sáros County. Both he both his family played important role in Hungarian history, in addition he belonged just to those strongest part of the gentry, retaining the freckles of their lands, but also taking offices, at the end of the 19th century. Nevertheless, Hazslinszky represented a wider strata in the 19th century: those intellectuals and officials of noble origins with civic values. A route of a life, embedded in social, economic and political environment, is so far determined by these forces, that any difference is hard to define between those in the same situation, thus a member of a group, defined this way, represents the whole group definitively.⁷⁷ To know the details of a career and a personality helps to get closer to the life of a whole group and the family time we observe in life courses can help to make conclusions to the mentality of this group.⁷⁸

Abstract

The concept of gentry in Hungarian 19th century history usually backed by its literary counterpart, most famously by those characters in Mikszáth Kálmán's novels and short stories. The proud but lazy and hedonistic lifestyle, in connection with its useless political and public role in Hungarian society, is so far widespread in public opinion that even in history writing doesn't lack it. In this article I want to rebut this mostly stereotypic picture drawn about multiple social strata and a complex social phenomena. For my purpose I use a genealogical approach due to its relevance from

⁷⁷ G. LEVI, *Les usages de la biographie*, in: *Annales ESC*, 6, 1989, pp. 1325–1336.

⁷⁸ M. KOHLI, *Gesellschaftszeit und Lebenszeit. Der Lebenslauf im Strukturwandel der Moderne*, in: *Die Moderne. Kontinuitäten und Zäsuren*, Göttingen 1986, pp. 183–208.

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a micro-historical viewpoint. A lifespan, especially an intergenerational mobility route, can represent the features of a social group and family time, described by stories of life courses, can help to make conclusions to mentality, thus through the story of Hazslinszky family, described in this study, we can get closer to those part of impoverished gentry, who became intellectuals and picked up civic values rather than being flighty and irresponsible snobs.

Keywords

Embourgeoisement; Gentry; Eperjes; Social History; Hungarian History