Old Mythologies and New Nations:
Social Discourse in Trianon Hungary

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Abstract

In the post-Trianon era there were efforts by not only the new nation of Czechoslovakia and the enlarged Romania but also by Hungary to continue asserting their claims by the use of cultural diplomacy. All three engaged in various sorts of propaganda, attempting to put forth an image of their Europeanness to the Western nations. Though these campaigns were directed toward the West, in Hungary there was a necessary need to recreate an identity within the nation. This thesis will seek to find the ways in which Hungary was represented to the West, both from within and by western historians, primarily those in Britain, and the reasons and means by with they were able to utilize a return from the Finno-Ugric origin theory to the Hun myth by the late 1930s.

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INTRODUCTION

Even today there seems to be no consensus among historians as to the origins of the Magyar people. This is really rather misleading; there is plenty of verifiable evidence, yet it is left open-ended, or rather the question has been re-opened time and again for political purposes. Beginning around the end of the 19th century this uncertainty was utilized for the purpose of identity formation from the top down. The skepticism concerning the Hungarian origins – shrouded in myth and folklore on the one hand, counterbalanced by a scientific, linguistic approach on the other – leaves much room for adapting theories to fit the needs of the situation, as has been done several times throughout the 1100 year history of the Hungarians in their current territory. One question this paper will address is how and why the origin myth was rewritten by historians and politicians, as well as re-contextualized in the public discourse, in the inter-war years in Hungary?

In fin-de-siecle Hungary the government – specifically the Ministry of Education – officially turned away from the Hun origin myth as a version of Hungarian ethnic identity and consciously chose to emphasize the Finno-Ugric linguistic root of Hungarian heritage. This view of Hungarian origin was seen at once as both more scientific and much less aggressive than identifying with the Huns as ancestors of the Hungarians. There weer two very beneficial and practical reasons why this was an agreeable choice of identity. First, it was a verifiable link to the past (though noticeably one leaving plenty of room to which any number of the myths

concerning ethnic origin could be attached.) Secondly, it was a very benign point of departure for cultural diplomacy with the West. At once it emphasized the Hungarian origin on the slopes of the Ural Mountains, imagining the Hungarians as always having been Europe's east guard, and de-emphasizing the often utilized myth of the Hun heritage, a people who were obviously seen as the exact opposite of defenders of Europe. Yet, by the late 1930s the dialogue in the public spheres pointedly turned back to this more aggressive Hun origin myth, certainly as far as discourse within the nation is concerned. That is to say, the dialogue between the Hungarians and the West may have retained the Finno-Ugric heritage as a Hungarian identity, but within the borders, specifically through education, a shift back to a stronger lineage occurred. The Huns had been utilized as part of the Hungarian identity time and again throughout the nation's history, and so this return was neither out of character with Hungarian historiography, nor difficult to accomplish.

This paper will show that the rather malleable origin myth of the Hungarians – there is not even a consensus as to whether they migrated from the east or west slopes of the Ural Mountains – allows much room for the use of situational identity. In his essay "Situational Ethnicity," Jonathan Y. Okamura explains how (generally in poly-ethnic societies) actors are able to modify their ethnic identity to given situations. Though he details several levels, the primary level is explain as such: "The structural dimension of situational ethnicity would refer to the restraints enjoined upon parties within social situations as a consequence of the setting of social action"[1] That is to say, the setting is the greater social structure which dictates the variable amount of identity one can ascribe to themselves in given situations. Though there are some specifics which will make it impossible to map this theory directly onto the Hungarian situation, it gives a framework from which to view the multi-ethnic historical Hungary, in which for the last one

[1] Jonathan Y. Okamura, "Situational Ethnicity", *Ethnic and Racial Studies Volume 4 number 4* (Oct. 1981) p. 452

hundred and fifty years the Hungarian were trying to solidify and assert their identity, as well as post-Trianon Hungary during which time the Hungarians were in a sense faced with a new nation and forced to recreate the Hungarian identity. As a result of the loss of two-thirds of their historic territory, the setting, or the structural framework within which they were able to identify themselves, had changed. The hypothesis of this paper is that there were two primary factors which encouraged the return to the Hun origin myth. The first aspect was the identity crisis the nation was faced with, and the ancestry seen as better able to impart strength upon the dismembered nation in the wake of international defeat was that of the Hun lineage, a warrior nation, rather than the scientific, yet humble, origins asserted in the Finno-Ugric theory. Second, and just as important, was that re-identifying with the Huns, for a nation of irredentists, would further justify their historic claims to their lost territory.

One of the 'situations' in which Hungary found itself for over a thousand years, and certainly in the post-Trianon era was that of being the odd-man out. I believe it is for this reason that origin played such an important role in the historiography of Hungary. It is easy to understand, especially looking at it through the situational identity approach, both how one would feel as an individual in the midst of others with a common heritage, as well as the two primary options of approaching the state of affairs. On the one hand, one could try to minimize the differences in an attempt to become more alike to the surrounding majority. On the other, one could seek out a special inherent quality or uniqueness which brings forth an identity which at once instills a sort of pride and validates an aversion to possible assimilation into the neighboring majority. Throughout their history in the Carpathian basin, the Hungarians have opted for the second option. Yet, at times, have found it more expedient to downplay this distinctiveness, at least in the sphere of external relations. It must be remembered, as far as internal policy is concerned, the assertion of a specific Hungarian identity has been just as much a means of

consolidating group identity as it has been a divisive force. After all, until the mid-19th century ethnic Hungarians were a minority majority – that is, they were the largest single group in the country, but did not constitute eve 50% of the population – in their own country vis-à-vis the aggregate of minorities within the historical borders, and until 1919 they were barely a majority. It really wasn't until after the signing of Treaty of Trianon on June 4, 1920 – or arguably since the temporary cease-fire borders of Hungary were established in the final two months of 1918 – that they made up more than 80% of the population. It is at this point that the Hungarian assertion of a national identity can be said to have had both a consolidating effect within the nation as well as act as a characterization which set it apart from the neighboring states, rather than finding themselves in the position of either causing dissention within the borders and identifying themselves as distinct from the surrounding Slav nations or vice versa.

In the post-Trianon era there were efforts by not only the new nation of Czechoslovakia and the enlarged Romania but also by Hungary to continue asserting their claims by the use of cultural diplomacy. All three engaged in various sorts of propaganda, attempting to put forth an image of their Europeanness to the Western nations. Though these campaigns were directed toward the West, in Hungary there was a need to recreate an identity within the nation. This will be the starting point of this thesis.

Four specific areas will be looked at in compiling my sources and information. First, I will of course need to look at how historians seeking the origin of the Hungarian people addressed the issue of Hungarian origins, and the divergent assertions that have been made of the centuries, and why. Second, I will address the issue of identity formation, beginning with individual within the larger group, the group within the greater social structure, and finally national identity both as a means of internal social cohesion and as a means of territorial and cultural affirmation within the international community. The final two chapters of this thesis will

deal with Hungarian identity as put forth through official channels. It is important here that both internal and external identity formation be dealt with. Externally I will look at the cultural diplomacy which the government engaged in, paying special attention to the post-Trianon image portrayed to the west. Internally I will specifically look to education, utilizing history textbooks produced especially for use in national school, as opposed to ecclesiastical schools. Through these means I believe the change in narrative between the millennium celebration of 1896 and the late 1930s can be traced. A comparison between the external diplomacy and the internal assertion of Hungarian identity will go a long way to show both the new Hungarian identity crisis as well as the uncertain position the nation maintained on the world stage.

CHAPTER 1

THEORETICAL APPROACHES: SITUATIONAL DISCOURSE

There will be three main sources discussed in this theoretical chapter which will be the driving ideas behind the analysis throughout this thesis; two which lean toward sociology and one which is a more historical discourse. Jonathan Y**.** Okamura's theory of 'situational ethnicity' will be very helpful in observing situational context of the historical factors involved in this thesis. This theory will blend nicely with the ideas of the construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of society through discourse, specifically the use of mythology, described by Bruce Lincoln in his book *Discourse and the Construction of Society.* The main source which falls more to the historical side will be found in the writings of Benedict Anderson's groundbreaking book *Imagined Communities*.

Situational Ethnicity

In the essay "Situational Ethnicity" Okamura, as the title suggests, discusses the concept of situational ethnicity. To be sure, this writing as well as many of the tools expounded upon fall into the category of social anthropology, rather than history, yet here they will offer a very useful

lens through which to better view the topic at hand, as well as any historical approach dealing with identity.

The theory of situational ethnicity sets out to explain ethnic identity vis-à-vis the greater community in poly-ethnic – otherwise there would be no discourse in which to locate an ethnicity – societies, dealing specifically "with subjective and perceptual notions of ethnicity in terms of the actor's understandings and explanations of social behavior."[2] With an approach such as this, "the variable meaning of ethnicity, the different criteria for ascription of ethnic identities, the fluidity of ethnic boundaries, and the varying relevance of ethnic and other social identities are most apparent for the actor and the researcher alike."[3] Quite simply, ethnicity is relative depending upon situation and other such factors. That is not to say that one can simply shed ethnicity, it is decidedly more complicated than that, but therein is the quintessence. There are two sides to be dealt with here, after all ethnicity really is nothing without a relationship, some idea, belief, or concept from which to reflect otherness. Here the relational parameters are determined by 'setting' and 'situation'. As Okamura explains it, "[situational ethnicity] is focused on the way in which individuals appraise the behavior choices open to themselves given the constraints imposed upon them by the wider setting."[4] So, setting is the greater social structure, within which individual actors may chose variable courses of action. Within a setting a person has choices concerning how, if, or to what extent ethnic characterizations will be accentuated or dulled in particular situations. These choices are often based on perception, as Okamura puts it, setting is the 'objective' point of view, while situation is a 'subjective' view. There are also choices to be made as to what ethnic identity a person ascribes to another in a situation. Finally, the most crucial idea is that "individuals have the option of asserting either

[2] Jonathan Y. Okamura, "Situational Ethnicity", *Ethnic and Racial Studies vol. 4 no. 4* (Oct. 1981) p. 452
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid., p. 453

their primary ethnic identity or other social identities, such as those derivative of class or occupation."[5] This is vital in dealing with national identity in the interwar years due to the fact that perception, boundaries, ascription, and setting all play very important roles.

In the context of this thesis, the situation approach as described by Okamura will be useful from the point of view of the changing international system in the interwar years. That is to say, any of the many newly formed nations, or the offspring of empires, find themselves in a situation in which the international setting is much like the wider social setting Okamura describes, while the nations themselves can be seen as the individual actors facing choices of how to represent themselves, as well as what identities they choose to ascribe to others. The changing social situation is crucial to mapping this theory of individual identity onto nation-states.

Social Discourse

Bruce Lincoln posits many important ideas which accord nicely with the situational approach already described and will be helpful to this thesis. His first main point, upon which the specific points which will be used herein will be built, coincides very closely with Okamura's situational approach. In any social structure, he explains, there are always several latent sentiments that are made available for associating or disassociating oneself or social group from others, "and the vast majority of social sentiments are ambivalent mixes in which potential of affinity are (partially and perhaps temporarily) overlooked or suppressed in the interests of establishing a clear social border or, conversely, potential sources of estrangement are similarly treated in order to effect or

[5] Ibid., p. 460

preserve a desired level of social integration and solidarity."[6] He then explains that because these sentiments carry the potential for division, groups within society are held together by officially approved sentiments. The opposite is also true. While the groups bound by an official narrative are with in the same society, the same narrative can also serve to create the border between other societies. In this paper these authoritative sentiments will be examined, with an eye to how they are used in an attempt to define one nation, and how they are used in situating a cultural barrier between other nations. As Lincoln states, "Ultimately, that which either holds society together or takes it apart is sentiment, and the chief instrument with which such sentiment may be aroused, manipulated, and rendered dormant is discourse."[7]

Lincoln's premise of discourse must be fleshed out a bit more before it can be sufficiently merged with Okamura's situational approach in order to create what will here be termed 'situational discourse.' Lincoln focuses on myth and ways in which it is used to construct social order, as well as divisions between peoples.

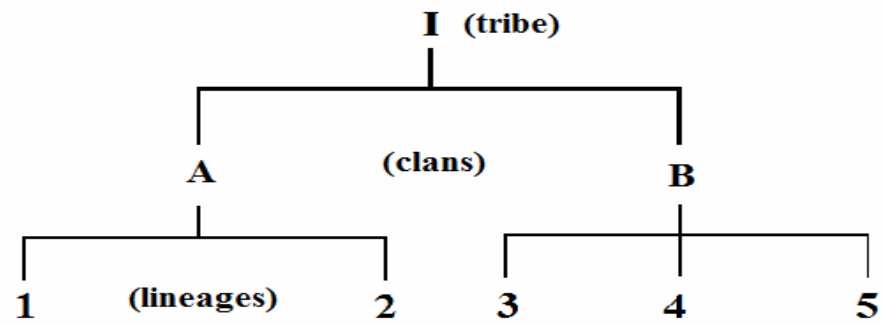

Diagram I – fission and fusion of segmentary units.[8]

Because of its importance here, the graph from Lincoln's book seen above will help illustrate this point. In the figure Roman numeral one is the common ancestor (tribe), the capital letters

[6] Bruce Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies of Myth, Ritual and Classification,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 10
[7] Ibid., p. 11
[8] Ibid., p. 19

represent primary descendents (clans), and the arabic numerals are place holders for further subgroups (lineages). Basic to this pattern is the guideline of fission and fusion, "whereby the members of a total social field can recombine at different levels of integration to form aggregates of varying size."[9] What is important is that during any sort of conflict, depending upon the groups involved, they will, much like Okamura's situational approach, be able to choose how far back the in the lineage they seek their narrative. Although, in keeping with this premise, it is clear that members of society in theory belong to multiple common groups, "at any given moment only one such level of social integration is active and evident, whereas the others exist as latent structural possibilities: alternate groups that may be mobilized under other circumstances."[10] Following this it is clear that the narratives that hold societies together, as well as create borders between others, are able to be chosen within the wider setting. When there is strife involving two groups, each will forgo the option of reaching back to the common ancestor as a point of reference. Yet, when the time comes to reach an accord, their commonality is available to reconstruct a more harmonious relationship.

Lincoln also addresses ways in which sentiment helps create the very discourse that allows for the manipulation of sentiment. This occurs through the summoning of particular moments in the past – a process not unlike that of ancestral selection – depending upon the group affiliation and sentimentality; a progression which in turn can serve to reaffirm, or, at times, redefine sentiment, as happens under certain conditions, such as when groups associated by a common tribal ancestor, split into clans or further lineage subgroups. Yet, not only does the past structure the present, but the converse is also true. "The present also shapes the past that is recollected, for specific ancestral invocations, being stimulated by the needs of the present

[9] Ibid., p. 19
[10] Ibid.

situation, must be appropriate to those needs: [referring to diagram 1] One cannot rally tribal-sized groups for clan-level conflicts."[11] It is easy to see that because of the fluidity of the social landscape, through identification with specific ancestors, one has the ability to deconstruct and reconstruct recognized configurations. It is important that because ancestry is "being fixed by historic fact and collective memory, one can only call forth the groups that are defined by those specific ancestors – unless, of course, one tampers with genealogy, a practice that is – to judge from the anthropological record and from the social register – not the least uncommon."[12] It is at this very point that not only is a certain amount of synthesis with Okamura's approach possible, but also the implication of social discourse on this thesis can be appreciated more fully.

Imagined Communities

Benedict Anderson's book *Imagined Communities* will be immensely helpful to this work in that it demonstrates ways in which the discourse within the context of modernity and nation-states came about, as well as how the situation within greater setting is perceived by the actors involved, in this case the nation. The changes which took place in order to create the imagined communities as Anderson describes it are precisely those things that construct a setting necessary for a new popular social discourse to take place, as well as the actors. That is to say, the discourse was not necessarily new, but rather the means. Because of this, a necessary re-shaping of the societies involved took place.

The nation, Anderson says, is imagined as limited, sovereign, and as a community. These three elements are integral to the formation of a modern national identity. Nations are "imagined

[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid., p. 21

as *limited* because even the largest of them…has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations."[13] A territory is of course fundamental to the activity of mental mapping, which is one of the ways in which Anderson describes the imagining of 'nation'. They are "imagined as *sovereign* because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm."[14] In other words, ideas and deeds changed the socio-political stage, creating a terrain in which peoples were no longer trussed by the rather unbounded stretch of religious authority or dynastic power. Anderson writes: "The gauge and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state."[15] The imagined community is such because "regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived of as a deep, horizontal comradeship."[16] He explains this point by reminding the reader that in any nation one can only imagine the others who make up the bulk of his con-nationals. In this sense nation is truly in the imagination.

Foremost in Anderson's theory is language. His two main points, which are important in enabling an analysis of national identity through the situational approach and social discourse discussed above, are the decline of sacral languages and the development of the printing press, as well as the changing concept of time. These topics will be helpful in integrating the theories of Okamura and Lincoln because time and the nation's connection to the past is the primary issue to be dealt with, and as already shown, this helped create the setting/situation as well as necessitating a conscious choice of ancestry around which to build the interwar discourse.

The change in the domination of the sacral languages over vast communities to the use of the vernacular was a fundamental shift which helped to create communities and territory. This

[13] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1993), p. 7
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.

allowed on the one hand for mental mapping as well as comradeship. After all, language is the most blatant of identity markers; one is easily able to feel solidarity with others who speak the same mother tongue. One the other hand, it enhanced the territorial community by creating the others in neighboring lands. Of course, language has been around long before modernity, and this is why the printing press and mass marketing of printed material is a crucial part of the role language played in forming imagined communities. With the sacral languages being replaced by vernaculars it was necessary for the press market to codify languages of large communities, picking and choosing among the many regional dialects, in order to broaden their market for printed material.

A shift in the concept of time was also brought on by the undermining of the sacral languages and the press media. Anderson explains that, "the mediaeval Christian mind had no conception of history as an endless chain of cause and effect."[17] Rather, in their mind, the past and the future are happening in the present. The change brought about by the printing press is aptly given in an example by Anderson in which he suggests that a man reading a newspaper in the morning, first of all is reading past events, but more importantly understands that simultaneously many members of his community are reading the same paper; it is a constant "technical means for 're-presenting' the *kind* of imagined community that is the nation."[18] In a very real sense, it made possible the imagined community.

[17] Ibid., p. 23
[18] Ibid., p. 25

Situational Discourse

The synthesis of the above theories will serve as a guide to this paper. If one can take the nation in place of the individual in Okamura's "Situational Identity," then it allows for the international landscape to stand in for the widen social setting within which that nation has situational choices available. Given this, Lincoln's discourse offers the opportunity to understand what and how those choices were made. Finally, Anderson's imagined community presents an understanding of the changing landscape over the more than two centuries leading up to the interwar years; it helps to understand not only the means by which the nations were making choices and creating discourse, but also how those means became available. They became available not only though new sources of communication, but through the very apprehension of time understood through this very media. The discourse to be discussed here would simply have been non-existent were it not for a new conception of time. It would be impossible to make choices concerning identity based on historical discourse if history were not available; only the change in consciousness of homogenous time allowed for this.

CHAPTER 2

UNCERTAIN PAST:
THE MALLEABILITY OF HUNGARIAN HISTORIOGRPHY

The social discourse in Hungarian historiography has nearly since the time of the conquest of the Carpathian Basin thrived on a certain amount of ambiguity. It was, and still is, in this context that the discourse of national origin can be manipulated to suit the needs of the times. Well before Simon Kézai's *Gesta Hungarorum*, Hungarian history became muddled and confused through the writing of several chronicles which not only used folklore and myth as their historical sources, but also adopted the ideas about, and images of, the Hungarians from the West, who identified them as Huns. "To fit this new pedigree, we find the early tradition remodeled, at first modestly, but in increasingly dramatic fashion as time proceeds, until a confusion has been reached which to this day has not been cleared up."[19] The anonymous writer of an earlier *Gesta Hungarorum* actually went so far in his fact bending as to blend Attila and Árpád into one character, simply transferring the exploits of Attila to Árpád at the time of the conquest[20], offering a distorted tale from the beginning of Hungarian historiography, something never to be sorted out, but always to be manipulated.

[19] C. A. Macartney, *Medieval Hungarian Historians: A Critical and Analytical Guide* (Cambridge University Press, 1953), p. 38
[20] Ibid., p. 67

It is important to begin this discussion with Simon Kézai's *Gesta Hungarorum* (ca. 1280) for two reasons. First, it will clearly be shown as a case of situational discourse, detailing a specific Hungarian character befitting the needs of the time. Secondly, it quickly became, and still remains, the basis for the Hungarian national identity.

Gesta Hungarorum

Simon Kézai, from the first pages of his Gesta Hungarorum connects the Huns and the Magyars through a specifically biblical tradition. He writes that Hunor and Magor are the twin sons of a direct descendent of Noah. "After the confusion of tongues the giant [Nimrod, Noah's grandson] entered the land a Havilah, which is now called Persia, and there begot two sons, Hunor and Magor, by his wife Eneth. It was from them that the Huns, or Hungarians, took there origins."(Chapter 4)[21] In this narrative, the Huns are said to be descendants of Hunor, the Magyars from Magor. This is a very important addition to the story which had not been directly dealt with by earlier chroniclers. The most notable earlier *Gesta Hungarorum*, written in the late 12th century by the unknown writer mentioned above, usually referred to as Anon, indirectly connects the ruling house of Árpád to Attila through the lineage of Almos, but does not go to the extent of drawing a line from the sons of Nimrod, Hunor and Magor, to the Huns and Magyars.[22]

Notably, as early as Chapter 4, Kézai is using 'Huns' and 'Hungarians' in a basically interchangeable manner. In his description of Attila, he makes a direct connection between the Huns and the Hungarians: "Attila's banner bore the image of the bird the Hungarians call the

[21] Simon De Kéza, *Gesta Hungarorum* (The Deeds of the Hungarians), László Veszprémy and Frank Schaer eds. and trans. (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1999), p. 15
[22] C. A. Macartney, *Medieval Hungarian Historians: A Critical and Analytical Guide* (Cambridge University Press, 1953), p. 68

Turul, with a crown on its head, and this emblem he carried on his own shield. In fact, until the time of Duke Géza this flag has always been carried by the Hunnish army."(Chapter 10)[23] Kézai is successful in asserting Hungarian identity on multiple levels in this short passage. First, he notably connects the emblems of Attila to Duke Géza, the ruler who first accepted Christianity in Hungary. While it was known that Géza continued to worship pagan gods after his babtism,[24] here Kézai not only connects Géza to the lineage of Attila, he also positions the Hungarian identity firmly within European Christianity. He also skillfully fastens the Hun and Hungarian histories together with a double knot; not only does he bring the narrative to well after the time of the conquest, but he also states that under Géza it was a 'Hunnish army.' This was made a bit easier by placing Attila's incursion into the Carpathian Basin in the "year of Our Lord 700"(Chapter 7),[25] bringing the legacy of Attila and the Huns 250 years closer the time of Árpád.

Claiming an identity for the Hungarians is of great significance to Kézai, to such an extent that it cannot go unnoticed that in several cases when dealing with the relationship to the Huns, he takes extraordinary care to create more than one link in the important areas. Already in Chapter 4, he has made the Huns relatives of the Hungarians through the twins Hunor and Magor. In the passage from Chapter 10 cited above, he extends the cultural traditions of the Huns to the Hungarians, and further on he makes a direct lineage from Attila to Árpád, relating the Hungarian to the Huns once again (having already established a lineage in Chapter 4 with the Magyars descending from Magor), through the other twin. "Among these captains Árpád the son of

[23] Simon De Kéza, *Gesta Hungarorum* (The Deeds of the Hungarians), László Veszprémy and Frank Schaer eds. and trans. (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1999), p. 38
[24] Paul Lendvai, *The Hungarians: A Thousand Years of Victory in Defeat* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 29
[25] Simon De Kéza, *Gesta Hungarorum* (The Deeds of the Hungarians), László Veszprémy and Frank Schaer eds. and trans. (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1999), p. 25

Álmos son of Előd son of Ügyek, of the Turul kindred, was richer in possessions and enjoyed a more powerful following."(Chapter 27)[26] The "Turul kindred" is an obvious reference to Attila.

Already setting the Hungarians within the biblical tradition, and reminding his audience that the Hungarian leader who still flew a Hunnish banner was also the leader who maintained a central role in facilitating the spread of Christianity throughout the Carpathian Basin, he gives Attila a sprinkling of holy water as well. In the following passage, Kézai details an encounter between Attila and the pope, in which, after a vision, the Hun comes to the aid of the Church rather than launch an attack against it. "The king first showed no inclination to accede what the Romans were asking. But in the midst of their discussions he chanced to glance upwards and beheld a human being hovering in mid-air just above him, swinging a sword and threatening to take his head off at any moment. Attila received such a shock that he assented to the petitions of the Romans lock, stock, and barrel."(Chapter 17)[27] In his book *Theoretical Elements in Master Simon of Kéza's Gesta Hungarorum 1282-1285 A.D.*, Jenő Szűcs suggests that after this encounter with the pope "Attila is exalted to the position of a defender of the Church; he has attained a function within, so to say, the *ecclesia militans*."[28] It seems to go a bit further than that. After all, ordinary men do not have visions. In this chapter, Kézai comes just short of giving Attila the role of Géza. In effect, he has a rather prophetic vision which turns him toward the Church, whether temporarily or not. This is a vastly different Hun than that which was currently in the European imagination, the one to whom western European nations identified the Hungarians. In this one encounter, the Hungarians, via the Huns, are able to take their proper place within European Christianity.

[26] Ibid., p. 81
[27] Ibid., p. 63
[28] Jenő Szűcs, *Theoretical Elements in Master Simon of Kéza's Gesta Hungarorum 1282-1285 A.D.* (Budapest: Akademia Kiadó, 1975), p. 19

Along with the Hungarian identity, which Kézai went to such lengths to imbue with all the important qualities of a European and Christian nation, was another vital issue: territorial claims. As descendents of the Huns, the Hungarians' claim to the Carpathian Basin is naturally strengthened. Yet, a close look at the first part of Kézai's *Gesta* shows that he not only uses the traditional 'second conquest' narrative, but also adds a third for good measure, as well as noting the Székely as Huns who never left. Therefore, the territorial claims are firmly founded not only on three conquests, but also a continued occupation since the time of Attila.

After Attila's death, he explains, the Huns fall into chaos and are forced to leave Pannonia. Attila's son Csaba returns to Scythia and immediately initiates plans return in order to seek vengeance against the Germans.[29] "Another group of Huns survived," Kézai writes. "Out of fear of the Western nations they remained on the field of Csigla until Árpád's time, referring to themselves not as Huns but as Székely. These Székely are in fact remnants of the Huns, and when they found out that the Hungarians were returning to Pannonia, they came to meet them on the borders of Ruthenia, and then joined with them in the conquest of Pannonia and acquired part of the country."(Chapter 21)[30] Kézai gives Csaba's son Edemen the role of the leader "when the Hungarians came back for the second time…"(Chapter 22)[31] Even taking into account the shift in chronology noted earlier, this cannot possibly be a reference to the return "in the year 872 of our Lord's incarnation...when the Huns, or Hungarians, entered Pannonia once again."(Chapter 25)[32] Therefore, it can be seen that where it concerns territorial claims, Kézai takes extra measures to show a continued, as well as a recurring presence of Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin.

[29] Simon De Kéza, *Gesta Hungarorum* (The Deeds of the Hungarians), László Veszprémy and Frank Schaer eds. and trans. (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1999), p. 71
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid., p. 73
[32] Ibid., p. 77

In the Kézai's Gesta Hungarorum we see that he is conducting an intricate operation in which he is attempting to reconstruct the Hungarian identity within the greater European community. First, he is making a direct connection between the Huns and the Hungarians, basically using references to either inter-changeably. Secondly, he is creating a strong biblical connection, allowing for acceptance into the Christian realm. Finally, he created an elaborate basis for territorial claims. In effect, he is giving the Hungarians the background of an ancient civilization, connecting them doubly to Christianity, and by settling them in the Carpathian Basin three times, he is making a historical territorial claim.

His adept ability to connect the Pagan past with a biblical past works well in several ways for creating a new social discourse. It offered Ladislas IV, also known as Ladislas the Cuman, validation for the pagan lineage he received from his mother's side. Perhaps more importantly, it gave the Hungarians a stronger heritage, which may have been vital in order to strengthen the nation not long after the devastating Mongol invasions. Also, because social discourse is used not only to craft an identity within a group, but also among groups, it helped create a place for the Hungarians within Christian Europe.

Finno-Ugrian connection

The *Gesta Hungarorum* followed Hungarian historiography well into the 18th century, settling into the position of authority not long after it was written. The narrative as told by Kézai didn't necessarily pose a threat to Ottoman rule, yet late in the 18th, as part of the Habsburg empire, the heritage of the Huns which the Hungarians had enjoyed for several centuries was not only too nationalistic for Vienna to abide, but the heritage that it reflected was suffused with just the type

of strength that had the potential to create a very real threat. The change in narrative came in the form of scientific inquiry, specifically through linguistics. "The first blow to the national pride was dealt by János Sajnovics, a Hungarian Jesuit, who went to observe the transit of Venus from the island of Vardö in Norway and on finding similarities between his native tongue and the language of the Lapps in the vicinity published a learned thesis in Copenhagen in 1770."[33] Sajnovics' thesis provided the foundation for the changing social discourse and identity reconstruction necessary for the Hungarians as part of an empire. In 1775, George Pray, though he initially argued against the new Magyar-Lapp theory, "adopted the findings of Sajnovics, and enlarging these with detailed comparisons between Hungarian and various Finno-Ugrian languages...declared that the Finns and their near relatives were of Hunnish stock and of the same origin with Huns, Avars and Hungarians."[34]

The Finno-Ugric theory of Hungarian origin, though arrived at through scientific methods, was still seen as competing with the Huns origin theory which was based primarily on conjecture, folklore, and myth. It is important here to understand this because there is no legitimate justification for putting the two theories against one another, and therefore it shows that not only was the Hun myth deeply ingrained in the Hungarian consciousness, but also that even in the face of scientific finding it was an identity that the nation was loath to relinquish. This is still the case, which is apparent in the first quote above in which Endrey, a Hungarian ex-patriot living in Austrailia, calls this new source of identification "a blow to the national pride."

Another reason they are set up as opposing theories is that they contrast each other in certain important area enough that it is the case that there can be now possible synthesis of the two. The Finno-Ugric theory is based mainly on linguistics, as Paul Lendvai explains, "in the

[33] Anthony Endrey, *Sons of Nimrod: The Origin of the Hungarians* (Melbourne: The Hawthorne Press, 1975), p. 27
[34] Ibid., p. 28

absence of written and archeological sources, the language remains the only scientifically reliable evidence for the origins of the Hungarians – a language from the Finno-Ugrian linguistic family unique in Europe."[35] The Finno-Ugric explanation of Hungarian origins basically states that "The ancestors of the Finno-Ugrian peoples lived on the European side of the Urals around the rivers Kama and Pechora in the forest zone at the beginning of the third millennium B.C. They formed a homogenous group until about 2500 – 2000 B.C. when the Finno-Permic group moved towards the west and north-west and the Ugric group migrated gradually towards the south-east...The separation of the proto-Hungarians from the Ob-Ugrians took place about 500 B.C."[36]

This new discourse came about at a time when language was increasingly seen as probably the most important marker of identity for the Hungarians. Around this time there was a conscious renaissance of the Hungarian language. Paul Ignotus, in his book *Hungary*, explains the language reform movement placing the same emphasis on language as Benedict Anderson does in his *Imagined Communities*. György Bessenyei was one of the main forces behind language reform in Hungary at the end of the 18th century, writing and publishing in Hungarian from 1772 onwards. Ignotus claims, because of his focus on the revival of the Hungarian language through literary means, that Bessenyei "invented the Hungarian nation."[37] It can be seen that this discourse certainly falls within the category of situational discourse. Not only was the contemporaneous situation on in which nationalism was not a desired form of group identity, but also there was a concerted effort underway to create, or recreate a Hungarian identity.

Anthony Endrey hints at a national despair, if not resentment, several times in his chapter on the Finno-Ugric origins, as well in the following quote: "Indications furnished by linguistic

[35]Paul Lendvai, *The Hungarians: A Thousand Years of Victory in Defeat* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 13
[36] Anthony Endrey, *Sons of Nimrod: The Origin of the Hungarians* (Melbourne: The Hawthorne Press, 1975), p. 32
[37] Paul Ignotus, *Hungary* (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1972), p. 44

research, sparse as they were, were magnified out of all proportions and the proud inheritors of Attila's sword were boldly pronounced as basically of humble Finno-Ugrian stock."[38] On one level this statement is correct: it was intended to create a humble heritage because of Hungary's place within the empire. Yet, the assumption about the average Hungarian is an anachronistic analysis. It is off target to see the Hungarian population base as being involved in a debate occurring in academic circles. If anything here he is inadvertently reminding the reader that in the late 18th century, the Hungarian nation meant the aristocracy, which really shines a different light on his objection to the theory. When considering situational discourse, it is essential that the actors – those in a position to create a new discourse – as well as their actions be kept in mind. Though the relegation of the Hun origin myth to just that, myth, may be a bone of contention to later generations, it cannot be said to have been the case at the time the discourse was being overhauled.

Time and circumstances are of utmost importance when understanding changing identities – from within as well as from others – by means of the situational discourse approach. This can be understood quite easily, as well as glimpsing the malleability of Hungarian history, by looking at the implications of one more passage from *Sons of Nimrod*. In his first chapter, entitled "The National Tradition," in a paragraph discussing the emphasis Anon places on the Attila lineage in his *Gesta Hungarorum*, suggesting that it was due to the fact that the king the writer served was belonged the House of Árpád, Endrey concludes with the line "…and it is now generally accepted that the descent of that house from Attila is factual."[39] Two things of note can be found with a closer look at this passage, both of which point to the manipulation of history in the service of current considerations. First, he attaches an endnote to this statement. The citation

[38] Anthony Endrey, *Sons of Nimrod: The Origin of the Hungarians* (Melbourne: The Hawthorne Press, 1975), p. 30
[39] Ibid., p. 4

confirms that his source for this statement came from Balint Hóman's book *Magyar Történet*, published in 1941.[40] If one considers why a historian writing in the 1970s would cite a book published more than 30 years earlier in order to validate something as "now generally accepted," the conclusion one must come to is that he is carefully sifting through the Hungarian origin discourse in order to support his own thesis. This is rather characteristic of Hungarian historiography ever since the chroniclers went to such lengths to bundle the Hungarian past in a wrapping of confusion. Secondly, the very book he cites was written during a brief period of time in the last 300 years of Hungarian history when the Hun myth had been returned to for specifically nationalist reasons. It was this very time of Hungarian history in which nationalism propped up on the shoulders of the Huns is the very point this thesis seeks to expose. In this one passage Endrey enhances the understanding of the ways in which an origin obscured by the mists of time as well as the briar patches planted by early chroniclers may be manipulated for political reasons well suited to the situations at hand.

Other Uses of History

To be sure, the use of history for political purposes can not be said to be a uniquely Hungarian tradition. In fact, as discussed in the theoretical chapter of this thesis, in any situation in which a new social discourse is being constructed, an appeal must be made to history. Whether that history is fictitious or not does not mater. What is unique about the changing Hungarian narrative over the course of time is that because of the uncertainty which surrounds the origins of

[40] Ibid., p. 97

the nation this is often the point of departure for those seeking to reconstruct the Hungarian identity. The two examples which follow will shed light on this point.

The situation in Hungary during the inter-war years serves as a prime example of an identifiable group which finds itself faced with circumstances in which not only are a plethora of identity choices available, but also in which a new national identity had already been created from the outside. That is to say, when Okamura talks about situational ethnicity he is often referring to the fluidity of ethnicity, but to a large extent against a rather static backdrop. In the case of post-Trianon Hungary, both the subjective (individual perception) and the objective (wider social setting) had undergone drastic changes. In light of this, it is easy to understand why several people with the necessary resources for recasting the national discourse would attempt such drastic revisions of the historical narrative. In his book *Modern Hungarian historiography* Steven Vardy explains the prevalent mindset among those looking to historical study with renewed vigor: "it was also motivated by the desire to probe into the possibility of reconstituting historic Hungary by demonstrating the alleged cultural and intellectual pre-eminence of the Magyars among the nations of the Carpathian Basin and its immediate vicinity."[41] With this goal in mind, an uncertain past was most helpful.

In the inter-war years there were "dozens of right-wing secret organizations – their number in 1920 was 101."[42] One of the most important was the Etelköz Association (E.K.Sz. – Etelközi Szövetség), or sometimes referred to as "X", headed by future prime minister, who was currently a captain on the general staff, Gyula Gömbös. Aside from deeper investigation of the organization's policies, a simple look at the ideology of the association will show that it was decidedly founded on the specific conceptions of Hungarian origins. As Nicholas Nagy-Talavera

[41]Steven Vardy, *Modern Hungarian Historiography* (Boulder, Colorado: East European Quarterly, 1976), p. 158
[42] Paul Lendvai, *The Hungarians: A Thousand Years of Victory in Defeat* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 384

explains in his book on Hungarian and Rumanian fascism, it was "organized on the framework of the old Magyar tribes before they entered the Carpathian basin."[43]

Ferenc Szálasi, head of the Arrow Cross, a fascist organization influenced by the German Nazis, but with a specifically Hungarian character, also utilized the uncertain origin of the Hungarians to help promote his political platform. Unwilling to accept the notion of Jesus being of Jewish descent, while in prison in 1938, he used a combination of sources in the bible along with the aid of Hungary's origin myths to create a decidedly different genealogy of Christ, "arriving at the conclusion that, after all, He is not Jewish! Jesus, according to Szálasi, belonged to the 'Godvanian race' (whatever that means), which is related to the Hungarian!"[44]

Conclusion

The confusion of the Hungarian past leaves much room for the manipulation of history for political reasons, and more often than not the focal point of the political uses of history in Hungarian historiography is the origin. As can be seen, from early on, and codified in Kézai's *Gesta Hungarorum*, the lack of historical records of the early Hungarians and the Huns allowed for the creation of a narrative steeped in myth and designed to serve the needs of the nation in the different eras of Hungarian history. Though the Finno-Ugric theory was arrived at through scientific means, the Hun myth has been so engrained in the national consciousness that this change in the social discourse actually created a situation in which not only is it contested by

[43] Nicholas M. Nagy-Talavera, *The Green Shirts and the Others: A History of Fascism in Hungary and Rumania* (Hoover Institution Press, 1970), p. 50
[44] Ibid., p. 119fn

those who are loath to relinquish the Hun origin myth, but also it seemed to help generate an identity which is based on the very notion of a mysterious past which can never be determined.

CHAPTER 3

REPRESENTATION: IDENTIFYING THE NATION AND THE 'OTHER' THROUGH SOCIAL DISCOURSE

As noted in the introduction to this thesis, the changing discourse in Hungary was not so much a result of World War I, but rather the war's aftermath. The signing of the Treaty of Trianon, as well as the other treaties created and signed at the peace conference held in Paris in 1919, changed the European landscape in such a way that the social discourse in many countries had to be amended drastically. As per Okamura, in his essay "Situational Ethnicity," the discourse through which one ascribes, or is ascribed, identity is dependent upon how the actor evaluates behavior choices based upon the limitations enforced by the wider setting,[45] When the setting changes – in this case the international community – discourse will change, or at least have a more fortuitous opportunity for change.

After World War I, Hungary was effectively a new nation. That is to say, not only was it the first time in nearly 400 years that Hungary was not a subjugated state, but it was also vastly truncated, losing two-thirds of its land to neighboring states as dictated by the terms of the Treaty of Trianon. Though still retaining its core, "Hungary proper was reduced to less than one-third (32.6

[45] Jonathan Y. Okamura, "Situational Ethnicity", *Ethnic and Racial Studies vol. 4 no. 4* (Oct. 1981) p. 453

per cent) of her pre-War area, and a little over two-fifths (41.6 per cent) of her population."[46] With such loss of territory and people, Hungary had to drastically re-imagine itself; the vanished agricultural land alone meant that, if nothing else, on a practical level the traditionally agrarian society had to re-conceptualize itself in view of the available options. At the same time it was necessary to create, or reaffirm an identity, both within the nation itself, and to the European community, especially the West due to irredentist sentiments and hopes for a revision of the treaty. In his book *Discourse and the Construction of Society*, Bruce Lincoln states, "that which either holds society together or takes it apart is sentiment, and the chief instrument with which such sentiment may be aroused, manipulated, and rendered dormant is discourse."[47] Because this chapter will deal with Hungary's representation to the West, in part as a revisionist campaign, and the West's image of Hungary, an apt amendment to the above quote would be the word 'strategy'. That is to say, as far as the discourse within Hungary is concerned, sentiment is of utmost importance as will be seen in the next chapter, but with regard to the contemporaneous situation, representation to others was a matter of strategy, of how to reclaim territory, as well as how to best situate itself within the changed international setting.

The Changing Discourse

It is true, as Count Istvan Bethlen claims in the foreword to *The Treaty of Trianon and European Peace*, a book containing four speeches he made in London 1933, that Lord Newton was among the

[46] C. A. Macartney, *Hungary and Her Successors: The Treaty of Trianon and its Consequences 1919-1937* (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 1
[47] Bruce Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies of Myth, Ritual and Classification*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 11

first to support Hungarian claims against the Treaty of Trianon.[48] As early as March 30, 1920 he announced his support for Hungary and its claims in the British House of Lords. Lord Newton's address, in which he stated, "Their crime is that they fought against us…other people whom we now greet as friends and brothers fought against us too. Hungary really is in the position of a man who has had a paralytic stroke and is being constantly kicked and cuffed by his former associates and dependents,"[49] is not one which can be misinterpreted. Yet, the real campaign among British historians and writers on Hungary's behalf can be said to have begun with the publication of Viscount Rothermere's article "Hungary's Place in the Sun. Safety for Central Europe." which appeared in *The Daily Mail* on June 21, 1927. In the article, Rothermere does not address the question of historic territorial rights in any significant way, but spends much of his time delineating the injustices of the treaty and the possible consequences it could have on harmony in Europe.

In the introduction to Rothermere's book *My Campaign for Hungary*, written in 1939 to explain his reasons for publishing the original article, as well as the unexpected adoration he received – actually receiving the moniker "The Little Father of Hungary"[50] from the Hungarian people – Ferenc Herczeg explains the important consequences of the article: "The first result of Lord Rothermere's action was the foundation of the Hungarian Revision League… The League accordingly took up the task of organizing Hungarian public opinion… It further set itself to arouse the interest of friends abroad, and to influence popular feeling in the victorious countries in favor of a peaceful revision of the Treaty."[51] In a sense, Rothermere's article helped direct the new discourse in and about Hungary.

[48] Count István Bethlen, *The Treaty of Trianon and European Peace* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1934) p. xi
[49] John Flournoy Montgomery, *Hungary: The Unwilling Satellite* (New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1947), p. 51
[50] Viscount Harold Sidney Harmsworth Rothermere, *My Campaign for Hungary* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1939) p. 7
[51] Ibid., p. 11

In order to show this more clearly, a pamphlet published in 1937 by The Society of the Hungarian Quarterly – an association specifically engaging in cultural diplomacy in the late inter-war years – will be very helpful. The name of the pamphlet is *What to Read About Hungary*. It is an extensive bibliography compiled by Clara Szölösy which will aid in showing the trend of interest in Hungarian history, culture, and contemporaneous concerns following the publication of the Viscount's article.

The pamphlet is divided into seven sections – history; geography, economics, agriculture, trade & finance; social and cultural life; folklore and arts; literature; dictionaries and grammars; and periodicals – with several subsections. The pamphlet already gives a hint as to the market the publications listed are intended for on the first page, noting that "unless otherwise stated, the place of publication is London."[52] A brief examination of one of the subsections under the heading of history, as well as two other sections, paying close attention to the dates and locations of publication, it will be easy to understand that the instigation of a movement occurred with the appearance of Rothermere's article.

The first subsection listed under the main section of history is simply 'general'. There are a total of 27 titles listed here; 12 were published after the article, of those 8 were published in London; 9 were published before World War I, of those 6 were published either in New York or London. The main thing of note here, which certainly suggests the beginning of a discourse in the wake of the article, is that of 27 titles only 6 were published between 1914 and 1927. Of these 6 titles, 5 were published after 1919, 3 of those in Budapest. So, while there was some interest in Hungarian history before World War I, the market place for Hungarian history in the West was rather scant between the

[52] Clara Szölösy ed., *What to Read About Hungary: A Selection of Representative Books on the History and Civilization of Hungary* (Budapest: The Society of the Hungarian Quarterly, 1937), p. i

establishment of the temporary cease-fire borders of Hungary in the final two months of 1918 and Rothermere's publication in *The Daily Mail*.[53]

A similar trend is found in the other sections. In the section devoted to social and cultural life a total of 36 publications are listed; 20 were published after the article, of those 13 were published in London; 6 were published before the war, of those 5 were published in London. Due to the fact that of the remaining 10 publications listed only 4 have dates (3 in 1925, 1 in 1926) it is not possible to analyze this set of facts properly, though a trend can still be seen.[54]

The last section to be looked at here is the one dealing with geography, economics, and agriculture. Here Szölösy lists 23 publications; 12 of which were published after the article, of these 7 were published outside of Hungary; only 2 were published before the war, both in Budapest. Of the remaining 9 publications, 6 were published between 1919 -1926 (4 of those in Budapest), while three contain no date.

The total number of publications in the three sections of the bibliography examined is 86. More than 50% (44) were published after the June 1927 article, while only 18.6% (16) were verifiably published before World War I, and 30.3% (26) were either published between 1919-1926 or have no date (it is important to note here that almost exclusively the undated items are either statistical data or maps.)

This pamphlet shows two things at once; that there was a decidedly increased interest in Hungary once the discourse in the West had been given a direction, and that because the publication itself was at once part of that discourse and promoting a specific understanding of Hungarian culture and history, it is apparent that the society was trying the take an active role in creating the Hungarian image in the West. This can be understood in the choice of publications. The titles indicate, as

[53] Ibid., pp. i - iii
[54] Ibid., pp. vii - ix

would be expected, that the publications were likely pro-Hungarian in general, and revisionist specifically. The notable absence of one important writer in East European topics, not known for his favorable sentiments towards Hungary, is R.W. Seton-Watson, also known as 'Scotus Viator', who was considered to be one of foremost writers instigating "the deteriorating perception of Hungary in Britain between 1896-1918"[55] Certainly, not all the literature in the West which appeared after the article which seemed to serve as a catalyst was positive, but it can clearly be understood that with more than 50% of the writings in the lists surveyed emerging in the ten years between 1927 and the publication of Szölösy's bibliography, something substantial was occurring concerning the situational discourse between the West and Hungary. It is also important to keep in mind that all the publications listed were in the English language, meaning that this was not part of the internal discourse which will be dealt with in the next chapter.

The British Discourse

Before 1914

In 1889 the Folk-Lore Society of London released a weighty publication entitled *Folk-Tales of the Magyars*, containing traditional folktales collected by Hungarian folklorists and translated and compiled by Reverend W. Henry Jones and Lewis L. Kropf for British consumption. Though the tales are not of such importance here, a few remarks in the lengthy introduction will be helpful as a starting point in which to appreciate the transformation of the British discourse about Hungary between the late 19th century and the late inter-war years. The translators of the book begin their

[55] Paul Lendvai, *The Hungarians: A Thousand Years of Victory in Defeat* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 303

introduction with brief history of Attila and the Huns, followed by the statement which ties the Hungarians to the Huns through legend, as well as the biblical tradition expounded in Kézai's *Gesta Hungarorum*. "A tradition asserts that the Magyars are descendents of those Huns, who, after their defeat, returned to their homes in Asia…Legend carries us still further back, saying that the giant Nimrod had two sons named Hunyor and Magyar, from whom the Huns and Magyars descended."[56]

They immediately leave that behind as legend, turning instead to the scientific understanding of the Finno-Ugric theory. Going to great lengths to show the confusion of lineage between the Hungarians and the Huns, they go one step further, questioning Székely/Hun relationship, as well as playing down the possibility of a Székely/Hungarian relationship. In the following quote, they in effect negate the latter: "…although they are at the present time, and perhaps always have been, a Magyar-speaking people, yet they are in many respects distinct from the race known as the Magyars."[57] This not only shows the important place origin maintains in the Hungarian national discourse, but also that, as described in the previous chapter, that during this time in Hungarian history, as the Millennium celebration approached, the discourse relied heavily on denying the Hun origin myth and championing the Finno-Ugric theory.

Between 1914-1927

It is not surprising that immediately following World War I, while the peace treaties were still being hammered out in Paris, what discourse there was reverted back to a Hungarian-as-Huns motif. Certainly, in the perception of enemies on both sides, the ranks swelled with barbarians during the conflict, but with regard to the Hungarians the tradition of the Hun heritage was easily returned to, especially considering the prevailing mood. This is clearly an example of social discourse not only

[56] Reverend W. Henry Jones and Lewis L. Kropf eds. and trans., *Folk-Tales of the Magyars: Collected by Kriza, Erdélyi, Pap and Others* (London: The Folk-Lore Society, 1889), p. viii
[57] Ibid., p. xiii

ascribing characteristics to a group, but also as necessarily situational. Yet, aside from a remark by British diplomat Harold Nicholson, here the discourse will not be shown to have reached back to the origin myths as it so often has in Hungarian historiography; it was simply a matter of defining the Hungarian national character. Because of this type of characterization, the discourse between the Hungarians and the western powers, had, at least temporarily, been silenced; Hungary was for the time being no longer part of the European community. That is to say, the Hungarians were unable to engage in a dialogue with the West in which they could effectively create the identity they wanted to exhibit. In a sense, considering the parameters of 'situational ethnicity,' the choices available (as far as asserting a specific identity) to the Hungarians were very limited. On the other hand, the western European powers had seemingly unlimited options for ascribing identities on the newly formed – or re-formed states.

Nicholson, in his memoirs of the treaty negotiations in Paris, titled *Peacemaking 1919*, describes his attitude toward the Hungarians quite brazenly. His remarks plainly carry an insinuation of the barbarian heritage of the Hungarian people. "I confess that I regarded, and still regard, that Turanian tribe with acute distaste. Like their cousins the Turks, they had destroyed much and created nothing."[58] After the most destructive war in European history, and being seen as one of the nations to be punished, many other delegates and peacemakers certainly held similar views about Hungary and its people. The result of such attitudes was that the discourse within the international community was more like a Hungarian monologue. Of the books listed in Szöllösy's bibliography concerning post-war history, more than half were published between 1919-1926, most of those published in Hungary. With this in mind, it is easy to understand the nation's "Little Father" being a British viscount who proffered a new dialogue.

[58] Harold Nicholson, *Peacemaking 1919* (London: Universal Library, 1965), p. 34

After 1927

The tone of the articles, pamphlets and books written about Hungary after 1927 is predominantly one of sympathy, understanding and support. Many of these writings, much like Rothermere's, focus on the contemporaneous issues, attempting to convince the European powers of the necessity to revise the treaty, not only to restore justice, but also to prevent more intense problems down the line. These will not be dealt with here. What will be investigated in this section are the more extensive items, which almost without exception start with the origin of the Hungarians, usually attempting to engage in a discourse which highlights a more benign heritage in order to restore Hungary to its place within the European community.

C. A. Macartney, who is quite representative of the British writers eager to take up the Hungarian cause after Rothermer's article, wrote at least four books between 1927 and the beginning of World War II on Hungarian history and historiography. One of those books, which made it onto Szöllösy's list[59], will be examined here as part of the wave of British interest in Hungary. *Hungary*, written in 1934 is a survey of Hungarian life, including chapters such as 'The Gentry', 'The Peasants', 'The National Minorities', and 'The Magyars in History' which is the second chapter, as well as the longest. In a sense this work is both a history (the second chapter three times longer than any of the others) and a survey of the current situation in Hungary. This work can easily be seen as part of the revisionist literature, with an attempt to show the problems the treaty has caused, as well as to address revision through a 'historical territorial rights' lens.

Important here is how he deals with the origin myths. Macartney makes no attempt to connect the Huns with the Hungarians; in fact he does not even address any of the legends which serve to create a lineage from either Hunor and Magor, or Attila to Árpád. In dealing with Hungarian territory, Macartney of course begins with the Huns, but only has this to say: "But Attila's own horde

[59] Clara Szölösy ed., *What to Read About Hungary: A Selection of Representative Books on the History and Civilization of Hungary* (Budapest: The Society of the Hungarian Quarterly, 1937), p. ii

was numerically small; and most of his subjects were Germanic… After his death…The remnants of the Huns who continued to dwell between the Danube and the Tisza were too small to be important."[60] Suggesting absolutely no direct blood ties between the Huns and Hungarians (aside from a very scanty, between-the-lines Székely/Hun/Hungarian connection),[61] he utilizes instead the relatively benign Finno-Ugric tradition from which to tell the story of Hungarian origins.

He makes a very telling remark in the first pages of the book, which show just what kind of character those empathizing with the Hungarians sought to ascribe to the nation and its people: "…how very thinly the blood of the old warriors who first crossed the Carpathians can run in the veins of those who call themselves Magyar to-day. The first generations of raiding and slave-snatching in Europe must have altered their racial composition radically…the band which first conquered Hungary consisted of male warriors only…"[62] In this remark, he suggests that they entered Europe as barbarians – raping and pillaging, to be sure – but by those very acts the barbarian within has not only been reduced, but has become European. This is the most important element in the situational discourse outside of Hungary beginning in the late 20s and continuing through the 30s. It is a sentiment which at once reduces the aggressive, nationalistic Hun heritage into a rather moderate origin, and situates the Hungarians firmly within the European community.

The Exported Discourse

The description of Macartney's work is similar to the literature – for the purpose of cultural diplomacy – being exported to the West the late inter-war years. The following brief examples will

[60] C. A. Macartney, *Hungary* (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1934), p. 32
[61] Ibid., pp. 50-51fn
[62] Ibid., p. 15

show only slight variation, but it will be clear that the attitude toward the origin myth is generally the same: identify the Hungarians as a humble nation which has for over a thousand years been a viable member of the European culture and society.

First it is important to take a more detailed look at The Society of the Hungarian Quarterly, which was organized in the years following the Rothermere article expressly for the purpose of exporting a specifically European image to the West. The inside of each cover contains the board of directors – listing Count Stephen Bethlen as the president – as well as the mission statement: "A periodical designed to spread knowledge of Danubian and Central European affairs and to foster political and cultural relations between Hungary and the Anglo-Saxon world."[63] It is also interesting to note that all the Hungarian names listed in the front cover are written in their English equivalent where possible; perhaps this was to make the Hungarian people seem less exotic. On the inside of the back cover some of the articles which had already appeared in *The Hungarian Quarterly* are listed, among them are "The British People and European Problems," "Links Between England and Hungary," and "The English Style Park in Hungary." From this it can hardly be doubted that cultural diplomacy was the main aim of this society.

On the first page of a pamphlet entitled "Hungary's Place in History," written by Julius Kornis, a reprint of an article which appeared in the autumn issue of *The Hungarian Quarterly*, the writer locates the origin of the Hungarian people within the Finno-Ugric tradition.[64] From here he finds the 'place in history' as the defenders of Europe, European traditions, and above all, Christianity. In expressing their European character to the West after the war, this was not an uncommon theme.

[63] Julius Kornis, *Hungary's Place in History* (Budapest: The Society of the Hungarian Quarterly, 1936), inside front cover
[64] Ibid., p. 1

> From that time [the crusades] the historical mission of the Hungarian nation was made apparent. She was to be the defender of the West; the Marches of Europe, a bulwark against oncoming tides of Orientals, Patzinaks, Cumans, Tartars, and Turks…if the Hungarians had not opposed [sic] their bodies to the onslaughts of Islam, the Saracens would have invaded a Europe already suffering the upheaval of the Reformation, and then to quote Macaulay, "the Koran would be taught at Oxford" to this day. The tragic mission of Hungary was to shed its blood for the rest of Europe.[65]

Rather than impart upon the Hungarians the heritage of Attila, 'the scourge of God,' Kornis has given them a humble origin while at the same putting them in the role of the defenders of Europe.

The Danubian Review, another organization designed to engage the West in Hungarian culture and history, reprinted, in pamphlet form, a paper written by Eugene Horváth and read at the meeting of the English-Hungarian summer school in September 1937, which had appeared in one of the publication's earlier editions. The title – "Anglo-Hungarian Connection in History" – again shows the understanding Hungary was trying to reach with England on a cultural level. In this essay, Horváth does not discuss the origin of the Hungarians, but goes to great lengths to create a tight historical bond between the Hungarians and British, as well as giving a slight twist to the 'defenders of the West' motif seen in Kornis. Because of the Hungary's high culture, due to close relations with Britain, "Hungary thereby became once more the advanced outpost of the Western community of nations, on the one hand forming an impregnable barrier of resistance to the attacks of Eastern barbarians and on the other opening out an approach admitting influences from the West."[66] The Hungarians are not only the bulwark against marauding hordes, but the conduit by which the rest of the world can become civilized.

The History of Hungary, a book by German historian, Otto Zarek, was published in London in 1939. Because the translation and publication was brought about through the support of the

[65] Ibid., pp. 3-4
[66] Eugene Horváth, *Anglo-Hungarian Connection in History* (Budapest: Sárkány Printing Co., 1937), p. 12

Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this book can be analyzed as Hungarian exported cultural diplomacy. In his book he deals much more with the Hungarian heritage. He reminds the reader on the first line that, "From its beginning a spell of romanticism pervades the History of Hungary."[67] In this work the writer confirms the Finno-Ugric theory while categorizing the Hun origin as myth, addressing both the twins of Nimrod version as well as the Attila-Árpád connection. His explanation is as simple as it is timely: "This 'mythical identification' of Árpád with Attila inspired the actual task of taking possession of Attila's land, so as to turn it into the country of the Hungarians."[68]

Conclusion

In this chapter it has been shown that in the inter-war years the social discourse of necessity had changed within the borders, as well as beyond, the borders of Hungary, specifically in the West. In both cases, after the publication of the immensely important article by Viscount Rothermere, the starting point found in the majority of the writings was the origin, almost without exception settling upon the Finno-Ugric theory in order to minimize the notion of the Hungarian heritage as one stemming from brutal, marauding hordes who for many centuries had represented barbarians from the East bent on destroying European civilization and culture in the European imagination.

It is extremely important to keep in mind here that the discourse discussed in this chapter is an external discourse. That is to say, it is a situational discourse in which not only were the Hungarians attempting to create a specific identity which would allow for placement within the European community, but also the West was ascribing specific characteristics to the Hungarian nation, most of which – being supportive of the Hungarian cause after 1927 – was also designed to

[67] Otto Zarek, *The History of Hungary* (London: Selwyn & Blount, 1939), p. 11
[68] Ibid., p. 44

construct a space for the Hungarians as part of the European civilization. Identity based upon the benign Finno-Ugric origin was something that would take a sharp turn back to the Hun origin myth in the internal discourse.

CHAPTER 4

BACK TO THE BOOKS: CHANGING THE DISCOURSE THROUGH PUBLIC EDUCATION

The situational discourse, as has been shown, went through a transformation in the inter-war years, specifically after 1927 when the direction of the discourse between Hungary and the West was set in place by an article which appeared in *The Daily Mail* in London. Because this discourse was between Hungary and the 'other' – for awhile uni-directional, but eventually a dialogue rather than a monologue – it was necessarily shaped around the issue of Hungary's place within the international community. This indicates that the discourse was situational to be sure. For in this phase of identity formation, Hungary was bound by what it perceived as the available options for asserting specific characteristics over and above others. Also, because they were dealing with quite a unique situation, it tended to rely more on strategic approaches rather than sentiment.

This chapter will deal with the internal discourse to which Hungary was appealing, to a certain extent to re-shape the Hungarian identity as was necessary in view of the new situation. This discourse was evoked, as Bruce Lincoln explains, "in order to effect or preserve a desired

level of social integration and solidarity."[69] This suggests two important things, the internal social discourse was both about how to establish, or soften, borders between the 'other', as well as creating a strong national identity. That is to say, situational discourse even within a single group, to a lesser or greater degree, is always a dialogue between the group and the 'other.' The way in which this can been seen in the interwar years in Hungary is very specific; not only were the Hungarians seeking a new source of identity, even as an internal dialogue it necessarily included the 'other' because the 'other' to which the Hungarian identity was in opposition was on territory lost with the signing of the Treaty of Trianon.

Education is a very powerful source of identity formation. Because in this discourse sentiments are preeminent, in that they carry the potential for division, cohesion, and the construction of cultural and social barriers, it is important to remember that often it is the officially approved sentiments which serve as the foundation of the discourse. Public education serves as a conduit for this official discourse. Not only can the government, through the Ministry of Education control discourse, but they also have a rather captive audience. Obviously, this means that the sway of the officially endorsed social discourse will have a very wide reception. This chapter will deal exclusively with the changing discourse in Hungary, seeking to find how and where it is observable in grades school textbooks utilized in state schools from the tail end of the 19th century through the late 1930s in Hungary.

[69] Bruce Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies of Myth, Ritual and Classification,* (Oxford University Press, New York 1989), p. 10

The Hungarian Social Discourse in Public Education

Late 19th century

In a textbook published for use in state schools in 1872, the writer addresses the origin of the Hungarians very much inline with the discourse observed in the external discourse between Hungary and the West after 1927, but with a small variation which suggests that the discourse was already beginning to take on a new form. The book, *Hungary's History in Short Presentations*[70], written by Ferencz Ribáry begins quite simply, with a description of the peoples living in the Carpathian Basin around the time of Christ's birth, stating it quite succinctly: "Our country since the earliest times was inhabited by different peoples."[71] By the end of the page he has reached Attila's empire: "…the famous Attila (432-453), whom people called 'the scourge of God,' set up an immense empire, which was across the border from Germany, extending to the Volga River. Greeks and Romans, together with the Germans and Slavs, feared his power, and the Greek and Roman emperors paid him tribute."[72] This history theoretically has nothing to do with the Hungarians, it is about Hungary, or, that is, the Carpathian Basin being that is was not Hungary yet. As for the Hungarians, he situates both their homeland and relatives in the following passage: "The mother land of Hungarians – before they moved to Hungary – was beyond the Volga River, in Asia, where they lived for centuries in the neighborhood of their relatives, the Khazars, the Cumans, the Pechenegs and the Bulgars."[73] The mighty ruler Attila,

[70] Ferencz Ribáry, *Magyarország Története:Rövid Előadasban* (Hungary's History: In Short Presentations), (Pest: Kiadja Heckenast Gusztáv, 1872)
[71] Ibid., p. 9 "Hazánkat a legrégibb időktől fogva különféle népek lakták."
[72] Ibid., pp. 9 "…a hires Attila (432-453), kit isten ostorának neveztek a népek, oly roppant nagy birodalmat állitott föl, mely Németország határától egész a Volga folyamig terjedett. Görögök és rómaiak, valamint a németek és szlávok egyaránt rettegtek hatalmától, s a rómaia s görög császárok adófizetői lettek."
[73] Ibid., p. 11 "A magyarok ős hazája, mielőtt Magyarországba költöztek volna, a Volgán tul, Ázsiában volt, hol a velök rokon kazarok, kunok, besenyők, bolgárok szomszédságában több századon át laktak."

'the scourge of God,' the warrior who put fear into the hearts of rulers of great empires, only becomes an ancestor of the Hungarian if the historian is willing to make the connection.

Ribáry makes that connection in a very subtle way: "He [Árpád], upon hearing that a beautiful and blissful land is beyond the Carpathian Mountains, which used to be Attila's country, whose family – as they believed – Árpád descended from, crossed with the Hungarians in 889 beyond the Carpathian Mountains and set up their camp close to Munkács. Upon seeing the beauty and fertility of the land, the Hungarians decided to conquer it."[74] The subtlety here suggests something important: the Hun myth, as canonized by Kézai and others, was firmly established within the Hungarian consciousness. Noticeably, he neither gives any indication whether or not the "as they believed" is true, nor does he concern himself with the lineage – either from Hunor and Magor or the Attila-Árpád heritage – as a way of confirming the Hungarian relationship to the Huns. He simply leaves it as a belief of the Hungarians who conquered the Carpathian Basin. Also, he specifically does not include any mention of the Finno-Ugric theory. This text seems to situate the Hungarian origins closer to the benign linguistic theory, yet is still somewhere between to two theories.

In *Domestic History: Through Character Studies*[75], published in 1877, writer János Ebenspanger, after a brief outline of world history up to the time of Attila, begins the homeland history by relating Cumans to the Hungarians, a slight distortion of the usual narrative, and relegating it to myth by the end of the opening paragraph: "Legend has it that the Cuman and Hungarian nations are brother nations and they sprang from the brothers Hunyor and Magyar. These two nations were indigenous to Asia, east of the Caspian Sea. Their ancient history is

[74] Ibid., p. 12 "Ez hallván, hogy mily szép és áldott föld fekszik a Kárpátokon túl, mely hajdan Attila országa volt, a kinek nemzetségéből, mint hitték, származott Árpád is, a magyarokkal 889-ben átkelt a Kárpátokon és Munkács táján tábort ütött. Meggyőződvén ekkor a föld szépségéről és termékeny voltáról a magyarok, elhatározták annak elfoglalását."

[75] János Ebenspanger, *Hazai Történelem: Jellemrajzokban* (Domestic History: Through Character Studies), (Budapest: Lampel Róbert Könyvkiadása, 1877)

however unknown, just like in the case of almost every nation."[76] The obvious divergence here is that the Hunor and Magor legend is utilized, but it relates the Hungarians to the Cumans, not the Huns. "The Hungarians lived a long time with their relatives the Cumans and other nations, then came to Hungary through the Verecke pass, lead by Árpád. After the tiresome mountain road, they rested at Munkács."[77] There is no direct connection made in this narrative between the Huns and the Hungarians, though the writer does make Árpád a great leader who brought several different peoples into the Carpathian Basin with the Hungarians. Mainly, regarding the Hungarians, he moves directly into the story of the Hungarians in Etelköz and Árpád becoming leader of the seven tribes. As in the previous text, there is no mention of the Finno-Ugric connection, and here the writer modifies the Nimrod legend by casting the Hungarians as relatives of the Cumans.

History: the Past of the Hungarians and Other People[78], published in 1888, gives another slight variation, one which was shown in the previous chapter, but which has not yet been seen in the textbooks examined thus far. After a very dramatic telling of the Attila narrative, concluding with choking on his own blood in his sleep, and the breaking apart of the Huns shortly afterwards, the writer addresses a small group of Huns who remained behind: "Part of the Huns now moved back to the old homeland; some three thousand people, however, it is said, migrated into Transylvania, they fled into the mountains and settled there. Their progeny consider themselves the Szekely."[79] It is already understood from the previous chapter how this ties the

[76] Ibid., p. 6 "A rege meséli, hogy a kún és magyar rokonnemzet Hunyor és Magyar testvérektől származik. E két nemzet Ázsiának a Kaspi-tengertől keletnek terjedő rónáin honolt, őstörténelmét azonban, mint jóformán minden népnél mély homály födi."
[77] Ibid., p. 9 "A magyarok a rokon kún- s más népek által megöregbülve Árpád vezérlete alatt a vereckei hegyszoroson át Magyarországba jövének. A terhes hegyi utról Munkácsnál pihentek meg."
[78] Miksa Mayer, *Történelem: A Magyarok és Más Népek Multjából Vett Életrajzokban* (History: the Past of the Hungarian and Other People in Biographies), (Budapest: Singer és Wolfner Könyvnereskedése, 1888)
[79] Ibid., p. 13 "A húnok egy része most viszszaköltözött régi hazájában; mintegy három ezren azonban, monda szerént, Erdélybe, a hegyek köze menekültek s ott telepedtek meg. Ívadékaiknak tartják magukat a székelyek."

Huns to the Hungarians, yet Mayer does not address this point. Instead, he moves on to the story of other nations before explaining the migration of the Hungarians from Asia, Árpád, the seven tribes, and the blood oath, finally telling of their conquest of the Carpathian basin. He ends with a statement of the millennium: "It is little short of a thousand years since his [Árpád's] migration, so he founded our dear homeland, which has existed for a thousand years."[80] Though in the opening of the next paragraph he does relegate part of the story to tradition, rather than science – "Scholars do not write it, but only speak to the tradition, about how within eight years he [Árpád] became ruler of the country"[81] – nowhere does he speak of the Finno-Ugric theory. In this text, the writer makes very minimal reference to the Hungarians before Etelköz, and makes no attempt to connect the Huns to the Hungarians, not even using the Szekely as a link.

With these three texts it is quite easy to see that there is something within, or amongst them, akin to the latent sentiment about which Bruce Lincoln writes. This suggests that the Hun myth is an unconscious part of the Hungarian consciousness; that is, where it does appear in these texts in connection with the Hungarians it is treated as a simple fact which there is no need to prove. Yet, another important element of these texts is that, when read chronologically, they seem already to be sorting out a new national narrative.

Early 20th century – 1927

Of the texts to be examined here, the first will be a history reader published in 1912. This text, edited by Sándor Mika, is a nice reader which instructs through a collection of historical narratives, often told through the voice of travelers or envoys to various courts. The first story,

[80] Ibid., p. 16 "Bejövetelének, kevés híjján, most telik be ezredik éve *s így ő alapitotta meg édes hazánkat, mely már ezer esztendő óta áll fenn.*"
[81] Ibid. "Nem tudósok írják, hanem csak a hagyomány beszéli, nyolez év alatt mint lett ura az országnak."

"Attila's Court,"[82] is told by a Greek traveler received by Attila. It tells of the grandeur of the court, recounting the story of the Huns from their entry into Pannonia until the disintegration of the empire after the ruler's death.

The following story, "The Conquest. The Legend of the White Horse.,"[83] tells of the story of the Hungarians beginning with Árpád and the seven tribes, not even hinting at the home of the Hungarians before their arrival in the Carpathian Basin. Interestingly, in the first sentence, the writer links the Hungarians to the Huns: "In the 670th year after the birth of our Lord and in the 100th year after the death of Attila, the Hungarians came back again to Pannónia."[84] The three small words "came back again" completely change the story, especially when one takes into account the haziness of Hungarian history. Given that this story was written by another writer, the missing connection is not so unusual, but certainly, Mika was making quite specific choices as editor of this text. After giving a brief description of the situation in the basin before the arrival, he again has the Hungarians 'return' as the rightful owners: "Yet during this time Árpád went to Pannónia with the seven leaders, but not as settlers, but as people who owned the land by way of inheritance."[85]

Finally, at the end of the tale, the writer manages to give it a bit of a biblical flourish. All this is done without the help of Nimrod or his sons. In this sentence, he clearly posits Hungary as

[82] Sándor Mika, *Magyar Történelmi Olvasókönyv: I. Rész – Magyarország Történelme a Mohácsi Vészig* (Hungarian History Reader: Part 1 – History of Hungary Until the Mohács Defeat), (Budapest: Wodianer F. és Fiai, 1912) p. 1 "Attila Udvara."
[83] Ibid. p 15 "A Honfoglalás. A Fehér Ló Regéje."
[84] Ibid. "Urunk születésének hatszázhetvenedik, Attila halálának pedig századik esztendejében a magyarok újra bejöttek Pannóniába."
[85] Ibid., p. 17 "Árpád pedig ezalatt a hét vezérrel bement Pannóniába és pedig nem mint telepesek, hanem, mint akik a földet örökségi jogon bírják."

a holy land: "And so the Lord gave back Pannónia to the Hungarians, just like he gave back the entire land of Canaan to the sons of Israel in Moses' time as inheritance."[86]

Taking into account the format of this book, it is understandable how it comes together to tell a slight variation of the narrative of Hungarian history which was acceptable at the time. Two things are important here. First, because it is a book of stories, the scientific Finno-Ugric account would not fit terribly well. Second, the story format accounts to some extent for finding no 'factual' links between Attila and Árpád, but rather only assertions, yet it also show the latent sentiments in the Hungarian consciousness concerning the Hun origin. Otherwise, it could not be put forth is such a way as to suggest that it is a simple, unquestionable truth.

A brief look at the table of contents of the 1922 edition of the same book is in order. In this simple observation is found the first blatantly conscious choice in re-addressing the social discourse. The opening historical narrative in the 1912 edition of this book is the story of Attila's empire; in the 1922 edition this story is omitted[87]. Instead the book begins with the story of the conquest. This is important not only in viewing it as a conscious attempt to direct the narrative, but also in view of the historical situation, in which, as was observed in the previous chapter, the Hungarians were still attempting to have their voice heard in the West.

The final book in this section was published in 1925, just two years before the appearance of Viscount Rothermere's article. The writer opens the texts with ancient history of different people, arriving at a small section about Attila. In two small paragraphs the empire is created and crumbles. With almost the same wording as Mayer's 1888 text, he leaves a group of Huns behind in Transylvania. After this, in one paragraph devoted to the Avars, he relates them to the

[86] Ibid., p. 18 "Visszaadta tehát az Úr a magyaroknak Pannóniát, miképen Izrael fiainak Mózes idejében visszaadat Kánaán egész országát örökségképen.
[87] Sándor Mika, *Magyar Történelmi Olvasókönyv: I. Rész – Magyarország Történelme a Mohácsi Vészig* (Hungarian History Reader: Part 1 – History of Hungary Until the Mohács Defeat), (Budapest: Wodianer F. és Fiai, 1922) p. 231

Huns.[88] This text again gives very little information about the Hungarians before their temporary settlement in Etelköz:

> Back in the oldest of day, our ancestors lived far away on the east, in Asia. They left their home, because the country was too small for the growing nation and the neighboring nations were also pressuring them. The Hungarians came to Europe from Scythia under the leadership of Álmos and after a long period of wandering they settled down between the Prut and Siret rivers, in an area which was then called Etelköz. However, they could not even rest here for long, because the neighbor nations were constantly harassing them.[89]

This is not so unlike the earlier texts observed; it places the Hungarians in an Asian homeland, yet makes no direct reference to the Finno-Ugric origin. He then returns to the Huns and the Avars in the section entitled "Árpád, the founder of the homeland", the writer's opening line connects the former occupants with the incoming Hungarians: "The Hungarians heard a lot of beautiful things about the one-time empire of their ancestors, the Huns and the Avars, and set out to conquer it. During their long journey, they fought a lot of victorious battles, until finally in the year 889 Árpád successfully led his nation across the Carpathian Mountains, into our present country."[90] Although, only three years earlier, it seemed that conscious choices were being made concerning the origin myth to be utilized in the discourse, here the story is told – a bit curtailed at times – almost exactly as it was in the late 19th century.

[88] János Győrffy, *A Magyarok Története* (The History of the Hungarians), (Budapest: A Szent-István-Társulat Kiadása, 1925) p. 7

[89] Ibid., p. 8 "Őseink a legrégibb időben messze keleten, Ázsiában laktak. Ottani hazájukból azonban kivándoroltak, mert a megszaporodott népnek szűk volt az ország, meg a szomszéd népek is szorították őket. Szittyaországból Álmos vezérlete alatt Európába jöttek a magyarok és hosszú vándorlás után a Pruth és Szereth folyók között telepedtek le, melyet akkor Etelköz-nek hívtak. De itt sem volt sokáig nyugtok, mert a szomszéd népek folytonosan zaklatták őket."

[90] Ibid., p. 9 "Árpád, a honalapító", "A magyarok sok szépet hallottak őseik, a hunok és avarok egykori birodalmáról és elindultak azt elfoglalni. Hosszú útjukban sok győzelmes csatát vívtak, míg végre a 889-ik évben szerencsésen átvezette a népet Árpád a Kárpátokon, mostani hazánkba"

1927 – 1938

As early as 1931, the Hun myth had been returned to consciously. From this point on there are only mythical connections to be found in the narrative; it is told directly from the first pages that the Huns and the Hungarians are related, but only according to legends. The 1931 text, *Segédkönyv*, opens with the following line: "Only legends tell about the ancient history of the Hungarians and their relatives the Huns. Yet this much is certain, that the brother nations had an ancient homeland in Asia."[91] Though he relegates the first sentence to legend, he makes loose factual connections in the next. He then tells of the Nimrod legend, giving the reader no doubt as to the heritage of the Hungarians and their relatives the Huns: "According to legend, Nimrod, the great hunter, had two sons. Namely: Hunor and Magyar. Once during the hunt they, chasing a beautiful deer, by mistake they went to a beautiful region in Europe."[92] There they married and "From Hunor derive the Huns, and from Magyar the Hungarians."[93] The story continues with the establishment of Attila's empire in the Carpathian Basin, and the Székely remaining behind in Transylvania. He next tells about the Hungarians conquest of the Carpathian Basin. Here is a specific choice to utilize the narrative, much like Kézai's, as a source of claiming territorial rights. After a battle, upon arrival to their homeland of Etelköz, "The returning Hungarians, seeing the destruction of their country and departed a third time, to conquer the legacy of Attila."[94] This sentence should not be read that they entered the Carpathian basin thrice, but this was their third move since they left their original homeland. Though the writer admits that the

[91] Pál Kalma, *Segédkönyv: A Történelem* Tanításához (Guidebook: for Teaching History), (Budapest, 1931), p. 1 "A magyar és a vele rokon hun nép őstörténetéről csak mondák beszélni. Annyi azonban bizonyos, hogy a testvérnépnek őshazája Ázsiában volt."
[92] Ibid. "A monda szerint Nimdódnak, a nagy vadásznak, két fia volt. Úgymint: Hunor és Magyar. Ezek egyszer vadászat közben, egy csodaszép szarvast üldözve, Európának egy gyönyörü vidékre tévedtek."
[93] Ibid. "Hunortól származtak a hunok, Magyartól pedig a magyarok."
[94] Ibid., p. 2 "A visszatérő magyarok, látva hazájuk pusztulását, harmadszor indultak útnak, hogy elfoglalják Attila örökségét."

origins connecting the Hungarians to the Huns are based in myth, he does not address the scholarly view. Still, it is important that he shrouds the origins in the mists of myth and legend.

In the next text, published in 1933, following upon the Hun portion of the narrative, the writer admits to the uncertainty of the past: "The history of the Hungarians, like other peoples, begins with myths. The legend that tells about the miracle stag says that Nimrod's sons were Hunor and Magyar. From them resulted the Hun and the Hungarian people."[95] The next sentence takes the student from myth to fact: "In reality, the closest relatives of the Hungarians are the Finno-Ugric peoples."[96] He very specifically details the ancient home of the Hungarians: "Their ancient home was in the eastern part of today's Russian, on the slopes of the Ural Mountains."[97] This is a very important observation. Although, as the public discourse in the 1930s began to turn back toward the Hun origin myth, in public education – after decades of vacillating and offering weak connections between the Huns and the Hungarians – here it is shown that in education the narrative is exactly opposite of what one might expect.

The 1938 textbook is even more elaborate in making a distinction between myth and fact. The writer again begins this text by relating the Hungarians to the Huns through the Nimrod legend: "The woman Eneth [Nimrod's wife] here bore two beautiful sons: Hunor was the name of the elder, Magyar of the younger…Hunor's successors were the Huns, Magyar's the Hungarians."[98] By the end of the page, Szondi begins to tell a different story: "The scholars

[95] Ferenc Kohl, *A magyar Nemzet Története Állampolgári Ismeretek Földrajz* (History of the Hungarian Nation, Civics, and Geography), (Budapest: A Szent-István-Társulat Kiadása, 1933), p. 4 "A magyarok története, mint más népeké is, mondákkal kezdődik. A csodaszarvasról szóló monda szerint Nimród fiai voltak Hunor és Magyar. Tőlük eredt a hún és a magyar nép."
[96] Ibid. "A valóságban a magyarok legközelebbi rokonai a finn-ugor népek."
[97] Ibid. "Ősi hazájuk a mai Oroszország keleti részén, az *Ural hegység mellékén* volt."
[98] György Szondi, *A Magyar Nemzet Története* (History of the Hungarian Nation), (Budapest: Bethlen-könyvkereskedés, 1938), pp. 5-6 "Két szép fiút szült itt Eneth asszony: Hunor volt a neve az idősebbiknek, Magyar a fiatalabbnak...Hunor utódai voltak a hunnok, Magyaréi a magyarok."

know otherwise about the origin of our ancestors."[99] He then, as in the previous text, goes into great detail of the Finno-Ugric connection and their original home in Asia on the slopes of the Urals.[100]

The texts in this last grouping tell a much different story than the contemporaneous social discourse in Hungary, which was a distinct return to the Hun origin myth. In fact, it sounds very much like the narrative told in, and exported to, Britain in the years between the newly emerging dialogue following Viscount Rothermere's article and the end of the thirties.

In the first grouping of textbooks examined in this chapter there is an observable identity issue which seems to be dealt with in very round about ways. On the one hand, the writers tend to relate the Hungarians to the Huns, yet on the other, they speak of it as legend and make no attempt to back up the lineage with factual data. The Hun myth in these texts seems to be a latent sentiment within the national consciousness. In the second batch of texts, some very conscious choices are seen which show that conscious choices are being make to direct the discourse, yet it seems that there is no consensus on just what that new discourse should be. The last texts even look as if they are standing in direct opposition to the nationalistic sentiment held within Hun legend, which had been returned to in the public discourse. This certainly shows that the situational discourse which emerged after the signing of the Treaty of Trianon was still far from solidified. One could easily argue that the vagueness of the Hungarian origins, which for so long had allowed for ever-changing narratives to be used for political purposes, was in this case worked exactly opposite. That is to say, the malleability and haziness of Hungarian historiography created such a jumble that a new narrative was much harder to either put into place or solidify.

[99] Ibid. "A tudósok másképpen tudják őseink eredetét."
[100] Ibid.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has offered an examination of the changing social discourse in the truncated Hungary after the signing of the Treaty of Trianon. This has been done utilizing as a guide Jonathan Okamura's theory of situational ethnicity, as well as Bruce Lincoln's explanation of the construction of society through social discourse. Taking into account the drastically changed international landscape in the inter-war years, one can insert the nation in place of the individual in Okamura's "Situational Identity," which then allows for the international landscape to stand in for the widen social setting within which that nation is able to perceive its available situational choices.

Hungarian historiography began with a very tangled assembly of legend and myths. This served as the base of Hungarian origin theories for several centuries, and to a large extent still does. As a result, as has been shown in several examples, throughout Hungarian history, this confusion surrounding the origins of the nation served as a convenient tool with which to change the social discourse for political purposes. Social discourse is often used as a political tool, creating cultural boundaries, not only constructing group solidarity, but also situating the group against the 'other'. And of course, history used as for political purposes is not exclusive to the Hungarian situation. What is unique about this case is that it has been made so much easier due to the uncertainty of the origin of the Hungarian nation. Because of this, history has been manipulated more often, and in vastly divergent ways than is the case in other nations.

This is easily observable by examining the discourse in the West concerning Hungary in the inter-wars years. After the publication of Viscount Rothermere's article in *The Daily Mail*, the discourse between Hungary and the West took an important turn, allowing for Hungary to engage in cultural diplomacy. As was shown, in this discourse it was necessary to address national origins for two reasons. First, it was important to show the Hungary's historic right to the territory lost as a result of the Treaty of Trianon. Secondly, it was very important to show a benign heritage rather than the more aggressive Hun lineage – which was how they had been identified by the West since the middle-ages – along with expressing all the characteristics of a member of the European community, rather than the barbarians of the East. This discourse, once an active dialogue opened up between Hungary and the West, was relatively easy to direct, relatively when compared with the internal social discourse. The dialogue with the West was simply a matter of proffering an image acceptable to the European community.

The internal dialogue was much more difficult to consolidate. This was due to the fact that the Hungarian nation was in the process of re-imagining itself. That is to say, the identity had to be completely reevaluated in view of not only the change in the Hungarian nation brought about by the signing of the Treaty of Trianon, but also the changed in the wider social setting, the international community. The difficulty was enhanced by the very thing which had made the recasting of the social discourse so much easier previously – the uncertain origin – as well as the fact that the Hun myth, codified very early on in Hungarian history, was so deeply ingrained in the national consciousness. This can be seen in the final chapter of this thesis. Early on in the discourse, the legends were addressed, but not attended to so diligently. Later, the writers of the texts seem to vacillate, as if they are trying to grasp hold of a new discourse. Finally, in the years between 1927 and 1938 the discourse in the school books demarks very firm borders between myth and fact. This occurred even as the wider public discourse was returning to the origins shrouded in myths and

legends as a point of departure. It is here that the confusion of the Hungarian origins caused a problem in the development of a new discourse. During this time of intense crisis, the nation had many actors all trying to organize a new social discourse. Reaching back to the origins – which had been a much more manageable project previously – now set the field of possibilities in disarray. It is easy to see this when looking at the texts written between 1912 and 1925, when the writers seem to be struggling to consolidate a new discourse from which to form the Hungarian identity. Then, in the later books, two things become quite clear. First, because they all start with the Hun myth, even though they relegate it to mythology, it shows that it is firmly fixed within the Hungarian national imagination. Secondly, the discourse was not only in a rather confused state brought about by the loss of so much territory, but also, even within the nation, there were competing discourse. Again, this was exacerbated by the malleability of Hungarian historiography. An examination of the textbooks used in this thesis shows at least one discourse in competition with the officially endorsed narrative.

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