

On University Historiography in Hungary: An Overview of the Past 25 Years*

Sobre la Historia de la Universidad en Hungría: un repaso a los últimos 25 años

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Abstract: In the following paper we display the development of writings about universities history in the last 25 years. It is important to underline that we use the name of Hungary as a historical definition. In this case it means the whole territory of the Carpathian Basin, because the current borders were created in 1920. Since the Hungarian universities were founded late the possibility of attendance at foreign universities represented great importance. Nowadays, we possess a database with more than 100.000 records about Hungarian students who attended foreign universities before 1918. Many Source editions, analyses and monographs were published in this topic. The purpose of

Resumen: En el presente artículo analizamos el desarrollo de los trabajos sobre la historia las universidades en los últimos 25 años. Es importante subrayar que usamos el nombre de Hungría como una definición histórica. En este caso nos referimos a todo el territorio de la Cuenca de los Cárpatos, debido a que las fronteras actuales fueron creadas en 1920. Dado que las universidades húngaras se fundaron tarde, la posibilidad de asistir a universidades extranjeras adquirió gran importancia. Hoy en día contamos con una base de datos con más de 100.000 registros sobre los estudiantes húngaros que asistieron a universidades extranjeras antes de 1918. Muchos compendios de fuentes, análisis y

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the following article is to summarize the most notable volumes.

Keywords: source editions, monographs on university history, Hungarian university education, students, Youth Clubs.

monografías se publicaron sobre este tema. El propósito del artículo que sigue es reseñar los trabajos más notables.

Palabras clave: compendios de fuentes, monografías sobre Historia de la Universidad, Educación universitaria húngara, estudiantes, Youth Clubs

In order to present research on the history of Hungarian tertiary education, it is indispensable to clarify what we mean under the name Hungary in different epochs and also into what chronological units the research can be divided. The historical Kingdom of Hungary covers the whole of the Carpathian basin which is now shared by eight European countries. For this reason we have to be aware that Hungarian historiography treats not only modern but also historical Hungary, in our case, the history of universities and academies that once existed in this area. This fact often causes confusion in Western Europe where people are still often unaware of the many changes that have taken place in the Central European region, and therefore interpret or analyse historical issues according to the current borders.

Chronologically, it is important to know that in Hungarian historiography the Middle Ages terminate in 1526, the year marking the end of the unified Kingdom of Hungary which fell into different parts due to the Ottoman intrusion and subsequently became part of both the Ottoman and Habsburg Empire. In the Eastern part was established the Principality of Transylvania. After 1699, Hungary was reunited within the Habsburg Monarchy in the form of a multi-ethnic country. A third crucial borderline was the year 1920 when, as a result of the Trianon peace treaty signed with the great powers, following WWI, two-third of the territory of Hungary was attached to the then newly formed neighbouring countries.

Historical sources of Hungarian university education

It is not rare to find incomplete written sources in the Central European region. This statement has an increased truth value for Hungary where, due to Ottoman Hungary, the inside conflicts and independence wars, sources in medieval – and, oftentimes, modern – archives have been seriously destroyed. During the Middle Ages, there were four attempts to found a univer-

sity¹, but the related documents are almost completely perished, and much of the information is provided by the Vatican Archives correspondence. The dawn of Reformation saw the emergence of four denominations, without any of them gaining majority; this fact contributed to the improvement of education as each denomination wished to establish high quality secondary and tertiary education systems. In the case of Catholics, it was the Jesuit Order which founded academies, including the University of Nagyszombat (today Trnava in Slovakia) in 1635. This institution is the oldest operating university in Hungary, and it moved to Budapest in 1777². Another Jesuit university was founded in Kassa (today Košice in Slovakia) in 1657, and a third one in Kolozsvár (today Cluj-Napoca in Romania) in 1581. The archives of the oldest Hungarian university survived the wars of the twentieth century, but were later transferred to the National Archives where they burnt down in the fire caused by the shooting of the Soviet forces during the 1956 revolution. The Protestant denominations established several lycea, Calvinist and Unitarian boarding schools, where education was often beyond secondary level, but they were not allowed to issue university degrees. The majority of these institutions were operating in areas outside Ottoman Hungary, that is, over current Hungarian borders. 56% of pre-war tertiary education establishments were placed outside post 1919 Hungary, together with their archives. Due to political reasons, between 1920 and 1990 these documents were barely if at all researchable, and thus there was no possibility to examine them under the angle of state-of-the-art methods. Over the past 25 years this situation has essentially changed, and research opportunities are becoming more and more favourable in the archives of neighbouring countries as well.

A related development is that from the 1980s on, there has been an increased activity of establishing university archives – rather late, compared to Western Europe³. Documents that had formerly been unresearchable were organized, printed guidelines presenting the materials in archives were being issued, along with source editions aiming at helping the work of histo-

¹ King Louis I founded a university in Pécs in 1367; Sigmund I in Buda in 1395; and King Matthias I established one in Pozsony (Bratislava) in 1465, but none of them operated longer than 10-20 years. After 1480, Matthias I began to transform the Dominican Studium Generale into a university, but this attempt also failed. It is a Hungarian trait that every monarch wanted to establish a university in different cities.

² Today's Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest.

³ Of the Hungarian universities founded more than a 100 years ago, now 14 have university archives and only three do not dispose of any.

rians specialized in the history of universities. In summary it can be concluded that the accessibility of university history sources has significantly improved over the past three decades, omitting any obstacles from high quality historical research.

Researching academic peregrination

Since the first Hungarian university was founded very late, attending foreign universities had a special importance in every epoch. There were attempts to research this area at the turn of the twentieth century, but there was no systematic investigation up until two decades ago. A research group formed in the Archives of the Budapest Eötvös Loránd University. For more than two decades, it systematically collected data related to the enrolment and studies of each and every Hungary-born student attending European universities before 1919. The data came from approximately 240 universities in 27 European countries, based on partly published papers, partly on field research. The data was then turned into an electronic data base, and inventories broken down to countries and to time periods were also published. The last volume is going to come out in 2017; the data will subsequently be accessible on the internet. The first Hungarian students were registered to have been affiliated to the University of Paris in 1154, and from this moment on approximately 13, 000 Hungarian enrolments were recorded in the medieval data base. Naturally, the majority of these students attended the universities of our then neighbouring countries (55% in Vienna, 35% in Krakow). Nonetheless, about 900 Hungarians were admitted to Italian, 80 to German, and 70 to French (mostly Parisian) universities. Furthermore, there were four students studying in England at the turn of the thirteenth century. The data relevant to the Middle Ages is published in the series entitled “Magyarországi diákok középkori egyetemeken” (Hungarian Students at Medieval Universities). The goal of these editions is to track the carrier of students (in addition to information on university studies), based on archive sources. So far there are two volumes published⁴. The collection of foreign university

⁴ 1. Anna Tüskés, *Magyarországi diákok a Bécsi Egyetemen 1365-1526* (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Levéltára, 2008); 2/I. Péter Haraszti Szabó, Borbála Kelényi and László Szögi. *Magyarországi diákok a prágai és a krakkói egyetemeken 1348-1525*. vol. 1: (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Levéltára, 2016.); In preparation: 2/II. Péter Haraszti Szabó, Borbála Kelényi and László Szögi. *Magyarországi diákok a prágai és a krakkói egyetemeken 1348-1525*. vol. 2, (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Levéltára, 2017.)

attendance in the modern age started earlier, a process hindered by the lack of registers in several institutions from the mid-eighteenth century on. At the same time, the data had to be compared with other Hungarian and foreign sources. Exactly because of the lack of Hungarian universities, the number of students going abroad increased dramatically between 1526 and 1800, meaning 27, 000 enrolments registered in the data base. The table below demonstrates the results.

Table 1. Students from Hungary in European universities between 1526 and 1800.

Region	Period							
	1526-1600	%	1601-1700	%	1701-1800	%	1526-1800	%
Germany	1718	49,18	3751	36,09	4535	32,58	10004	35,98
Vienna University	675	19,33	2102	20,22	3568	25,63	6345	22,82
Austrian Hereditary Lands	303	8,68	1535	14,76	1344	9,65	3182	11,44
The Netherlands	2	0,05	1591	15,30	1488	10,70	3081	11,08
Vienna, other institutions	—	—	—	—	1735	12,47	1735	6,24
Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth	371	10,62	580	5,58	186	1,33	1137	4,09
Italy	354	10,14	443	4,26	318	2,28	1115	4,01
Switzerland	42	1,20	67	0,64	680	4,88	789	2,83
England, Scotland	12	0,34	289	2,78	49	0,35	350	1,25
Scandinavia, the Baltic countries	—	—	22	0,21	6	0,04	28	0,10
France	15	0,43	4	0,04	5	0,03	24	0,08
Russia	—	—	5	0,05	3	0,02	8	0,03
Total	3492	100	10393	100	13917	100	27802	100

Data relevant to the long nineteenth century was collected up until the end of WWI. So far, all students have been registered in the database, independently of nationality or religion, the sole criterion being Hungarian birth. Of course, this method lost pertinence in the era following 1920, so work had to be terminated at this point. An enormous number of 60, 000 students studying in foreign establishments were registered in the long 19th century. The number of real persons is actually always a bit smaller as many of the

students attended between two and five universities. These data are published in the series entitled “Magyarországi diákok egyetemjárása az újkorban” (Hungarian Students Attending Foreign Universities in the Modern Age). Following an introductory study, the data is presented in order of establishments, chronologically listed for each. The volumes are supplemented with an index of personal and geographical names, and with a brief summary written in the language of the given country⁵.

⁵ 1. László Szögi, *Magyarországi diákok a Habsburg Monarchia egyetemlein 1. 1790-1850., Ungarländische Studenten an Universitäten der Habsburger Monarchie 1790-1850*, (Budapest – Szeged: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Levéltára, 1994); 2. József Mihály Kiss, *Magyarországi diákok a Bécsi Egyetemen 1715-1789., Ungarländische Studenten an der Wiener Universität 1715-1789* (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Levéltára, 2000); 3. László Szögi, *Magyarországi diákok svájci és hollandiai egyetemeken 1789-1919., Ungarländische Studenten an schweizerischen und niederländischen Universitäten 1789-1919* (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Levéltára, 2000); 4. Andor Mészáros, *Magyarországi diákok a prágai egyetemeken 1980-1918., Uherští studenti na pražských univerzitách 1850-1918* (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Levéltára, 2001); 5. László Szögi, *Magyarországi diákok németországi egyetemeken és főiskolákon 1789-1919., Ungarländische Studenten an den deutschen Universitäten und Hochschulen 1789-1919* (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Levéltára, 2001); 6. Ádám Hegyi, *Magyarországi hallgatók svájci egyetemeken és akadémiákon 1526-1788 (1798), Ungarländische Studenten an den schweizerischen Universitäten 1526-1788 (1798)* (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Levéltára, 2003); 7. József Mihály Kiss and László Szögi, *Magyarországi diákok bécsi egyetemeken és főiskolákon 1849-1867., Ungarländische Studenten an den Universitäten und Hochschulen in Wien 1849-1867* (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Levéltára, 2003); 8. István Fazekas, *A Bécsi Pazmaneum magyarországi hallgatói 1623-1918 (1951), Matricula Collegii Pazmaniani Viennensis 1623-1918 (1951)* (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Levéltára, 2003); 9. László Szögi, *Magyarországi diákok lengyelországi és baltikumi egyetemeken és akadémiákon 1526-1788., Studenci z Węgier na Uniwersytetach i Akademiach w Polsce i krajach Bałtyckich 1526-1788* (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Levéltára, 2003); 10. Gábor Patyi, *Magyarországi diákok bécsi egyetemeken és főiskolákon 1890-1918., Ungarländische Studenten an den Universitäten und Hochschulen in Wien 1890-1918.* (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Levéltára, 2004); 11. Attila Tar, *Magyarországi diákok németországi egyetemeken és főiskolákon 1694-1789., Ungarländische Studenten an den deutschen Universitäten und Hochschulen 1694-1789* (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Levéltára, 2004); 12. Júlia Varga, *Magyarországi diákok a Habsburg birodalom kisebb egyetemlein és akadémiáin., Ungarländische Studenten an den kleineren Universitäten und Hochschulen des Habsburger Reiches 1560-1789* (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Levéltára, 2004); 13. Bognár Krisztina Kiss, *Magyarországi diákok a bécsi tanintézetekben 1526-1789., Ungarländische Studenten an Wiener Bildungsanstalten 1526-1789* (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Levéltára, 2004); 14. György Gömöri, *Magyarországi diákok angol és skót egyetemeken 1526-1789., Hungarian Students in England and Scotland 1526-1789* (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Levéltára, 2005); 15. Réka Bozzay and Sándor Ladányi, *Magyarországi diákok holland egyetemeken 1595-1918., Hongaarse Studenten aan Nederlanse Universiteiten 1595-1918* (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Levéltára, 2007); 16. Beáta Szlavikovszky,

The following table presents data relevant to the nineteenth century.

Table 2. Students from Hungary in European Universities between 1801 and 1919.

Regions	Period					
	1801-1850	%	1851-1919	%	1801-1919	%
Vienna institution	8267	63,90	21673	46,10	29940	49,82
Germany	1741	13,45	12935	27,51	14676	24,42
Austrian Hereditary Lands	1556	12,02	5299	11,27	6855	11,40
Vienna military Academy	1204	9,30	3182	6,76	4386	7,29
Switzerland	3	0,02	1889	4,01	1892	3,15
France	9	0,06	741	1,57	750	1,25
England	17	0,13	519	1,10	536	0,89
Romania	-	-	382	0,81	382	0,63
Italy	115	0,88	245	0,52	360	0,60
The Netherlands	16	0,12	131	0,27	147	0,24
Belgium	2	0,01	122	0,26	124	0,20
Serbia	-	-	28	0,06	28	0,04
Russia	6	0,04	1	0,002	7	0,01
Total	12936	100	47150	100	60086	100

Magyarországi diákok itáliai egyetemeken I. rész 1526-1918., Gli studenti ungheresi in Italia dal 1526 al 1918 (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Levéltára, 2007); 17. László Szögi, *Magyarországi diákok németországi egyetemeken és akadémiákon 1526-1700., Ungarländische Studenten an den deutschen Universitäten und Akademien 1526-1700* (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Levéltára, 2011); 18. Robert Offner and Hansgeorg von Killyen, *A bécsi orvos-sebészeti József Akadémia (Josephinum) magyarországi növendékei 1775-1874, Ungarländische Zöglinge und Studenten der Wiener Medizinisch-Chirurgischen Josephs-Akademie (Josephinum) 1775-1874* (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Levéltára, 2012); 19. Gabriella Sárközi, *Magyarországi diákok angol és skót egyetemeken 1789-1919., Hungarian Students in England and Scotland 1789-1919* (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Levéltára, 2013); 20. László Szögi, *Magyarországi diákok bécsi egyetemeken és akadémiákon 1789-1848., Ungarländische Studenten an Wiener Universitäten und Akademien 1789-1848* (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Levéltára, 2013); 21. Andor Mészáros, László Szögi and Júlia Varga, *Magyarországi diákok a Habsburg birodalom kisebb egyetemén és akadémiáin 1789-1919., Ungarländische Studenten an kleineren Universitäten und Akademien des Habsburgen Reiches 1789-1919.* (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Levéltára, 2014); 22. Gábor Patyi, Zsolt Simon, Miklós Szabó, László Szögi and Júlia Varga, *Magyarországi diákok bécsi egyetemeken és főiskolákon 1867-1890., Ungarländische Studenten an Wiener*

As it can be seen from the above, attendance at foreign universities was primarily oriented towards German-language universities, mostly in the Habsburg Empire and in Germany; for Hungarian Protestants, Dutch and Swiss universities were also important. This is a subject of great interest in Hungarian research, having a significant literature at national and international levels⁶.

The University of Szeged has compiled an enormous database from the album entries of Hungarian students, entitled IAA Inscriptioes Alborum Amicorum, and the work is being carried on.⁷ In Transylvania (now belonging to Romania), Hungarian historians have published a database on Transylvanian students who studied abroad in a series of several volumes⁸.

Source editions

The above concludes that Hungarian historiography started the publication of written sources on national tertiary education rather late. There were no matriculation editions made (which are common in Western Europe), and, for a long time there was barely any attempt to publish archive documents,

Universitäten und Hochschulen 1867-1890. (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Levéltára, 2015); 23. Ádám Hegyi and László Szögi, *Magyarországi diákok svájci egyetemeken és főiskolákon 1526-1919., Ungarländische Studenten an schweizerischen Universitäten und Hochschulen 1526-1919.* (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Levéltára, 2016); Work in-progress: 24. László Szögi and Júlia Varga, *Magyarországi diákok francia, belga, román és szerb egyetemeken 1526-1919., Étudiants hongrois aux universités françaises, belges, roumaines et serbes 1526-1919.* (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Levéltára, 2017.)

⁶ *Peregrinatio Hungarica. Studenten aus Ungarn an deutschen und österreichischen Hochschulen vom 16. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Márta Fata et al. (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006); *Régi és új peregrináció. Magyarok külföldön, külföldiek Magyarországon. vol. 1-3.* ed. Imre Békési et al. (Budapest-Szeged: Nemzetközi Magyar Filológiai Társaság, 1993); *Iter Germanicum. Deutschland und die Reformierte Kirche in Ungarn im 16-17. Jahrhundert*, ed. András Szabó. (Budapest: Kálvin Kiadó, 1999); *Universitas Budensis 1395-1995 International Conference for the History of Universities on the Occasion of the 600th Anniversary of the Foundation of the University of Buda*, ed. László Szögi et al. (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Levéltára, 1997).

⁷ Inscriptores Alborum Amicorum, accessed december 19, 2016, <http://www.iaa.bibl.u-szeged.hu>

⁸ Sándor Tonk, *Erdélyiek egyetemjárása a középkorban.* (Bukarest: Kriterion Kiadó, 1979); Miklós Szabó and Sándor Tonk, *Erdélyiek egyetemjárása a korai újkorban 1521-1700* in *Fontes Rerum Scholasticarum IV.* (Szeged: József Attila Tudományegyetem, 1992); Miklós Szabó and László Szögi, *Erdélyi peregrinusok. Erdélyi diákok európai egyetemeken 1701-1849.* (Marosvásárhely: Mentor Kiadó, 1998); Miklós Szabó, Zsolt Simon and László Szögi, *Erdélyiek külföldi egyetemjárása 1849-1919 között 1-2. vol.* (Marosvásárhely: Mentor Kiadó, 2014).

which are considered to be important for university history. In this respect there have been huge changes over the past decades. Towards the end of the 1970s, they started publishing a series entitled *Felsőoktatástörténeti kiadványok* (Publications on University History), which contained, among others, important documentation related to the specific periods of Hungarian university history⁹. Similar books were published during the 1990s: in one volume, they included archive founding documents of medieval and early modern universities in Latin and in Hungarian¹⁰. The Old Hungarian Literature Department at the University of Szeged has launched a series to publish sources related mainly to university history¹¹, but they have other editions comprising several university history documents or related articles¹². Furthermore, in the Archives of the Budapest Eötvös Loránd University, a series including the list of then students of Hungarian universities and academies, based on researchable archive documents, is being made¹³. It has to be added, however, that due to the already mentioned destruction of documents, historians often have to resort to secondary sources to uncover the past of our universities and academies. When it comes to Church-founded establishments, the consultable documents usually consist of church archives, professors' personal legacy (if any) or contemporaneous prints. This naturally means significantly greater work load than having the original sources to our disposal. Several of the university archives founded over the past three decades have started the publication of historically important documents¹⁴.

⁹ *Dokumentumok a magyarországi felsőoktatás történetéből 1760-1790*, ed. András Tóth et al. (Budapest: Felsőoktatási Pedagógiai Kutatóközpont, 1981); Oszkár Sashegyi, *Iratok a magyar felsőoktatás történetéből 1849-1867* (Budapest: Felsőoktatási pedagógiai Kutatóközpont, 1974).

¹⁰ *Régi magyar egyetemek emlékezete., Memoria Universitatum et scholarum maiorum Regni Hungariae 1367-1777*, ed. László Szögi (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem, 1995).

¹¹ The series entitled *Fontes Rerum Scholasticarum* enumerates the name list of several Transylvanian Protestant Academies.

¹² Such writings are published in the series entitled "Adattár a XVI-XVIII. századi szellemi mozgalmaink történetéhez (*Database for the History of our XVI-XVIIth century spiritual movements.*)

¹³ For example, "Fejezetek az Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Történetéből" (Chapters from the History of Eötvös Loránd University) and the editions of "Felsőoktatástörténeti Kiadványok. Új sorozat" (Publications on the History of Tertiary Education. New series). Works published in the series can be consulted on the website of ELTE archives, <https://leveltar.elte.hu>

¹⁴ Such series have been published by the archives of the Budapest Veterinary University, the University of Economics (today Budapest Corvinus University), the former Garden Engineering University (today part of Szent István University), the University of Fine Arts and by the University of Industrial Arts.

It is typical of Hungarian source research to cooperate with archivists and historians of the neighbouring countries as many of the documents are to be found in the archives or libraries of these countries. Fortunately, this cooperation works efficiently; what is more, there are more and more examples of joint bilingual editions. This latter is an important issue as Hungarian-founded universities may have more than one legal successor, possibly in several countries. In such cases the best solution is to explore our shared history, which was absolutely impossible in the years preceding 1990. I would like to bring two interesting examples. The University of Nagyszombat (Trnava), founded in 1635, continued its activities in Budapest from the year of 1777. However, the Faculty of Theology was detached in 1950, and this Faculty evolved into Pázmány Péter Catholic University in 1992. At the same time, there was a new university established in Trnava, Slovakia, in 1992, meaning that today three universities consider themselves to be the continuation of the original. The issue related to the successor of the then Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca) University is just as interesting. As mentioned above, the Kolozsvár University was founded in 1581, but, due to multiple pauses, it could do actual education work only after 1698. The Hungarian government founded an official state university in Kolozsvár only in 1872, which became the second university of sciences in the country. The database of this institution has been publishing¹⁵. The city being attached to Romania in 1919, the university had to flee to Hungary and was given a place in Szeged in 1921. In the meanwhile a Romanian university was established in Kolozsvár. During WWII, between 1940 and 1944, there was a Hungarian university operating in the city again, and from 1945 there was a separate Hungarian and Romanian university, united in 1959. After all this it is understandable that the question of modern university succession and of the starting dates can lead to serious debates within the region¹⁶.

Monographs on university history

There used to be considerable arrears in the making of institutional history monographs based on real source research. The first modern summary on

¹⁵ Victor Karady and Lucian Nastasă, *The University of Kolozsvár/Cluj and the Students of the Medical Faculty, 1872-1918* (Budapest, Cluj: CEUPress, 2004).

¹⁶ The Selmecbánya (today Banská Štiavnica, Slovakia) Academy of Mining and Forestry also fled to Hungary in 1919, where its successors are universities partly in Sopron, partly in Miskolc. The university founded in Pozsony (Bratislava) in 1912 moved to Pécs in 1923. In the meanwhile, a Slovak-language university was founded in Pozsony in 1919.

the oldest Hungarian university – Eötvös Loránd University – was written in the mid-1930s, three centuries after its foundation. Following this, another monograph was published on the occasion of the 350th anniversary¹⁷. The 1980s saw the celebration of another establishment, namely, the 250th anniversary of the foundation of the then Selmecebánya Mining Academy (today Banská Štiavnica in Slovakia). In that decade already, the volumes published were of high quality¹⁸, and, naturally, these editions treated recent historical developments to a small extent only. It has to be pointed out that political circumstances did not favour objective history writing for a long time since the evaluation of the whole of the twentieth century and the second part of the nineteenth was heavily influenced by the Marxist view on history; diverging opinions could be expressed but they were not allowed to be published. Also, the fact that the sources were unprocessed hindered the compilation of serious university history monographs. Like everywhere else in the world, university anniversaries provide an excellent occasion to put the past of these establishments in the spotlight. It is a good reason to publish aesthetically pleasing and representative editions which, however, are not based on serious source processing, and thus have no real academic value. The compilation of such books need the cooperation of scientific experts, with several years of work pre-calculated. Since the 1990s politics hasn't been impeding such work, and this type of research has emerged as well. At the beginning of the 2000s, Eötvös Loránd University published a monograph which treats the past of the oldest Hungarian university objectively¹⁹. The history of the 235-year-old Budapest University of Technology and Economics has a rich literature, and in 2005 a Hungarian-English bilingual edition came out, useful but not destined to be a monograph²⁰. For the 200th anniversary of forestry, a high quality work was compiled. It discussed institutional history and academic achievements of the university in two separate volumes²¹. Hungarian historians living in Romania have published several volumes on the history of

¹⁷ István Sinkovics, ed., *Az Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem története 1635-1985*, (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem, 1985).

¹⁸ Zsámboki László, ed., *Selmecectől Miskolcig 1735-1985*, (Miskolc: Nehézipari Műszaki Egyetem, 1985).

¹⁹ Szögi László, ed., *Az Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem története 1635-2002* (Budapest: Eötvös Kiadó, 2003).

²⁰ Németh József, ed. et al., *A Műegyetemtől a világhírig*, (Budapest: Műegyetemi Kiadó, 2005).

²¹ Albert Levente, ed. et al., *Az Erdészeti felsőoktatás 200 éve. Emlékkönyv Selmecebánya 1808 – Sopron 2008*, vol. 1-3, (Sopron: Nyugat-magyarországi Egyetem Erdőmérnöki Kar, 2008). The third volume is a database.

Kolozsvár University, of which we now mention only the latest one²², welcoming the fact that researching this topic has no political obstacles any more. Another successor of this university is the University of Szeged in Hungary, which has launched a project to write a multi-volume monograph based on archives research; the first two volumes have already come out²³. Of the new universities founded at the beginning of the twentieth century, a monograph was published on the occasion of the centenary of Debrecen University, presenting the so-called socialist era in a comprehensive and realistic manner²⁴. Approximately of the same age, the University of Pécs is commemorating its predecessor founded 650 years ago this year. Following long centuries of idleness, tertiary education was re-activated in the city only in the course of the nineteenth century. A recent book presents the history of this establishment²⁵. Unfortunately we do not have the possibility to enumerate all the writings published by the universities usually younger than these ones. Still, there appears to be a positive direction taken in the academic processing of the past of Hungarian universities. Nevertheless, it is a definitive lack of Hungarian cultural policy that there are few historical works published in global languages, and few can therefore be informed of the results of Hungarian historical research. I would like to make reference to an English aperçu in order that foreign experts can learn more about Hungarian university education²⁶.

Major periods in Hungarian university education

The history of Hungarian universities has an extensive literature, and it is possible to inform oneself on works before 1980 from specialized bibliographies²⁷. If we take the specific historical periods into account, we can see

²² György Gaal, *Egyetem a Farkas utcában. A kolozsvári Ferenc József Tudományegyetem előzményei, korszakai és vonzatai*. (Kolozsvár: Scientia Kiadó, 2012).

²³ László Szögi et al., *A Szegedi Tudományegyetem és elődei története. I. rész. A Báthory-Egyetemtől a Kolozsvári Tudományegyetemig 1581-1872*. (Szeged: Szegedi Egyetemi Kiadó, 2011).

²⁴ István Orosz, ed. et al., *A Debreceni Egyetem története 1912-2012* (Debrecen: Debreceni Egyetemi Kiadó, 2012).

²⁵ Tamás Fedeles, et al., *A pécsi felsőoktatás évszázadai* (Pécs: Pécsi Tudományegyetem, n.d.).

²⁶ József Kardos, et al., *Centuries of Hungarian Higher Education* (Budapest: Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó, 2001).

²⁷ Gábor Márkus, ed. et al. *Magyar neveléstörténeti irodalom 1800-1944* (Budapest: Könyv-értékesítő Vállalat, 1985); Andor Ladányi, ed. et al. *Magyar felsőoktatás-történeti irodalom 1945-1979 Bibliográfia* (Budapest: Felsőoktatási Pedagógiai Kutatóközpont, 1981). Data on

that research on medieval universities is mainly oriented towards the exploration of the career Hungarian students pursued at home or at foreign universities, due to the reasons explained above. In order to help this, there have been serious investigations on the composition of Catholic chapters, on the clarification of prebends' clerical and political roles, including their post-university careers in many cases. Naturally, we are trying to uncover those foreign sources which are preserved in archives and libraries abroad and are related to the studies done by Hungarian students. The exploration of these sources started more than a hundred years ago²⁸ and is still being carried out²⁹. University education between the 16th and 18th centuries has a particularly rich literature. In this period, Protestant tertiary education in Hungary was characterized by the so-called collegios where, besides grammar school education, there were classes specialized in academic subjects which prepared students for studies abroad. Despite the fact that the third of the country had been occupied by the Ottoman, these schools were generally flourishing, attracting a great number of students in the other regions. Lutherans had such lycea in regions which had partly German population, like Nagyszében (Sibiu), Brassó (Braşov, Romania), Eperjes (Prešov), Lőcse (Levoča), Késmárk (Kežmarok), Pozsony (Bratislava in Slovakia), and Sopron in Hungary. Calvinists had their widely-known lycea in regions inhabited by a mainly Hungarian population (Debrecen, Sárospatak, Pápa in modern Hungary; Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca), Nagyenyed (Aiud) and Marosvárhely (Târgu Mureş) in modern Romania). Unitarians operated such a lycea in Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca). It was these schools and the already mentioned Jesuit academies that kept the formation of Hungarian intelligentsia alive in the 150 hard years of Ottoman rule, and even after. The historical exploration of each and every lyceum started as early as the nineteenth century, but these procedures were only listing the data and did not analyse it. There have been changes in this respect in the course of the past few years, and researchers have

literature on later periods was published in the journal *History of University*.

²⁸ Károly Schrauf, *A bécsi egyetem magyar nemzetének anyakönyve 1453-tól 1630-ig* (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1902).

Andreas Veress, *Matricula et acta Hungarorum in universitatibus Italiae studentium. vol. 1. Padua 1264-1864*. (Kolozsvár: Stephaneum Nyomda, 1915); Endre Veress, *Olasz egyetemeken járt magyarországi tanulók anyakönyve és iratai 1221-1864*. (Budapest: Római Magyar Történelmi Intézet, 1941); Asztrik Gábrriel, "Magyar diákok és tanárok a középkori Párizsban" in. *Egyetemes Philológiai Közöny* 48. (1938) 182-210.

²⁹ Astrik L. Gabriel, *The University of Paris and its Hungarian Students and Masters during the Reign of Louis XII and François I^{er}*. (Notre Dame, Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Josef Knecht, 1986).

started to compile up-to-date and detailed institutional monographs based on source analysis³⁰. Nevertheless, there is much to be done yet in this field as well³¹.

The era of state-controlled education policy began in the mid-eighteenth century, in the period called enlightened absolutism. It concerned all Central European countries, and Hungary was no exception to that. In Hungarian history the year 1777 marks this shift when Queen Maria Theresa issued her decree on education policy known as *Ratio Educationis*³². The *Ratio* regulated the structure of tertiary education as well, transferring the only Hungarian University to Budapest and establishing the Royal Academies of Legal Studies³³ where they launched an Arts and Law faculty, with two college years for each. The culture policy of the era is treated in excellent academic aperçus³⁴. This system, introduced in 1777, determined the tertiary education in the Kingdom of Hungary up until 1848. We are still in debt with a detailed source edition on this period. At this point it has to be added that in the whole of Europe, Hungary was the last to discard Latin as the official language of administration and education in 1844; these sources are therefore written in this language. In a multi-ethnic Hungary Latin was an acceptable and neutral language and the introduction of Hungarian as the language of education instantly generated conflict among the different nationalities³⁵.

The first civilian Hungarian government, founded during the 1848/49 revolution and fight for freedom, declared the independence of the only Hun-

³⁰ József Barcza, ed., *A Debreceni Református Kollégium története 1538-1988* (Budapest: Magyarországi Református Egyház Zsinati Irodájának Sajtóosztálya, 1988); Dénes Dienes et al., *A Sárospataki Református Kollégium története* (Sárospatak: Tiszáninneri Református Egyházkerület Hernád Kiadó, 2013).

³¹ A good aperçu on this era: István Mészáros, *Az iskolaügy története Magyarországon 996-1777 között* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1981).

³² Publication of this decree and of a similar one issued in 1806: István Mészáros, trans., *Ratio Educationis* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1981).

³³ The seat of the six academies following 1784: Győr; Pozsony (today Bratislava), Kassa (today Košice), Nagyvárad (today Oradea), Zágráb (today Zagreb) and we can also consider an institution belonging to Kolozsvár (today Cluj Napoca), established in Transylvania. This educational institution was not founded by the decree, though.

³⁴ Domokos Kosáry, *Művelődés a XVIII. századi Magyarországon* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1980).

³⁵ It is worth mentioning that Latin and later German as languages of education attracted a lot of foreign students to Hungary. It was our special initiative to conduct a separate research on foreign students attending Hungarian universities. The preliminary results have been published in the following book: Zsuzsanna Heilaufer, *Külföldi hallgatók Magyar felsőoktatási intézményekben 1635-1919* vol. 1, (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Levéltára, 2006).

garian university from the influence of Vienna in law. It also declared the free choice of school, an idea so important at that age. There was no time left for serious reforms although there were plans and bills made. Following the failure of the independence war (with the help of Russian intervention), a university reform signed by minister Leo Thun was introduced in the spirit of Vienna absolutism. In many respects, this reform included positive measures and modernized university formation, but it did so under the concept of centralization, which was unacceptable to all nations living in Hungary. One of these measures included the introduction of German as the language of education, which was mostly useful for the German-tongue minority. These earlier measures were repealed in 1860, and Hungarian was designed as the language of education again³⁶.

The Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 established the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and the fifty years that followed are considered to be the period that brought remarkable development into Hungarian university education. It was in this period that the whole spectrum of Hungarian universities and colleges emerged, there were considerable infrastructural developments and the quality of university education completely caught up with that of the renowned European establishments. According to researchers, scientific base formation was particularly high standard. It was so strong that outstanding students in possession of these basics performed well at the best European universities or research centres. This was later confirmed by the international career of many of our scientists. The fact that the number of people entering tertiary education was rapidly growing called for the necessity to establish new institutions. However, this was not actually realized up until the beginning of the twentieth century when some attempts were made. The usual problem came up: how to resolve the contradiction between elite formation and mass education? At the turn of the century, politics gained space within universities. The teacher staff was not really divided, but the students represented different points of view: they belonged either to those who professed conservative and Catholic national values or to those who considered themselves social democrats, or radicals. This group gained power for a short while in the chaotic period following the WWI, and they even founded the communist Hungarian Republic of Councils, which lasted only a few months. Naturally, it is impossible to present all the problems and

³⁶ The best summary of university education in the period: Oszkár Sashegyi, *Iratok a magyar felsőoktatás történetéből 1849-1867* (Budapest: Felsőoktatási Pedagógiai Kutatóközpont, 1974) 3-86.

contradictions of the period in only a few sentences, but it must have become clear that the twentieth-century historical evaluation of this era couldn't be neutral due to the prevailing ideology.

From the above it can be concluded that the evaluation of the post-compromise era has changed significantly over the past century. It was assessed differently by later historians from the then existing minority groups and by Hungarian historians. It was viewed in different ways between the inter-war era and, naturally, during the so-called socialist decades. None of these interpretations can now be considered acceptable, and it is therefore research on the development of specialization areas and on scientific history that has a persistent value. Of the works discussing this area, those covering the career and university policy of dualism educational politician and ministers are given special praise³⁷. Also, there have been editions rich in data but outdated in the perspective they adopt³⁸. It goes without saying that the pre-1990 era saw a comprehensive processing of the 1918/19 tertiary education reforms, with only its positive traits presented³⁹.

In the inter-war era, it was top priority to reorganize the mutilated country, its educational policy included. Interestingly, tertiary education and scientific research soared in this defeated and impaired country. One of the reasons behind this fact is that the peace treaty of Trianon prohibited the development of Hungarian military forces, which meant that proportionally a lot more of the national budget could be spent on education than before. The then Minister of Culture, the renowned Kuno Klebelsberg managed to get the state found new universities and make large investments. Another achievement of his was establishment of Hungarian institutes of culture and research centres⁴⁰. In the socialist era, Klebelsberg's name appeared in exclusively negative contexts, but since then works presenting the era objectively have of course been

³⁷ László Felkai, *Eötvös József közoktatásügyi tevékenysége* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1979); Miklós Mann, *Trefort Ágoston élete és működése* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1982); Miklós Mann, *Wlassics Gyula* (Budapest: ELTE Bölcsészettudományi Kara Neveléstudományi Tanszék, 1994); Miklós Mann, *Kultúrpolitikusok a dualizmus korában* (Budapest: Országos Pedagógiai Könyvtár és Múzeum, 1993); László Felkai, *Portrék a dualizmus korának kultuszminisztereiről* (Budapest: Balassi Bálint Intézet, 2004).

³⁸ Andor Ladányi, *A magyarországi felsőoktatás a dualizmus kora második felében*. (Budapest: Felsőoktatási Pedagógiai Kutatóközpont, 1969).

³⁹ Andor Ladányi, "A Tanácsköztársaság felsőoktatási politikájának kérdéséhez" *Századok* 1-2. (1965): 152-171.

⁴⁰ Such were the Collegium Hungaricum established in Berlin, Vienna, Rome, and several Departments or Institutes of Hungarian Studies founded abroad.

published⁴¹. Changes were made in university structure during the WWII as well. Northern Transylvania was given back to Hungary in 1940, and it was a point of honour for the Hungarian government to re-establish the university in Kolozsvár – the price of this was the closure of a faculty at three regional universities. Between 1940 and 1944, this university operated with five faculties. Here it has to be pointed out, that both Hungary and its neighbouring countries committed mutual errors in their minority policy. Before 1918 Hungarian cultural politics had not permitted the establishment of Romanian- or Slovak-language tertiary education institutions; after 1918, the newly-formed states did the same to Hungarian-language universities and colleges.

When discussing inter-war Hungarian university policy, we cannot avoid talking about the 1920 *numerus clausus* law. This law limited the number of students that can be admitted to university, in proportion of minorities. With respect to the fact that the overwhelming majority of minorities was stuck on the other side of the borders following Trianon, the *numerus clausus* primarily restricted the admission of Jewish students. There were some concessions made in 1928, but the admission of Hungarian Jews became increasingly difficult as a result of the “Jew laws” introduced during WW II. The issue of this unjust and wrongful law has been discussed for decades and is still an intensively researched area. As it has relevant political implications, it is important that researchers have a strict critical attitude towards all related sources, that they publish them, providing a basis for monographs treating this issue.

The least researched area is the tertiary education policy in Hungarian state socialism. Although almost three decades have passed since the collapse of the socialist system, we still cannot say that there has been an authentic exploration of academic policies of the age. Of course, there were less significant summary works published at the end of the 1980s⁴², but these are hardly objective. In 1948 the Communist Party seized power, and introduced ideological dictatorship based on the Soviet example in Hungary. Their intention was to replace the whole Hungarian intelligentsia, and in order to do so, they made redundant several professors (an exception might have been the field of engineering) and re-organized Hungarian tertiary education to

⁴¹ Gábor Ujváry, *Egy európai formátumú államférfi. Klebelsberg Kuno (1875-1932)* (Pécs-Budapest: Kronosz Kiadó – Magyar Történelmi Társulat, 2014). Of the latest interpretations of the period: Andor Ladányi, *Klebelsberg felsőoktatási politikája* (Budapest: Argumentum Kiadó, 2000); Andor Ladányi, *A gazdasági válságtól a háborúig. A magyar felsőoktatás az 1930-as években* (Budapest: Argumentum Kiadó, 2002).

⁴² Andor Ladányi: *Felsőoktatási politika 1949-1958* (Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó, 1986).

fit the Soviet model. The Theological faculty was removed from classical university structures, the faculties of Medicine were turned into individual specialized universities, and several small specialized universities emerged. Such measures might be reasonable in a USSR-size country, but it was definitely dysfunctional. Another important and discriminative change was the transformation of the university entry exam. The aim was to increase the number of students of working class and peasant background to such an extent that it should reach 70% if possible. For this reason several outstanding intellectuals could not gain admission to university. Nor did they admit students from wealthy agrarian families or those who attended Catholic secondary schools. They introduced the compulsory education of Russian and ideological subjects, and university autonomy was abolished. The highest level of decision-making was concentrated in hands of the state and local organizations of the Communist Party. The toughest period of dictatorship lasted until 1956, the outbreak of the Hungarian revolution, but it continued up until 1963 following its defeat.

The consolidating social system introduced new reforms in the mid-1960s. They abolished family background-based categorization at entrance exams in 1963, and academic results became more and more important. Naturally, adherents of the system were still privileged, for example, children whose parents had communist decorations were given positive discrimination, and the admission of students coming from certain Catholic schools was rendered more difficult mandatorily. At the same time it would be unjust not to acknowledge the developments that took place in the 1970s and 1980s. There were significant university constructions, ideology-free research was given greater subsidy and the quality of university education improved without the shadow of a doubt. The number of students was proportionately low because of the strict admission requirements, but the drop-out rate was also low, almost everybody obtained a degree. In the 1980s ideological dictatorship was less and less prevailing, and it can be said that the atmosphere was a lot better in Hungary than in other socialist countries. The complete history of the socialist era is not yet explored. It is important to know that many of the valuable sources of the era are not to be sought only in national and institutional archives but also in the central and local archives of the Communist Party as many of the decisions were made there. The Party State documentation was nationalized in 1993, and, even if deficient, it is preserved in the Hungarian National Archives. It is beyond doubt that part of the important documents was either destroyed in the years of the regime change or they are lost somewhere. This also obstructs research, just like

the fact that we need to have a historical distance which makes it possible to evaluate the events objectively. As I have mentioned, there are already monographs which include chapters that present university history of the 1950s and 1960s realistically⁴³. There has been no comprehensive monograph on the period published yet, but it is encouraging to see that both the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and universities support university history research⁴⁴.

The role of university youth in Hungarian revolutionary movements

University youth played an important role in the revolutions of modern Hungarian history which were decisive in the future of the country. The first of these events was taking place in the 1848 revolution that is, the 15th March, celebrated as a national holiday in Hungary. On this day students of the Pest University joined a movement initiated by young reformers; this gave a new motivation to achieve the reform demands. Political leadership was naturally seized by the pro-reform group of the liberal nobility and aristocracy, but the united nation-wide presence of university and academy youth was also a key factor of the victory. Almost every Hungarian university and academia declared their support to the political turn, and the teacher staff worked out plans relevant to institutional reforms⁴⁵. These plans failed because of the military events of the fight, but they were later used. University youth joined the military in great numbers, and there was a separate university legion in between 1848 and 1849⁴⁶. It is worth mentioning that in the course of the past 170 years, all Hungarian political – and, in particular, youth – movements defined their relationship to 1848, and tried to act as its continuation. The same applies to all university movements, and this gives a popular topic to Hungarian history writing⁴⁷.

The second period is the revolutions of 1818-1819, although its assessment is far from being unanimous. Hungarian historiography showed a different

⁴³ For example: István Lengvári, ed. et al., *A Pécsi Bölcsészkar bölcsője* (Pécs: Pécsi Tudományegyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kar, 2013); *A Debreceni Egyetem Bölcsészettudományi Karának története* vol. I-II. (Debrecen: Debreceni Egyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kar, 2014-2015).

⁴⁴ In 2013 The Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Budapest Eötvös Loránd University jointly supported the foundation of a University History Research Group, with István Draskóczy university professor as the leader.

⁴⁵ The topic has a rich literature for each institution. For a brief aperçu see László Szögi, “Egyetemi és főiskolai mozgalmak, reformok 1848-ban” in *Az évszázados universitas*, ed. László Szögi (Budapest: Magyar Felsőoktatás Könyvek, 2001), 87-103.

⁴⁶ See: Tibor Ács, *Hadi tanfolyam a Bölcsészeti Karon és a Pesti Egyetemi Légión (1848-1849)* (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Levéltára, 2001).

⁴⁷ László Szögi, “1848 utóélete a magyar felsőoktatásban,” *Az Egyetemi Könyvtár évkönyvei* IX. (1999): 319-336.

attitude to these events in its different periods. During state socialism, the movement that emerged after the lost war was defined as a democratic revolution, and the communist takeover in the spring of 1919 was considered to have been a socialist revolution. At that time university youth was strongly divided. There was a smaller but very influential left-wing group which promoted the introduction of the most radical changes. They even supported communist takeover in the name of social progress, hoping for the international victory of European left-wing revolutions. They thought so in a period where much of the country was being invaded by the military of neighbouring countries and no peace treaty had yet been signed. Several university reform plans were made at that time, part of which would have definitely been useful if put into practice, but they were coupled with a dictatorship that the majority of society clearly rejected. Historiography between 1950 and 1990 qualified these student movements as “progressive”, and people who thought otherwise were called “reactionaries”⁴⁸. There were several other students movements and groupings at that time, but their historical sources are either lost or no publication related to them was allowed for several decades. After the change of regime it became possible to publish writings which reject a unilateral examination of the age⁴⁹. It is worth noting that some new documentary sources have been published which inform people on the Hungarian university movements of the 19th and 20th centuries⁵⁰.

A third revolutionary event of which our history still bears the imprint is the 1956 revolution and fight for freedom. Hungarian university youth played a decisive role in the preparations and the launching. The revolution itself began on 23 October 1956, when university students demonstrated for Polish political movements. It soon turned into a protest against communist dictatorship. The movement was short-lived as it lasted only two weeks due to the blood-soaked intervention of the Soviet army. The rule was re-established and qualified the events as “counter-revolution”, concealing the actual events as much as possible. Important plans were outlined at universities and colleges during this short period of time, with the aim of regaining university au-

⁴⁸ Andor Ladányi, “Az egyetemi ifjúság az 1918-1919. évi forradalmak időszakában” in *A haladó egyetemi ifjúság mozgalmi Magyarországon 1918-1945*, ed. Ágnes Szabó (Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó, 1978), 13-93.

⁴⁹ János Viczián, *Diákélet és diákegyesületek a budapesti egyetemeken 1914-1919* (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Levéltára, 2002).

⁵⁰ János Viczián, *A magyar egyetemi és főiskolai diáklapok bibliográfiája 1857-1972* (Budapest: Felsőoktatási Pedagógiai Kutatóközpont, 1978); Ferenc Gergely et al., *A magyar ifjúság történetének kronológiája 1914-1991* (Budapest: Holnap Kiadó, 2014).

tonomy, among others. The defeat of the revolution was followed by a bloody revenge, lots of professors and students were eliminated from university, and many had to emigrate. Recently there have been several writings published that can finally tell the truth about university movements in 1956⁵¹.

University Youth Clubs

An essential element in the research of tertiary education is to explore the history of special youth clubs at colleges and universities, and to examine the “everyday life” of a university student. This has been a subject of importance in European university historiography, but it has no significant traditions in Hungary. The lack of relevant sources does not completely account for this problem as there is a massive documentation on this topic in well-organized university archives. A more plausible reason is that classical institutional and science history research used to be hindered in many places, and therefore this subject was left in the background.

The institution of university or college student clubs emerged at around the end of the 18th century. Before 1848 it was typical to have literary or nationalist reading clubs and societies in Hungarian tertiary education as the maintenance of national language and culture, together with the promotion of related political movements, was a crucial issue of the era. Vienna generally prohibited the starting of any club, but they were always running under different names and were carrying out the activities they had declared themselves to be in charge of⁵².

After the defeat of the 1848/49 fight for independence, no student club

⁵¹ Gyula Várallyay, *“Tanulmányúton” Az emigráns magyar diákmozgalom 1956 után.* (Budapest: Századvég Kiadó – 1956-os Intézet, 1992); Tamás Kiss, *Magyar Egyetemisták és Főiskolások Szövetsége 1956 – Szeged* (Szeged: Belvedere Meridionale, 2006); Frivaldszky János, ed., *Ötvenhat műegyetemistái. Ének a lyukas zászlóról.* (Budapest: Kráter kiadó, 2006); Sándor Sarkady Jr, *A soproni MEFESZ az 1956-os forradalomban* (Sopron: Nyugat-magyarországi Egyetem, 2006); Zsolt Osváth, ed. et al., *Magyarországi felsőoktatási intézmények az 1956-os forradalomban és szabadságharcban* (Budapest: Magyar Felsőoktatási Levéltári Szövetség, 2007); “A budapesti egyetemisták és főiskolások 1956-ban,” in Nagy Imre és kora. *Tanulmányok és forrásközlések* V. ed. Nóra Némethné Dikán et al. (Budapest: Nagy Imre Alapítvány – Gondolat Kiadó, 2009). Of memories: György Gömöri, *Az én forradalmam. Emlékezések és írások az 1956-os forradalomról* (Budapest: Pont Kiadó, 2006).

⁵² The most excellent work on the associations of the age came out as early as the beginning of the 1960s. Géza Bodolay, *Irodalmi diáktársaságok 1785-1848* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1963).

was allowed to operate up to 1862, and even after that there were only mutual aid associations, reading circles or debating societies functioning at Hungarian universities. The “Burschenschaft”, popular in Germany, was unknown in our country. At the end of the nineteenth century student associations started to have a political colouring, and at the same time they started to differentiate. For example, within the Budapest University Circle (the largest student association) there were three groups: the so-called “Reform Party”, “Central Party”, and “National Party”, which had different perspectives and political views. More and more student clubs were formed at the beginning of the twentieth century which sometimes conflicted one and another, other times they united in opposition with materialists⁵³. Liberal materialist students founded the Galilei Circle, the members of which played a crucial role in the 1918/19 revolutionary events⁵⁴.

For decades there was no processed data on university youth clubs of the inter-war years. Such work has been published only recently⁵⁵. The end of WWII presented a whole new era for university student associations. Old clubs were banned by 1947 the latest. The different political parties had youth divisions, university and college students had a united association founded. An example of this tentative was MEFESZ (acronym in Hungarian for “Association of Hungarian University and College Clubs”). An important positive initiative of the era was NÉKOSZ (“National Association of Rural Schools”), which stemmed from pre-war ideas and helped a number of talented but poor students of peasant origin obtain a place at university⁵⁶. In the 1950s there was only one association allowed, DISZ (“Association of Working Youth”), controlled by the Communist Party. The failure of this association

⁵³ Here we can mention the 1888 Szent Imre Circle, see Balázs Csiky, “A Szent Imre Kör”, in *Szent Imre 1000 éve. Tanulmányok Szent Imre tiszteletére, születésének ezredik évfordulója alkalmából*, ed. Terézia Kerny (Székesfehérvár: Egyházmegyei Múzeum, 2007), 145-151. Calvinist University Students founded Bethlen Gábor Circle in 1901. The Makkabea Association of Zionist University Students was founded in September 1903, and it became the centre of Hungarian Zionist movement.

⁵⁴ This circle had a rich literature in the years of state socialism, see Márta Tömöry, *Új vizeken járok. A Galilei kör története* (Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó, 1960). Also: Zsigmond Kende, *A Galilei Kör megalakulása* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1974). New: Péter Csunderlik, *Radikálisok, szabadgondolkodók, ateisták. A Galilei Kör története 1908-1919*. (Budapest: Napvilág Kiadó, 2017).

⁵⁵ Róbert Kerepeszki, *A Turul Szövetség 1919-1945* (Máriabesnyő: Attraktor Kiadó, 2012); Gábor Ujváry, “Egyetemi ifjúság és katolicizmus a, neobarokk társadalomban”, in *A harmincharmadik nemzedék*, ed. Gábor Ujváry (Budapest: Ráció Kiadó, 2010).

⁵⁶ NÉKOSZ was founded in July 1946 but was abolished by dictatorship in July 1949, see: Ferenc Pataki, *A NÉKOSZ legenda* (Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 2005).

became evident by the active participation of students in the 1956 revolution. Students wanted to re-organize MEFESZ, but this was prohibited by the victorious government and between 1957 and 1989, there existed only one youth association, the KISZ (“Communist Youth Association”), which had its local clubs at every university and college⁵⁷. It was characteristic of the system that occasionally there were tentatives on the part of the opposition from within the KISZ, since not all members were devoted to the system. Take, for example, the reform attempts at the Faculty of Arts at ELTE, which was a reaction of the 1968 Western European events, and vindicated a more democratic university education and several organizational reforms⁵⁸. Naturally, the movement was forcefully abolished shortly after.

To summarize, it can be said that Hungarian university history research has achieved significant results over the past 25 years and has caught up with its arrears significantly. It is important to emphasize the continuous organization and publication of university history sources, the making of new types of database, and the active work on subjects that were earlier considered as taboo. Nevertheless, we are aware that there is still a lot to be done in all areas if we want to provide national and international historical research with a realistic and authentic insight into the past of Hungarian tertiary education.

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⁵⁷ Ferenc Gergely, *A KISZ története 1957-1989* (Budapest. Holnap kiadó, 2008).

⁵⁸ For the events of 1969 see Zoltán Pál, *Az Eötvös Kollégium. Elitképzés a népi demokráciában* (Budapest. Kairosz Kiadó, 2013), 124-154.

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