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DOI 10.14232/belv.2014.4.8

# *The Torockó Myth*

## *Notions to the Sociographic Interpretation of Heritage Space*

**Abstract** The paper shows the development of a myth about Torockó in the literary works (fiction and scientific literature as well). The analysis follows the myth from its foundation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Finally, the paper analyses the symbolic language of monument space as well. Our conclusion is that myth can be interpreted as the basis of cultural heritage space emerging after 1990. The myth fills up the architectural environments with social contents (narratives, memorial images etc.). In fact, the discourses react on the architectural forms as well.

The founders of Torockó myth (e.g. Mór Jókai, Balázs Orbán) in the 19<sup>th</sup> century used a romantic language. They created a picture which influences the view about Torockó until today (for example “lunar landscape”). It is also important to mention that Torockó was a significant site on the “national map” of Hungary. After 1920, as part of Romania, Torockó became the symbol of minority life and the cultural exchange between Hungarians, Germans and Romanians (see the idea of “Transylvaniam”). However, the authors continued the tradition of romantic language. Only the third generation – working during the communist dictatorship in the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century – changed the language tools. They revised some basic elements of Torockó’s history (like the German origin, see by Zsigmond Jakó). The effect of their work is interesting in the sense that it has not decreased, but strengthened the myth. Finally, the paper shows the heritage transformations of the past two decades from the special aspect of the Torockó myth. This means an understanding of how the heritage protection displays the myth, as well as how the heritage space contributes to maintaining the myth. From this point of view, is important to interpret the reconstruction of mining houses of 17-18<sup>th</sup> centuries as an act remembering on myth of “freedom”; the renewing of houses from period 1860-1890 as a representation of myth of “German origin”, and so on. Thus, the monument protection of townscape is not only an architectural intervention but in the same time a creation of space of cultural heritage and a social fact of collective memory and historical identity.

**KEYWORDS** environment and society, social geography, regional studies, sociology of cultural heritage, architecture sociology, ethnic relations in Transylvania, sociology of knowledge.



## **Torockó as Heritage Space**

‘Torockó’s heritage protection is a success.’ – These words started the presentation of Árpád Furu and Iván M. Balasa about the Torockó Value Protection Program at the XVII. Folk Architecture Conference in 2010 (BALASSA–FURU 2011. 43., see also FURU 2006). The program started in 1996 when the outstanding figure of Hungarian heritage protection, Román András’s proposal was accepted by the Fifth District Municipality of Budapest to adopt two small Transylvanian villages, Torockó and Énlaka (Râmetea/Inlăceni RO). The program management was realized

by local NGO, by the Transylvania Trust from Kolozsvár/Cluj Napoca. The aim was to promote the survival of the remaining buildings of folk architecture with a fund of 20-25,000 Euros per year. Of this amount, the owners have received support for undertaking their home maintenance and for renovating their historic buildings. To receive support, the owner has had to accept the recommendations of the heritage experts. The sum spent on building reconstructions during the program was significantly higher than the subsidy from Budapest, because the owners have contributed with their own capital and especially with their work. So far 160-180 buildings have obtained interventions. Another field of activity of the program aimed to save some very ancient monuments from the 17-18<sup>th</sup> centuries. These buildings have been successfully restored with American support. A clear sign of success of the program is that it received the Europa Nostra Prize in 2000 (BALASSA-FURU 2011. 45.)

The aesthetic appearance of an architectural ensemble is a convincing argument for heritage preservation. However, for a sociologist, the question is what cultural-historical antecedents had taken place before a settlement became heritage space? The study below shows one section of an extended sociological research. It presents the theories about the origin and development of the Torockó myth. Firstly, it is important to emphasize that the word myth is not used in the original, literary meaning. Here myth means a historical account, a narrative that is still alive in the local folklore (PÁSZKA 2009). Actually, it is not one sole myth; we can speak of myths, or at least several layers within a myth. I assume that the basis of these layers appear in the literately works about Torockó (fiction and scientific literature as well). Torockó has been present for more than 150 years in Hungarian and Transylvanian public discourses. Its reputation was established by famous persons like Mór Jókai or Balázs Orbán, but the most famous architect of Transylvania, Károly Kós did visit Torockó as well. The following analysis will start from the foundation of myth in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and stop at the scientific revising of the myth in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This revision is interesting, because although the scientific sources refuted some elements of the myth, this fact has not decreased, but strengthened the myth. Finally, the paper will return to the heritage transformations of the past two decades. It reviews the results of heritage protection from the special aspect of the myth of Torockó. That means an understanding of how the heritage protection displays the most important myth layers of the past one and a half centuries, as well as how the heritage space contributes to maintaining the myth.

## **From the Biological Space to the Memorial Space**

Today, it is obvious that the view of a landscape is not given, but created (HARPER 2012). Take just one extreme example, the birds' settlement view. Here the houses turn into 'cliffs', caves become protected dens, and litter bins come to be valuable feeding sites (LIKER et al 2012). Anthropologists, sociologists and psychologists have been trying to describe the more complex human spatial concepts for decades (DÚLL 2010). The basics for people are also biologic. The finest architectural works in extreme conditions signify no more than cliffs to birds: obstacles, dens and lairs. Space is therefore primarily the depot of biological existence. But, as the human being itself, the built environment is much more than the mere framework of biological existence. The fundamental fault of functional modern urban planning is that it ignores this thesis, and it has not accepted the need for decorations and non-functional elements (MEGGYESI 2005). Modern residential units are designed with optimal conditions for optimal people. The old 'irrational paths' (streets) have been wiped out to let the mechanized circulation of the new settlement

freely flow. “*But it has never come to my mind why to build something different, something new instead of ( ... ) an existing (...) district with a wide range of values, traditions, and intangible atmosphere.*” (GRANASZTÓI 1976. 33.) Space is therefore not only the depot of biological existence, but the depot of social traditions which ensures individuals’ identity and fastens their memories in the spatial reality (BACHELARD 1994, HALBWACHS 1985, PÁSZKA 2009).

“*Its countless alveoli, space contains compressed time.*” – writes Gaston Bachelard (1994. 8.). The ability of memorizing comes from the nature of space. The directions, width and connections of the old streets preserve the way of life of former societies (MEGGYESI 2009). The recognition of the spontaneously preserved spatial structure can be regarded as a spiritual genesis of the heritage space (ROMÁN 2004). In parallel with the discovery of heritage, its preservation has also come on the agenda (MEZŐS 2002). In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a few individual buildings, and from the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, parts of whole settlements, then landscapes have been successfully placed under protection. Meanwhile, an unprecedented revolution has occurred in architecture creating a huge contrast between the heritage and non-heritage spaces.

However, the heritage space is unique not only in its morphology. The historic built environment almost offers itself as the scene of the collective social memory (Assmann 2006, Nora 1989). The *site of memory*, as Pierre Nora refers to it, is the spatial appearance of social identity. Its main feature is that it inspires the collective memory, encompasses old myths and contributes to creating new myths. The myths as discourses about the heritage space fill up the architectural environments with social contents (narratives, memorial images etc.). In fact, the discourses react on the architectural forms as well.

### “*The Despots Must Be Censured*” (ORBÁN 1985. 369)

So far, it has been pointed out that the heritage space beyond its actual architectural shape has a social content too. Next, the historical roots of a myth will be presented through the example of Torockó. It is clear that nowadays Torockó is an outstanding memorial site of national identity, together with other sites like Kolozsvár (Cluj Napoca RO), Csíksomlyó (Șumuleu Ciuc) or the Gyimes Valley (Ghimeș RO) (ILYÉS 2010). The origin of its function originates in the bloody ethnic conflicts of the freedom fight of 1848-1849. The Romanian-Hungarian conflict took place mostly in the area of the Ore Mountains (Erdélyi-Érchegység HU/Munții Metaliferi RO). The population of Zalatna (Zlatna RO), Verespatak (Rosia Montana RO), Abrudbánya (Abrud RO) and Nagyenyed (Aiud RO) suffered the most. All in all, 4000-6000 Hungarian and 3000-4000 Romanian people died. It means that 70 to 80% of the victims in Transylvania were concentrated here (ABLONCZY 2008). The Romanian rebels also surrounded Torockó, but the town was defended successfully: “... *some forty people collected the drums of the school and silently slipped out to the open Székelykő side, then climbed up the Székelykő slope, and there they started drumming terribly, shooting and marching into the town in immense clamour. A cowardly part of the Vlachs (Romanian) took flight for the noise of gunfire and drumbeat amplified by the echo of the place.*” (ORBÁN 1868. 208.) The writer of the previous citation, Balázs Orbán is perhaps the most famous author in Transylvanian homeland studies. He was a scholar, a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, yet a significant part of his works is not without literary sophistication. Especially the *Description of the Székely Land* (Székelyföld leírása I-V., ORBÁN 1868), which includes the chapter about Torockó, and has an entertaining literary style. His style did not derive from a specific scientific concept of Balázs Orbán, but it was rather the result of the norms of publication language in the period. In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, literature, popular science and academic science were not clearly distinguished yet. The emotionally

saturated interpolations, plotting, metaphors and symbols were standard stylistic instruments in scientific publications (LEDERER 2002). Incidentally, it is worth noting that more than a century later, it became clear that scientific publications of the 20<sup>th</sup> century used literary tools as well, in spite of the fact, that they aimed to be neutral like the papers of natural or technical sciences (WHITE 1978, GYÁNI 2000).

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, only few readers verified the scientific language of natural or technical papers in social studies, like history, geography or sociology. The authenticity of a text did not lie in the proofed methods, but in the person presenting the history. Therefore, we can say from today's point of view that the book of Orbán Balázs is a sociographic work containing numerous personal emotions and intuitions. The mining town of Torockó is in his concept the symbol of the 'Hungarians' who rebel against feudal oppression, who fall again and again, but never give up their rights and desire for freedom. The history of the town formulates a warning message to Hungary which embraced the ideas of 1848/49 by the Compromise of 1867 only partially: *'the people impatiently carried the yoke forced upon them. (...) All along they were true to the sacred cause of the homeland.'* (ORBÁN 1985. 367. 373). From this perspective, Torockó represented the national mythology of the generation of 1848/49 on a micro level, which means that it was an example for 'the moral winner of lost battles'. This generation created the myth of a defeated nation, based on historical events like Mohács (1526) and Rákóczi's independence fight (1703-1711), but first of all on their own experience of the lost revolution in 1848/49 (GYURGYÁK 2007, LEITHA 2004). Balázs Orbán also details the struggles of miners of Torockó against Rabutin and Tige's soldiers in the early 1700s, to the event of the forged charter of freedom (intended to evade the feudal obligations of Torockó citizens), and the legendary history of 1848/49. Meanwhile, he ignored the problem that the 1848/49 revolution and the miners in 18<sup>th</sup>-century who rebelled against feudal obligations had fundamentally different freedom ideals. Torockó's history by Balázs Orbán, the town with a crushed rebellion and tenacious struggles becomes an allegory of the 1848/49 revolution and war of independence, as well as the subsequent decades of quiet resistance (This pattern appears likewise in Rózsa Ignác's novel in connection with 1956.)

The contrast of the massive Székelykő cliff and the wooden houses that easily catch fire offers a perfect setting for a historical drama about the centuries of fight between the people struggling for their rights and the oppressive tyranny. Thanks to Balázs Orbán's linguistic inventiveness, we feel as if we were reading a great historical novel. However, it seems more authentic than a fictional novel as he prepared the manuscript of his works with scientific consistency. Balázs Orbán was a pioneer explorer. Reading his works makes us see the yellow donation letters, not yet in archival collections but in town or aristocratic libraries, or even in lofts. Later he descends to the depths of the mine, from where, as an early David Attenborough, he reports live: *'The rumble of horrifying moans, mournful growls you hear, and you feel to be in the damned hell'* (ORBÁN 1985. 380.). The epic arc of the discovery makes the description of Torockó one of the best chapters written by Balázs Orbán. The text served as an inspiration to further authors, first of all to Mór Jókai. Jókai published the most famous fiction novel about Torockó, 'God is One' (1877). The influence of Balázs Orbán was not limited to the story but it affected the style and the atmosphere of the text of Jókai as well.

### **'Lunar Landscape'**

As in the 19<sup>th</sup> century national ideas were born, Torockó was one of the first to be placed on Hungary's symbolic map (KEMÉNYFI 2013). This was primarily due to Jókai's novel, 'God is One' (1877). The effect of his works on the contemporary public opinion can be hardly overestimated.

Jókai had the unique talent to create regional 'minor homelands', towns and landscapes, so that they did not serve the particularity, but the case of the 'greater homeland' of Hungary. While he was a master of landscape descriptions, from the islands of the Danube, through Pest-Buda to the Transylvanian mountains, his works have no trace of regionalism. *'He spoke a highly idealized and universal language of the Hungarians at each site, like a folk song of a new style wherein geographical names vary freely.'* (SZERB 1978) In his novels, fiction was not separated from history and geography, emotion from science. In his villa in Buda, in Svábhegy he actually compiled books about the Hungarian landscape, and diversity and regionalism were part of the ideas of national ideology: *'This unity has never been achieved, alone in Jókai's work'* (HAMVAS 1996. 95.)

Jókai was not yet the kind of a modern novelist who passed internal details of his own mental life to the reader. He was more like an anthropologist. Before writing his novels, he organized data collecting journeys, he read scientific papers and took notes on slips of paper: *"Jókai wrote to the poet Sándor Teleki on 26 July 1876 to Koltó: 'If God is willing, this year I'll indeed get to meet You. Truly, on 3 August night I am going to Kolozsvár, from there to Torockó on 8<sup>th</sup>. I must take measure of the Unitarian brothers, because I want to tailor a novel on them...'"* (MIKÓ 1975. 231.). The inhabitants of Torockó prepared for the visit of the prince of Hungarian literature literary, and they made their best to show themselves in the best possible way during the two-day visit. They showed Jókai their church and their school; they wore their most beautiful clothes, so Torockó marched into Hungarian literature in its 'Sunday best'. *"Every suit was snow-white, even the sleeveless frock made of fine lamb leather too (...) and their shoulder corsets, aprons, gowns (viganó) were laden with laces, so much that even a fashion lady would envy them, their belts were interlaced with gold, and pinned into them, loose silk wedding shawl hung to the ground"* (Jókai 1966 : 40). Not only the costumes, but the scenery obtained its image from Jókai. However we have to mention that Jókai also used Balázs Orbán's descriptions who had taken over details from Kővári (KŐVÁRI 1853).

It has to be noted that people had not considered mountain regions beautiful until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the centuries of scarcity, beauty and utility had meant the same, therefore the more fertile the land was, the more beautiful it was considered. To admire barren landscapes required a particular scale of value. The time of romantic literature was a period when wildness and untouched nature became more interesting than cultivated agricultural lands. Thus, the romantic literature rejected the "agriculture orientated" taste while creating national ideology (T. SZABÓ 2008). The landscape discoveries of the 19<sup>th</sup> century guided people to barren lands, mostly to the mountains or to non-cultivated plains. The fashion for desolate landscape was so strong that it could overwrite the suggestions of the biggest poets, they could not ignore the spirit of the era. Sándor Petőfi for example had described the fertility of the Hungarian Great Plain, but soon after him the people turned to the wild parts of this region, namely to the Hortobágy (SZABÓ 1988. 81.). The almost deserted Hortobágy became the synonym of the nomad Hungarian traditions of the 9-10<sup>th</sup> centuries (KOVÁCS – SALAMON 1976).

However, the horizontal view of Hortobágy was not the landscape with which the Hungarians in Transylvania could have identified themselves. Beyond the pass of Királyhágó (Pasul Craiului RO) closed basins follow each other instead of the endless steppe. The atmosphere of the Transylvanian landscape appears compressed in Torockó as to be just a counterpart of Hortobágy. There, the sun has an exceptionally long path on the horizon, while in Torockó it rises twice because of the high mountains, and in the evening, long before dusk the valley is already darkened in shadow. No romantic taverns (csárda) invite us, no horses ride. In contrast to the

well-known romantic images of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Hortobágy, Torockó provided an exceptional experience for Jókai Mór: *'This land possesses a likeness to a lunar landscape which the great telescopes bring to us; and on that island everything is so singular, as if originated from a foreign star'* (JÓKAI 1966. 39.).

The truth is that Torockó's lunar landscape is as anthropogenic as natural. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, a significant portion of Székelykő was still covered with woodland. The uncontrolled use of wood by the mines and iron works led to an almost complete shearing of the hill-side, and resulted in the bizarre and astounding sights that make all visitors wonder. To this wonderment, Jókai created the most enduring words. The novel *'God is One'* created a captivating atmosphere that defined the forthcoming generations' view. When Károly Kós, the founder of regional architecture of Transylvania, visited Torockó in the early years of 20<sup>th</sup> century, he noted the following in his diary: *"just tolling the bells. One-on- one ... the ding-dong sounded, just like Jókai writes -in a real Unitarian manner"* (Kós 2008. 5.).

## The Literature of Titles

Jókai has indisputable merits in the development of the Torockó myth. But he actually did not borrow the inspiration from Torockó. The characters of the novel are foreign persons; the average figures of Jókai's are nearly the same everywhere. They are novel heroes in the strictest sense of the word. They could have lived anywhere. The love story and the chevalier adventures detach the novel from the actual site. One has not the faintest feeling that all this can just happen here and just to these people. *"The great sensations of primitive life, love and murder set in different environments vary in Jókai's novels."* (SZERB 1978. 374.). Yet the title is one of the best in Hungarian literature. *'God is One'* promises a perfect novel, compact sentences, but first of all, a binding to the location.

The later historical novels about Torockó convey the spirit of the site, but they have unforgettable titles as well. In 1926, Domokos Gallay published the *'Vaskenyéren/On Iron Bread'*. Some decades later Rózsa Ignác wrote *'Torockói Gyász/Sorrow of Torockó'*. Rózsa Ignác was born in Kolozsvár but lived in Budapest, and she used the case of Torockó as an allegory of the Hungarian anticommunist revolution of 1956. Ignác and Gallay guide the reader to the very beginning of the 1700s, when Torockó fought for its feudal autonomy, and then it was spectacularly punished, burned, looted, and the resistance fighters were executed. The story offers the artificial dramatic tone for the novels: *"they gravely looked after carriages. Those disappeared in the valley one after the other. Their rumble resounded in the turns time to time like a sinister threat ..."* (GALLAY 1996. 58). *"That summer was not only the time of grief but the happy time of unwise hope as well. Even I hoped for the impossible."* (IGNÁCZ 1970. 142.). The artificiality is not just the fault of the authors, but also of the literary genre. Historical novel is not a genre for the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The historical tales have too many lessons, too many theatrical gestures which awake to much mobilization of collective power. Furthermore, they abound in factual descriptions. The detailed descriptions of geography, ethnography or historiography appeared in Jókai's time as requirements for a successful novel, but seemed to overexposure education a few decades later. For example, the fictional diary writer, Kata Kriza in the *Torockói Gyász/Sorrow of Torockó* introduces her house with words of an amateur ethnographer. Of course, there are some evident fictional elements in the house presentation, like the runic writing. The mixture of facts and fiction makes her work a real myth *"they all have wood wall of scarf-joint. (...) t the wooden frame around the window in*

*a good palm-size is plastered all around, and whitewashed like snow. (...) The gates do not have the present Latin writing, but old runic one.*" (IGNÁ CZ 1970:57–58)

The Torockó novels written by different authors have played an essential part in the development of the myth. Although their literary value may be questionable, their atmosphere – particularly in Jókai's work – has defined the emotional attitudes to Torockó. To verify this, let me recall György Beke's sociographic report that aimed to portray the social reality of the changing rural conditions of the 1970s: *"My first experience was like everyone else's in Torockó: a romantic dream, the imagination overwrites my vision and my hearing, my thinking. The pathetic words of Jókai prepared me for a perception of such kind."* (BEKE 1979. 117.).

## Symbol of Transylvania

Although Torockó was apt for expressing the 1848 generation's identity, it had some drawbacks in reality. It had a declining mining industry at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the accompanying social problems. The decline fitted in no way in the era 1867-1920 that advertised steady development. But the First World War and the subsequent collapse of the Hungarian Kingdom produced a new situation in Transylvania. The case of Torockó could serve as a new historical symbol for the Hungarian population now under Romanian rule. *"But the people of Torockó remained Unitarians and Hungarians. As if the Székelykő's cliff had transformed their souls, their character became firm, as a rock."* (BORBÉLY 1927. 140.). The sentence cited here belongs to the literary historian, István Borbély who published a new book about Torockó history. Like Balázs Orbán, Borbély presents Torockó as the allegory of the Hungarians too. It was nevertheless a new element that the allegory represented the situation of the Hungarian minority in the Romanian Kingdom. In the introduction of his work he mentioned: *"This small mining town presents the oldest Hungarian history of Transylvania."* (BORBÉLY 1927. 5.). As compared to Balázs Orbán, Borbély's tone is less dramatic. For him, the act itself carries the drama, right from the Hungarian conquest which had – as Borbély argues – a very different meaning in Transylvania than in the valley of the Danube and Tisza rivers. While the latter region was the centre of Hungarian kings, Transylvania was an occupied territory. This thesis fits perfectly into the new conception of 'transylvaniam'. *Transylvaniam* was a regional ideology and literature school of three Transylvanian nations: Romanians, Hungarians, and Germans. In fact, it was reserved against the Hungarian ideology before 1920 and the national state of new Romania. It emphasized regional identity, the social interdependence of intellectuals and other social classes against the logic of national politics, which were based on authority, homogeneity and central power (KÓ S 1998, K. LENGYEL 2007).

Torockó represented at that time a special spirit for the Hungarian minority. Its history had predestined it for this role. The people of Torockó lived in continuous commercial and cultural relationship with the neighbouring Romanian villages. In addition, the culture of Torockó could be interpreted as a result of cooperation of Germans (Saxon) and Hungarian nations in housing, customs or painting. Therefore, the ideology of transylvaniam updated the results of former ethnographic researches. These had drawn attention to the German origin of the folk art of Torockó: *"The soil from which sprouted its art is German and do not deny it; but the Hungarian spirit has indeed printed its stamp in it; it has somewhat softened its hard, stern lines and enlivened its colours"* (KÖRÖSFŐ I 1909.). Thus, the myth was enriched with the new hue of the symbol of ethnic coexistence.

## Scientific Language

Because transsylvanism could never become a leading political idea, it maintained its innocence which is very important to the further developments of the Torockó myth. During the decades of communism, Torockó was reduced from a little town to a village, so it lost its administration character. It became a place for Hungarian intellectuals to escape from the towns, both in a physical and ideological sense. The cliff of Torockó was the symbol of survival in all times of hardship. Meanwhile, the Torockó myth became restrained at this time. The emotional overflow of Jókai which still had an influence between the two World Wars disappeared from the Torockó discourse. Under the conditions of the communist dictatorship, writing became a dangerous power (KENDE 2013, PÁSZKA 2006). Perhaps this explains why scientific texts had a renaissance in the Torockó literature in these decades. A professional tone could provide some protection against censorship. The scientific elaborations enriched the Torockó myth with a new image emphasizing the specific character of the site. This character was analysed through many aspects of life, such as the pre-modern mining technologies, the ambitions of a town to get autonomy during late feudalism of the 18-19<sup>th</sup> centuries, or – after 1990 – through the architectural heritage (FURU 2006, IFJ. KÓs 2010, JAKÓ 1974).

The scientific analyses were able to enrich the myth of Torockó with new elements. What particularly indicates the flexibility of the myth of Torockó is the fact that it has been able to survive its own refutation. Moreover, it could create new reference layers from these refutations. The best example is Zsigmond Jakó's study which aims to review some basic theses of the former local history of Torockó. As seen before, an important element of the Torockó myth is the ethnic synthesis involving Germans. But as Jakó points out, the German origin of the residents is only a legend based on a 'medieval liberation charter' forged in the 1700s. Based on the forgery, historians believed that the people of Torockó were descendants of Styrian miners settling here in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. In reality, the economic-political struggles of the 18<sup>th</sup> century explain the 'Germanization' of the miners' ancestors. The 'medieval liberation charter' appeared when the Viennese court intervened in the conflict between the miners and the landlord. The court hoped to extend its mining taxes by giving the town independence. Thus, the aim was primarily to prove not the German origin, but the autonomy. Probably, Vienna directly instructed Adam Hüttenmeyer, a gold exchange officer who made up the mining town's liberation charter to include the Styrian origin. The false charter did not reach its original goal, thus Torockó remained feudal possession of landlords. However, the unintended effect of the "German origin story" influenced the folk art.

Jakó's briefly described study puts the ethnic interactions of the myth in a new, even more interesting light. As long as the German origin was accepted, the German material culture could be well explained (see by KÖVÁRI 1853, IFJ. KÓs 2008, KÖRÖSFŐI 1909). But in fact, the cultural exchange was more complex. First of all, the people of Torockó accepted the false charter and the identity of the Styrian origin at the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century. (In fact, some German immigrant families did live in Torockó, but their origin is unclear). To underline the German origin, they began to adopt cultural elements from Transylvanian Germans, from the Saxonland. (This adaptation ignored that the Saxons did not have a Styrian origin.) Parallel to the development of "German origin", the population of Torockó took part in the revolution in 1848/49, and later the people accepted the modern national identity of Hungarians. Thus, the cultural change had



a double trend: an increasing number of artefacts with German origin and the strengthening of Hungarian national identity in spirit. Such a complex and fascinating phenomenon makes the case of Torockó very special. In conclusion, the refutation of the myth did not put an end to the myth itself, but enriched it with a new aspect, with the issue of the interaction of myth and reality.

### ***Myths in the Heritage Space***

In order to position the myths in modern heritage space, the initial thoughts should be recalled and compared with the layers of the myth. Thus, it was assumed that the heritage space is a space filled up with layers of myths. In other words, the architectural elements may be of interest not only because of their aesthetics, but also because of their symbolism. Within the myth layers, the following concepts have arisen from Balázs Orbán to Zsigmond Jakó: (1) allegory of freedom which derived from the projection of the anti-feudal nature of 1848/49 on the past; (2) national allegory which emphasizes communal loyalty and endurance after the suppression of the freedom movement (the losers' moral victory); (3) specific landscape that includes the mountainous environment, the relics of mining and iron crafts and the Unitarian religion; (4) Transsylvaniam and the different interpretations of the ethnic synthesis.

The heritage space as a memorial site keeps – either in an indirect or direct manner – the narrative elements of the myth alive. The concluding part of the paper raises some possible interpretations. At first, we should interpret the restoration and the partial reconstruction of the ancient mining houses from 17-18<sup>th</sup> century. These buildings can hardly meet modern requirements, so people used to demolish them. The heritage protection saves them, but at the same time it provides a strong spatial display of the memorial culture of the mining town's struggles in the 1700s. The red painting on the windows becomes visible again, and it serves as a memory site. As known, the red window frames reminded the people of Torockó on the bloodsheds of 1702 and 1704 carried out by Austrian generals (ORBÁN 1868). Perhaps the interpretation of the red window frames as memorial action is only a legend. The fact is that this interpretation was not a considerable part of the local memorial culture at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As Rózsa Ignác wrote: “*Not even the oldest miners would claim that the sign would be a message to call for resistance*” (IGNÁCZ 1970. 309.). Ignác spent a lot of time in Torockó, so we can assume that she had right in this case.

Next, we are going to interpret the second layer of the myth, the national allegory. While it is hard to define any ethnic character in the architecture, the myth has a lot of ethnic interpretations. The Torockó myth interprets first of all elements and decorations of folk art and make them treasures of national symbols. This idea originates in the works of Körösfői (1909), who mentioned that the Hungarian decoration would make the ‘hard German forms of houses’ milder and softer. The protection of folk art on facades awakes this interpretation again. The logic of myth does not request the verification of the thoughts of Körösfői. It is enough to have the morphological form.

The third level of the myth of Torockó is the landscape. It is full of symbols like hillsides cultivated in terraces, the bare rocks and the remaining entries to the mines. The view is very similar to the view of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, at least there are no signs of modern urban planning. This fact offers the symbol of ‘lunar landscape’ described by Jókai, in the scene of the novel ‘God is One’. Spatial correspondence to the literary text makes the landscape concretely readable, revealing not only the past of Torockó, but symbolizing an entire era of urban and social development as well.

Finally, without the claim to completeness, we should attempt to place the heritage preser-

vation of the historic houses on the marketplace in the symbolism of the myth. The house type represents the ideas of Transsylvaniaism and in general, the interethnic relationships. The form goes back to the cultural exchange, as the people of Torockó took over the idea of German origin. In the years of 1860–1870, they built houses in ‘German-Saxon style. But latter, the Saxon influence greatly weakened during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the buildings began to lose their original character after a series of extensions, paintings and window replacements. However, this process has stopped and even reversed thanks to the heritage preservation program, and thus the ‘Saxon origin’ of Torockó has again become strongly perceptible in the view.

But the interaction between space and myth is not only one-directional. The heritage program has refreshed the narratives, texts and myths about Torockó. First of all, the value of historical data increases simultaneously with the heritage investigations. The idea of authenticity requires the knowledge of the socio-historical context of the buildings. For example, ifj. Károly Kós’s study, which explores the 19<sup>th</sup>-century mining town’s occupational socio-topography, is the basis for settlement structure investigation. Also the literary contents of the myth have a great importance in the process of emotional reception of the architectural experience. Consequently, the heritage space becomes a terrain of discourse maintained by professionals, locals and tourists. Still, the operation of specific knowledge transfers should be the subject of another study. \*

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