

**THE IMAGES OF PRAID
IN THE TRAVEL AND TOURISM IMAGINARIES
OF THE LONG 19th CENTURY (1780–1918)**

Keywords: imagology, image, imaginary, symbolic geographies, Praid, 1780–1918

Researched theme, area and time period

The thesis presents an analysis of the process by which the image of a Transylvanian locality called Parajd¹ (the knowledge on this place) formed during the long nineteenth century (1780–1918), showing the articulation of Parajd as a travel destination in the public consciousness. The analysis is based on theories which claim that the social imaginary of an era is extremely complex, consisting of a multitude of dominant and marginal images, which are constantly changing, and are always subjective, deficient, contradictory and mediated by various entities of media. The sources of this transdisciplinary analysis are the material (textual and graphic) representations of these images. This work can be called, in general, an analysis of representations; a historical analysis of a specific place image; or (using the terminology of tourism science) a history of *destination image*; but the results of the research could also be connected to a history of Parajd's *place brand*.

Sources – methodology

The thesis presents the analysis of a large database: approx. 600 pages of texts on Parajd (see the digital appendix of the thesis) and a collection of related graphic illustrations (maps, drawings, photographs, etc.). In this database (I) the texts are categorized as follows: (a) under the keyword "science" appear scientific texts – encyclopedias and general dictionaries; comprehensive descriptions, monographs (presenting empires, countries, regions, etc.); the literature of mineralogy, geology and geography; etc.; (b) under the keywords "travel, bath, tourism" there are itineraries and guidebooks; the literature of Transylvanian baths; travel descriptions; school yearbooks including information on school trips; etc.; (c) under the keyword "news" appear the texts collected from newspapers containing information on the history of travel and tourism in the Praid area; finally (d) the texts which do not fit into the above mentioned categories are collected as "other texts". (II) The graphic representations (the collected text illustrations) can be found as an appendix of

¹ Praid.

the thesis. The text content of this database can be taken as the most complete bibliography of Parajd and, at the same time, the largest collection of texts on this locality; the appendix of graphic representations is also a unique collection.

The research is determined by methodological considerations developed in different academic fields (like the science of tourism, marketing, comparative literature, historical imagology, etc.). The content and discourse analysis is performed on three levels: the textual analysis shows, how the image of Parajd as point of interest had articulated; the intertextual analysis shows the continuities and changes of the image components over the researched time period; the contextual analysis reveals the circumstances in which the studied images were born (the work contains chapters on the general history of media and science in Transylvania, on the history of travel, baths and tourism in this land; on the other hand, there are numerous chapters presenting the authors of the studied travel literature). The work is enriched by the track logs of the investigated travels in written form and maps based on these. Thus, the dissertation contains more than 60 maps – a true atlas of travels in Transylvania.

Contexts; presentation of travellers and travels

The work offers two major chapters that expose the contexts, the historical circumstances in which the analyzed images constructed. Discussed topics are the process of mineralogical and geological exploration of Transylvania; the accessibility of Parajd and the Sóvidék ('Salt Land') region during the researched epochs; the changes in the culture of travel and travel writing, the characteristics of prototourism and the birth of modern tourism, including the development of bath culture in Transylvania (with emphasis on the history of the baths around Parajd: Korondfürdő² and Szovátafürdő³).

The thesis is based on a great variety of sources. There are travellers and travels identified in the travel literature, but also those found in the scientific literature, in the publications of the Transylvanian balneology, or in the news contents of the press of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century. The studied travellers are categorized as follows: travellers writing about Parajd without visiting it; travellers visiting the region of Parajd but not writing about it; and travellers, excursionists visiting and describing Parajd and its surroundings. The biographies and travels/excursions of these travellers are presented in chronological order. The list of these persons includes Emperor Joseph II (1741–1790), Ferenc Benkő (1745–1816), Balthasar Hacquet (1739–1815), György Aranka (1737–1817),

² Corund.

³ Sovata.

József Teleki (1777–1817), Dominik A. Guillaume (1763–1819), *Ami Boué* (1794–1881) and Karl Lill von Lilienbach (1798–1831), Paul M. Partsch (1791–1856), John Paget (1808–1892), Mihály Szentiváni (1813–1842), János Pálffy (1804–1857), Auguste de Gerando (1819–1849), Carl J. Andrä (1816–1885), Mór Jókai (1825–1904), Kálmán Lázár (1827–1874), László Kovách (1816–1894), Johann M. Salzer (1823–1903?), Márk Békessi (1824–1911?), Franz F. Fronius (1829–1886), Franz von Hauer (1822–1899), Károly Révai (1856–1923), Gyula Mentovich (1847–1903), Arthur J. Patterson (1835–1899), Ottó Herman (1835–1914), Ferenc Darányi (1851–1908), Gábor Téglás (1848–1916), Basiliu Basiota (1836–1906), Pál Kovács (1855–1915), Antal Deréki (1849–1931), Nelli Létay (?–?), Oszkár Mailand (1858–1924), Emil Hudyma (1876–1950), Jenő Cholnoky (1870–1950), János Tulogdy (1891–1979), Gyula Merza (1861–1943), András Hoffer (1884–1946), Irma Havas (1883–1985), Henrik Gonda (1880–1942), Hans Carossa (1878–1956), Arthúr P. Vákár (1879–1958), József Pogány (1886–1938), Karl F. Nowak (1882–1932), Lajos Szádeczky (1859–1935), László Fényes (1871–1944), an author with the pseudonym "Jenő", and there's also a presentation on the Society of Hungarian Physicians and Naturalists (1841–1933), on their assembly in Marosvásárhely⁴ with a special excursion to Szováta and Parajd (1864). The chapter of biographies contains the presentation of travellers frequently mentioned in the literature of travel history, but it introduces unknown ones as well.

Image analysis; results

The analysis identifies the components of Parajd's image in every epoch of the researched time period. These components are categorized as follows: (a) distinctive elements; (b) "rival" or contradictory elements; (c) synergizing elements; and (d) inactive or marginal elements.

The distinctive elements of the image are the components which make Parajd a well-differentiable entity. These are markers which in the studied imaginary can be connected only/primarily to Parajd. First of all, *the name of the locality* is analyzed – its variations and deformations; then the image of Parajd *as an industrial center*; Parajd as a place with *salt mine* (this subchapter reflects on the contradictions which can be found in the secondary literature regarding the beginning of the underground exploitation of salt in Parajd, and presents the evolution of images which show the salt mine of Parajd as a point of interest, as an industrial facility worth to visit); Parajd as a place with a unique geological phenomena,

⁴ Târgu Mureş.

the *Salt Canyon*; Parajd as a place with mineralogical rarities, like the *agate stone* or the *colored and fibrous salt*; Parajd as a locality without well-developed *spa culture* in the researched time period (contrary to the neighbouring baths, Korondfürdő and Szovátafürdő); Parajd as home of *halophilic plants*; and Parajd as a locality also characterized by its mythology related to the ruins of the *Rapsóné Fortress* close to the village.

”Rival” or contradictory image components are identified in contents which are strongly linked to different localities, this way dissolving the clear lines of their images – this is the case of Szováta and Parajd. One chapter of the dissertation focuses on the representations of the *rock salt appeared on surface* (as a result of salt tectonic movements) in the texts and graphic illustrations depicting Parajd and Szováta – this image component serves as a strong marker in case of both localities. The next chapter discusses the descriptions of *immense salt lakes* and *extraordinary floods* connected to both localities in the texts of the 18th and 19th centuries.

The synergizing elements are image components which strengthen each other. Such components can be identified in the presentations, promotional materials of the bath places Szovátafürdő and Korondfürdő. These publications presented the whole area, including Parajd (first of all its salt mine) as main point of interest for the excursionists. Such image components can be also identified in the texts which were decisive in the spread and mediatization of the notion ”Sóvidék” (’Salt Region’).

Inactive or marginal elements are image components which had a strong potential in the shaping of the place image, and yet, in the researched time period did not have a considerable impact on its formation. The analysis presents the profile of some authors (János Benedeki Enyedi Órás; Izabella Fanghne Gyujtó; Vilmos Hankó), who can be connected to Parajd, and who were prolific and recognized writers, but whose characters (in their lifetime or later) had not become important components of the Parajd image. (The first author ”entering the *Pantheon of Parajd*” was the poet Lajos Áprily.)

The dissertation identifies the moments of appearance and disappearance of the image components, outlining the major epochs of image formation. The first period started in the year 1780, with the beginning of the preliminary works of the underground exploitation and the appearance of the most important work of the era, written by Johann Ehrenreich von Fichtel. The transition to the second period took place during the years 1852–1868; in a simplified way, the year 1853 could be identified as the line between the first two periods (this was the year of appearance of the work *Erdély földe ritkaságai*, ’Rarities of Transylvania’ by László Kőváry, in which Parajd already appeared as a place for excursions).

The transition to the next period took place during the years 1880–1895, i.e. in the years of the institutionalization of tourism in Transylvania. The most important moment in this transition period was probably the foundation of the Transylvanian Carpathian Society (TCS) in 1891. This third short period was closed by the end of the First World War (1918–1920). The dissertation offers a detailed description of the image formation processes in each of these three time periods.

The first period: scientific travels, patriotic travels and the appearance of the first "tourists". The first publication in the database, which contains an entire subchapter on Parajd, is the work of Joanne Fridvaldszky (1767). Still, 1780 is the year which can be identified as the beginning of the first period, with the start of the preliminary works of the underground exploitation at Parajd and the appearance of the most important book of the era, written by Johann Ehrenreich von Fichtel on the rock salt of Transylvania. (This was the most important publication in terms of spreading knowledge on Parajd until the middle of the 19th century.) In the beginning of this period the name of the place was still "plastic" – Fichtel, for example, used three variations of the name (*Parajd, Parayd, Paraid*) in the same publication. He found no underground exploitation at Parajd, only works on the surface. He is the author who made the salt of Szováta and Parajd, the Salt Canyon ("a valley, the bottom and sides of which are of pure salt") known in Europe. The fibrous and colorful salt was connected to Parajd by the same book of Fichtel's, as well as the agate stone (this content was present in the Parajd-related texts until the middle of the 19th century). This publication contained the first appearance of the following formula used (even today) to describe the locality: "Parajd could provide the salt needed for the whole continent even for a whole century." The studied texts show: before the 1860s descriptions of the salt mine and the Salt Canyon appeared in Hungarian language very rarely (Fridvaldszky's work was written in Latin, Fichtel's publication in German, etc.). The travel description of the scientist Balthasar Hacquet was published during this period, in 1791. This contained the first printed graphic illustration of Parajd (depicting the Sóhegy,⁵ i. e. the "Salt Mountain" and the salt mine). The important authors of this period were mostly scientist travellers – the decades between 1770/1780 and the middle of the 19th century represent the era of scientific travels. Among these travellers it is important to mention the name of Paul Maria Partsch, an Austrian geologist, who visited Parajd in 1826 – though his observations were published only later, in the famous 'Geology of Transylvania' (1863) written by Guido Stache and Franz von Hauer. The last published

⁵ Muntele de Sare.

description of a scientific travel in the database (1859) can be connected to this latter geologist, Franz von Hauer. The literature of Enlightenment shows plenty of travels and salt mine visits made for the sake of science, but it also gives examples of excursions and salt mine visits made already basically for fun and pleasure (see the letter of Gábor Döbrentei written in 1817). The first "tourist travellers" appeared in Transylvania in the Era of Reforms, coming from the West. The most important publications were results of travels made by John Paget (1839) and Auguste de Gerando (1845). Both travel narratives contain words on Parajd. The first modern guidebooks appeared in this same period. The first item of this kind in the database is the guidebook of John Murray (1844), mentioning the salt mine of Parajd. Ami Boué's guidebook (appeared a few years earlier, in 1836, written in French, specifically for geologist-travellers) is also important – it oriented the travellers in the direction of Parajd. These highlighted works were published abroad: the book of Fichtel and the travel narratives of Hacquet in Nuremberg, Paget's travel description in London, De Gerando's narrative in Paris; the guidebook of Boué also in Paris; Murray's guidebook in London, Paris and Leipzig – the only exception is the mineralogy of Fridvaldszky, published in Kolozsvár⁶.

The second period: the development of travel culture, the emergence of Transylvanian bath culture and the appearance of publications identifying the points of interest, the destinations worth to visit in Transylvania. During the '50s and '60s of the nineteenth century there were remarkable changes in the evolution of the images of Parajd. In the second half of the century the travellers did not travel to Transylvania necessarily/primarily in the service of science anymore. The scientific travels of these times can be exemplified by the field trips of Franz von Hauer or Franz F. Fronius in the 1850s. (As a result of Fronius' trip, a specific geological event was recorded, the memory of which later became part of Parajd's descriptions: Fronius explored the Salt Canyon terrain in the days after the huge salt collapse of 1857.) The travels and excursions made for reasons specific to modern travel culture (like the pleasure of travel itself) can be exemplified by the travel of Mór Jókai (1853), which was highly mediatized via the press of the time, and after which Jókai also published words on Parajd. Among the most important travel narratives of the years around the Austro-Hungarian Compromise (1867) there is a travelogue written by Charles Boner (1865) and another one written by Arthur J. Patterson (1869). They both wrote about Parajd – Boner presented the Salt Mountain, while Patterson presented the salt mine as an attraction. The years after 1867 brought the expansion of railways in Transylvania, the development of bath culture, as well

⁶ Cluj-Napoca.

as the spread of Transylvanian spa literature. (In the first half of the 19th century Korondfürdő was already developing, but in the absence of promotional materials that would have determined the formation of the area's image.) During the 1850s and '60s appeared publications which contained descriptions of the Parajd salt mine and the Salt Canyon already in Hungarian language. In this respect, it was important that the general assembly of the Hungarian Society of Physicians and Naturalists in 1864 took place in Marosvásárhely, with an excursion to Szováta and Parajd – the extraordinary event offered a great visibility to Parajd in the press of the time, and it generated scientific publications on the Parajd area, the *Sóvidék*. One of these publications was the text of József Houchard, who enriched the discourse on Parajd with a specific motive: a reference to the salt on surface in Cardona, Spain. The most important author of this period was first László Kőváry (1842, 1847, 1852, 1852, 1853, 1857, 1866, etc.), then Balázs Orbán (1868, 1870). Kőváry's work published in 1853 was the pioneer of modern guidebooks in Transylvania. This included a description on Korondfürdő as well, with its excursion sites and destinations, first of all: the salt mine of Parajd. (Before this publication, there can be found only one description on Korondfürdő in the database.) The image of the Szekler "who cultivates the land on the back of the immense salt massif", or the image of the Szekler "who cuts his cellar into pure rock salt" appeared for the first time in the writings of Gyula Mihály Szigethi (1828, 1831), but these were little known in the 19th century – these images were introduced into the public discourse, again, rather by Kőváry (1852, 1853). Another work of this author (1852) also represents a milestone in the dissemination of knowledge on a particular element of the Parajd image: the Rapsóné Fortress (more precisely the ruins of it, which can be found in the neighbourhood of the locality). Via this publication the mythology related to the Rapsóné Fortress was introduced in the works of Saxon ethnographers, and it was adapted more and more often by Hungarian writers and poets too. The monograph of János Hunfalvy and Lajos Rohbock ('Hungary and Transylvania') was published in 1864. This is the first Hungarian publication in the database, which explicitly states: the salt mine and the Salt Mountain of Parajd are worth visiting. In 1868 the first volume of Balázs Orbán's monograph was published, in which the author reused the motif found in Houchard's text (the reference to the Cardona salt); used the notion "Sóvidék", having a strong impact on the spread of it; described the Rapsóné Fortress as a spot which offers itself for excursions from Parajd (later on the first Transylvanian guidebooks took this information from him); and finally, this important author has determined the public discourse (till nowadays) also by fixing a wrong date: in Orbán's work – and in the 19th century publications only here (apart from a text based on this

monograph of Orbán) – the beginning of the underground exploitation is marked erroneously by the year 1762. The monograph is also important for graphic representations: the presentation of Parajd and its surroundings contains an illustration of the Rapsóné Fortress and another illustration of the mining site at Parajd. Since the work of Balthasar Hacquet (1791) these were the first published graphic representations of Parajd, produced for the large public. The highlighted publications appeared in Kolozsvár (Kőváry's works), in Hermannstadt/Nagyszeben⁷ (Fronius' travel notes), in Vienna (Hauer – Stache 1863), in Darmstadt (Hunfalvy – Rohbock 1864) and Pest (Houchard 1865; Orbán 1868, 1870). This was the time period when the Rapsóné Fortress became component of the Parajd image, as well as a new industrial facility worth visiting: the match factory of Parajd was opened in 1858 and it was closed in 1899. (The first report on a visit to this match factory is from the year 1864.)

The third period: the institutionalization of tourism and the first decades of organized tourism in Transylvania. The (multiple) institutionalization of tourism in Transylvania took place during the last two decades of the 19th century. Some remarkable writings were published even earlier than 1880, but from the same authors who were actors of the organization of the Transylvanian tourism during the 1880s and 1890s. It is worth mentioning the account of Gábor Téglás on his excursion to the Sóvidék region (1874), or the description of Ödön Nemes (1882) published in the press of Budapest – this was the first article exclusively on Parajd (with a full-page illustration of the Salt Mountain and the mining village). This period was determined by the birth of the Siebenbürgischer Karpatenverein (1880), then by the birth of the Erdélyi Kárpát-Egyesület, the 'Transylvanian Carpathian Society' (1891). In 1892 the TCS published its magazine, which was the first Hungarian tourism periodical in Transylvania. In 1895 a new class of the TCS was established in Székelyudvarhely,⁸ close to Parajd. The first Transylvanian modern guidebook was the work of Eduard Albert Bielz (1881) written in German language. The first Hungarian modern guidebook in Transylvania appeared in 1891, the first Romanian one in 1894. The first guidebook on Udvarhely County appeared in 1897 (edited by the members of the TCS from Székelyudvarhely). As another important publication should be mentioned the book of Vilmos Hankó, published in 1896 under the emblem of the TCS. This new institution of the Transylvanian tourism built infrastructure, wrote programme for the development of tourism, created media surface for tourism-specific contents, promoted and this way positioned the

⁷ Sibiu.

⁸ Odorheiu Secuiesc.

different places in Transylvania. The TCS guidebooks preferred to locate the Transylvanian salt on surface by promoting Szováta; Hankó's work on the other hand – through its textual and graphic contents – focused on the rock salt of Parajd instead. The graphic illustration of the Salt Mountain from this book was redistributed by several publications until the outbreak of the First World War. (Also, Hankó was the first one who used the comparison "Parajd's salt – like Carrara marble", a motif which appears often in the discourse on Parajd.) Another important publication from the beginning of the new century was the monograph *Az Osztrák–Magyar Monarchia írásban és képből*, 'The Austro–Hungarian Monarchy in Text and Image', including a new illustration of the Salt Canyon and connecting the notion of "rock salt on surface" again to Parajd. In the first decade of the twentieth century Szováta reached the first place among the baths of Szeklerland, this way Parajd gained additional media surface as a place for excursions. At the same time, the components of the image of Szováta began to reorganize: the Medve-tó⁹ had become more and more important in this image. (In these years lots of postcards had appeared promoting Szováta through the images of karstic salt surfaces.) From the year 1892 the bath of Korondfürdő had also been promoted with more effort by the new owner, Gyula Gáspár. Parajd, as an excursion place, once again took advantage of the appearance of these promotional materials. In this period the brochures promoting the baths of Korondfürdő and Szovátafürdő appeared already in the edition of local entrepreneurs. In 1907 Gyula Merza, a pioneer of the professional tourism management in Transylvania, a member of SCT, published an article on the management of tourism in the *Sóvidék* already emphasizing the need to promote Szovátafürdő, Parajd and Korondfürdő as a touristic microregion. At the beginning of the 20th century so called "Szekler Societies" were established to solve the urgent problems of the society and economy of Szeklerland. An important branch of activity of these societies was the development of tourism and baths. In 1903 and 1905 they carried out an intense campaign in the press of the the whole country promoting circuits organized in Transylvania (including in the programme the visit of the salt mine at Parajd). These decades represent the period when school trips became an integral part of the annual school curriculum – this was the first important period of "school tourism" in Transylvania. Salt mine visits became mass phenomenon during this period. The railway reached Parajd only in 1906; later on, in 1915 a second line was opened as well, connecting the settlement with the city of Marosvásárhely. This period of development was ended by the outbreak of the First World War.

⁹ Lacul Ursu.

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