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The Evolution of the Székely Identity 1867–1940

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Contents

The topic of the dissertation is the thorough analysis of the evolution of the Székely identity in the period between 1867 and 1940. I have chosen this period of time – with antecedents dating back to the middle ages – deliberately. It is considered almost a cliché in the Hungarian historiography that the Székelys had lived as a medieval *natio* – here the Latin *natio* not meaning the modern nation, but a social stratum based on specific legal status and privileges – until the Hungarian Civic Revolution and War of Independence of 1848–1849. The latter event caused the integration of the Székelys in the modern civic Hungarian nation, thus the Székelys voluntarily disclaimed the reminiscences of their privileges.[1] In the present dissertation I have tried to argue, that although the events of 1848–1849 are important for the evolution of the Székely community's identity, but I would not consider them as an unequivocal milestone. Accordingly, without contesting the role of the events of 1848–1849, I tried to reason that almost all the crucial elements making up the Székelys' identity remained in the community's conscience, thinking and discourse. The references to the ancient, Hunnic origin, the braveries of the past, the medieval liberties and specific democracy, heroism, military glory, protection of the faith and thus of Western civilization are not just discursive frills, but – in my opinion – they constitute very important pillars in the Székely community's everyday ethnicity and identity construction.

Besides the compulsory chapters, like the introductions and the conclusions, present dissertation is structured into four major chapters that present the evolution of the Székely identity based on three principles. The first is the chronological one, so from the beginnings of modernity until 1940. The second is the thematic approach, so the two main periods – from the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 until the end of World War I and the interwar period – are presented according to similar aspects: the origin and image of the Székelys in the historiography, literature, press, political discourse and historic remembrance politics of the studied epoch. The third principle is the territorial one. Up until the end of World War I the construction of Székely identity was mainly the job of the Székely elite, without denying the role of the Hungarian political and cultural elite. After the war tens of thousands of Székelys, mostly intellectuals and members of the administrative and political elite of Austria-

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[1] Hermann, Gusztáv Mihály: Náció és nemzet. Székely rendi nacionalizmus és magyar nemzettudat 1848-ig. Pro-Print. Csíkszereda. 2003. 298–299; Egyed Ákos: Forradalom és szabadságharc 1848–1849. In: Egyed, Ákos – Hermann, Gusztáv Mihály – Oborni, Teréz (red.): *Székelyföld története. II. kötet. 1562–1867.* MTA BTK – EME – HRM. Székelyudvarhely. 2016. 618.

Hungary, were forced to flee Romania and moved to Hungary. Thus the construction of Székely identity happened on two different frontlines. On the one hand there were the Székelys of Romania, who tried to cope with their new minority status and resist the denationalization politics put forward by the new Romanian state. On the other hand there were the Székelys in Hungary, who advocated a more radical approach of identity building.

Sources and bibliography

When dealing with modern or contemporary historical topics, the researcher meets various sources. The most important are the archival ones. For the period of Austria-Hungary the most important archival sources I used were the official reports of the municipal committees of the Székely seats then counties.[2] In Székely Land I have also looked into the archives of political formations,[3] schools,[4] persons or families.[5] In the Central Archives of The National Archives of Hungary I studied documents of the interwar period, mainly those concerning problems of the Hungarian minority in Romania.[6] Also in the Central Archives of The National Archives of Hungary and in some of its regional archives I researched the archives of some political or social organizations of the Székelys.[7] Besides the archival fonds I have also researched some personal collections and posthuma of libraries from Romania and Hungary.[8]

[2] Serviciul Județean Harghita a Arhivelor Naționale F 27 Scaunul secuiesc Ciuc. B. Documente din perioada 1861–1876. 3. Registru cu procese-verbale încheiate în ședințele adunării generale a scaunului Ciuc 1869–1876; F 7 Prefectura județului Ciuc. 4. Registrele cu procesele verbale ale ședințelor comitetului municipal al comitatului 1877–1911; F 43 Prefectura județului Odorhei. 2. Registrele cu procesele verbale ale ședințelor comitetului municipal al comitatului 1876–1913, 1915–1916, 1918.
Biroul Județean Covasna a Arhivelor Naționale F 8 Scaunul secuiesc Trei Scaune. 8. Registru cu procese-verbale încheiate în ședințele adunării generale a scaunelor unite Trei Scaune și Micloșoara 1867–1876; F 9 Prefectura județului Trei Scaune. 1. Registrele cu procesele verbale ale ședințelor comitetului municipal al comitatului 1876–1917.
Serviciul Județean Mureș a Arhivelor Naționale F 23 Scaunul secuiesc Mureș. 20. Registru cu procese-verbale încheiate în ședințele adunării generale a scaunului Mureș 1861, 1867–1872, 1872–1876; F 48 Prefectura județului Mureș. 5. Registrele cu procesele verbale ale ședințelor comitetului municipal al comitatului 1877–1918.
[3] Serviciul Județean Harghita a Arhivelor Naționale F 318 Consiliul Național al Comitatului Ciuc.
[4] Serviciul Județean Harghita a Arhivelor Naționale F 72 Gimnaziul Romano-Catolic Șumuleu Ciuc (Miercurea Ciuc); F 683 Gimnaziul Unitarian Cristuru Secuiesc.
[5] Serviciul Județean Harghita a Arhivelor Naționale F 12 Fondul personal Pál Gábor, Dr; Biroul Județean Covasna a Arhivelor Naționale F 36 Fondul familial Apor din Turia de Jos; Biroul Județean Covasna a Arhivelor Naționale F 48 Fond familial Szentkereszty din Arcuș. Biroul Județean Covasna a Arhivelor Naționale F 74 Colecția „Cserey Emília".
[6] Central Archives of the Hungarian National Archives K 28 The Prime Minister's Departament for Minorities and Nationalities; K 64 Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 27. Romanian-Hungarian Relations; K 437 Centre of Social Organizations
[7] Central Archives of the Hungarian National Archives P 1072 The Székely National Party; Hungarian National Archives Hajdú-Bihar County Archives X 83 Székely Society of Debrecen (1919–1926); Hungarian National Archives Fehér County Archives X 803 Society of Székelys and Transylvanians of Székesfehérvár (1929–1944).
[8] National Széchenyi Library, Budapest. Endes Miklós Collection. Fol. Hung. 2099, 2112, 2123/I., 2123/II.

In the vast collection of newspapers and periodicals of the National Széchényi Library I read through the papers edited in the Székely Land or by the Székelys settled in Hungary after World War I, like *Hargitaváralja,* periodical of the Symbolic Székely Municipality by the same name. The *Arcanum Digiteca*, the continuously expanding digital periodical database was of real help during my research.

Archives and periodicals do not constitute the sole sources, so the present dissertation is also based on a large amount of primary and secondary bibliography.[9]

The structure and brief presentationof the dissertation

Chapter I. Introduction: topic, sources, method (pp. 6–62)

The first part of the introduction summarizes the motivations behind my choice, emphasizing the recent renaissance of study of Székely history and the recent developments in trying to redefine, reevaluate or rediscover the Székely identity. This is followed by the presentation of the hypotheses of the dissertation and of the methods used during the drafting of the thesis. Then comes a brief walk through the historiography of the topic and of the

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[9] I would like to name just a few of the most important titles dealing with the issue of Székely identity: Ablonczy, Balázs: Székely identitásépítés Magyarországon a két világháború között. In: Orbán, Zsolt (szerk.): *Székelyföld és a Nagy Háború. Tanulmánykötet az első világháború centenáriuma alkalmából*. Csíkszereda Kiadóhivatal. Csíkszereda. 2018. 467–485; Balaton, Petra: Gazdaság és agrártársadalom. In: Bárdi, Nándor – Pál, Judit (szerk.): *Székelyföld története. III. kötet. 1867–1990*. MTA BTK–EME–HRM. Székelyudvarhely. 2016. 137–241; Bárdi, Nándor: *Otthon és Haza. Tanulmányok a romániai magyar kisebbség történetéről*. Pro-Print Könyvkiadó. Csíkszereda. 2013; Bárdi, Nándor: A két világháború között. In: Bárdi, Nándor – Pál, Judit (szerk.): *Székelyföld története. III. kötet. 1867–1990.* MTA BTK–EME–HRM. Székelyudvarhely. 2016. 393–529, 573–604; Bottoni, Stefano: Nemzeti tervek, regionális identitás, mindennapi kompromisszumok. Székelyföld Nagy-Romániában (1919–1940). In: Lagzi, Gábor (szek.): *Közép-Európa a 21. század küszöbén – regionális identitás és civil társadalom*. Pannon Egyetem – Modern Filológiai és Társadalomtudományi Kar – Társadalomtudományok és Nemzetközi Tanulmányok Intézet. Veszprém. 2014. 45–64; Dani, Erzsébet: *Identitásgyarmatosítás Erdélyben. Identitásdrámák és interkulturális stratégiák a Trianon utáni székelymagyar irodalomban*. Pro-Print Könyvkiadó.Csíkszereda. 2016; Egry, Gábor: *Etnicitás, identitás, politika. Magyar kisebbségek nacionalizmus és regionalizmus között Romániában és Csehszlovákiában 1818–1944*. Napvilág Kiadó. Budapest. 2015; Gottfried, Barna – Nagy, Szabolcs: *A Székely Hadosztály története*. Gutenberg Kiadó. Csíkszereda.2018; György, Béla: Adalékok a két világháború közötti székely autonómia kérdéséhez. *A Csíki Székely Múzeum évkönyve*. VII. Szerk.: Kelemen, Imola. Csíki Székely Múzeum – Pro-Print Könyvkiadó. Csíkszereda. 2011. 105–120; Hermann, Gusztáv Mihály: *Náció és nemzet. Székely rendi nacionalizmus és magyar nemzettudat 1848-ig*. Pro-Print. Csíkszereda. 2003; Pál, János: Vissza- és elrománosítási kísérletek a székelyföldi unitárius egyházközségekben. *Magyar Kisebbség*. XIII/1–2. 2008. 186–253; Pál, Judit: Erdély népeinek eredetmítoszai: a székelyek hun eredetének mítosza. In: Jankovics, József – Nyerges, Judit (szerk.): *Hatalom és kultúra. Az V. Nemzetközi Hungarológiai Kongresszus (Jyväskylä, 2001. augusztus 6–10.) előadásai*. II. Nemzetközi Magyarságtudományi Társaság. Budapest. 2004. 814–822; Pál, Judit: A dualizmus kora. In: Bárdi, Nándor – Pál, Judit (szerk.): *Székelyföld története. III. kötet. 1867–1990*. MTA BTK–EME–HRM. Székelyudvarhely. 2016. 27–104, 242– 361; Zahorán, Csaba: Egy kis Magyarország Nagy-Romániában. Alternatívák a Székelyföldre a két világháború közötti magyar tervezetekben. *Magyar Kisebbség*. Új sorozat/XIV/1–2. 2009. 133–149.

various sources used. The last part of the introduction is made up by the definition of the key notions and concepts used, like ethnicity, nation, nationalism, patrimonialization.

Chapter II. The Székely Identity Before the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 (pp. 63–98)

The beginning of the chapter briefly introduces the problem of the origin of the Székelys, followed by the presentation of the most important aspect about the medieval Székely nation. The thesis analyses the long road from medieval ethnic conscience towards the acceptance of modern national identity.

The central question of the chapter is whether the Hungarian Civic Revolution and War of Independence of 1848–1849 constitutes a real milestone in the evolution of Székely identity? My answer – lengthily explained in the following chapters – is no. Although the medieval Székely nation disappeared with all the remains of their privileges and the integration into the modern Hungarian nation takes place, already from the Neoabsolutist era we have many sources that suggest the endurance of the most important elements of the specific Székely identity.

Chapter III. Factors Shaping the Székely Identity 1867–1918 (pp. 99–196)

The chapter dedicated to Austria-Hungary is divided in many subchapters. Some of these deal with the problem of Székely's origin in the political discourse of the Hungarian Parliament and of the municipal committees of the Székely seats then counties, in the historiography, textbooks and periodicals of the studied age. In terms of political discourse one can notice that whenever the Székelys felt threatened by the various political, administrative or economic reforms – or the lack of those, like the constant delay of infrastructural or industrial development – coming from the Hungarian central government, the identity-rhetoric returns to the mythical past of the presumed ancestors, the Huns, the first conquerors of the land, who heroically resisted to all nomadic assaults in South-Eastern Transylvania until the arrival of their "brothers", the Hungarians. The land soaked with the blood of the ancestors, the armed resistance against Tatar and Turkish hoards, thus being the advanced bastion of Christianity were amongst the main arguments used to reach present goals. The same stressing of the glorious past of authentic equality and medieval democracy, but also references to adverse circumstances we find in the discourses said at diverse ceremonies, like the celebration of the Millennium or the inauguration of a new administrative seat. Historiography and textbooks are more interesting cases. Up until the middle of the 19th

century no one had challenged the historically claimed descent from Attila's Huns, a tradition carried on by all chroniclers of the Middle Ages. When some scholars dared to criticize this theory, they had no effect on Székely mentality, they were simply considered "strangers" or "traitors". The Székelys' universal belief was that presented by "the greatest Székely", Balázs Orbán in his monumental book "The Description of the Székely Land". The first textbooks used in the confessional schools after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 continued the tradition of the chroniclers. Only in the late 19th century, when more and more historians challenged the Hunnic origin of the Székelys and gave alternative explanations to this problem, the authors of history schoolbooks introduced these new developments in their texts, but not without mentioning the universal belief of the Székely people. One subsection presents the same issue of the Hunnic origin reflected in various writings in newspapers and periodicals.

Another subchapter takes a look on the monographs edited by the Székely counties. Being ordered by the leadership of the counties, these writings reflect the "official opinion" of the administrative and political elite on their own history, including the problem of Hunnic descent. As one could expect, they do not turn against the historic tradition and collective conscience.

A subsection is dedicated to identity construction through the establishment of various collections and erection of public monuments. The most important collection is the Székely National Museum established in Sfântu Gheorghe in 1875, then the Museum of Industrial Art in Târgu Mureș founded in 1886. The latter gained an imposing new seat in 1893, the central figure of the building's tympanum is Attila, the most important king of the Huns. Thus the statue symbolically tells that the Székelys are Attila's descendents. In the same manner, most of the stained glass of the Palace of Culture from Târgu Mureș, erected between 1911–1913 present images of the Székely's mythical origin and past. In regard to the public monuments erected by the different authorities we can conclude that during Austria-Hungary most of them hint at various moments of Székely peoples history: the Monument of the Honvéds Sfântu Gheorghe (1874) reminds of the heroic resistance against the Austrian troops fought especially by those from the Three Seats; the Monument of the Székely Martyrs in Târgu Mureș (1875) evokes the martyrs executed in 1854 by the Austrian authorities in the Neoabsolutist era; the Millennial Statue in Odorheiu Secuiesc (1897) planned to be erected initially on Budvár Hill – where, according to the tradition the rabonbáns, mythical leaders of the Hunno-Székelys in the early Middle Ages had their seat; the Monumentul from Siculeni (1905) that commemorates the few hundred Székelys massacred by the Austrian army in

1764, following their opposition to be recruited in the border guards of the Austrian military. All these monuments, the "history set in stone" shows us that by erecting them, the Székelys wanted to emphasize their own past, own traditions, specific heroism and suffering.

The last subchapter deals with the image of the Székelys in the writings of foreign travellers. Beginning with the 19th century travelling to distant, unknown or exotic places came to fashion. Thus even some of the remotest, so more mysterious or romantic areas of Hungary, like the Székely Land hosted the first tourist, like John Paget, Auguste de Gérando, Charles Boner, Arthur John Patterson, Emily Gerard or Margareth Fletcher. Though with different prior readings, knowledge or interests, all the above listed present a positive, sometimes even idealized image of the Székely Land and its people. Even if they had read conflicting theories they do not even contest the Hunnic descent of the Székelys, but warmly present their primordiality, specialness and extraordinary qualities.

Chapter IV. The Székely Identity in Romania in the Interwar Period (pp. 197–477)

The longest chapter of the dissertation is dedicated to the analyses of all the factors that influenced the evolution of the Székely identity in interwar Romania. The chapter is made up of seven subsections. The first three focus on political issues. The loss of the war by Hungary, the dissolution of Austria-Hungary and the Treaty of Trianon brought major changes for the Székely Land and its people. Once the new borderlines were settled, the Székely Land became part of Romania, located exactly in the center of the new state. The new realities were perceived by the Székelys, who were the absolute majority in the area, as unjust, a catastrophe. Therefore the Székely National Council formed at the end of the war set as its main objective the proclamation of a Székely Republic. Similarly, the Székelys, who made up most of the Székely Division, a military unit of the Hungarian Republican Army in 1918–1919, were the last ones to fight for Hungary's territorial integrity in the Hungarian-Romanian War of 1919.

After failing to proclaim the Székely Republic, the elite of the region proposed two major political goals. The Declaration adopted by the Romanian National Assembly on the 1st of December 1918 proclaimed equal rights for all minorities. Hence the Székelys integrated in the Hungarian Party (Országos Magyar Párt) fought for these rights to be guaranteed by the Romanian governments. The other political aim, that referred only to the Székelys, was the issue of autonomy. At the Paris Peace Conference, the Principal Allied and Associated Powers made Romania to sign the Minority Treaties in December 1919. Article 11 of the Treaty formulates: "Romania consents to give ecclesiastical and educational autonomy to the

Székely and Saxon communities of Transylvania under the control of the Romanian state." Many prominent members of the Transylvanian political and judiciary elite interpreted this article in many different ways. But the Székely peoples wish for autonomy was not supported by any of the interwar Romanian governments. Yet more, this desire was not supported either by the historic Hungarian churches, that feared the loss of control over the education in confessional schools, or by the Hungarian Party, that feared the division of the Hungarian community in Transylvania and thus the weakening of its position in Romanian politics.

Another subchapter focuses on the condition of being a minority Székely in Romania. The policy of uniformization, denationalization and Romanization carried out by the Romanian governments in the interwar period – such as the so called "cultural zones" or name analyses – brought much sorrow on the Székelys. But most difficult to digest was the intent to "reromanize" the "szeklerized Romanians". According to many Romanian scholars the Romanians contituted the majority in the Székely Land before the settlement of the latter, but they were szeklerized throughout the centuries. In support of these theories came some pseudosciences, fashionable in the period, like eugenics. Its discourse played an important role in the Romanian national culture and in shaping the Romanian national identity. But the "reromanization" politics and making the Székelys loyal to the Romanian state proved to be a failure.

The subchapters dealing with political life are followed by those that focus on the problem of the Székelys' origin and image in the historiography of the times analyzed. Despite most historians of the period did not support the theory of the Székelys' Hunnic origin, they kept on emphasizing its importance in the collective conscience. Székely historians did not promote the new trends, but continued to criticize the opponents of the Hunnic origin theory, and argued for the primordiality and mythical history of the Székelys. The loss of Transylvania, the day-by-day problems of minority life in Romania led many pseudo historians to come out with different phantasmagorias or more radical approaches. In these dilettantish writings the Székelys appear as successors or various great ancient peoples with extraordinary racial qualities. These theories very mainly supported by authors with Székely origin, but settled in Hungary. As far as the Székelys of Romania are concerned, their self-image had not changed: the belief of Hunnic ancestry remained unaltered.

One subchapter focuses on identity shaping through literary and sociographical works. The territorial and political changes that followed World War I stimulated the Transylvanian men of culture to a constant search for finding their own voice. Besides some notable trends, like Transylvanism, young Székely authors founded the Group of the Eleven, aiming to find

the Székely literature's own voice and specificities. But the most important authors, considered as the most significant Székely writers of the period were József Nyírő and Áron Tamási. They both wrote their works in "Székely language", with all its archaic and regional features and its chracteristic humour. They were the ones who created two heroes – Úz Bence și Ábel – that can be considered the archtypes of the " Székely man". Their novels and other writings were very popular in the period, hence their influence on upholding and shaping the Székely identity is unquestionable. The subchapter also deals with a very familiar polemics of the period, crumbs form the Székely lyre and points out the differences between myth-making and myth-busting writings. The most significant demythologizer of the analyzed period was György Bözödi, who in his sociography entitled "Székely regrets" tried to look as objectively as possible on the history and problems of the Székelys, thus being the first to break out from the mythical canons of Székely conscience.

The penultimate subchapter is concerned with the problem of patrimonialization. It presents the Roman Catholic Whitsuntide Pilgrimage at Șumuleu Ciuc, and its impact on identity, being treated as the pilgrimage of the "Székely nation". Then the Székely folk art movements are presented, these led to a renaissance of folk weaving and wearing folk costumes. The most important results were the foundation of the Museum of Ciuc dedicated mainly to folk art and the organization of The Day of the One Thousand Székely Girls at Șumuleu Ciuc starting from 1931. The Day's impact on upholding and consolidating identity was percieved by the Romanian authorities, who banned this festival aiming the preservation of traditions from 1935. This subchapter also deals with the discourses said at different inauguration ceremonies (of a church, museum etc.). We can observe that the speakers' main goal was clear: conserving the specific Székely identity at all costs. The last part of the subsection debates the question of the existence of Székely painting. Three painters of Székely origin are presented, who, through their work, topics and messages of their paintings, and their reception by the art critics, contributed to keeping up the specific identity.

The last subchapter focuses mainly on the concept of Székely Land, especially by thoroughly presenting a magazine entitled *Székelység* (*Székelys*) established and redacted from 1931 by a geologist and teacher from Odorheiu Secuiesc, János Bányai. The periodical had some permanent columns: the presentation of the great Székelys, of local history, ethnography, natural beauties, but also of specific Székely vocabulary or humour. The readers of the magazine were not only reaffirmed in their own identity, but also educated by the journalists about their own history and values that could make them proud.

Chapter V. Székely Identity Building in Hungary 1918–1940 (pp. 478–628)

Roughly 200 000 Hungarians from Transylvania repatriated to Hungary in the first years after the end of World War I, circa 60 000 of them being from the Székely Land. These refugees either left the country of their own free will or they were forced to leave by the Romanian authorities. The majority of those who had previously worked for the Hungarian administration refused the oath of allegiance to the Romanian state, the same thing happened in the case of the university teachers of Franz Joseph University from Cluj, transformed in 1919 into Ferdinand I University. The Hungarian university fled to Szeged. For these reasons thousands of students, intellectuals, public servants from the Székely Land arrived to different settlements in Hungary. It goes without saying that these thousands of people who had lost their contact with their homeland and most of the members of their tighter community, tried diverse methods of upholding as vividly as possible the memories connected to the fatherland, to keep, study and care for everything that strengthened their specific Székely identity.

This part of the dissertation is structured into six subchapters. Based on unpublished archives the first one presents the birth, internal organization, program, ideology and disappearance of an ephemeral party, the Székely National Party (1920–1921). This was the only attempt to establish a party based on Székelys in Hungary.

Two subchapters deal with Székely organizations from two important Hungarian towns, Debrecen and Székesfehérvár. Based also on unpublished archives I tried to summarize the objectives and activity of the two associations. We can conclude that besides their activity for maintaining and consolidating the specific identity, they also tried to draw the attention and to sensibilize the Hungarian public opinion over the Székely problems, especially of those who decided not to leave the homeland and chose the minority life in Romania.

The following subchapter deals with a student organization, the Association of Székely University Students. The founding, organization, leadership, functioning and the periodicals edited – *Új Élet (New Life)* and *Híd (Bridge)* – by the association are presented. Then the biggest and most mysterious event held annually by the association, The Great Sacrifice in May is presented. This open-air gathering was an official ceremony mixed with mystic, ritualistic elements, many taken from real or invented traditions of Székely history, and with the main objective to highlight the ancient history, the glorious past and the sense of fraternity. The last part of the subchapter presents the birth of the Székely national anthem(s) and the debate surrounding them.

The penultimate subchapter is dedicated to another Székely organization, Hargitaváralja Symbolic Székely Municipality, established in order to unite the Székelys torn away from their homeland. Being a symbolic village, it was imagined by its members like an ideal community that would help the Székelys solve their social, economic and cultural problems and would help keeping up the memory of their history and traditions and of the "ancient" morality. To follow through with their goals, they organized symbolic villages and municipalities in the whole country becoming the biggest Székely organization in the country. Besides presenting the organizational structure and the functioning of the symbolic villages, the subchapter deals also with their own magazine, *Hargitaváralja* and their own publications. Both in the periodical edited between 1936–1944 and in the roughly a dozen books published we can observe the constant radicalization of the tone. The writings about the Hunnic or more ancient origin, the exaggerated glorification of the own history is combined with more radical ideas of the extreme right: chauvinism, revisionism, antisemitism.

A short subchapter concludes this part of the dissertation. It deals with the references to the Székelys' Hunnic descent in the discourses of the Hungarian Parliament and later, with the installation of the communist regime the disappearance of this topic from the parliamentary rhetoric.

Chapter VI. Conclusions (pp. 629–671)

The conclusions of the dissertation are also organized in two subchapters. The first one analyses the means of identity construction in the case of the Székelys. I focused mainly on the most important historical myths, like those of primordiality, ethnogenesis, kinship, suffering, unfair treatment, civilising mission, heroism, bravery etc. Then with the help of the critical discourse analysis method I tried to mark and highlight the process of discoursive identity construction in the case of the Székelys. Different strategies – eg. constructive or destructive – were analyzed, then the most relevant examples of fallacies were pointed out. In the interwar period the discourse of identity construction was "enriched" by many "novelties" due to the troubled times, more emphasis is put on the "ancient power", the Székely "heart", "soul", "energy", "genius", "honour", "exclusivity" or "spirit".

The last subtitle of the dissertation is entitled " Are the Székelys Different? Is There a Székely Identity?" It sums up the meanings of Székely and Székely Land, it presents them also from the perspective of regional identity or symbolic boundary making. In the closing paragraphs I tried to present also some other interpretations, like that of the cultural memory or of ethnosymbolism. The final conclusion of the thesis is that in this period of almost a

century the Székely identity is a live one, references to historic particularities and specific traditions is constant. We speak of a peculiar identity, sometimes very special, sometimes regional, at other times complementary with the Hungarian identity. Thus, whenever the Hungarian nation or state were in danger the Hungarian component of the identity was strengthened. But after World War I being torn apart from the bulk of the Hungarian nation, the authenticity, primordiality and the particularities were emphasized. So we are talking about an old Székely self-conscience which became more complex and colourful when Székelys assumed the Hungarian identity.

Sources and Bibliography (pp. 672–719) close the dissertation.