

4 How to conserve Kertbeny's grave?

A case of post-communist queer necrophilia

Judit Takács

Introduction

“Social homogeneity is not just a historical notion, but will also be important in [the] future, because it gives people security”, claimed the Hungarian Minister of Human Capacities at the “What Does Conservatism Mean Today?” conference organized by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in March 2018 at the St. Marienthal Abbey in Saxony, Germany.¹ In the minister’s speech, criticizing the overly “globalist” German conservative approach, social homogeneity was interpreted in a racialized way as a counterpoint to migration, bringing on “a catastrophe that would change our country’s image and coexistence, the culture on which Hungary and Europe has been built for a thousand years”. As this episode illustrates, in the political discourse used by representatives of the Hungarian government, conservatism is implicitly meant to conserve Hungarian-ness in an imagined intact form to prevent the threat not only by unwanted social heterogeneity caused by migration but also by running out of Hungarians, i.e. the 18th-century Herderian prophecy on the disappearance of the Hungarian nation coming true. Another fitting rhetorical pattern often used by the right-wing ruling parties is about their ‘freedom fight’ against external pressure of a ‘worldwide conspiracy’ supported by ‘domestic liberals’ trying to stop ‘the Hungarians’ acting in their own way and resisting the danger of becoming ‘colonized’.²

This chapter discusses a specific Hungarian case of commemorative cultural practices: the process of constructing a memorial for the long-forgotten grave of Károly Kertbeny, a 19th-century Hungarian German author and translator who coined the word homosexual in the course of his efforts to try and contribute to the legal emancipation of homosexuality. It is also examined how his memorial has been conserved at the intersections of national and queer histories by activists, commemoration officials and others. It is important because it reveals the potential role of Kertbeny, both dead and alive, in cultural memory formation processes. Placing Kertbeny’s gravesite under special protection as one of the national memorial sites was not only a practical act of cultural integration, but also

a symbolic act to demonstrate that queer memories are inseparable from Hungarian national memories. This case is embedded in memory politics by showing that the Hungarian commemorative landscape can be queered even in conservative illiberal political regimes characterized by policies that are not at all queer-friendly.

The chapter, building on Verdery's (1999) dead-body politics concepts,³ tells a story that can be interpreted as a specific queer version of postsocialist necrophilia, where the focus is on the symbolic effectiveness of finding and (re)inventing not only a grave but also its symbolic significance. This is a story about the cultural validation of a political claim on the parallel possibilities of belonging to the nation and homosexuality: the word as well as people associated with and under this umbrella concept. Following Pierre Nora's definition, I want to show how memory has been "attaching itself" or rather is being attached by an increasing number of activists and others to Kertbeny's grave that became a *lieu de mémoire*, a site of memory.⁴ It is also useful to critically consider the link between Nora's approach and classical sociological observations on the disintegration of traditional communities, resulting from historical transformations of modernity such as urbanization, industrialization and the accelerating development of communications media, leading to social memory becoming increasingly externalized (i.e. having less direct linkage to such communities) and in need of tangible reminders.⁵ At the same time Keightley and Pickering critically contend that seeing *lieux de mémoire* as "residual traces of lost or moribund traditions, or evidence of traditions that have been 'invented' in compensation for such loss and decline"⁶ can create historical dichotomies between the past and the present that are "far too schematic for dealing with such contingencies as the symbolic valuing of 'community' or 'tradition' in inverse proportion to their residuality".⁷ These considerations can be especially relevant in the case of non-traditional communities, including Hungarian queers, who might need to invent traditions from scratch, instead of compensating for lost ones. For such communities externalizing social memory can become a preferred and viable option.

In the following I briefly map the potential tradition-inventing capacities of Kertbeny's biography: trying to show what can be recognized as making him potentially important in his (after)life for his activist successors and others. I will also contemplate whether it makes sense to think of the dead Kertbeny as a repatriated cultural treasure,⁸ since he could have been already seen as such while still alive when he was brought back to Hungary in 1875, in a bad state of health, with the support of the Hungarian government. He was even provided with a free apartment in the Rudas bath house by the city of Budapest as a means of contributing to his recovery.⁹ Including the last seven years of his life between 1875 and 1882, for more than 25 years Pest, Buda and (after 1873) Budapest provided a home for Kertbeny, who actually coined several words connected to his studies of sexuality: not only the term *homosexual* but also the term *heterosexual* and others.¹⁰

The conservative turn in the Hungarian context

In present-day Hungary social homogeneity is to be achieved by a demography-focused governance, i.e. a “demographically-motivated” approach to family policy that keeps revolving around increasing the Hungarian birth rate. Two days after the Hungarian national elections of 2018 bringing the third consecutive two-thirds majority victory for Prime Minister Orbán, the government spokesperson declared that demography is the single most important Hungarian national strategy issue.¹¹ In fact, reference to demographic decrease as the most important challenge facing the nation was a recurrent theme already in their previous term, when family-friendly politics was declared, implementing “family mainstreaming” rather than gender-mainstreaming as if these were completely incompatible concepts.¹² The anti-gender discourse could also be nicely packed into the “freedom fighter” rhetoric, where Hungarians should be free to preserve “our traditions”, reflecting the natural order and resisting the unnatural gender craze.¹³

During the second decade of the 21st century Orbán’s right-wing populist government had successfully created an increasingly xenophobic¹⁴ and gender-unequal sexist social climate,¹⁵ where academic freedom was threatened, gender studies programmes were banned¹⁶ and anti-gender campaigns were elevated to the level of state policy.¹⁷ While their populist governance techniques are easily identifiable, the policy reforms introduced by the Orbán regime can be characterized by ideological diversity, including neoliberal, conservative and étatist approaches.¹⁸ However, the preoccupation with an imagined traditional family model and the vigorous promotion of Christian-national values as the real Hungarian ones reveal a specific form of crossbred conservatism that can be closely linked to Wendy Brown’s description:

neoliberals who are also conservatives are inclined to ontologize the individual, the heterosexual nuclear family, and sexual difference. They seek to root each in nature, rather than in power, and do not want the family held responsible for gendering individuals or generating social inequalities.¹⁹

This expanding far-right agenda has been playing out in practice since the System of National Cooperation (*Nemzeti Együttműködés Rendszere*) was established in 2010, with ‘work, home, family, health and order’ declared as its main pillars.²⁰ After the change of government in 2010 the Hungarian Constitution (i.e. Act no. XX of 1949) was soon replaced by “The Fundamental Law of Hungary” stating in its “national avowal” part that “the family and the nation constitute the principal framework of our coexistence, and that our fundamental cohesive values are loyalty, faith and love”, while recognizing “the role of Christianity in preserving nationhood”.²¹ On 1 January 2012 the new Fundamental Law entered into force, reflecting the more conservative views of the ruling party coalition, replacing the old

Constitution that was in principle rewritten after the 1989 political transition. Despite being pronounced as a modern document transferring the rights from the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights, the discrimination clause of the Fundamental Law, for instance, failed to move significantly beyond the former text. Although the newly adopted text contained additional prohibited grounds for discrimination, such as disability, it still failed to prohibit unjustified differential treatment on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. Reading it together with the marriage defence provision of the Fundamental Law in Article L (1), stating that “Hungary shall protect the institution of marriage as the union of a man and a woman established by voluntary decision, and the family as the basis of the nation’s survival”,²² the omission obviously created a step back from the previous constitutional regime. These features can also highlight the implementation of anti-gender discourse²³ into the Fundamental Law.

Memorializing Kertbeny

In the second year of the System of National Cooperation, in September, 2011, the National Committee of Reverence and Memorial Sites (NCRM), a government committee established in 1999 within the Prime Minister’s Office responsible for defining, registering and deciding about Hungarian national and historical memorial sites,²⁴ declared the grave of Károly Kertbeny a national memorial site belonging to the “Nemzeti Sírkert” (*National Graveyard*), a virtual national pantheon, and placed it under protection in the graveyard where Kertbeny was buried in 1882. This virtual pantheon is not linked to any specific cemetery: it includes all protected graves belonging to significant figures in Hungarian history and culture from any cemetery throughout Hungary. The decision about the official protection of Kertbeny’s grave was based on an official request submitted to the NCRM together with a short biography and recommendation letters provided by two Hungarian university professors of literature. Following the publication of the NCRM’s decision in the Official Notices annexed to the *Hungarian Official Gazette* (*Magyar Közlöny*), a new Kertbeny entry appeared on the webpage of the National Gravesites (*Nemzeti Sírhelyek*), including information on the exact coordinates of the actual gravestone, the year it was placed under official protection, a portrait and a short introduction about Kertbeny’s life and work. In addition to providing basic biographical information, the entry briefly describes the significant role Kertbeny played in the introduction of Hungarian literature into German as well as his homosexuality-related merits:

He was among the first ones to write, albeit anonymously, about homosexuality. He published an article to amend the Prussian Penal Code because he believed that the criminal prosecution of consensual homosexual acts violated human rights and the sanctity of privacy. His

linguistic invention was the creation of the terms homosexuality and heterosexuality for the conceptual separation of sexual acts.²⁵

In the same year, the annual report on hate crimes published by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) included a reference to “the desecration of the grave of a prominent LGBT activist” under the heading “Information and data on crimes and incidents motivated by bias against LGBT people”.²⁶ This incident was reported to OSCE ODIHR by a Hungarian LGBTQI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex) NGO, the Háttér Society:

On July 22, 2010 a right-wing news portal published photos of the gravestone for Károly Kertbeny covered in black and with a quotation from the Bible ‘If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them (LEV 20.13)’. The gravestone was erected in 2002 by the Hungarian LGBT movement in the Kerepesi cemetery to commemorate Kertbeny’s contribution to the LGBT movement for coining the words *homosexual* and *heterosexual* in the 19th century. The Rainbow Mission Foundation reported the incident to the police. The police refused to investigate the case arguing that no material damage had been done to the gravestone, and the incident could not be considered incitement to hatred (Article 269 of the Criminal Code), because it was not done publicly and did not contain a call for violence. Upon complaint, the police changed its opinion on the publicity aspect, but maintained the argument that the incident did not amount to incitement to hatred as the call for violence was not concrete enough, and the risk of actual violence was not imminent. The case was closed without investigation.²⁷

Since 2010 memorial ceremonies regularly organized at Kertbeny’s gravesite have become an established part of the annual LGBT festivals. Wreath-laying at Kertbeny’s gravesite on 11 July 2010 was in fact a formal event within the programme of the 15th Budapest Pride: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Film and Cultural Festival.²⁸ Thus, attacking the gravesite could also be interpreted as a symbolic attack against one of the first collective memory-making projects of Hungarian LGBT people. At the same time, these physical and symbolic threats can be seen as incentives prompting the initiation of the process leading to Kertbeny’s grave becoming an officially protected memorial site. Public sites of queer memory, such as Amsterdam’s Homomonument and the Berlin Memorial to the Homosexuals Persecuted under the National Socialist Regime, have important awareness raising functions by their sheer existence, while attacks against them, by the same token, can make manifest and latent forms of homophobia even more visible.²⁹

Kertbeny: Adventurer and controversial national figure

Kertbeny's mother tongue was German, but he declared that "I was born in Vienna, yet I am not a Viennese, but rightfully Hungarian".³⁰ At the age of 24 he officially changed his original German name, Karl Maria Benkert, to the "Magyarized", i.e. Hungarianized, Károly Kertbeny – by transposing the two syllables of his family name, and adding a "y" to the end, making it resemble an old noble name.

In this historical period "Magyarization", i.e. turning the many peoples of the Hungarian Kingdom into Hungarian by heavily relying on the promotion of the Hungarian language, was in the air.³¹ After all, Petőfi, known as one of the greatest patriotic poets in Hungarian literature, whom Kertbeny personally admired, translated, and popularized, having a Serbian father and a Slovak mother, also "Magyarized" his name from Petrovics to Petőfi. In terms of the plasticity of national identity as a product of culture and an acquired characteristic, they were both "elective Hungarians".³² While it is hard to assess how deeply Kertbeny was immersed in questions of Hungarian nationalism in the late 1860s when he coined the term 'homosexual', Tobin convincingly argues that Kertbeny, who was familiar with the programme of Magyarization in the eastern parts of the Habsburg Empire, could see the possibility of the "cultural construction of a malleable sexual identity analogous to the construction of a new national identity".³³ His political views must have been influenced by the Hungarian *Zeitgeist*, the spirit of the time that saw language and literature as crucial features of Hungarian identity, rendering "biological descent from Magyar stock" less important.³⁴

The first known appearance of the novelties in sexual terminology Kertbeny created can be traced to a private letter written in 1868 by Kertbeny to German writer and jurist Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, presenting a classic liberal argument about the state not having "the right to intervene in anything that occurs between two consenting persons older than fourteen, which does not affect the public sphere, nor the rights of a third party".³⁵ Here Kertbeny also emphasized that their common goal with Ulrichs was changing the law, for which first and foremost the scientific proof of the inborn nature of homosexuality seemed to be inevitable. However, now he saw this as a useless argument, exactly because of its limited power to persuade legislators.³⁶ Kertbeny also announced that he had prepared a manuscript discussing the "Monosexual, Homosexual, Heterosexual, and Heterogenit" categories defined by sexual acts "directed toward, respectively, themselves, the same sex, the other sex, and another (i.e., nonhuman) kind".³⁷

In 1869 in an anonymously published open letter to the Prussian Minister of Justice, Kertbeny called for the elimination of the Prussian penal code criminalizing same-sex sexual activities. This political pamphlet, where the word homosexual, created from the Greek *homo* ("same") and the Latin *sexus* ("sex"), was first used publicly, was reprinted in 1905 by Magnus Hirschfeld as "one of the best works on the homosexual problem".³⁸

However, despite the opposition of Ulrichs, Kertbeny and others, in 1871, after the first German unification, the Prussian anti-sodomy statute was introduced as Paragraph 175 in the new German Imperial Criminal Code.³⁹ This meant the continuation of criminal prosecution in some parts of Germany such as Prussia, and re-criminalization of consensual homosexual acts in other parts of Germany, including Bavaria, Württemberg, Baden, Hanover, and Brunswick.

Today, the terms homosexual and homosexuality are perceived by many as reflecting the interpretation of same-sex attraction in a medicalizing or pathologizing way, while their original context, opposing paternalistic state intervention in people's private life, became overshadowed. At the same time, heterosexuality gained a neutralized meaning, although Kertbeny had a long list of potential dangers associated with the term.⁴⁰ Considering the normative character of its present-day usage, we have to agree with Jonathan Ned Katz that it is indeed one of the grand ironies in the modern history of sexualities that Kertbeny coined the word heterosexuality "in the service of homosexual emancipation".⁴¹

When Kertbeny died at the age of 58, without any living relatives, his burial was arranged by the Hungarian writers' mutual society. While the obituaries did not remain silent about some of the uneasy facets of his life, such as the lack of success and skill in his first literary attempts that were received with mockery, there were no references whatsoever to his homosexuality-related emancipatory attempts or sexual-terminological inventions. However, these were not the only undiscussed aspects of Kertbeny's life: it took more than a century after his death to find out about his short-lived police informant career in 1854, when he offered his services to the Police Ministry in Vienna. Historian Ágnes Deák in her study on 19th-century Hungarian informants describes Kertbeny as an adventurer, trying to make money by using his writing talent in a (perhaps) unusual way.⁴² Deák found that after submitting two or three useless reports, the Austrian police commissioner broke all contacts with him, while for Kertbeny "the business had its uses, it did produce 50 florins, which was not bad for a few pages of daydreams and beating about the bush".⁴³

References to Kertbeny as an alleged "adventurer, highly importunate, and in the habit of contracting debts to the point of fraud"⁴⁴ also surfaced in a study focusing on Kertbeny's meeting with Danish fairy tale writer Hans Christian Andersen in Geneva in 1860. While Kertbeny appeared in Andersen's diaries as "Petőfi's courteous translator", who "was so good-natured and friendly",⁴⁵ their meeting seemed to provide valid grounds to speculate about Andersen's sexuality, characterized by "strong erotic feelings towards men" as well as women.⁴⁶ This episode can illustrate the parallel, sometimes contradictory perceptions of Kertbeny by Andersen and others in their own time as well as the power of retrospection, namely assuming potentially relevant aspects of Kertbeny's interactions with others while knowing that he would 'invent homosexuality' a few years later.

The adventurer image can also be linked to Kertbeny's transnational character, born in Vienna, brought up in Pest, spending about half of his "truly restless life" wandering around Europe,⁴⁷ and networking with many outstanding figures of the 19th-century European cultural elite. Besides his mostly secretive involvement in homosexual rights activism, Kertbeny was also an active supporter of free movement, publicly demanding the elimination of passports several times in his life, especially when he ran into trouble because of not having a valid passport.⁴⁸

Kertbeny's recent afterlife

The idea of locating Kertbeny's grave in Budapest came from Vienna. It was suggested by Austrian journalist, translator and LGBT activist, Kurt Krickler, a founding member of the *Homosexuelle Initiative Wien*, a Vienna-based NGO that had built close links with Hungarian LGBT activists dating back to the early 1980s.⁴⁹ In the summer of 2001 Krickler discussed with Hungarian activists that Kertbeny's story could be presented as a queer cultural heritage shared between Vienna, Kertbeny's birthplace and Budapest, where he died, but it is probable that Budapest would benefit more from such a commemoration. However, at that time there were still a lot of details about Kertbeny, including the exact location of his gravesite, that were not clear.

Then everything happened relatively quickly: it was a simple matter of telephoning the Kerepesi Cemetery,⁵⁰ the oldest functioning cemetery in Budapest, founded in 1847, and ask them to check their records whether Kertbeny was buried there in 1882. Thanks to the cemetery's accurate administration system, it soon turned out that he was.

Later in the autumn of 2001, two members of the Lambda Budapest Gay Association arranged a personal meeting with the director of the cemetery, and discussed the possibility of erecting a new gravestone for him on the 120th anniversary of his death in the following year. The director was supportive of the idea of restoring a long-forgotten grave: even though she was not aware of Kertbeny's literary merits until she was shown the relevant Kertbeny article in the Hungarian Literary Lexicon that was, just in case, conveniently brought to the meeting by the Lambda delegation. In this context it indeed made a lot of sense to present Kertbeny, both dead and alive, as a repatriated cultural treasure, closely linked to the 19th-century Hungarian literary canon. It was also important to include in this presentation that in anonymously published political pamphlets Kertbeny broke a lance for the rights of homosexuals, and although throughout his life he wanted to be acknowledged for his literary achievements, he created instead something lasting in the terminology of sexual orientations.

In November 2001 Lambda Budapest set up a temporary grave-post for Kertbeny in the cemetery, and in December the *Mások* gay magazine started a "Donate for the Hungarian homo-monument" campaign.⁵¹ This led to the collection of the necessary funds covering the cost of a new gravestone, made

of pink granite, with a metal relief depicting the young Kertbeny's portrait. On 29 June 2002, the inauguration of the new gravestone was a central event of the 7th Hungarian Gay and Lesbian Festival.

In the same year nearby Kertbeny's gravestone a neglected joint grave of a police constable and a teacher, buried in 1940 and in 1945 respectively, was discovered by accident.⁵² Since then Lambda Budapest have had the couple's grave renovated and each year during the annual Budapest Pride festivals a memorial ceremony has been organized at both Kertbeny's and the same-sex couple's gravesites. These activities have become a well-established ceremonial part of a collective queer memory-making project, through which a queer past can be (re)gained, (re)constructed and certainly re-imagined.

After the attack mentioned in the 2011 OSCE ODIHR hate crime reports, Kertbeny's gravesite has been left in peace. At the same time, especially since 2013 when the first Hungarian LGBT History Month programme was organized in Hungary, there was growing interest and increasingly critical attention devoted by activists and scholars alike to various aspects of queer history, including Kertbeny's life and work. For example, one of the first LGBT History Month events was dedicated to a discussion of "Controversial figures in Hungarian LGBT history",⁵³ including Kertbeny, Cécile Tormay, Hungary's best-known conservative woman of the interwar era, who was involved in a divorce trial surrounded by charges of female homosexuality,⁵⁴ the "gender bender" aristocrat Sándor/Sarolta Vay, who was born as a woman, raised as a boy, and lived the life of the traditional gentry male of late 19th-century Hungary, and the poet Kálmán Thaly, who forged 17th-18th century poetry.⁵⁵ In 2018 at the 6th Hungarian LGBT History Month a "Having a name for 150 years – Károly Kertbeny, the first Hungarian gay rights activist" exhibition was organized by activists of the Háttér Archives to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Kertbeny's coining the word homosexual.⁵⁶

In October 2020 Kertbeny even made it to the *Magyar Nemzet* (Hungarian Nation), a daily newspaper, functioning as the mouthpiece of the government since February 2019 (when merging with another 'national conservative' newspaper, associated with Orbán's Fidesz government). Kertbeny's name appeared in an article, inspired by a "manufactured moral panic over a storybook featuring LGBT+ characters"⁵⁷ published by the Labrisz Lesbian Association a few weeks earlier, where the author first described his aversion to the "buziparádé" (queer parade):

I cannot understand why someone is proud to have abnormal sexual habits. Why should an intimate relationship between two people be a public affair? I do not dispute that a close emotional relationship can develop between two people of the same sex. I respect that, but I do not want to know about it if this relationship goes beyond friendship. The intimate details of a person's private life are no one else's concern.⁵⁸

Then he went on to explain his different meanings of the pejorative “buzi” (faggot, queer), LGBT and homosexual terms:

I don't have any problem with homosexuals, but I do with *buzis*. [...] LGBT people are extremely extrovert, they march and offend, thrusting into everyone's face what should be concealed. This is a form of aggression. [...] Homosexuals are discreet people, many of them lovable and talented people. Several excellent writers, artists, and scientists were born with this feature. For example, Oscar Wilde, Alan Turing, Károly Kertbeny (creator of homosexual terminology), Kálmán Thaly. Erzsébet Galgóczi was a lesbian, an excellent writer and an outstanding person.

In this paragraph the author shows that he is well informed and aware of Kertbeny's terminological inventions. He is also able to identify Erzsébet Galgóczi, the lesbian author whose 1980 novel, *Törvényen belül* (Another Love) was in 1982 the basis of the first mainstream film in Hungary, *Egy-másra nézve* (Another Way) to portray a lesbian relationship that soon became a lesbian cult film not only in Hungary but also in Poland and elsewhere. We should note that the persons listed here are all dead, suggesting perhaps that dead homosexuals are the really discreet and loveable ones, while the author clearly disapproves of queers 'invading' the public space as opposed to the tolerable model of privately kept homosexuality. These views are in harmony with the infamous 2019 statements of László Kövér, founding member of the Fidesz party, and since 2010 Speaker of the National Assembly of Hungary, about 'normal homosexuals' who should know the "order of life" and should not consider themselves equal.⁵⁹

These examples can highlight the fact that present-day mainstream Hungarian political discourse is hostile towards 'public display' of issues related to sexual and gender diversity, which is embedded in genderphobia, i.e. the strategic avoidance of breaking gender(ed) norms in institutional settings and in everyday life. Orbán's leading role in conservative family movements across the region is closely linked to "radical re-patriarchalization", and this hegemonic restructuring rests "on the issues of gender politics and anti-discrimination, seen by conservative national elites as 'alien' European Union-inspired programmes imposed on nation states against the will of their citizens and politicians, whether these concern gender mainstreaming, LGBT rights or reproductive rights".⁶⁰

Conclusion

This chapter showed how Kertbeny's homosexuality-related specific biography and the process of transforming his unmarked grave into a memorial site could be used by queer memory activists to re-evaluate the national past. My approach to a specific queer version of post-communist necrophilia was inspired by Verdery's research on the animating role played by dead bodies in

post-communist politics⁶¹ and her reinterpretation of nationalism as part of “kinship, spirits, ancestor worship, and the circulation of cultural treasures”.⁶² I believe that Verdery’s concepts are perhaps even more relevant in present-day Hungary than they were at the end of the 1990s.

The observations made by Moss a few years ago about right-wing nationalists defining national identity as purely heterosexual, and wanting “to exclude homosexuals from the nation” are still valid in the present-day Hungarian context of “new national conservatism”⁶³ and in an increasing number of other countries, including Russia, Czechia, Croatia and other parts of former Yugoslavia.⁶⁴ In this context it can become especially meaningful to build up a collective memory-making project around a person who did not only coin the word homosexual and placed heterosexuality at the service of homosexual emancipation, but in doing so was actually inspired by specific aspects of 19th-century Hungarian nationalism. Kertbeny as an ‘elective Hungarian’ had personal experience about the plasticity of national identity as a product of culture and an acquired characteristic. Kertbeny conceived his belonging to the Hungarian nation as a cultural matter, based on language rather than biological descent, and his liberal nationalism was rooted in the idea that the state should protect the rights of its minorities.⁶⁵

Recognizing Kertbeny as someone worth commemorating, and consequently making his grave recognized by both queer activists and officially designated commemoration experts as a site of memory can serve as an important means of *localizing* a claim about full citizenship, referring to a set of legal, political, economic and in this case mainly cultural practices, defining a person as a competent member of society, and at the same time shaping the flow of resources to persons and social groups.⁶⁶ The Kertbeny memorial, including the actual gravesite and its ceremonial memory-making aspects, can provide memory resources for the queer community, and others, including present-day ‘elective Hungarians’ and those opposing any (re)patriarchalized state intervention into people’s private lives.

Notes

- 1 Kormany.hu (Website of the Hungarian government) “Everything that is a Threat to Security, Must Be Rejected”. *Kormany.hu*, 10 March 2018, <https://2015-2019.kormany.hu/en/ministry-of-human-resources/news/everything-that-is-a-threat-to-security-must-be-rejected>.
- 2 Anikó Félix, “Hungary”, in *Gender as Symbolic Glue: The Position and Role of Conservative and Far Right Parties in the Anti-gender Mobilizations in Europe*, ed. Eszter Kováts and Maari Pöim (Budapest: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2015), 68.
- 3 Katherine Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 23–53.
- 4 Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire”. *Representations*, no 26, Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory (Spring, 1989): 22.
- 5 Emily Keightley and Michael Pickering, *The Mnemonic Imagination: Remembering as Creative Practice* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 144.
- 6 Keightley and Pickering, *Mnemonic Imagination*, 144.

- 7 Keightley and Pickering, *Mnemonic Imagination*, 145.
- 8 Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies*, 49.
- 9 József Szinnyei, *Magyar írók élete és munkái* [The life and works of Hungarian writers] (Budapest: Hornyánszky Viktor könyvkiadója, 1899), 136.
- 10 Manfred Herzer, "Kertbeny and the Nameless Love". *Journal of Homosexuality* 12, no. 1 (1986), 6.
- 11 Hirado.hu "A demográfia a legfontosabb nemzetstratégiai kérdés a kormányzóvivő szerint", Hirado.hu, 10 April 2018, <https://hirado.hu/belfold/belpolitika/cikk/2018/04/10/a-demografia-a-legfontosabb-nemzetstrategiai-kerdes-kovacs-zoltan-szerint>.
- 12 Félix, "Hungary", 64.
- 13 Félix, "Hungary", 69.
- 14 Vera Messing and Bence Ságvári, *Cementing European Divisions: Mapping of European Attitudes Towards Migration* (Budapest: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2020), <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/budapest/16566.pdf>, 4–8.
- 15 According to the Gender Equality Index 2019, produced by the European Institute for Gender Equality, Hungary, characterized by the worsening of gender equality between 2005 and 2019, is ranked 27th out of the 28 EU Member States. Source: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2019/HU>.
- 16 Erzsébet Barát, "Stigmatization of Feminism: Gender Studies as 'Gender Ideology' in right-wing populist political discourse in Hungary", *Baltic Worlds*, 13 no 1 (2020): 21–30.
- 17 David Paternotte and Roman Kuhar, "Disentangling and Locating the 'Global Right': Anti-Gender Campaigns in Europe". *Politics and Governance*, 6, no 3 (2018): 6–19; Paul Stubbs and Noémi Lendvai-Bainton, "Authoritarian Neoliberalism, Radical Conservatism and Social Policy within the European Union: Croatia, Hungary and Poland". *Development and Change* 51 no 2 (2019): 540–560.
- 18 Attila Bartha, Zsolt Boda, and Dorottya Szikra, "When Populist Leaders Govern: Conceptualising Populism in Policy Making". *Politics and Governance* 8, no. 3 (2020): 76.
- 19 Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (Cambridge, MA, London: Zone Books, 2015), 101.
- 20 Kormany.hu (Website of the Hungarian government). "Az Országgyűlés 1/2010. (VI. 16.) OGY politikai nyilatkozata a Nemzeti Együttműködésről". Kormany.hu, 16 June 2010, https://2010-2014.kormany.hu/download/d/56/00000/politikai_nyilatkozat.pdf.
- 21 *The Fundamental Law of Hungary*, Nemzeti Jogszabálytár, 13 December 2019, https://njt.hu/translated/doc/TheFundamentalLawofHungary_20190101_FIN.pdf.
- 22 Nemzeti Jogszabálytár, *The Fundamental Law of Hungary*.
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