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## The Representation of the Australian Aborigines in Text and Picture: Dr. Med. Pál Almási Balogh (1794-1863) and the Birth of the Science of Anthropology in Central Europe/Hungary

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A manuscript entitled *Az ember Australiában* (*The Man in Australia*) can be found in one of the collections of private files in the Library of Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary. It has been preserved among the miscellaneous files (handwritten notes, letters and other kinds of shorter writings) of Dr. Med. Pál Almási Balogh (1794-1863), a Hungarian physician who practiced during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The manuscript, written in Hungarian, consists of six sheets of paper altogether. The individual sheets are folded in two, and inserted in one another like a booklet. Not all pages of the booklet are filled with letters; there are altogether nineteen pages that are. As for its content, the manuscript is divided into nine different subchapters, and most of them bear an underlined title. The first unit starts right after the main title and discusses the bodily structure and the geographical environment of the Australian indigenous people (in approximately three pages). This is followed by eight other units under the following titles: “Religion” (approximately two and a half pages), “Habitation” (approximately two pages), “Way of life” (approximately one page), “Marriage” (approximately five and a half pages), “Superstition” (approximately two and a half pages), “Inclinations” (approximately two pages), “Dress” (shorter than a page), and finally, “Language” (some what longer than a page)<sup>1</sup>

The manuscript and the historical contexts in which it was embedded and of which it was a product can throw light on cultural practices relating to the representation of the Distant Other in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Europe. Revealing the technology and the channels of communication by which ideas—textual as well as visual concepts of non-European indigenous people—were mediated from one geographical-cultural region to another, the manuscript on Australia is an excellent source for getting insight into the local socio-cultural world(s) surrounding the emergence of the science of anthropology during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The manuscript by Almási Balogh is the first monographic work on ethnography/anthropology ever compiled in Hungary dedicated to the native inhabitants of the fifth continent. It is, however, undated and it has never been published. Absent from the bibliographical-historiographical collections of the related sciences,<sup>2</sup> it has been completely unknown to Hungarian anthropologists, historians, and historians of science until recently.<sup>3</sup> However, as it will be discussed below, the purpose of its compilation can be inferred from its physical form as a text described above as well as from the profession and the activity of its author.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, some inner textual references together with important visual aspects of the content could contribute to a better estimation of the time period in which it came into existence.

Applying an approach of micro-history, let us start with outlining some of the relevant historical contexts of the manuscript, one after the other. Starting from a piece of handwritten text soon I will arrive at printed books and then at images (engravings) of anthropological relevance. All this will lead me to inquire into reading practices and processes of reception and appropriation in the field of scientific discourse as well as into the broader socio-cultural world of late Enlightenment and early Romanticism in Europe in which all the former were embedded.<sup>5</sup>

The author of the manuscript, Pál Almási Balogh, was a learned scholar of Hungarian noble origin. He was an important figure in the intellectual and scientific life in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century in the Kingdom of Hungary, which at that time formed part of the Habsburg Empire.

He was born in 1794, and was educated in the College of Sárospatak, a Protestant academy located in North-Eastern Hungary. During the period denominated the *Age of Reform* (which lasted approximately from the beginning of the 1820s until the revolution of 1848<sup>6</sup>) Almási Balogh served as private physician to the two leaders of the Hungarian anti-Habsburg movement: Count István Széchenyi and Lajos Kossuth. As for his political views, he seems to have been an early liberal thinker and an anti-monarchist, who was active, however, more in the field of science than that of high politics.

It is important for understanding the genesis of the manuscript that one of Almási Balogh's dreams was to create an independent institution for the sciences in Hungary, that is, one that was independent from Austria, the Habsburg rulers, an idea he shared with many of his contemporaries, both nobles and bourgeois. He worked tirelessly on how the structure of the sciences cultivated in his country should look like, and he took pains indeed to realize his projects during his long life. In 1837 he became editor (and also a contributing author) of a new Hungarian periodical called *Tudománytár* (*Store of sciences*), published by the Hungarian Society of Scientists, institution founded in 1825 that was the predecessor (as well as the contemporary equivalent) of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

It is also notable that, with the explicit intention of learning and making contacts with renowned foreign scholars, Almási Balogh made two longer study trips in Western Europe before his death in 1867. In 1825 he travelled to (and throughout) Germany. Among other cultural centers, he visited Weimar and the University of Göttingen, where he met both Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840), the German founder of physical anthropology. In the year 1856 he spent several months in France and the United Kingdom, meeting, for example Étienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire (1772-1844), the French botanist, as well as other notable scientists of the age. His deep interest in the natural sciences is evidenced by the fact that it was he who published the most on the work of Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859) and was later in charge of delivering the eulogy on the latter at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences on the occasion of his death in 1859. Almási Balogh was also among the first

Hungarians to read and popularize the early works of Charles Darwin (1809-1882).<sup>7</sup>

It seems thus that the author of the first Hungarian monographic writing representing the Australian aborigines was an exceptionally learned, scientifically active and curious student of natural history. Being one of the polyhistor scholars of his age, he could read and write in at least five different foreign languages: Latin, Italian, French, English, and German for certain, and perhaps also Greek and a bit of Hebrew, as was compulsory for the pupils of the Protestant college of Sárospatak at the time. His notes and files preserved in the special collections of the Library of Eötvös Loránd University themselves have been written in about six different languages (Hungarian plus five foreign languages).<sup>8</sup>

The manuscript on Australia provides an excellent insight into the processes of scientific communication in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and the interface among its different media and channels. It shows us how early ethnography compiled its discourse from a great number of diverse textual and, as it will be discussed later, visual/figural sources, and how—and also for what reasons— ethnographic descriptions at that time focused on the *external* characteristics of human life and culture.

At the time of Almási Balogh the study of non-European native peoples and cultures was embedded mostly in the natural sciences. As, while a student at Sárospatak, Almási Balogh attempted to set up a catalogue of all the sciences in 1815 for his own purpose, he did not use the terms “ethnography,” “ethnology,” or “anthropology” yet. Works containing descriptions of “alien” (that is, non-European) ways of life were listed in his catalogue under subheadings like *geography*, *statistics*, *accounts of travel*, and also *natural history*. The latter was represented there in plenty of its various branches which have not yet been clearly delineated from one another, such as physics, zoology, botany, and also medicine.<sup>9</sup> It is, however, also found in some of the handwritten notes of our physician that a particular discourse regarding *non-European indigenous peoples* was also about to emerge from that miscellaneous background of natural lore. It is exactly this that is attested by the manuscript on Australia. Let me quote its first

paragraph:

An interesting, if not the most interesting, part of the natural history of the human race is the study of peoples that are on the lowest level of human culture. Man is seemingly close there to animals, from which he differs only in some specific features like his speech and his head lifted towards the sky. In him we find the human inclinations and passions in their clearest state, which will then show themselves in multiple forms and shapes in social life, education, social relations and various other circumstances.<sup>10</sup>

This paragraph, as well as the entire text, suggests that the main ethnographical/anthropological concepts of Almási Balogh were embedded in the universalistic, linear and stadial discourse of history, characteristic of the period of late Enlightenment and early Romanticism in Europe. Within that discourse, the Native was constructed most of all of its *body* and *instincts*. He (mostly *he* and not *she*) occupied the lowest stage of an imaginary social development consisting of three or four different stages (“savagery”, “barbarism”, “half-civilization”, “civilization”). According to this schema, the Native had the potential to develop and become, as it was envisioned, “social” or “socialized,” even though he could provide important lessons in his “savage” state, too, for the European scientist studying him.<sup>11</sup> The textual representation that Almási Balogh compiled on the natives of Australia was a hierarchizing and barbarizing discourse in many respects, based on a simplifying and stereotyping description of the aborigines, and, as we will see soon more closely, founded to a certain extent on the *visible* characteristics of their way of life.

Where did this representation come from? Contrary to the great Western European travelers of the age of the Enlightenment and Romanticism who explored Oceania—such as George Anson (1697-1762), Louis Antoine de Bougainville (1729-1811), James Cook (1728-1779), and the like<sup>12</sup>—Pál Almási Balogh was an armchair scholar. Beyond the two trips to Germany, France and England mentioned earlier, he never made any other longer journeys. In particular, he never left Europe. What he did, however, was collect books with a

true passion. Apart from works on medicine and natural history, he gathered a magnificent collection of books on geography and travel in his private library, which was one of the richest at the time in all of Hungary. The exact number is not known, but, according to reliable estimates, it consisted of approximately 50.000 volumes.<sup>13</sup>

As far as non-European indigenous people are concerned, Almási Balogh seemed not only to know about but he indeed experienced intensely the characteristic trope of (early) modern representations according to which reading was travelling and a way of communicating with the Other, and, vice versa, travelling and communicating with the Other could indeed be thought of, and “realized” as *reading*.<sup>14</sup> The archives of our physician are full of handwritten notes and half-ready, unpublished writings about diverse non-European indigenous peoples, from American Indians to Inuits, from Arabs to Africans, from Chinese to Philippines, etc., all coming from, or based upon, books and periodicals that he read, borrowed, purchased, accumulated in his private library from his student years at Sárospatak through the end of his career as a physician in Pest.<sup>15</sup> His knowledge on Oceania and Australia itself seems to have originated in that stock of written/printed material. In part, it came from scientific texts which were easily identifiable, since the time of Almási Balogh was also the time of the emergence of the specific requirements concerning scientific apparatus (proper citations, bibliographical references etc.). And Almási Balogh was indeed a serious, precise scholar providing exact and exhaustive references on his readings in his manuscript. But he also seems to have derived his knowledge from *visual representations*, an emerging *scientific visuality* in the field of anthropology during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century—at least in terms of what his collection of books of natural history and travel mediated to him through their engravings, many of which were, again, identifiable. This ethnographical/anthropological visuality was related, among other non-European regions, to Oceania, and resulted both in stereotyped, Eurocentric images of the indigenous peoples there, and empirically oriented descriptions.<sup>16</sup>

As for the textual sources of the monograph on Australia, Almási Balogh drew on the most



recent contemporary accounts made by Western voyagers and scholars of the fifth continent. As the various inventories of his books attest, he had copies of many of those French and British works in his private library. His ever favourite authors whom he cited the most in the manuscript were as follows.

First of all, the monograph makes repeated mentions of certain “Quoy and Gaimard, famous students of nature” who, as Almási Balogh says, “many times saw the wild savages of Australia to devour the bowels of fish having been thrown away by the sailors,” and who found that “at the Bay of the Sea Dogs [la baie des Chiens-Marins] both men and animals of all kinds living in that land are obliged to appease their thirst with sea water.”<sup>17</sup> These two French scholars could be identified as the zoologist Jean René Constant Quoy (1790-1869) and the ship surgeon Joseph Paul Gaimard (1796-1858), who participated in two great expeditions around the world that touched Oceania, too. One of those journeys was made between 1817 and 1820 on board of the *Uranie*, under the command of Captain Louis de Freycinet (1779-1841), while the other was realized between 1826 and 1829 on board of the *Astrolabe*, under the command of Jules Dumont d’Urville (1790-1842). According to the inventory of his books, the private library of Almási Balogh contained copies of the published material of both of those expeditions. One can even find an *ex libris* of our physician in one of the several volumes of the Freycinet expedition entitled *Voyage autour du monde*, published in Paris volume by volume from 1824 on.<sup>18</sup>

In second place, the manuscript of Almási Balogh refers to a certain “Mr. Collins” many times. The account of the latter is cited, for example, in connection with an Australian aborigine called “Benilong,” whose specific beliefs, several wives, and other “barbarian customs” are discussed, mentioning also his alleged trip to England. This author is no other than the English colonel David Collins (1756-1810), one of the founders of New South Wales, the first British colony created as a penal colony in Australia. Collins became the first governor of Tasmania and published an account of the British colonization of Australia between 1798 and 1802 in London. The two volumes of this work were surely known to Almási Balogh either directly or through the mediation of some other texts, since certain paragraphs of Collins’ *An*

*Account of the English Colony in New South Wales, with some Particulars of New Zealand* were cited in his manuscript.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, the native called “Benilong” can be identified as Woollarawarre Bennelong (c. 1764-1813), a senior of the Eora aboriginal people, who served as an interlocutor between the British and his people and did indeed travel to the United Kingdom in 1792 .

In third place, the manuscript on Australia draws on accounts by a certain “Barrington” as well, whose descriptions serve as a source of data on the aborigines’ love ritual and their beliefs in spirits and ghosts. It also includes a longer “anecdote” concerning the rites of marriage of the natives, which is based on the writings of the same person. This author can be identified beyond doubt as George Barrington (1755-1804), a pickpocket of Irish origin who arrived in Australia on a penal transport, and who himself wrote a history of the British colonization of the southern continent, as well as a more personal story of his own arrival there. The volumes of his *Voyage to New South Wales* were published between 1795 and 1801, and then from 1802 in London. Although historians are divided in their opinion as to the authenticity of Barrington’s writings, what is important from our point of view is that Almási Balogh knew the works of this author either directly or, like those of Collins mentioned above, through the mediation of some other writings.<sup>20</sup>

In fourth place, a certain “Cunningham, botanist of Sydney” is also mentioned in the manuscript. Almási Balogh excerpted from his work especially native beliefs concerning spirits and ghosts living in the waters and in the land (e.g. in caves), as well as beliefs relating to rituals in connection with thunder and lightning. This author can be identified as Allan Cunningham (1791-1839), a Scottish botanist and explorer, who studied especially the flora of Australia, and published several works on this topic during the 1820s and 1830s in London. I could not, however, establish as yet which of Cunningham’s writings Almási Balogh had relied on. It is also a question, just like in the former cases, whether he had consulted those texts in their original edition, or perhaps as citations, extracts, references etc. embedded in some other texts.

In the fifth place, the manuscript on Australia also makes reference to a certain “Captain Cook”, that is James Cook (1728-1779), the British explorer of the fifth continent. In this case (just like in the former) our physician does not specify which of the numerous editions and copies of the travels of Cook he drew on. Almási Balogh cited Cook in two places in his manuscript as a scholarly authority: first as he described the characteristics of the language of the aborigines living in the northern region, by the river Endeavour, and second as he discussed the significant differences among the various indigenous “dialects” in general. In this case it is, again, uncertain whether he used an original, or a mediated, secondary text.

And finally, there is a further question that deserves attention as well as further textual, philological research: certain details, paragraphs and sentences in the manuscript of our physician, seem to be identical to certain passages of the section on Australia that appears in the second volume of another popular work, *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde*, edited and in part written by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century French explorer of Oceania, Jules Dumont d’Urville (1790-1842).<sup>21</sup> The problem of philology is further complicated by the fact that those details, paragraphs and sentences of *Voyage pittoresque* themselves make reference to some of the above mentioned authors and their works (such as Cunningham, Collins, etc.). As attested by the inventories of his books, Almási Balogh owned exemplars of the work of Dumont d’Urville in his library, in at least two copies. Furthermore, as we will see below, the above-mentioned textual similarities seem to be only some of the many borrowings of our physician from Dumont d’Urville; there are others in the visual register, too.

To conclude with the textual register of the manuscript on Australia at this point, the following statements can be made. Considering the dates of publication of the above-mentioned works on travel and natural sciences, the manuscript of Almási Balogh could not have been written earlier than 1834-1835, which marks the years of the French publication of the

two volumes of Dumont d’Urville’s *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde*<sup>22</sup>, nor could it have been written much later than that. The studious reliance upon those French and British authors testifies that the Hungarian physician had easy and seemingly regular access to the most up-to-date texts on travel and natural history that were being published in Western Europe. And not only to texts.

Despite the fact that the manuscript on Australia does not contain any images, the writing of Almási Balogh—his style, his rhetoric, his structuring of the arguments—is picturesque, colourful and figurative indeed. It is so much so that it made the author of the present study to search for his potential visual sources, some existing images that he could possibly have seen, could have contemplated and probably also describe in his writing. The manuscript contains several paragraphs that could have originated in such individual visual representations of the Australian aborigines that were widespread in Western Europe at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Some of them deserve special attention, since they seem to be based on images (engravings) that are to be found in one and the same account of travel that the Hungarian physician ought to have read, and which together provide an (almost) complete ethnographic profile of the Australian aborigines. All five images that had most probably been seen by Almási Balogh and must have served as the basis of his descriptions come from the section on Australia of the above mentioned *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde* edited (and in part authored) by Jules Dumont d’Urville, and published from 1834-1835 in various French and German editions. In the remainder of this text, one of the German editions which Almási Balogh had in his private library<sup>23</sup> will be referenced concerning the images, and a copy of his of the earliest French edition<sup>24</sup> will be used for references to the texts.

Let us now see how the following five images from *Voyage pittoresque* and certain descriptions of Almási Balogh run in parallel with one another, in almost perfect correlation.





1. *Eingeborene vom Königs Georg-Hafen* (Natives from King George's Sound), in Jules Dumont d'Urville, *Malerische Reise um die Welt. Verfaßt von einer Gesellschaft Reisender und Gelehrter. Ins Deutsche übertragen...* von Dr. A. Diezmann, vol. II, Leipzig, Industrie-Comptoir (Baumgärtner), 1835.

The *body/physical structure* and the general appearance of the Australian aborigines as shown in *Eingeborene vom Königs Georg-Hafen* (Fig. 1), seemed rather ugly and miserable to European eyes. Almási Balogh provided a description of the body of the aborigines in a corresponding tone, and with possible references to details of the picture. As for their body and alimentation: “[Their meagerness] results from the misery and poor meal that is fallen to this unfortunate people’s lot... They consume lizards and small roots, on which they can hardly survive.” And, as for their clothing, it cannot not be called “dress” at all, it is “very scanty”; “during the whole winter they cover themselves only with a piece of kangaroo skin that hardly protects their shoulders.”<sup>25</sup>

The *decoration/painting of their body*, as shown in *Eingeborener von Australien* (Fig. 2), was apparently seen as scary, horrific. As if

commenting upon (parts of) that image, Almási Balogh said the following:

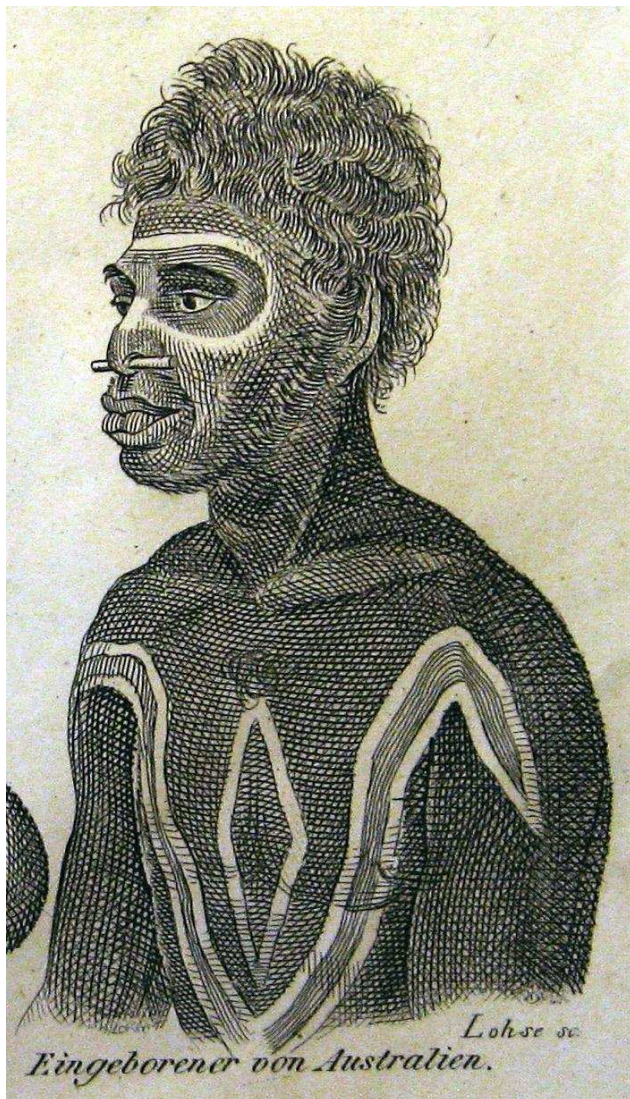
Can one imagine anything more terrifying than such a chap daubed and blackened with oil, having a wide white circle around his eyes, and having lines of the same colour drawn on his arms, thighs and legs? Smeared in black sometimes totally, with white lines in the edges, they make truly frightening apparitions.<sup>26</sup>

The dwelling place of the natives, as represented in *Dorf an der Jervis Bai* (A Village in Jervis Bay) (Fig. 3), was considered meagre and lamentable according to European standards. Almási Balogh put this in the following way, describing almost exactly what is to be seen in the picture:

The hut of the natives of the woods are



made of a sheer piece of bark that is bent in the middle and fixed at its two extremities in the ground, and which can protect its unfortunate occupier from the rain and the wind only imperfectly. They never carry it with them.<sup>27</sup>



2. *Eingeborener von Australien* (A Native of Australia), in Jules Dumont d'Urville, *Malerische Reise um die Welt. Verfaßt von einer Gesellschaft Reisender und Gelehrter. Ins Deutsche übertragen... von Dr. A. Diezmann*, vol. II. Leipzig, Industrie-Comptoir (Baumgärtner), 1835.

Indigenous rituals, such as those shown in *Ceremonie des Gna-lung* (*The Ceremony of Gna-lung*) (Fig.4), were judged violent and cruel by contemporary Europeans. Again, it is as if Almási Balogh described what was happening in this particular picture: “One of the teeth of the young boys is drawn out as they arrive at the age of puberty; it takes places in a great celebration.”<sup>28</sup>

Finally, the ritual of indigenous marriage was represented in a similar way. *Ceremonien vor einer australischen Hochzeit* (Ceremonies Preceding an Australian Marriage) (Fig.5) shows a scene deemed violent, upon which Almási Balogh commented in a condemning manner: “Isn’t it horrifying, that the prelude of love is made of violence among them, violence of the most cruel nature? The unfortunate victims of this outrageous and wild passion are sought always in unrelated, alien, even hostile groups by the young men... and the poor, unfortunate [women] are abducted while their kin and protectors happen to be away.” What our physician attempted to describe here—or, rather what was hidden behind the Euro-centric prejudice and the passionate, indignant words of his as a product of both late Enlightenment rationality and Romantic emotionality—is the simple fact that the Australian aborigines practiced exogamy in their marriage (that is, young men sought wives outside their own kinship group) and that this was embodied the custom of the so-called *abduction of women*, which might turn out violent, and during which the bride herself could be injured.<sup>29</sup>

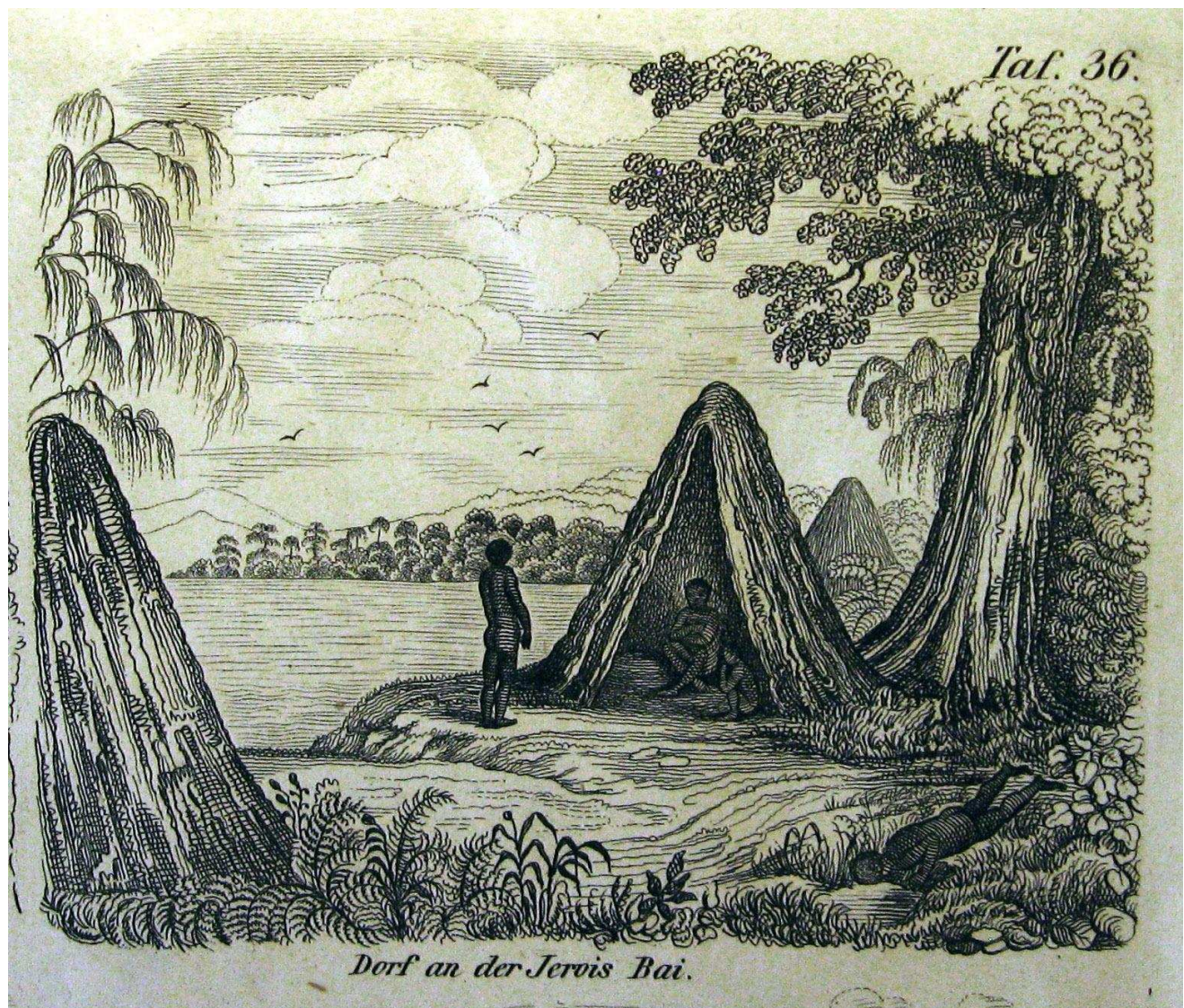
It is beyond doubt that both the textual and the visual world of Dumont d’Urville’s *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde* exerted a considerable impact on Almási Balogh’s imagination. Those five images together make up a visual ethnographic *profile*, a little visual monograph on the Australian natives, with a special emphasis on the physical, external features of their culture. Relying upon the specific division of that visual profile (bodily appearance, natural surroundings, alimentation, dwelling, dress, rituals) that came ready to him from Western European scientific discourse, Almási Balogh seemingly used his visual knowledge to organize his written text, too. As the images of *Voyage pittoresque* testify, late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century Western European travelogue visuality seems to have functioned more than just an illustration to or an equivalent of the printed scientific text. It provided an important surplus, namely an accurate classification and a well-structured density of visual “data” that were about to become “ethnographical/anthropological” as the appropriate sciences emerged and became institutionalized during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Both of the registers of communication that Almási Balogh relied on for information regarding the



indigenous people of Australia—especially the visual register—instructed him not only on what to see, but also *how* to see it, not only on what to describe, but also *how* to organize the elements of knowledge that he gained, *in writing*. Furthermore, both registers mediated a more general interpretive frame, a Eurocentric and barbarizing way of *othering*.<sup>30</sup> As for the latter, it is remarkable how the five images avoid

Liebersohn regarded the work of Dumont d’Urville as “the triumph of racial science.”<sup>31</sup>

The interplay between the textual and the visual registers of communication in the manuscript on Australia reveal much about how the earliest scientific profiles of ethnography came into being in Western Europe, and how they were spread, how they were adopted in other parts of



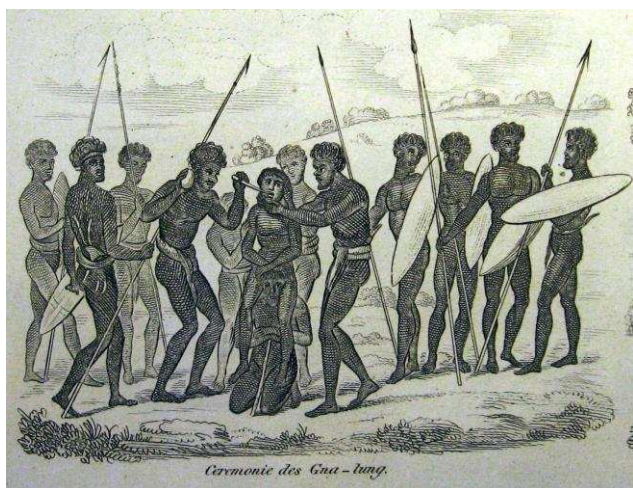
3. *Dorf an der Jervis Bai (A Village in Jervis Bay)*, in Jules Dumont d’Urville, *Malerische Reise um die Welt. Verfaßt von einer Gesellschaft Reisender und Gelehrter*, Ins Deutsche übertragen... von Dr. A. Diezmann, vol. II, Leipzig, Industrie-Comptoir (Baumgärtner), 1835.

representing the material evidence of colonization: no European objects, tools, clothing, forms of settlement, etc. are shown in connection with the aborigines. The absence of their depiction suggests an idea of authentic *primitivism*. It is worth recalling here that an American historian of the Pacific travels, Harry

the continent (e.g. in Central Europe/Hungary). As it will be outlined below, four main communicational—as well as cultural-political—processes can be distinguished in this history, whose understanding would necessitate, beyond micro-history, the adoption of a complex, multi-dimensional and *multi-communicational*



approach to representation; in our case, the representation of the Distant Other in East-Central Europe. The latter seems to be the result of an interesting *mélange* of cultural and political practices as well as technologies of communication. As regards texts, the methodological suggestions of Roger Chartier concerning the *act of reading* (its materiality and its inscribed messages), and, as regards images, those of W. J. T. Mitchell concerning the *act of seeing* (its politics and multimediality) would prove especially relevant for working out an adequate approach which, in my view, should be founded on concepts like *colonialism's culture*, *cultural othering* as well as *culture as a process*.<sup>32</sup> I cannot but outline some of the perspectives of such a research here for a further contextualization of the manuscript of Australia.



4. *Ceremonie des Gna-lung* (*The Ceremony of Gna-lung*), in Jules Dumont d'Urville, *Malerische Reise um die Welt. Verfaßt von einer Gesellschaft Reisender und Gelehrter*, Ins Deutsche übertragen... von Dr. A. Diezmann, vol. II, Leipzig, Industrie-Comptoir (Baumgärtner), 1835.

One of the processes is related to the construction and use of an *ethnographic visuality*. Stereotyped images, visual commonplaces have been derived from the early travelers' depictions of the Oceanian, and among them, Australian natives published in the first European accounts of travel, colonization and natural history from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>33</sup> According to the applied frame of stadial history, such depictions conveyed an already filtered, reduced image of things once truly seen and experienced in the field. The process of reduction and filtering seemed to continue under the impact of the later evolutionary concepts in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It confirmed, hierarchized and

sometimes also distorted (i.e. exaggerated certain parts of) the former images of the continent and its native inhabitants.<sup>34</sup>

The second process relates to the construction and use of a stock of scientific texts. As the textual sources of Almási Balogh testify, such texts themselves come mostly from late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century travel writing and natural history, providing material for a re-organization of knowledge according to the then established categories and sub-categories of ethnographic profiles (including *material culture*: appearance and way of life; *mentality* (later: folklore): rites and beliefs) on one hand, and to the then admitted stadial/processual history on the other (an imagined history leading through the stages of "savage" or "barbarian" societies, and then to a "civilized" Europe).<sup>35</sup>



5. *Ceremonien vor einer australischen Hochzeit* (*Ceremonies Preceding an Australian Marriage*), in Jules Dumont d'Urville, *Malerische Reise um die Welt. Verfaßt von einer Gesellschaft Reisender und Gelehrter*, Ins Deutsche übertragen... von Dr. A. Diezmann, vol. II, Leipzig, Industrie-Comptoir (Baumgärtner), 1835.

Comparing ethnographical descriptions from different time periods shows that both the visual and the textual transformation of things seen originally have been function of a third process, that of *selection*, too. A remarkable selection of data for science always took place in the observers', scholars' minds. The meaning and the referential area of "science" being somewhat different according to the different periods (Renaissance, Baroque, Enlightenment, Romanticism etc.) and the different discourses (ecclesiastical/religious, functional/commercial, secular/scholarly, and their many—many variations and combinations) during the early modern and modern era in Europe, the vision and the representation of the same subject—e.g.



of non-European indigenous people—were not comprised of the same components. It seems that certain elements (e.g. the religious-ritual and, as seen from the Christian discourse, “demonological” aspects of indigenous cultures) were emphasized—and perhaps also noticed—more than others in certain periods and discourses (e.g. in the works of Catholic missionaries’ discourses from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century on). Other components (e.g. aspects of economy, social structure, kinship groups etc.) were, however, rather neglected or left unnoticed. The differences in representation are especially characteristic if we compare, on one hand, the accounts given during the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> century on Central and South American Indians by our East Central European Jesuit missionaries still ruminating on the “diabolic” features of those cultures, and, on the other hand, the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century representations of indigenous peoples in the scholarly discourse of *historia naturalis*, having become more of secular nature and laying its stresses on the natural surroundings and the specific *physical* way of life of those peoples.<sup>36</sup> The manuscript on Australia testifies accordingly that by the time of Almási Balogh—as well as in *his* kind of discourse, much closer to *historia naturalis*—it was especially the physical, external features of human culture as well as their rendering in an imaginary progressive order that constituted the main scientific filter for data in both the textual and the visual registers of scientific communication.

The above mentioned three processes all contributed to shaping the content of ethnographical/anthropological discourse, which emerged as a new branch of the sciences during the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, and went through a process of canonization and institutionalization from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century in Western Europe. The manuscript on Australia is one of the rare pieces of evidence suggesting that such a discourse had found its way to East Central Europe, too, especially through the adaptation—reception and appropriation—of textual and visual representations of non-European native people.<sup>37</sup>

It is exactly to this process of adaptation that the fourth component or process at work here is connected. It is the impact of *locality*, the specific circumstances of the local appropriation of the discourse of ethnography/anthropology in

its textual as well as visual aspects. The effects of locality make the last context of the manuscript on Australia that will be discussed in the present study.

Although the manuscript of Almási Balogh counts indeed as the first anthropological monograph ever written in the Hungarian language about the aborigines of Australia, it is a rather ambiguous heritage for Hungarian cultural anthropology. Our physician closed his manuscript with the following words:

I finish this report on the inhabitants of that far-away land with the righteous observation made at one time by Collins. "If we get a better knowledge about the barbarous customs and the inhuman ways of the natives of New South Wales, we stop wondering about the scarcity of its population. Several causes foster such a state of affairs: the constant struggle in which they live, the brute way in which they treat their women."<sup>38</sup>

As it was discussed earlier, both the Western European scientific texts and images accessible to Almási Balogh mediated, a *barbarizing* discourse, and our physician seems to have adopted it without hesitation. In this respect he could not be considered more than a prejudiced product of his age; he seems, however, also a product of a specific place and a specific time. As it was mentioned above, our physician was active during the *Age of Reform* characterized by the anti-Habsburg movement of national awakening in Hungary (cca. 1820-1848). Together with many of his compatriots, he intended to establish an independent institute of sciences and, as far as ethnography/anthropology is concerned, a new branch of disciplines in that country. This context and his archives suggest that he appreciated highly his French and British sources representing indigenous peoples, among them, the Australian aborigines. He took French and British science as *ideals, models* indeed for Hungary, and therefore he relied on them *without criticism*. In order to introduce and legitimize the new science of anthropology in his country, he took and applied both the textual descriptions and the visual stereotypes coming from Western travelogues as unquestionable, authentic sources of reality. He might have been a liberal thinker and a revolutionary-minded academic in other matters (such as national/Hungarian vs.

Habsburg political issues), but in his uncritical reliance on prejudiced, colonial images about non-European people he seems rather to have been an unconscious racist.

Almost nothing is known about the purpose why he wrote the manuscript on Australia. However, the form of the writing and its particular scientific contexts suggest that it was used as a draft either for an oral presentation, a lecture, or a written study prepared for some periodical. Almási Balogh was member of many scientific societies, for example that of the *Magyar Orvosok és Természetvizsgálók Társasága* (*Society for Hungarian Physicians and Students of Nature*) which had parallel societies abroad, for example in German lands. The monograph on Australia is only one of the many drafts of similar appearance, structure and content in his archives. He had similarly elaborated and structured manuscripts for example on the Canadian Inuits (in German) and on the Australian natives themselves (other, lesser manuscripts in different languages).<sup>39</sup>

Relying upon the above-cited French and British authors and the hierarchical, stadial concepts of social development of Enlightenment, Almási Balogh himself considered the indigenous people of Australia as savages living in a stage close to animals. He tried, however, to explain that “stage” and the features of their society not on the basis of causes inherent to them, but rather from the *natural surroundings*, the *natural milieu*, and especially the severity of the latter. This is particularly clear in the conclusion of the monograph on Australia: “What a great impact the climate and the quality of the soil could have on the bodily structure of man, and his moral character is illustrated, among others, by the case of the Australian natives.” The aborigines, he argued, “stand in the lowest stage of our species,” “their number is small, and they struggle continually with their severe environment.”<sup>40</sup> This kind of “natural” explanation does not exempt him from his cultural biases; it may, however, throw more light on its sources one day. Apart from the above mentioned French and British travelogues and works of natural history, there might be other intellectual/communicational contexts that could have shaped his textual and visual biases that remain to be explored.<sup>41</sup>

The birth of anthropology in Hungary as

embodied in the manuscript on Australia seems, however, to have been a *failure*. Almási Balogh’s writing seems not to have had any scientific reception or reaction, neither locally nor abroad. It seems to have sunk into oblivion already in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a period that saw the institutionalization of anthropology in Hungary. János Hunfalvy, the first professor who taught world geography and anthropology during the 1870s at the University of Budapest, did not rely on Almási Balogh’s writing in his lectures, nor did he even mention it.<sup>42</sup> The scientific context of the textual and visual representation of indigenous peoples had changed considerably by that time. Drawing on a geographical/anthropological literature based mostly on German studies (e.g. those of Oscar Peschel (1826-1875), Karl Ritter (1779-1859)), ethnography/anthropology in Hungary had turned away from the particular French and British scientific ideals that characterized its orientation at the turn of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

It still is a question whether János Hunfalvy ever came across Almási Balogh’s manuscript on Australia, and within it, the first Hungarian profile of its native inhabitants. This profile being undeniably Euro-centric, containing several prejudiced, colonial concepts, textual and visual stereotypes coming from its Western European sources, it is to be understood as such in our East-Central European history of science and representations. Together with its textual and visual evidence telling as much about the working of European scientific discourse and communication in the period concerned as about the Australian aborigines themselves, the manuscript on Australia belongs to the heritage of the history of cultural anthropology in Europe, and constitutes one of its main archival sources in the East-Central part of that continent.

## Notas

<sup>1</sup> Pál Almási Balogh, *Az ember Australiában* (*The Man in Australia*), manuscript, n.d. University Library of Loránd Eötvös University, Budapest, n. d. [ELTE EK KRNYO D 22/5]. Throughout the text, all English translations from the original Hungarian are mine. I discovered the manuscript in 2006 in the special collection of rare books and manuscripts of the Library of Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary.



<sup>2</sup> See for example István Sándor, *A magyar néprajztudomány bibliográfiája, 1850-1870 (The bibliography of Hungarian ethnography, 1850-1870)*, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1977.

<sup>3</sup> My first publication about the manuscript (in Hungarian) is Ildikó Sz. Kristóf, "Az ausztrál bennszülöttek teste. Almási Balogh Pál ismeretlen kézírata és az etnológia (egyik) születése Magyarországon ("The Body of the Australian Aborigines. An Unknown Manuscript of Pál Almási Balogh and (One Of) the Birth(s) of Ethnology in Hungary"), in György Endre Szőnyi and Dóra Szauter (eds.), *A képek politikája. W.J.T. Mitchell válogatott írásai. Tanulmányok (The Politics of Pictures. Selected writings of W.J.T. Mitchell. Studies)*, (Ikonológia és műértelmezés 13), Szeged, JATE Press, 2008, p. 30. I also gave a talk on it in May 2013 at the international conference "European Iconology East & West 5: Cultural Imageries of Body and Soul. Intermedial Representations of the Corporeal, the Psychic and the Spiritual" organized by The Cultural Iconology and Semiography Research Group, University of Szeged and The Szeged Branch of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Szeged/Budapest; the title of my talk was "The Body of the Australian Aborigines in Text and Picture. Notes on the Birth of Anthropology in Hungary."

<sup>4</sup> Such a *material* approach to written texts and their meaning is suggested in Roger Chartier, "Le monde comme représentation." *Annales E.S.C.* 6, 1989, pp. 1505-1520; "Laborers and voyagers: From the Text to the Reader", *Diacritics*, n.2, vol. 22 1992, pp. 49-61; Roger Chartier (ed.), *Culture écrite et société. L'ordre des livres (XIV<sup>e</sup>-XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, Paris, Abin Michel, 1996.

<sup>5</sup> The methodology of doing and telling history that I apply here is based on the propositions of historians like Carlo Ginzburg, Giovanni Levi, Jacques Revel and others appreciating and themselves practicing micro-history; see Carlo Ginzburg, "Clues: Roots of an Evidential Paradigm," in Carlo Ginzburg (ed.), *Myths, Emblems, Clues*, London, Sidney, Auckland etc., Hutchinson Radius, 1990, pp. 96-125; Giovanni Levi, "On Microhistory", in Peter Burke (ed.), *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1991, pp. 93-113; Jacques Revel (ed.), *Jeux d'échelles. La micro-analyse à l'expérience*, Paris, Le Seuil-Gallimard, 1996. In the current context of a discovery of an as yet unknown manuscript of scientific importance, I attempt to tell a narrative by advancing step by step in the *micro-philology* of the manuscript while broadening and multiplying the registers of interpretation in which it was once inscribed and interpreted in the period of late Enlightenment and early Romanticism.

<sup>6</sup> For an excellent survey of the period see László Kontler, *Millennium in Central Europe. A History of Hungary*, Budapest, Atlantis Publishing House, 1999, pp. 222-246.

<sup>7</sup> His archives contain numerous references to the *Journal and Remarks* of Darwin, published in 1839 on the Beagle expedition (1831-1836). This aspect of the scientific interests of Almási Balogh is not known yet in Hungarian scholarship; I intend to publish on this topic in the near future.

<sup>8</sup> It has been a challenge (as well as a pleasure) for the author of the present study to work on his files. The best biography as yet written on him (in Hungarian) is Károly Nagy, *Dr. Almási Balogh Pál életútja, 1794-1867. (The Life of Dr. Almási Balogh)* Nagybarca-Ózd, Nagybarca község önkormányzata; Ózd város Almási Balogh Pál Kórháza, 1992.

<sup>9</sup> Pál Almási Balogh, *Catalogue des plus célèbres auteurs dans toutes les espèces des sciences et des beaux arts. Composé à S. Patak 1815*, Manuscript, University Library of Loránd Eötvös University, Budapest [ELTE EK KRNYO D 19 Balogh Pál Egyveleg Kivonatai 7. Különféle 1815].

<sup>10</sup> Pál Almási Balogh, "Az ember...", *op. cit.*

<sup>11</sup> Marvin Harris, *The Rise of Anthropological Theory*, New York, Thomas & Cromwell, 1969, pp. 27-35; Alan Barnard, *History and Theory in Anthropology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 15-26; Paul B. Wood, "The science of man", in Nicholas Jardine, James A. Secord, and Emma C. Spary (eds.), *Cultures of Natural History*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 197-210. See also Ildikó Sz. Kristóf, "The Uses of Natural History. Georg C. Raff's *Naturgeschichte für Kinder* (1778) in its Multiple Translations and Multiple Receptions", in Alison Adams and Philip Ford (eds.), *Le livre demeure. Studies in Book History in Honour of Alison Saunders*, Genève, Droz, 2011, pp. 309-333; "Domesticating Nature, Appropriating Hierarchy: The Representation of European and Non-European Peoples in an Early-Nineteenth-Century Schoolbook of Natural History", in Dagnosław Demski, Ildikó Sz. Kristóf and Kamila Baranieczka-Olsewska (eds.), *Competing Eyes. Visual Encounters with Alterity in Central and Eastern Europe*, Budapest, L'Harmattan, 2011, pp. 40-66.

<sup>12</sup> Archibald Grenfell Price (ed.), *The Explorations of Captain James Cook in the Pacific. As told by selections of his own journals, 1768-1779*, New York, Dover Publications, 1971; Glyndwr Williams, *The Great South Sea. English Voyages and Encounters 1570-1750*, New Haven & London, Yale University Press, 1997, pp. 175-273; Nicholas Thomas, *The Extraordinary Voyages of Captain James Cook*, New York, Walker & Company, 2003.

<sup>13</sup> An estimation of 48. 000 books based on the manuscript catalogue of Almási Balogh's private library is mentioned in Károly Nagy, *Dr. Almási Balogh Pál...*, *op. cit.*, p. 124. As to my knowledge however, other catalogues have also survived. More thorough research is needed to establish the content of that library, outstanding indeed at that age in Hungary.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 124-125.

<sup>15</sup> Prior to its unification in 1873, the capital of the Kingdom of Hungary consisted of three separate cities: Buda and Óbuda located on the west bank of the river Danube, and Pest, on the east bank.

<sup>16</sup> Hermann Mückler, *Einführung in die Ethnologie Ozeaniens*, Wien, Facultas Verlags und Buchhandels AG, 2009, pp. 20-30; Nicholas Thomas, *The Extraordinary Voyages...*, *op. cit.*; Tony Ballantyne (ed.), *Science, Empire and the European Exploration of the Pacific*, Aldershot/Burlington, Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2004. See also Peter Burke, "Stereotypes of Others", in Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing. The Uses of Images as Historical*

*Evidence*, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 2001, pp. 123-139.

<sup>17</sup> Pál Almási Balogh, “Az ember...”, *op. cit.*

<sup>18</sup> His *ex libris* is to be found in the volume of 1825, see Louis Freycinet, *Voyage autour du monde, Entrepris par Ordre du Roi... Exécuté par les corvettes de S. M. l’Uranie et la Physicienne, pendant les années 1817, 1818, 1819 et 1820*, Paris, n.d., 1824.

<sup>19</sup> David Collins, *Account of the English Colony in New South Wales, with some Particulars of New Zealand*. Vols. I-II, London, n.d., 1798 and 1802.

<sup>20</sup> George Barrington, *A Voyage to New South Wales*. In two volumes. Vol. I. *A Voyage to Botany Bay*, London, n.d., 1792 and 1801.

<sup>21</sup> Jules Dumond d’Urville (ed.), *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde. Résumé général des voyages de découvertes*, vol. I, Paris, 1834; *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde. Résumé général des voyages de découvertes*, vol. II, Paris, n.d., 1835; *Malerische Reise um die Welt... Verfaßt von einer Gesellschaft Reisender und Gelehrter, ins Deutsche übertragen von Dr. A. Diezmann*, vol. II, Leipzig, Industrie-Comptoir (Baumgärtner), 1835.

<sup>22</sup> See in particular: “Chapitre XXXIII. Australie – Découverte et géographie,” “Chapitre XXXIV. Australie – Histoire naturelle,” “Chapitre XXXV. Australie – Indigènes,” and “Chapitre XXXVI. Colonies anglaise de l’Australie,” in Jules Dumond d’Urville (ed.), *Voyage pittoresque...*, vol. II, *op. cit.* pp. 301-326.

<sup>23</sup> Jules Dumond d’Urville, *Malerische Reise um die Welt...op.cit.*

<sup>24</sup> Jules Dumond d’Urville, *Voyage pittoresque... op. cit.*

<sup>25</sup> Jules Dumont d’Urville, *Malerische Reise...*, *op. cit.*; Pál Almási Balogh, “Az ember...”, *op. cit.* For textual comments in the French edition see Jules Dumont d’Urville, *Voyage pittoresque...* vol II, *op. cit.*, p. 316.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 316-317.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 318.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, p.317.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 319.

<sup>30</sup> For the concept of “othering” see especially Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, New York, Pantheon Books, Random House Inc., 1978 and Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism’s Culture. Anthropology, Travel and Government*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1994. A reasonable definition of it sounds like this: “Othering” describes the various ways in which colonial discourse produces its subjects. “In Spivak’s explanation, othering is a dialectical process because the colonizing *Other* is established at the same time as its colonized *others* are produced as subjects”, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin (eds.), *Post-Colonial Studies. The Key Concepts*, London and New York, Routledge, 2009, p. 156.

<sup>31</sup> Harry Liebersohn, *The Travelers’ World. Europe to the Pacific*, Cambridge, MA and London, Harvard University Press, 2006, pp. 226-230.

<sup>32</sup> Chartier, “Le monde...”, *op. cit.*; “Laborers and voyagers...”, *op. cit.*; *Culture écrite...*, *op. cit.*; William John Thomas Mitchell, *Picture Theory. Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1994; *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 2005. For “colonialism’s culture” see Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism’s Culture...*, *op. cit.* For “cultural othering” see Edward Said, *Orientalism*, *op. cit.* For culture as a process see Victor W. Turner, *The Ritual Process. Structure and Anti-Structure*, Chicago, Aldine, 1969. See also György Endre Szónyi and Dóra Szauter (eds.), *A képek politikája*, *op. cit.*

<sup>33</sup> Glyndwr Williams, *op. cit.*; Nicholas Thomas, *The Extraordinary...*, *op. cit.*; Tony Ballantyne, *op. cit.*; Inga Clendinnen, *Dancing with Strangers. Europeans and Australians at First Contact*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

<sup>34</sup> Marvin Harris, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-35; Alan Barnard, *History and Theory in Anthropology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 27-46, Tony Ballantyne, *op. cit.* See especially Harry Liebersohn, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-297 and Nicholas Thomas, “Melanesians and Polynesians: Ethnic Typifications Inside and Outside Anthropology”, in Tony Ballantyne (ed.), *Science, Empire and the European Exploration of the Pacific*, Aldershot/Burlington, Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2004, pp. 297-319.

<sup>35</sup> Tony Ballantyne, *op. cit.*; Alan Barnard, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-26; Paul Wood, *op. cit.* See also Ildikó Sz. Kristóf, “The Uses of Natural History...” *op. cit.*; “The Body of the Australian Aborigines...”, *op. cit.*

<sup>36</sup> See Ildikó Sz. Kristóf, “The Uses of Demonology. European Missionaries and Native Americans in the American Southwest (17-18th Centuries)”, in György E. Szónyi and Csaba Maczelka (eds.), *Centers and Peripheries in European Renaissance Culture. Essays by East-Central European Mellon Fellows*, Szeged, JATEPress, 2012, pp. 161-182; “Missionaries, Monsters, and the Demon Show. Diabolized Representations of American Indians in Jesuit Libraries of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century Upper Hungary”, in Anna Kérchy and Andrea Zittlau (eds.), *Exploring the Cultural History of Continental European Freak Shows and Enfreakment*, Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 38-73; “The Uses of Natural...”, *op. cit.*; “Domesticating Nature...”, *op. cit.*

<sup>37</sup> See Ildikó Sz. Kristóf, “The Uses of Natural History...”, *op. cit.*; “Domesticating Nature...”, *op. cit.*

<sup>38</sup> Pál Almási Balogh, “Az ember...”, *op. cit.*

<sup>39</sup> The relation of the latter to the manuscript analyzed in the present paper remains to be established.

<sup>40</sup> Pál Almási Balogh, “Az ember...”, *op. cit.*

<sup>41</sup> Climate for example had a significant role in much of the earlier 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> century scientific discourse on the division and distribution of mankind. It would be crucial to see how much Almási Balogh owed to that rather cosmographical-topographical-geographical tradition and how much he was influenced by the new natural history of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. See for example Brian Ogilvie, *The Science of Describing. Natural History in Renaissance Europe*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 2006



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and Nicholas Jardine, James A. Secord and Emma C. Spary (eds.), *Cultures of Natural History*, *op.cit.*

<sup>42</sup> The drafts of his university lectures survive, see Mihály Sárkány and Gábor Vargyas (eds.), “Hunfalvy János és az ‘Egyetemes néprajz’”, in *Egyetemes néprajz. Dr. Hunfalvy János egyetemi nyilvános rendes tanár előadásai után*, Budapest, MTA Néprajzi Kutatóintézet, 1995, pp.8-15.

### **¿Cómo citar correctamente el presente artículo?**

Kristóf, Ildikó; “The representation of the Australian Aborigines in text and picture: Dr. Med. Pál Almási Balogh (1794-1836) and the birth of the Science of Anthropology in Central Europe/Hungary”. En *caiana. Revista de Historia del Arte y Cultura Visual del Centro Argentino de Investigadores de Arte (CAIA)*. No 5 | 2do. semestre 2014, pp. 126-140.

URL:[http://caiana.caia.org.ar/template/caiana.php?pag=articles/article\\_2.php&obj=160&vol=5](http://caiana.caia.org.ar/template/caiana.php?pag=articles/article_2.php&obj=160&vol=5)

Fecha de recepción: 17 de septiembre de 2014  
Fecha de aceptación: 7 de octubre de 2014