

Narratives of the Hungarian Philosophy within the Framework of the 19th-Century National Culture

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In order to achieve the aim of the present article and offer a description of the narratives of the 19th-century Hungarian philosophy, an analysis of the term of the so-called “national philosophies” as defined in the philosophical historiographies of the 20th and 21st centuries concerning the phenomenon of the 19th-century philosophical life is necessary. (Representatives of the 19th-century “national philosophies” almost never used the term and they spoke simply about English, Scottish, French, German, Hungarian etc. philosophies.) It is not easy to clarify the concept of “national philosophies” as it was used in the 19th-century national intellectual lives. The term signifies a malleable, *essentially contested concept* (ECC). ECC is a term introduced by Walter Bryce Gallie into the political philosophy in the 1950s.¹ ECC-based discourses always need new definitions of their fundamental categories, such as *democracy, liberty*, etc. However, *national philosophy* is an ECC of the history of philosophy. It is possible to distinguish it from similar expressions of the 20th-century discourse of the *national characteristics*, at least in the Hungarian case. (However, there are instances for the use of the term of national philosophy within the mainstream philosophical discourse in the early 20th century, in the interwar period and sporadically after the fall of Communism, for example, in the Czech philosophy²).

The Hungarian case seems to be clear from this point of view, and we can put the term of national philosophy into the context of the 19th-century nation-building processes whereas the interwar period discourse of the *Hungarian way of thinking* creates a different narrative, in a different stratum of the scholarly public sphere.³ The crucial point of the differences is a substantive

1 Gallie, “Essentially Contested Concepts”. Gallie’s essay, after its first publication, has been elected for significant representative essay-volumes of political philosophy.

2 For a recent analysis of this phenomenon of the Czech philosophy, focused on the philosophies of Jan Patočka and Erazim Kohák, with a comparison of other philosophical traditions of East-Central Europe see: Lalíková, “A „nemzeti filozófiák” koncepciói mellett és ellen felsorakoztatott érvek a kortárs cseh filozófusok műveinek tükrében.”

3 A paradigmatic figure of this 20th-century discourse was Sándor Karácsony (1891–1952); for his emblematic work on this topic in a modern edition see: Karácsony, *A magyar észjárás*. First edition of Karácsony’s essay-book was published in the middle of the 1920s. It had several modified and extended editions in the interwar period.

interpretation of the term of “Hungarian philosophy” in the 20th-century discourse. Sándor Karácsony has pointed out that “there is a Hungarian philosophy but there is not a Hungarian philosophical system because I do not consider Károly Böhm’s system as a Hungarian philosophical system”.⁴ This type of exclusion of a Hungarian philosopher from the Hungarian philosophy was impossible in the 19th-century discourse. Significant works on the Hungarian philosophy have dealt with the *whole* of the past or present philosophical life of Hungary. First, the emergence of the phenomenon of the “national philosophy” will be interpreted as an answer to the structural change of the scholarly public sphere at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, focusing on its consequences for the philosophical life. Secondly, two types of the 19th-century national philosophies will be examined: their manifestoes and visions about the philosophy of the future and the endeavour to build a national canon and narrative of the memories of the regional philosophical past. Thirdly, both the first serious 19th-century works of the historiography of the Hungarian philosophy will be outlined; the work of Pál Almási Balogh (1794–1867), written during the Hungarian Reform Era and the book of János Erdélyi (1814–1868), written after the revolution of 1848. Both of them were in different ways supported by the Hungarian Scholarly Society, later called Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The analyses of these works will be focused on the possibility of a Hungarian narrative of the history of the philosophical traditions in Hungarian culture, and its possible relationships with the universal narratives. Finally, the consequences of the abovementioned tradition of philosophical historiography from the point of view of the methodology of the contemporary historiography of the Hungarian philosophy will be discussed.

The Kantian formulation of the new scholarly public sphere, and the Hungarian situation in the period of the Hungarian controversy on Kant (1792–1822)

What follows is an analysis of the new structure of the public sphere both by Kant’s formulation and by its consequences for the Hungarian philosophy and for its role within the framework of national culture. It is hypothesized that in the change of the structure of this public sphere lies the origin of the phenomenon of the so-called *national philosophy* in its 19th-century meaning. The change of the structure of the academic public sphere in Central Europe

⁴ Karácsony, *A Magyar észjárás*, 415. This sentence of Karácsony is highly interesting in his intellectual environment, at the University of Debrecen. In the same faculty, the head of the Department of Philosophy, Béla Tankó (1876–1946) was a faithful of the philosophy of Károly Böhm (1846–1911). A series of the Ph.D. theses was formulated in his department, supervised by him, and Debrecen was one of the centres of the so-called “grand-children of Böhm”, i.e. the third generation of the philosophical school of Böhm.

was in synchrony with the rise of Kantianism. In this context, several reflections of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) about the turn of the public sphere of the academic life will be examined. Furthermore, their unexpected consequences in the European philosophy in general and their Hungarian instances in particular will be shown.

Kant's reflections on the changing structures of the public sphere in the community of philosophers from our point of view contain two main formulations. The first one is the distinction between *philosophia in sensu scholastico* and *philosophia in sensu cosmopolitico*, and the second one is the distinction between the private and public use of one's (human) reason.⁵ However, Kant talks about the historical determination of *philosophia in sensu scholastico*, and in several junctures he defines it as a *historical type of knowledge*, in opposition to the philosophy in its strict sense – it is clear that he is conscious of the institutional background. His formulation of mere historical knowledge of philosophy presumes an alternative system of institutions for philosophical knowledge. However, Kant always talks about the individuality of the use of the reason: *thinking* has not actually lost its social aspects in his thought. The purpose of philosophical thinking is not individual satisfaction, but that of the humankind. Solution to the institutional restriction of the private, individual use of the reason of individuals is hidden in the community; it is the publicity of thinking or the liberty of the public use of the same human reason.

In the following, several consequences of the Kantian concept of the publicity of philosophy in posterity of the following generations in different national cultures of Europe will be discussed. Historians of philosophy rarely emphasise that the changed public sphere has increased the importance of national vernaculars in philosophical discourse and its consequences for the future of European philosophy. In Kant's cultural environment, in German philosophy, the importance and the consequences of this change of languages were not initially clear because of the wide German speaking audience of philosophy. In a more detailed analysis, 18th-century German reflections of the new structure of the academic public sphere reflect a more varied picture than a naïve admiration of the new intellectual openness of this epoch. Kant himself was a participant of the shared academic public sphere, dominated by the *functional bilingualism*. However, he held his university lectures in German, and their written versions make up two functional groups with different purposes and target audiences. His Latin works were written in order to get academic degrees as obligatory steps of a Prussian professor of his lifetime,⁶

5 Kant's first twin-term *philosophia in sensu scholastico* / *philosophia in sensu cosmopolitico* have appeared at first in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, in the chapter entitled *The Architectonics of the Pure Reason*. After that it was used in several *loci* in the *œuvre*, e.g. in his metaphysical lectures in the version edited by Pöhlitz, and in his lectures on logics. The second twin-term *private and public usage of reason* was used in his popular writing entitled *Was ist Aufklärung*.

6 For Kant's Latin works see: "*Meditationum quarundam de igne succincta delineatio*," "*Principiorum primorum cognitionis metaphysicae nova dilucidatio*," "*Metaphysicae cum geometria iunctae usus in*

and his German works were published for a more wide audience than the professionals of philosophy. In other words, *philosophia in sensu scholastico* within his œuvre was cultivated in Latin, *philosophia in sensu cosmopolitico* in German. Consequently, the Latin was for the entire humankind and the German was available for the German speaking world, only. An solution to this dichotomy came from the circle of the Kant's disciples. Distinguished German professor of the first generation of the Kantian thinkers, Friedrich Gottlob Born (1743–1807) at the University of Leipzig, mentioned in his correspondence with Immanuel Kant that the critical philosophy is a fundamental turn in the history of the Western philosophy, and that its masterpieces should not remain in the domestic vernacular of the Germans but must be available in Latin for the international audience. Later, he promptly translated and published the main works of the Kantian critical philosophy, in the lifetime of Kant.⁷

In smaller Central European cultures, the discourse on “world philosophy” and the nation-level discourse on the role of certain philosophical elements in national cultures were evidently different. This can be seen in the Hungarian case during the so called *Hungarian Controversy on Kant* (1792–1822). The first phase of the controversy (1792–1800) was characterised by the dominance of Latin language and by an attempt at the participation in the European philosophical discourse. The writings published used the academic norms of the age and they focused on the Kantian epistemology. From the beginning of the 19th century, the debate was gradually conducted in Hungarian and its argumentation was mainly about ethics. The first phase can be divided into two parts with the prohibition of the Kantianism in the Habsburg Empire (1795 and both parts are characterised by a Latin book written not for the Hungarians only, but for the scholarly community of Europe. Both of them are anti-Kantian discussion papers, published as separate volumes. One of them is the first significant publication of a young Protestant scholar in his early career in the beginning of the controversy on Kant.⁸ The other one is the last work of a Catholic, Jesuit professor emeritus of the University of Pest.⁹ Both books declared on their frontispieces that they contribute to the European scholarly discourse on the Kantian philosophy. Rozgonyi (1756–1823) dedicated his work to his German opponents, professors Reinhold and Jakob in Jena and Hall while Horváth (1732–1799) published his book as an emeritus professor *and* a member of the Academy of Sciences of Göttingen. However, these Latin anti-Kantian discussion papers had similar positions in the European philosophical discourse but their function in the

philosophia naturali, cuius specimen I. continet monadologiam physicam,” “De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principiis.”

7 Kant, *Opera ad philosophiam criticam*.

8 Rozgonyi, *Dubia de Initiis transcendentalis idealismi Kantiani*.

9 Horváth, *Declaratio infirmitatis fundamentorum operis Kantiani Critik der reinen Vernunft*.

Hungarian intellectual life was different. Rozgonyi begun free philosophical discussion about a novelty of philosophy, namely the Kantian criticism, in the open sphere of the publicity, outside the walls of the cultural institutions of his age whereas Horváth supported the governmental prohibition of the Kantian philosophy in the Hapsburg Monarchy in his work, written several years later.

The second half of the controversy on Kant was dominated by the Hungarian language,¹⁰ and by the end of it the Hungarian scholar periodical press had emerged. It is symptomatic that Rozgonyi who was a supporter of the Latinity of the Hungarian intellectual life, published his last work as a standard scientific article in the Hungarian scholarly periodical press.¹¹ It ended the Hungarian controversy on Kant. This was an important feature of the period because of the communicational turn from the narrow (but international) scholarly discourse to the wider (but national) public sphere and from Latin to Hungarian in the midst of the *Controversy on Kant*. Consequently, the next generation formulated the problems of the communicational turn mainly in terms of Kantian philosophy. The main problem of scholarly communication of the next generation was the decline of Latin in the sphere of public philosophy but it saved significant positions in education and in state administration. The generation of Rozgonyi used two public spheres at the same time: the international network of the European scholars by Latin publications and the Hungarian laic audience by Hungarian works, using *functional bilingualism*. How to create scholarly discourse in Hungarian, and what will be its relation to the laic discourse on philosophy as well as to the international discourse was the problematic Hungarians tried to face in the Reform Era.

Formulations of the position of national philosophy in the period of Reform Era

Within a few decades philosophies written in national languages met a double challenge in their self-identification within the twin frameworks of the universal philosophy and national cultures. One consequence of the challenge was the emergence of different conceptions of “national philosophy”. The

10 For the first significant Hungarian work published within the framework of this debate see: [Budai], *A' Kánt szerént való filozófiának rostálgatása levelekben*. It was not the change of the languages, but the change of the styles, the topics within the Kantian philosophy, and the target audiences. The writings published in the first, dominantly Latin period have used the academic norms; have been focussed on the Kantian epistemology, for the European scholars. Budai's anonymously published pasquinade was the first in the series of brochures in Hungarian, focussed on the Kantian moral philosophy, written for the laic Hungarian audience.

11 Rozgonyi, “Aristippus védelme.”

dominant form of the philosophical self-interpretations of the new, modern national cultures that used a concept of “national philosophy” was the publication of visions and manifestoes about the philosophical thought of a nation *in the future*. The neighbouring national cultures were abundant in the manifestoes; it is enough here to mention the classics of the Czech and Slovak histories of philosophy, Augustin Smetana (1814–1851) and Ludovít Štúr (1815–1856) or the series of the authors of the Polish Messianism, with the frequent use of the word ‘future’ in the titles of their books.¹²

Hungarian philosophy had much more moderate works in this genre in the middle of the 19th century. Among them the most influential ones were the so-called *Propylaea* of a significant critic and public philosopher of the Reform Era, Gusztáv Szontagh (1793–1858), the first one for the whole of philosophy,¹³ the second one for the social and political philosophies.¹⁴ Szontagh’s proposals did not have generous conceptions and speculations of philosophy of history. The creation of grand visions was impossible in the framework of his anti-speculative, anti-Hegelian philosophy, based mainly on the Scottish common sense-tradition, with sympathies with the Kantianism. These Hungarian works of the conscious planning of the future of the Hungarian philosophy focused on the role of philosophy in the Hungarian culture as the tool of theoretical critique in the creation of the conscious self-reflection of a newly born national culture of modernity.

This self-image of the Hungarian philosophy of the Reform Era can be exemplified by two paradigmatic publications, the first one from the beginning, and the second one from the end of the period. The first one is Gusztáv Szontagh’s early philosophical program, formulated in the beginning of his career.¹⁵ Szontagh has declared that the task of philosophy in a new established national culture is theoretical critique of the works of fine arts, literature, and the phenomena of economic, social and political life. In his view, a systematically developed theoretical reflection, constructed in a periodical, can make from the chaotic amount of artworks, writings, economic, social and political endeavours an organised national culture, including the gradual canonisation of the national culture. Later, in the 1830s and 1840s (1837–1840), Szontagh’s dream was fulfilled by the establishment of the

12 For Smetana’s work see: Smetana, *Die Katastrophe und der Ausgang der Geschichte der Philosophie*. For a promptly published (negative) Hungarian book-review see: Szontagh, “Smetana s a philosophia közel kimenetele.” I have consulted Ludovít Štúr’s writing in a modern Hungarian translation, for it see: Štúr, “A szlávok és a jövő világa.” For an unsuccessful experiment to the popularisation of the Polish Messianism in the Hungarian scene see: Hecksó, “A legújabb lengyel bölcsészet végeredményei.” Augustin Smetana and Ludovít Štúr have formulated their manifestoes in German. Pál Hecksó (1825–1895) was ethnically Slovak, and after this single Hungarian publication, without reflections, he has published his writings in the Slovakian press as Pavel Hečko.

13 Szontagh, *Propylaeumok a magyar philosophiához*.

14 Szontagh, *Propylaeumok a társasági philosophiához, tekintettel hazánk viszonyaira*.

15 Tuskó Simplicius [Szontagh, Gusztáv], “A literaturai kritikás folyóírásokról.”

Hungarian periodical, entitled *Figyelmező (Spectator)*. He was one of the most important lights in the fields of prose and philosophy due to his reviews published in this periodical. The second one was an official discussion at the Department of Philosophy of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences about the proposal of its member, János Szilasy (1795–1859), on the topic of the Hungarian philosophy.¹⁶ Szilasy with other participants in the discussion formulated the problem in modified Kantian terms. By Szilasy's description, there were four grades and modes of the cultivation of philosophy. There were the Kantian twin-terms of *school philosophy (philosophia in sensu scholastico)* in the basis, and the *world philosophy (philosophia in sensu cosmopolitico)* on the top of the scale. The core of Szilasy's problem was that the most valuable part of the works and activities of the Hungarian philosophers cannot be identified in either of them. The eminent authors of his lifetime offered a reconstruction of known philosophical system for educational ends, but their sporadic publications did not constitute a new philosophical system. The term of *individual philosophy* had been offered for this genre in Szilasy's proposal. The fourth genre of philosophy on Szilasy's scale between the *individual* and *world philosophies* was *national philosophy*. He opined that it is not a task concerning the future, or a philosophy substantially Hungarian, German, etc. in its content, but a significant amount of existing philosophical writings in Hungarian, which must be a part of the *world philosophy* by the authors. However, it could not be available for the international audience because of its language and its cultural context, as a part of it was written as a theoretical reflection of the Hungarian cultural, political, economic and social life after Szontagh's program. Szilasy's pursuit was to create a provisional position for philosophy in the Hungarian national culture, and to offer a solution to the self-identification of the Hungarian philosophers who had found themselves in the trap of their national language after the communicational turn of the European philosophies aiming at 'world philosophy'.

However, from the Hungarian culture we know those above detailed, careful manifestoes which made up the dominant form of a "national philosophy" as the *creation of a national narrative of the regional philosophical past*. Its possible causes will be dealt with in the next section. As a hypothesis, we may say that its causes were rooted in the special Hungarian institutional background, concretely in the policy of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Manifestoes can appear by individual initiative without institutional background but serious works in the history of philosophy, including the investigation of the original sources, philological and micro-philological preparation of the texts, could be procured by the awards and with a possibility of publication offered by the Academy or by other institutions, only.

¹⁶ Szilasy, "Lehet-é magyar philosophia?"

A narrative of the past of the Hungarian philosophy in the formulation of Pál Almási Balogh

One of the primary aims of the Hungarian Scholarly Society (later: Hungarian Academy of Sciences) as a 'counter-institution' striving to foster a new type of public life in Hungarian intellectual circles was to establish the Hungarian academic language for different disciplines and catalogues the achievements of various scholarly fields had accumulated until their time in the way the system of the Departments of the Hungarian Scholarly Society required. Philosophy enjoyed a premium position among these efforts and could boast significant accomplishments rather early on. Following the first academic dictionary dedicated to mathematics, *A Dictionary of Philosophical Terms*, was published as the second result of this project,¹⁷ and the first serious historical overview of Hungarian philosophy by Pál Almási Balogh, also initiated and supported by the Hungarian Scholarly Society, came out in the following year.¹⁸

Almási Balogh's task, besides the compilation of literature, was to study two fundamental problems. On one hand, he had to place the sources of Hungarian philosophy into the grand narrative of world history of philosophy, and on the other hand he also had to insert the same material into the system of the then budding Hungarian national culture, and find its function and position therein. Writing the history of philosophy as an independent discipline was still a relatively new concept in his lifetime. Although curricula included courses in the history of philosophy since the last decades of the 18th century in Central European universities, and the Hungarian Protestant colleges have followed this model, the most widely used handbooks were still those by the first professional generation, primarily Johann Jakob Brucker's (1696–1770), on whose work Almási Balogh himself relies heavily.¹⁹ It is symptomatic that Hegel's lectures on the history of philosophy were

17 *Philosophiai Műszótár*. This first dictionary of philosophical terms in the Hungarian culture was not a normative, prescriptive academic manual, but a precise philological work, which has followed the standards of the lexicography of its age. An editorial committee, entitled by the Department of Philosophy of the Hungarian Scholarly Society, has elected the list of the relevant scholar periodicals, and the relevant philosophical œuvres written in Hungarian, and has prepared a list of the terms used in this text-corpus, with all the parallelisms and varieties.

18 Almási Balogh, "Felelete ezen kérdésre." Pál Almási Balogh has submitted his manuscript as a proposal for the award of the Hungarian Scholarly Society in the beginning of the year 1834. However, his work was published later than the philosophical dictionary, he cannot know it during the development of his manuscript.

19 Brucker, *Historia critica philosophiae a mundi incunabilis ad nostram usque aetatem deducta*. It is the standard, complete edition of Brucker's work. Later have been published a series of short editions, both in Latin and German versions. An abridged Latin edition in the pocket-book form, published by the Press of the Calvinist College of Kolozsvár (Cluj), was known in the network of the Protestant schools in Almási Balogh's student years. Of course, in his

mentioned in Almási Balogh's work as the newest work of the methodology of philosophical historiography without any detectable influence on the structure of the work of the Hungarian author. (Seemingly, Almási Balogh has consulted Hegel's work during the last phase of the preparation of his work; thus he could just make an additional note to the list of the newest literature about Hegel, whose collected works were published in the 1830s, amongst them his lectures as first editions. Before this edition, the text of Hegel's lectures was available in the manuscripts of his students, only. The evaluation of Hegel was influenced by the circumstance that Almási Balogh in his own philosophical works was a follower of the Schelling's natural philosophy and he regarded Hegel as "the best follower of Schelling in Germany nowadays".)

Almási Balogh's relationship with József Rozgonyi, the anti-Kantian protagonist of the Hungarian controversy on Kant is also an important question, mainly because Rozgonyi's British (specifically, Scottish) concept of philosophy was not at all prevalent in Hungary at the time. Rozgonyi's college course which testifies to his uncommon orientation has come down to posterity in the notes of an alumnus of the College of Sárospatak, i.e. Pál Almási Balogh himself,²⁰ which provide an interesting early version to compare with the later printed (and censored) edition.²¹ Almási Balogh had reconciled the Hungarian materials with the concepts of history of world philosophy found in both the aforementioned popular handbook used at the time and the work of his former professor at Sárospatak. The author's less explicit task was to position the history of Hungarian philosophy in the evolving system of Hungarian national culture. For this purpose, Almási Balogh had to align philosophers and philosophical texts with the prominent eras and milestones of Hungarian history and turn the Hungarian philosophical heritage into a self-contained history in a national framework, parallel with similar component narratives (e.g. literary history, art history, legal history), in such a way that it would not lose its connection with the most significant trends of the history of the European philosophy.

Almási Balogh's skill at negotiating both tasks successfully is evident in his using one of the most characteristic tools of the historiographer's trade:

abovementioned work, he has consulted Brucker's complete Latin edition, with precise references.

20 *Clarissimi Domini Josephini Rozgonyi Philosophiae*. It is an edited copy of his sketches made in the lecture rooms, with a designed frontispiece, bound in leather. The manuscript contains all the usual courses of Rozgonyi, excluding his lectures on legal philosophy, which was offered for the students of the local Academy of Law. It is clear that Almási Balogh has carefully saved this record of his philosophical studies, as an adult, as well, and he probably has used it during his inquiries in the field of history of philosophy. It is possible by philological evidences that he had personal information about the events of the Hungarian Controversy on Kant, from his professor, József Rozgonyi, and he has used them in his work.

21 Rozgonyi, *Aphorismi historiae philosophiae*.

when he quotes Greek sources about Scythian thinkers or interprets the Cynics as Cumans (*cynica / kunok*), he operates with the topic of “barbarian philosophy”, originally retained by Brucker for religious reasons in order to trace the roots of Hungarian philosophy back to the dawn of world philosophy.

It is noteworthy here that although the readers commissioned by the Hungarian Scholarly Society asked Almási Balogh to modify certain parts of his manuscript – it have required mainly additions to the biographies and updating the bibliography, and it seems that it have offered collegially several new data – which request he happily obliged prior to printing, and it seems that no one objected to the chapters on the *proto-history* of Hungarian philosophy. This topic demonstrates well the intrinsic problem of Almási Balogh’s task, that of creating a nation-level narrative of philosophy. This narrative had to work by itself as a whole and to offer a privileged link to the history of the world philosophy in order to achieve its main aim, the creation of a useful national canon of the local philosophical traditions for the tasks of cultural nation-building.

Almási Balogh followed two models in the introductory chapter to his work. His first model of the historiography of philosophy was Brucker, who wanted to demonstrate the continuity of the human knowledge from Adam until his age. On one hand, it was a requirement rising from the religious background of his thinking, a worldwide idea of his age. For the fulfilment of this requirement, he used the term *philosophia barbarorum*. The use of this term is as ancient as the Christian apologetic literature of the 2nd century. By Tatianus’ argumentation in his famous speech *against the Greeks*, representatives of the Hellenistic culture had to recognise the supremacy, or at least equivalency of the Barbarian Wisdom, i.e. the Mosaic teaching with the Greek tradition. Later, Christians born in the Hellenic tradition found arguments for the equivalency of the Greek philosophy, especially Plato with the Old Testament as necessary steps in the education of the humankind in recognition of the Truth of Jesus Christ. A secularised form of the term *philosophia barbarorum* appeared in the rise of the philosophical historiography in the modernity, i.e. the end of the history of the human thought is not Christianity, but philosophy in its narrow sense and all forms of the Barbarian Wisdom had prepared the humanity for this supreme kind of thinking. In the introductory chapters of his giant monograph Brucker offered a series of descriptions from the wisdom of Egypt and Chaldea to the traditions of the Celtic and German tribes as a necessary proto-philosophy. The first half of these proto-philosophies he connected with orientalism and Egyptomania of the German culture of his age. They were not national philosophies in the modern sense of the term, and Brucker tried to discuss them as representatives of different periods, following the mediaeval model of the idea of *translatio studii*. (There were periods in the history of the human thought when it was dominated by the Egyptians, later by the Chaldeans, etc.) On the other hand, in the second half of the series, his hidden achievement was to find a place for

the intellectual pre-history of the new nations which have appeared in Europe during the decline of the antiquity. In his view, Celtic and ancient German wisdom was equal with the Egyptian and Chaldean knowledge, all of them were pagans and had achieved the level of Greek philosophy. The task of the historian of philosophy was to demonstrate how all the known nations can join to the same universal tradition of philosophy, based on its ancestral wisdom. It is a similar method compared with the way of thinking of the medieval chronicles which identify a mythical ancestor of a pagan tribe with a Scriptural figure in order to creating a unified global history of the humankind within the framework of Christianity, based on different traditions. In the Hungarian case the figures of Magog (Gen. 10, 2) and Nimrod (Gen. 10, 8) were often used as the Scriptural ancestors of the Hungarians.

Almási Balogh applied creatively these 18th-century topics to the Hungarian case as he mixed them with the fantastic Hungarian pre-history written by István Horvát (1784–1846),²² and derived from these elements a history of the Hungarian philosophy, which had its origins in the climate of the so-called smaller Socratic schools, especially the Cynic school, creating an intellectual basis for the inborn political wisdom of the Hungarians, manifested in the ancient, unwritten constitution of Hungary.

However, Almási Balogh has attributed significance to the topic of ancient wisdom of the Hungarians although it had not importance for the later parts of his work. Since the second chapter he actually drew the beginning of story of the Hungarian philosophy from the codices of the scholastic texts in Hungary. It is clear in his case that the problems of the beginnings and the links with the universal narrative of a nation-level philosophical historiography emerged as a requirement to the jury of the academic competition and to the target audience. By the common opinion of this age, a national narrative could not have its beginning *ex nihilo*; it had to be rooted in a provisional universal story. In the case of Almási Balogh, he dated it to Diogenes of Sinope, far from the centres of the Greek culture, and consequently, he could be originally barbarian, possibly Scythian what was equal with the Cumans, and both of them could be identified with the ancestors of the Hungarians.

A narrative of the Hungarian philosophy in János Erdélyi's work

Several decades later the same problem of beginning solved in another way. János Erdélyi, a 19th-century Hegelian classic of the historiography of Hungarian philosophy, used the topic of the spiritual last will and testament of the first Hungarian Christian king as the starting point of his narrative.²³

²² Horvát, *Rajzolatok a magyar nemzet legrégebb történeteiből*.

²³ Erdélyi, "A bölcsészet Magyarországon." Erdélyi's work was published at first in the periodical entitled *Budapesti Szemle*, as a series of articles in 1865–1867. It was published

In his story, Saint Stephen played a similar role as the Seven Greek Sages had done in the prehistory of the Greek philosophy. Most of them were statesmen and creators of the constitution in their countries like the Hungarian king. Erdélyi summarised his narrative in the following scheme: the first epoch was the prehistory of Hungarian thought, formulated in a foreign language, Latin, in an age when the other European nations developed their philosophical cultures also in Latin, within the framework of the international network of the medieval universities. The second epoch was the long period characterised by the gradual turn from Latin to Hungarian, and the third and last epoch denoted the end of the world history and of the history of philosophy when the self-conscious Hungarian philosophers wrote their own history since from the foundation of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. At this historical moment, the end of the world history and history of philosophy in keeping with the philosophy of Hegel was applied to the Hungarian case, i.e. the end of Hungarian philosophy is Hungarian Hegelianism, a final meeting point of the Hungarian and world spirit. It was incarnated in the figure of the Hegelian historian of Hungarian philosophy, Erdélyi himself, who wrote his narrative of the philosophy of his country on behalf of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. His story is a narrative of an emancipation process of a national culture focused on the history of philosophy, within a characteristic Hegelian framework in the post-Hegelian climate of the 1850s and 1860s.

Conclusions and consequences for the present

The first steps of the historiography of the Hungarian philosophy mirrors well the methodological problems of nation-level histories. In short, the dilemma was the discrepancy between the Hungarian philosophy as a unique and autochthon narrative and the mere series of grey and boring reception of the ideas of mainstream authors. Both of these points of view are wrong; no one wants to write a unique autochthon story nowadays, and the patterns of the histories of reception cover special constellations of the different influences. The solution can be a regional, in the Hungarian case, East Central-European

posthumously in a separate volume in 1885, in edition of József Bánóczy, as the single work written by Hungarian philosopher within the series *Filozófiai Írók Tára* [Series of Philosophical Writers], edited by Bernát Alexander, the father of the history of philosophy as a separate discipline in Hungary. It is the point when Erdélyi's work has been a part of the national cultural canon; however, Erdélyi could not finish his work because of his death. Erdélyi's history of Hungarian philosophy was not directly ordered by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, as Almási Balogh's one was, but he had a direct and continuous contact with the leaders of the Academy, especially with Ferenc Toldy, and he had their moral support, at least.

comparative history of philosophy.²⁴ Another consequence of this historical research for our age is the re-discovered experience of the Latin *functional bilingualism* in the field of philosophy. It was an inspiring condition of philosophy for its self-identification in the framework of national cultures, under conditions of the rise of the so-called *national studies*,²⁵ but before the establishment of a monolingual national culture with its fixed canons. Nowadays, after this monolingual condition of the European national cultures, when the everyday experience of the scholars is a new type of bilingualism, this re-discovered world of an archaic form of the bilingualism can be useful in the cultural self-identification of intellectuals.

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24 For a previous, detailed formulation of this idea see: Mester, "Toward a Central-European Comparative History of Philosophy."

25 For a standard monography on the 19th-century history of the national studies in the Hungarian case see Dávidházi, *Egy nemzeti tudomány születése*.

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