

“Proof of what a Hungarian woman is capable of”: Travels of Mrs. Mocsáry in the United States and Mexico

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While numerous insightful studies have been published on women's travel writing abroad, nineteenth-century female travelers from Hungary to the United States and its neighbors have rarely, if ever, been studied seriously. In Hungarian scholarship, there is even less attention paid to female travel writers than to travel writing in general, which could give the false impression that travel writing in the nineteenth century was not only a male-dominated genre but there were no female representatives at all. This is far from reality: Hungarian women at the time traveled in and wrote about Europe, India, the Middle East, Africa, as well as the United States and Mexico. They not only traveled when accompanying men but several of them left the mother country on their own, often introducing a novel point of view and approach towards countries and cultures visited. Their works provide a wealth of information for scholars: on women's position in contemporary Hungarian society, transportation history, the development of Hungarian travel writing, while also highlighting how Hungarian travelogues differed from Western European travel accounts studied more extensively in Anglophone scholarship. The case study presented here offers an analysis of Mrs. Béla Mocsáry's unique travel accounts in an inter-American context, studying the images of the United States and Mexico and the possible effects of the author's gender on the depiction of these North American countries.

Carl Thompson, a leading scholar in travel writing studies, describes travel as a “negotiation between self and other that is brought about by movement in space” and “all travel writing is at some level a record or product of this encounter, and of the negotiation between similarity and difference that it entailed” (9-10). Perceptions of the self, the cultural and social background of the travelers clearly influence, and to an extent predetermine, how they perceive unfamiliar cultures and people (the other) and thus how they represent them for their readers. In line with this, the question of generic differences among travel writers due to gender has played a crucial role in travel writing studies. Are female travel accounts fundamentally different from those written by males? Do women perceive, experience, and present the world differently during their travels? These

questions, among many others, have been central to travel writing studies in recent years and numerous publications have dealt with the scholarly study of female travel writing internationally.²

More women could embark on international journeys from the second half of the nineteenth century than ever before thanks to the major improvements in transportation, the commercialization of travel, and significant social changes. However, traveling (and travel writing) still posed several challenges and remained to a large extent the privilege of upper classes of (male) society: for women, traveling abroad (outside Europe in particular) required not only courage but also a willingness to go against social expectations and prejudice. This was especially true for women who decided to travel alone. Organizing the particularities of the journey (arranging transportation, finding accommodation, obtaining proper clothing) already required great attention, while the act of traveling itself and then the decision to publish the accounts contributed to these women being perceived as different and exceptional. Meanwhile, travel accounts written by women as a result of such journeys were often seen as marginal and less valuable than those published by men.

Hungarian women abroad: Gender, travel, and tourism

Hungarian historian Sándor Márki called attention to the significance of travel accounts written by Hungarian women as early as 1889, claiming that they provide new perspectives on the countries visited and complement even the best travelogues written by men. In his study, Márki listed almost forty female travelers, twenty of whom also published travel accounts at a time when “in our country the prejudice that a woman should stand out with her beauty alone was still widely accepted” (Wesselényi, “Előszó”).

Gradually, Hungarian women also abandoned their aversion to travel and more and more of them visited beautiful sights both in Hungary and abroad not only out of necessity but also with the aim of studying. Moreover, in the last hundred years several of them published their experience in book form as well. Although they did not prepare their books with scholarly claim, the travelogues are attractive because they mirror what a woman pays attention to and what she is interested in while traveling. (Márki 92)

Several Hungarian women visited European countries including Italy, France, Germany, and Greece as part of a quasi Grand Tour.² These places became increasingly accessible for Hungarian women as well and they served as worthy destinations due to their remarkable history and culture. At the same time, more and more women embarked on voyages outside Europe, too.³ The accounts of these pioneering female travelers were significant also because, as Jill Steward notes, “for the female reader, the experience of reading accounts of foreign places written by women was an important element in encouraging them to think of themselves as tourists and to want to travel abroad” (88).

There were several female travelers left out by Márki who published accounts of journeys in various newspapers, whose works were incorporated into joint publications with their husbands (see Theresa Pulszky on the United States, for example), and probably there were cases when women wrote under pseudonyms. At the same time, the number of female travelers continued to grow after Márki’s publication as well. Istvánné Jakabffy published the first Hungarian travel account on the United States (visited with her son) written by a woman in 1893 (Glant, *Csodák* 188-89). Mrs. Mocsáry wrote about her experience in the United States and Mexico in numerous publications at the turn of the century and might be considered an exceptional traveler also because she traveled on her own.

Several factors contributed to the growing number of female travelers from Hungary by the end of the nineteenth century. First of all, the development of infrastructure and the commercialization of travel together with the spreading of tourism made traveling easier and locations that were harder to reach before became more accessible for everyone (Venkovits, “Changing Experience”). As Márki wrote, “the railroad, steam ships, from which the toilette tables and mirrors were not absent either, made traveling rather simple for women” (95-96). Besides this, changes in the social status and perceptions of women, mostly those from privileged classes, made travel and travel writing more acceptable to society. Perceptions of the traditional female roles (as mothers, good wives, and housewives) still persisted, but various social tendencies pointed towards changes and emancipation and thus a possibility for stepping out of the typical roles assigned to women (Pető).

Scholars studying female travel accounts have often tried to identify features that are uniquely characteristic of women travelers. There is a clear

assumption in most critical texts that female travel writing is inherently different. As Sara Mills claims, “the difference is not a simplistic textual distinction between men’s writing on the one hand and women’s writing on the other, but rather a series of discursive pressures on production and reception which female writers have to negotiate, in very different ways to males” (5-6). Scholars assert that female travel accounts are more personal and emotional and thus focus less on public discourse, including politics or economy, than male travel accounts; they provide more detailed accounts of domestic issues, women being more attentive to detail; women’s texts are claimed to be more literary than scholarly, the latter style usually associated with men; the topics discussed and reasons for writing are also often delineated along gender lines as we will see.

Such texts resist simple categorization based only on gender categories: “In terms of stylistic features, there is no way that women’s travel writing can be differentiated from that of male writers, though a case could perhaps be made for difference in emphasis, in selection of material, in the relationship between the traveller and the putative reader” (Bassnett 240). In many cases we might as well assume that differences in style or content are the result of personal characteristics rather than gender differences alone. The cultural and national background of a female travel writer may have a stronger influence on a particular textual representation than her gender.

“Traveling transformed my whole being”: Mrs. Mocsáry in North America

Susan Bassnett describes female travel writers as being doubly different: “they differ from other, more orthodox, socially conformist women, and from male travellers who use the journey as a means of discovering more about their own masculinity” (226). This is true for Hungarian women as well while a comparison with Western travelers (a third way to be different) was also perceptible in contemporary reports on Mrs. Mocsáry’s travels:

Widow Mrs. Béla Mocsáry, née Mária Fáy, is . . . one of the most noteworthy women. If the English woman travels, she comes to the continent and that is it. If the American woman travels, she comes over to Europe—usually Paris is the destination—she goes to Italy and then settles peacefully because she traveled! However, this Hungarian woman, not to mention her journeys in Europe, visited Africa, India, and America twice—all alone . . . serving as proof of what a Hungarian woman is capable of. (Mocsáry, “Havannában” 36)

Mrs. Mocsáry is often mentioned as the first female travel writer from Hungary, which is certainly not the case. She is not even the first one to travel to North America; still, she is a unique author whose travel accounts concerned areas not visited by women travelers before. She traveled alone when she was over fifty, took numerous photographs, and her works lend themselves to the study of changes in the Hungarian image of North America and questions of gender and travel writing.

Mária Fáy was born in Pomáz in 1845 into a land-owning family.⁴ In the available biographies her love of traveling is usually depicted in relation to two male figures, her father and her husband. Mária's father (Ignác Fáy) often traveled and took his daughter with him, for example, to Venice and Vienna. After marrying Béla Mocsáry (at the age of 16), the couple traveled extensively: to Switzerland, Italy, Paris, London, and Berlin. Her social background and early life fits into Kristi Siegel's description of female travelers of the time, claiming that most of these women were relatively privileged and constitute a select group who traveled voluntarily (2).

The couple had no children, and after her husband died in 1890, she decided to continue traveling on her own: "Me, who did not know what the sweet hug of a mother was like, whose married life was not blessed by fate with a child whom I could overwhelm with my love, in my solitude I searched for consolation and found peace in the beauties of nature and the dangers of traveling" ("Mocsáry" 354). Travel by women writers has often been presented as a means of escape, a time "free of constraints of contemporary society, realising their potential once outside the boundaries of a restrictive social order" (Bassnett 234). The travel experience is also often depicted as a search for a new identity and new definition of the self. Mary Kingsley (and her travels through West Africa) is often cited as a key example but clearly such a statement is true for Mrs. Mocsáry as well. She embarked on journeys with the purpose of leaving behind her former self after the death of her husband, and travelling granted her a new identity and a possibility for transformation: "I want to exchange the unbearable uniformity of life without goals to a more interesting, more pleasant, and better pastime," she insisted (*India és Ceylon* 7). Based on the introduction to her first book, she successfully achieved such a transformation: "since then, if I think of my sad past, I feel that my experience during my journeys, the numerous majestic

sights have transformed my whole being” (7). Later she added, “the memories of my journey made my life more beautiful, human society more pleasant, and gave me strength to keep on struggling” (*Keleti Utazás* 398).

The money she earned from the family estate and the fact that she spoke several foreign languages made the realization of her travel plans possible, already indicating the changing social perceptions of women. First, she traveled to the Tatra Mountains and then to Transylvania. But “the feeling of abandonment without a family became terrifying and I wanted to travel further in the world” (“Mocsáry” 354-55). Together with her sister, she traveled to the Balkans and the Middle East (1893), visiting Egypt, Palestine, Greece and Turkey, even reaching Nubia. In later journeys, she traveled alone in Asia, including extensive trips in India and Ceylon (Sri Lanka). After spending some time at home, she embarked on transatlantic voyages and traveled to North America twice: to the United States in 1896 and Mexico in 1904. She was also planning a journey around the world, which became impossible due to the Russo-Japanese War. Thus, she had to return home in Hungary, where she died in 1917. These journeys were certainly unmatched at the time and the resulting publications were welcomed and appreciated by contemporary readers.

The decision to publish

Mrs. Mocsáry decided to publish her recollections of the first journey after returning home from India. Similarly to many other female travelers of the time, she assumed an apologetic voice, emphasizing that hers was only a tourist description not aimed at competing with male travel accounts:

Now I give in to persuasion and based on my letters sent home and my memories, I record my journey for the purposes of charity, not from a scholarly perspective, as *being a simple village lady* I did not embark on journeys for that purpose, but as a way of entertainment for fellow women. Therefore, I recommend my work to Hungarian ladies. (*India és Ceylon* 3)

Such an attitude was in line with that of other female travelers and was a reflection of women’s position in public life. Siegel notes that female travel writers often included an “apology” at the beginning of their work, claiming that they write “only” as women and they are not trying to compete with men in the

public sphere; thus not breaking the conventions of femininity. Such apologies often included references to the fact that the travelogue was originally written in the form of letters (to friends and family) and the decision to publish came only later on. William H. Prescott in his introduction to Fanny Calderón de la Barca's *Life in Mexico* (1843), a popular and significant publication in the history of female travel writing, also highlights such an apologetic attitude: "The present work is the result of observations made during a two years' residence in Mexico, by a lady It consists of letters written to the members of her own family, and, *really*, not intended originally—however incredible the assertion—for publication" (Calderón, "Preface"). A similar example comes from the other iconic female travel writer Mary Kingsley, who writes: "what this book wants is not a simple Preface but an apology, and a very brilliant and convincing one at that. Recognising this fully and feeling quite incompetent to write such a masterpiece, I have asked several literary friends to write one for me, but they have kindly but firmly declined" (Kingsley vii). Such assertions (both regarding the language and content of travel accounts) brought such publications by women more in line with the expectations of contemporary society.

Mrs. Mocsáry similarly claims that more competent people (men) have already written about the places visited, she emphasizes that she is only a simple village lady, and that she is publishing not with scholarly goals in mind but only for the purposes of entertainment. While her journeys and publications indicate the ongoing changes in the status of women in Hungary, Mrs. Mocsáry is always careful to emphasize the significance of the family and the home in the life of women. While acknowledging this feature of female travel accounts, almost all Hungarian men also included apologetic notes in introductions to their publications. These, however, emphasized the deficiencies in their writing skills mostly, otherwise they liked to stress the unique and informative nature of their accounts.

Mrs. Mocsáry published travelogues both in the form of newspaper articles and books, illustrated with photographs taken during her journeys. Her articles were published in *Ország-Világ* [*The Country and the World*] and *Magyar Szalon* [*Hungarian Salon*] as well as in the "Séták a nagyvilágban" ["Strolls in the World"] section of *Új idők* [*New Times*], where several other female travel writers also published travelogues (for example, Mrs. Kornél Kozmutza about India). She wrote travel accounts for *Földrajzi Közlemények* [*Geographical Review*] as well,

which indicates a professional attention to her journeys besides popular interest. She became a member of the Hungarian Geographical Society (which was the first scientific society that admitted women as members already at its foundation in 1872) and also delivered lectures there.

Mrs. Mocsáry published several books about her journeys. *India és Ceylon: Úti jegyzetek* [*India and Ceylon: Travel Notes*] came out in 1899 and presented her travels to and in India (Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta) and Ceylon with 80 illustrations and photographs. Her 400-page-long book *Keleti utazás: Egyiptom, Szentföld, India, Ceylon* [*Oriental Journey: Egypt, the Holy Land, India, Ceylon*] is a second, extended edition of the first one, this time also featuring accounts of her journey to Egypt, the Nile, Jerusalem, and Greece. This publication also included more than two hundred photographs.

The accounts of her US and Mexican trips were first printed in article form in *Földrajzi Közlemények* and *Magyar Szalon* respectively, and were published as reprints in book format due to their popularity. Compared to her former books, these were short texts. While *Földrajzi Közlemények* offered a scholarly forum, *Magyar Szalon* was a more popular medium where the publication of illustrated travel accounts was also dominant. The fact that she published in papers for such different audiences and purposes shows her appeal to a wide range of her contemporary readers.

A tourist's view of North America

Mrs. Mocsáry provides a modern tourist's account of North America using a descriptive style where the personality of the writer, her thoughts, and opinions often remain hidden (as opposed to most male travel writers). In this sense she was similar to some of the other Hungarian women travelers.⁵ Mrs. Mocsáry also traveled on the tourist track, staying in the best hotels and visiting "tourist attractions" only; thus, she provided eloquent and explanatory accounts of various places. In the US she moves away from urban areas in the east and goes to the western part of the country in search of unparalleled vistas and natural scenery primarily. Instead of detailing urban areas and social issues, she describes mountain rides, hotels, restaurants, and the pleasures of traveling. In Mexico she visits the capital and other major cities focusing also on tourist attractions and sites of memory related to Maximilian von Habsburg and his empire. While the journey itself is presented as enjoyable, she offers a guide for future tourists by

providing tips to them: on good hotels, the price of accommodation and different types of services, what people should wear during trips to different locations. In this way she creates a travel-guide text with snapshots of unfamiliar beauties of nature.

Her presence as a female tourist traveling alone already indicated social and historical changes in North America. Traveling became more comfortable, safer, and enjoyable in both countries. Her journey was supported by the relatively calm historical period as well, compared to earlier travel accounts, as her journey was not affected by political problems that she would have had to address even if seen “unfit for a lady.” The issue of safety (and thus the plausibility of tourism) was especially crucial in the case of Mexico, a country depicted as dangerous and full of bandits by earlier travelers (and thus also inferior and uncivilized). However, in turn-of-the-century Mexico, “under the new calm, tourists became a common sight. . . . The first guidebooks had appeared in the 1880s, and in the last two decades of the century nearly sixty books of travel were published by American and British writers” (Drewsey 40). The new group of tourists also brought changes in terms of what was noteworthy in the country. “Few tourists were coming to explore the ancient Indian monuments, which were mostly in ruins, inaccessible, or undiscovered. . . . [R]ather it was the Spanish heritage, the new works created by Maximilian and Díaz, the scenery, and the local color that attracted tourists” (Drewsey 40).

This was certainly true for Mrs. Mocsáry as well. Karl Baedeker’s *The United States with an Excursion into Mexico* was first published in 1893 and could probably serve as a handbook for her.⁶ The guidebook’s introduction to the Mexican section already heralds a new approach towards the country both in terms of its progress and attractiveness for (female) tourists:

Since the opening of the railways . . . , an excursion into Mexico can be easily added to a visit to the S. part of the United States, and affords a survey of so novel and picturesque a civilisation as amply to repay the time and trouble. Three weeks will suffice for the journey to and from the City of Mexico, with halts at many interesting places on the way, and also for trips from the City of Mexico to Orizaba (or even Vera Cruz), Puebla, and Oaxaca (Mitla). This excursion involves no serious hardships and is constantly made by ladies.

(Baedeker 537)

The guidebook supplied her with tips on what cities and sights to visit; recommended hotels, possible means of transportation, theatre and other social programs; and also provided introductory notes that she could use to prepare for the trips and also recycle in her account. It is likely that Mrs. Mocsáry consulted this Baedeker as she stayed in the hotels suggested by the guidebook and described many of the places recommended in it. She then recirculated this information and created a Baedeker-like account herself both on Mexico and the United States.

At the same time, the assumption of the tourist identity made it possible for Mrs. Mocsáry to exclude comments on social problems and politics from her travel account (neither deemed acceptable topics for women) and to focus on portrayals of scenery and tourist sites that were considered more neutral topics. Objective and matter-of-fact descriptions in relatively short publications (37 pages in the case of Mexico and 42 devoted to the US, with most of the space taken up by photographs) provide detailed descriptions of the most important tourist spots focusing on the beauty and development of the country without any discussion of social or political matters. The major social issues also affecting Hungarians are not mentioned: in the US account there is no reference to New Immigration (taking place from the 1870s to World War I) with more than a million Hungarians leaving the mother country for the US (with an estimated 25 million other people immigrating to the United States during this period). Immigration to Mexico is mentioned but the author does not express an opinion on the issue, its causes and consequences and, of course, neither discourages, nor encourages migration. Mrs. Mocsáry meets several Hungarians during the voyage to Mexico and she writes about the Hungarian presence in the country. She mentions at one point that the director of *Hotel Palacio* is a Hungarian and states that several Hungarians living in Mexico also contacted her (*Mexikói utazásom* 20). Social issues related to various ethnic and racial groups are not introduced, nor are questions and problems related to urbanization, among other issues that formerly played an important role in male travel accounts.

While offering detailed descriptions of major sights, Mrs. Mocsáry writes little about the population. Even when she mentions various ethnic or racial groups within society, she remains the objective outsider and does not start to analyze their social position. In the United States, for example, she mentions the presence of Chinese and Japanese workers, the Chinese maids are described as

“skillful and attentive” (*Mexikói utazásom* 7), but she does not discuss questions of Asian immigration (for example, Chinese Exclusion restricting Chinese immigration to the country) or the often hostile attitude towards Asian immigrants in California. The same silence occurs in connection with African-Americans, as, for instance, when she mentions the work of black servants on trains without any regard for their social status or contemporary issues. Her ideas concerning the position of non-white people are revealed only in scarce, short, and indirect statements and references. For example, when talking about Alaska Natives, she mentions boarding schools and celebrates them as a means of educating the natives who will leave behind their traditions and thus become more civilized. Otherwise, they are presented only as interesting people to be visited as part of a trip to the region. Concerning Mexico, she practically remains silent on the population and provides an introduction only to two groups in relative detail, the Native populace and women.

While in former travel accounts the different social, racial, and ethnic groups were always discussed, in Mrs. Mocsáry's travel accounts of Mexico, these considerations are completely missing. Mrs. Mocsáry ponders the past traditions, beliefs, and artwork of Natives, providing an overview of their history and the description of major sites and archeological findings related to their culture, without actually visiting these places.⁷ Although she tries to avoid criticism and a hostile approach towards the population, certain statements reveal her attitude towards the contemporary Native people. At one point, she reports the wife of the Count working at the Consulate “complained that despite all her efforts and sacrifice she can help improve the problems of the people only slightly due to their fanatic thinking and traditions” (*Mexikói utazásom* 11). Later, however, she shares with her readers her own unfavorable view as well: “they [Natives] bent before European civilization and today it is hard to imagine that these people were capable of governing a state like that of the Aztecs’ on a regular basis” (*Mexikói utazásom* 12).

It is often claimed that women travelers are more open to the detailed discussion of the status and position of fellow women and provide more reliable accounts of their domestic life than male travel accounts. But in her US travelogue, any discussion of American women is missing completely. In the case of Mexico, unfortunately, Mrs. Mocsáry does not provide any new information about Mexican women. She focuses on their physical beauty only, presenting

their looks and clothes, and the reader cannot learn about their domestic life or concerns. Basically, she reiterates former views of Mexican women propagated by male travelers: “the Mexican woman is always pretty, strong, and healthy and she stands out with her long black eyelashes and strong eyebrows; she does not know about the corset and likes music and flowers” (*Mexikói utazásom* 21). Although she also adds photos of Mexican women, her descriptions remain simplistic and provide only a few general statements, such as “the love of children and flowers is well developed in women” (*Mexikói utazásom* 17). During her stay, she did not have an opportunity to get to know Mexican women and thus did not learn about their everyday life in any more detail than any previous male travel writers. We cannot gain insight into either women’s opinion on Mexican social issues or on the status of women at the turn of the century. Mexican women mentioned by all Hungarian travel writers were simply attractive, beautiful, and exotic; such statements rarely went beyond the simplistic portrayal of women’s physical features and exoticism with no details of their social life. Unfortunately, Mrs. Mocsáry did not violate this “convention.”

She introduces those aspects of life in the United States and especially Mexico that could be experienced by an upper-class woman traveling on the tourist path and living in the best hotels. Using the form of a tourist report, Mrs. Mocsáry did not feel compelled to comment on social issues discussed in all previous Hungarian travel accounts; for example, the differences between racial and ethnic groups in Mexico or the position of African-Americans in US society, which met gender expectations in current travel writing: “despite their generally privileged class position, women writers tended to concentrate on descriptions of people as individuals, rather than on statements about the race as a whole” (Mills 3). Women in their travel accounts seem to be more interested in domestic life and picturesque landscapes than men, exhibiting a “clear assertion of femininity, either through attention to details of clothing, accounts of domestic life, or the inclusion of romantic episodes” (Bassnett 239).

Moreover, women travel accounts were often devalued and seen as non-literary and merely autobiographical, while (seemingly in a contradictory manner) they were also often accused of falsification and exaggeration (Mills 110) and were thus seen as marginal to men’s accounts. “If they tend towards the discourses of femininity in their work,” writes Mills, “they are regarded as trivial, and if they draw on the more adventure hero type narratives their work is

questioned” (118). Taking photos and attaching them to their work helped authenticate their accounts and mask them as more real or believable for readers, avoiding accusations of falsification. As a modern tourist, Mrs. Mocsáry was also equipped with a Kodak that she used throughout her journey to document her experience, and taking photos became an important way of relating her journey and sharing her impressions with Hungarian armchair travelers.

By the time of publication of Mrs. Mocsáry’s book, the inclusion of photographs had become relatively widespread as taking photographs and integrating them into travelogues became easier due to the development of technology. Taking photos also came to play a crucial role in the tourist experience itself. Mrs. Mocsáry often emphasizes that she is using her Kodak to record what she sees and expresses regret when she cannot take a photo of an event or place worthy of remembering (*Mexikói utazásom* 5). There are about 40 photos included in her Mexican and US travelogues, most of them documenting major attractions of the cities visited, some focusing on beauties of nature, intriguing (and ancient) objects, and artwork. People rarely appear in these pictures, the only exception being three close-up images of Mexican women and photos of Natives in the US account. The postcard-like photos also seem to reinforce the guidebook style of the account that focuses more on propagating images of tourist attractions than reflecting on ethnography or social issues.

Her tourist identity becomes visible in descriptions of such topics as transportation and technology. Advances in infrastructure, railways, and roads are important for her not as indicators of progress and civilization (as in former travel accounts written by men) but because they make places accessible for “excursionists.” While traveling in the US, her focus is not on the railroad itself but on the surrounding environment. Technology, tunnels, and snow sheds are interesting only to the extent that they make traveling for tourists easier and help bring them to places previously inaccessible to the masses: “later the railroad is even more gorgeous and at every turn it offers a new surprise for the travelers, its artistic structure touches on the most beautiful spots, turning here and there, sometimes leaving, then resurfacing from one of the canyons, but always visiting those places where there is a surprising view” (*Útazásom* 14). Technological and infrastructural development in Mexico, therefore, is not linked to the progress of the country, nor does it represent a significant move forward, but is only an achievement contributing to the improvement of the tourist experience. Even if

Mrs. Mocsáry mentions examples or suggestions for Hungary to follow, they come within the realm of tourism: she claims that Hungary's most beautiful places in the High-Tatras, for example, should be served by railroads, which would benefit the tourist industry (*Útazásom* 16). When emphasizing the popularity of outdoor camping in the United States, she claims that such a form of holiday should also be encouraged in Hungary so as to allow even the poor to enjoy nature and go on holiday (*Útazásom* 16).

Conclusion

In Hungarian travel writing before Mrs. Mocsáry, descriptions of Mexico typically included references to the United States, comparisons with the Northern neighbor and very often binary oppositions of superiority and inferiority (Venkovits, "Describing the Other"). In her case, however, the United States does not serve as a constant reference point even though she visited both countries. This may be due to two reasons. On the one hand, in her Baedeker-like account she focuses on Mexico specifically, its main attractions and peculiarities, and in such an account there is no point in making inter-American comparisons. On the other hand, such contrasts would have involved the discussion of politics and the making of political statements on issues of superiority and inferiority, civilization, and progress; topics often discussed by men but not in line with Mrs. Mocsáry's purposes and style of writing.

Mrs. Mocsáry provided Hungarians with one of the first female views of Mexico and the United States by a Hungarian. While translations of texts by other female travelers such as de la Barca were available earlier in Hungary, among Hungarian writers only men provided travel accounts of Mexico and thus women served only as the objects of descriptions. Also, some women had published travel accounts on the United States, but Mrs. Mocsáry was the first to travel on her own and share her experience in writing. Thus, she provided a new point of view opening up novel realms of discourse. She produced an original account as she traveled writing as a tourist per se, which reflected her privileged background while her style conformed to social expectations of travel writing. Through describing major sights while traveling on the tourist path she offered an alternative view of what was worth visiting and writing about. Through her style she propagated a new image of the countries. She presented new insights into life in the United States as former travel writers did not focus on those areas and

topics she deemed primary. She moved away from former depictions of Mexico, presenting a country where even a woman could travel alone. Similarly to Jenő Bánó writing about Mexico at the same time, Mrs. Mocsáry deconstructs the former image of Mexico as a land of bandits and thieves asserting that Mexico is safe. Even if gender obviously influenced her approach, she also often reiterated former male perceptions of the American countries thus it would be difficult to distinguish her travel account from travel writing by men simply on a textual basis.

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Notes

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¹ See, for example, Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 1991); Susan Bassnett, "Travel Writing and Gender," *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, ed. by Tim Youngs and Peter Hulme (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), 225-242; Kristi Siegel, ed., *Gender, Genre, and Identity in Women's Travel Writing* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004); John Theakstone, *Victorian and Edwardian Women Travellers: A Bibliography of Books Published in English* (Mansfield Center, CT: Martino, 2006); Jane Robinson, *Wayward Women: A Guide to Women Travellers* (Oxford: OUP, 1990); Catherine Barnes Stevenson, *Victorian Women Travel Writers in Africa* (Boston: Twayne, 1982); Indira Ghose, *Women Travellers in Colonial India: The Power of the Female Gaze* (Oxford: OUP, 1998); June Edith Hahner, *Women Through Women's Eyes: Latin American Women in 19th-century Travel Accounts* (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 1998).

² See, for example, the following: Lilla Bulyovszky, *Úti naplóm [My Travel Diary]* (Pest: Boldini, 1858); Lilla Bulyovszky, *Norvégiából: Úti emlékek [From Norway: Memories of a Journey]* (Pest: Elmich G., 1866); Ádámné Wass, *Úti képek: Szeptember-november 1859 [Images of a Journey: September-November 1859]* (Kolozsvár: n.p., 1860); Emma Teleki Ágostonné De Gerando, *Hedvig és Andor utazása Rómában: Írta Anyjok [The Journey of Hedvig and Andor in Rome: Written by their Mother]* (Paris: Jouaust, 1866) and *De Gerando Ágostné gróf Teleki Emma Görögországi levelei és a régi Attikának hiteles kiírók utáni leírása [The Greek Letters of De Gerando Ágostné Gróf Teleki Emma and the Description of Old Ithaca Based on Reliable Sources]* (Pest: Heckenast, 1873); Józsa Uhl, *Emlékek római útból [Memories of My Trip to Rome]* (Pozsony: n.p., 1888); Hermína Geduly Tauscherné, "Utazásom a Mont-Blancra" ["My Trip to Mont Blanc"], *Földrajzi Közlemények* (1882): 218-32; Polyxéna Pulszky Hampelné, "Kirándulásunk a régi Trója vidékére" ["Our Excursion to the Region of Old Troy"], *Egyetértés* 128 and 130 (1884);

³ Etelka Györfly sent letters from India published in *Magyar Házasszony [Hungarian Housewife]* as early as 1886. Mrs. Samuel Baker (of supposed Hungarian origin) accompanied her husband to Africa, while Hermína Gillmingné Fischer traveled around the world visiting and

writing about the United States, Cuba, South America, Japan, China, and India with her work being published in German.

⁴ This section is based on Szinnyei, *Magyar írók* [*The Life and Works of Hungarian Authors*] and Balázs, *Magyar utazók* [*Lexicon of Hungarian Travelers*].

⁵ Márki described Mrs. Ádám Wass, for instance, in a similar fashion: “Her personality never steps too much into the foreground, at least during her journeys, as she only gets off in major cities and thus her delicate taste does not have to accommodate itself to the imperfect, sometimes dirty inns of small towns or villages” (111).

⁶ Here, I am using the second, revised edition: Karl Baedeker, ed, *The United States with an Excursion into Mexico* (Leipzig: Karl Baedeker, 1899). The German version was also available (and was probably used by Mrs. Mocsáry): *Nordamerika: die Vereinigten Staaten nebst einem Ausflug nach Mexiko* (Leipzig: Verlag von Karl Baedeker, 1893).

⁷ The description of the practice of sacrifice and the Aztec calendar stone have by now become standard elements of travel accounts on the country.

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