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A Hungarian Writer's Experience of the Mediterranean: On Ferenc Herczeg's *Szelek Szárnyán* Travelogue/ Ship`s Log

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Abstract. One of the works of the much disputed and until recently often avoided oeuvre of Herczeg Ferenc is the attention-grabbing work entitled *Szelek szárnyán* [*On the Wings of the Wind*] (1905), a travelogue and a ship's log. Its analysis casts another view on the life of this writer, born in South Banat, who, at the beginning of the 20th century, sailed the Adriatic and the Mediterranean with his nephew in his sailing boat called Sirály (The Seagull) – thus demonstrating and choosing a secessionist lifestyle, even abandoning Budapest –, and his inspiration by the sea reached a peak in this volume (Secessionist in every sense, advertising the beauties and values of the Adriatic). This prose work was created in the context of Rijeka, Zadar, Šibenik, Trogir, Split, Dubrovnik, and Boka Kotorska, which (apart from its Secessionist character), owing to its cross-artistic and multicultural features, blends various art forms and ways of expression. It gives a superb experience to the reader. The study interprets and analyses Ferenc Herczeg's volume *Szelek szárnyán* as a complex genre created in a cross-artistic environment, with the objective to emphasize and present its special role and standing in Hungarian literature as well as in the field of fine and applied arts.

Keywords: experience of the Mediterranean, Secession, ship's log, travelogue, Secessionist fine and applied arts

Ferenc Herczeg (1863–1954) was the most acclaimed Hungarian writer of the first half of the 20th century; he was celebrated by his contemporaries and readers as the 'king of writers'. In 1925, 1926, and 1927, he was nominated for the Nobel Prize in literature on grounds of his novel *Az élet kapuja* [The Gate to Life]. After World War II, due to his origin (born in Vršac to a German middle-class family,

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with Hungarian sentiments) and his activities with the Hungarian revisionists,[1] he was accused of irredentism, thus having deprived him of any previous awards and titles. He was expelled from the Hungarian Writers' Society, where he used to be vice-president. His works were black-listed; they could not be published until the mid-1980s, and were aesthetically degraded.

With the regime change-over, his oeuvre was rehabilitated in the political sense; however, owing to traditional literature-historical thought – interpreting national literatures as a 'unison' story –, there is still a strong general opinion of Ferenc Herczeg by which he was an "epigone character"[2] imitating the style of Mór Jókai[3] and Kálmán Mikszáth,[4] a superficial writer of bestsellers, whose "one-sided psychology" resulted from narrowing down his "story-telling talent […] solely to the magnates and the gentry"[5] (Utasi 2002: 78).

Up-to-date historical thought, however, evaluates these phenomena in a more shaded way. Since history too lives in variants – and there are increasingly more narratives on these (White 1973) –, given its historical trait, literature also exists in variants of utterance within the same culture. Within such a mesh, expressions other than the canonic literary utterances, hence bestsellers, also have a rationale and value-creating effect. The role of literary science is to comprehend these differing movements.

From one perspective, interpreting the phenomena of Hungarian historical narrative from the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st, following the novel-writing style of Jókai and Mikszáth does not mean epigonism but a choice of narrative tradition which was probably convenient in the first two decades of the 20th century – overshadowed by war – to reconstruct the Hungarian historical

1 The Hungarian Revision League (1927–1944) as a social organization was founded to organize and co-ordinate irredentist activities, aiming to raise awareness in the most influential countries of the world about the injustice of the Trianon Treaty, thus facilitating its revision. Ferenc Herczeg was the chairman of the organization.

2 "What must have been most deceiving at the time was the intellectual and artistic likeness of Herczeg's historical novels to certain respected, esteemed antecedents. Ideologically, he seemed to connect with the most prominent figures of the second half of the past century (Kemény, László Arany) and as a writer to Mikszáth's proven 'bravado technique'. Nevertheless, this was exactly what made his oeuvre transient. In both relations he would only repeat something from earlier when the political circumstances and the laws of genre creation required something completely different." (Imre 1996: 154)

3 Mór Jókai (1825–1904) was one of the most prominent Hungarian novelists of the 19th century. He was Sándor Petőfi's (1823–1849) colleague and friend, and took part in the 1848/49 Hungarian revolution. His oeuvre comprises of over a hundred volumes.

4 Kálmán Mikszáth (1847–1910) was another acclaimed Hungarian novelist and publicist of the 19th century, as well as MP. He is considered by Hungarian literary historians to be Mór Jókai's spiritual heir.

5 Csaba Utasi refers to the aesthete Jenő Péterfy (1850–1899): […] at the end of the 90s, Jenő Péterfy emphatically stressed: it would be such a waste if Ferenc Herczeg limited his narrative talent strictly to the circle of magnates and the gentry since his psychology would slowly turn one-sided." (Utasi, 2002. 78)

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novel pointing at the dissimilarity of the past and its role in questioning crisis modelling but also its role in finding answers to the incidences of the contemporary world. That is to say, on grounds of this view, the historical narrative always puts the reconstruction of a certain era in the service of questioning the present (Bényei 1999). Contemporary Hungarian historical novel reflects on it in the sense of this thought and reconstructs Jókai's and Mikszáth's 19th-century historical narrative, the one in which Herczeg's narrative also founded a tradition.

Scarce research conducted in the 1980s – like the research by Béla Németh G. (Németh, 1985) – made it clear that contrary to the stereotype created about Ferenc Herczeg he was not a writer of the gentry but of the elite middle class, which had been the bearer and recipient of elite culture in Hungary before World War II and which was later qualified by cultural policy governed by socio-realist ideology as the number one public enemy, an antiestablishmentarian intellectual composition. Therefore, it was not unusual that his oeuvre, although it was a success story of the Horthy-era[6] but distanced from Nazism, was erased from the public mind for decades. Then, in the early 1950s, the elderly, exiled Ferenc Herczeg made a request to the Hungarian Communist Party pleading that at least his works which were not against the regime be published. This did not happen – except for one book written in 1905; *Szelek szárnyán* [*On the Wings of the Wind*], a travelogue and ship's log about his voyages on the Adriatic – posthumously turned into a teenage adventure novel –, came out in 1957.

It should be pointed out that contemporary critics, such as Frigyes Karinthy,[7] the ingenious writer for *Nyugat* magazine, in his article dated 1910, also qualified *Szelek szárnyán* as a shallow, entertaining piece of writing lacking any poetic depth. The differing viewpoints originate from the social-cultural affiliation of the two writers, the social grounding of their views. "With my poor, deplorable soul, crammed with philosophy and poetry by anguish and anxiety, I somehow try to comprehend this viewpoint as if I were standing on the shore watching the yachts gliding in the distance. […] However, the nobility glide on white yachts, sailing past happy and joyful isles and exercising their smooth skin to bronze in the scorching seaside sun. This perception inevitably does not grasp anguish! – thus it cannot understand poetry either: – and to the least its highest and most intense apex: worship and comprehension of nature" (Karinthy 1910: 1150). Of

6 In Hungary, the political period between November 1919 and 15 October 1944 was named after Vice-Admiral Miklós Horthy, who was at that time the head of state. His ideology was the 'Christian national idea'. The most important elements were revision of territory, antiliberalism, criticism of the Hungarian Jew population's 'expansion,' anticommunism, and conservativism.

7 Frigyes Karinthy (1887–1938), Hungarian poet, writer, translator. He was a contributor to *Nyugat*, a magazine at the turn of the 20th century gathering the major authors of Hungarian literature of the time. His friendship was legendary with Dezső Kosztolányi (1885–1936), Hungarian poet, writer and aesthete born in Subotica, who was also a first-generation *Nyugat* contributor. Among his most popular works are the volume of parodies *Így írtok ti* [*This is How You Write*] published in 1912 and the novel *Utazás a koponyám körül* (1937) [*Voyage around My Skull]*.

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Herczeg, he primarily demands poetry, the intense poetic experience of nature, and refuses the lightsome ways of life – offered by existential security –, i.e. their presentation in literature, as mediated in *Szelek szárnyán*.

From a perspective of over a decade, Frigyes Karinthy's judgment of values proves implausible. He overlooks the bibliographic, genre-typical characteristics and complexity of *Szelek szárnyán*. He handles the work as one of *belle-lettre*, and not as an album comprised of the interaction of several art forms (applied arts, fine arts, literature). He does not take into account that the literary range of the book engages not only the genre registers of a short story/novella but also the toolkit of a ship's log/travelogue – not so poetic, and shifting the boundaries of fiction towards transient genres and interdisciplinary language range (e.g. sailing terminology). This is exactly the reason why his narration is broken, fragmented: judging by form, it is a mesh of short stories, anecdotes, and other prose-epic forms.

Reviews also skip the fact that *Szelek szárnyán*, i.e. the album of fine arts and literature, is not signed only by Ferenc Herczeg. Apart from him, there are works of fourteen painters;[8] the contents list notes: the artwork in the book contains paintings, drawings – pen, charcoal, and ink drawings. According to their technique and character, among them, there are cover pictures and lithographs in three or four colours, in-text drawings/pictures, title pages, front plate pictures, and flyleaves.

Frigyes Karinthy states, objecting to firstly Herczeg's lack of depth in understanding nature, then lack of poetic depth and lack of experience in the description of the Adriatic, that Herczeg is only a 'describer' (in today's terms: narrator); what is missing is the poetic vein, and the landscapes are short of genuine lyric. In addition to the fact that this narrative orientation – seen from a hundred years' perspective –, does not seem to be a significant disadvantage in prose writing, we should also observe that the critic oversees certain important aspects of attitude and origin, e.g. that the landscapes created by Herczeg are not metaphoric expressions of his lyrical experiences identifying with nature but visual images, so-called vedute, registering scenes of nature, inspired by visual arts, presented from a large-scale perspective (Imre 1966).

What might also follow from contemporary positioning, time distance, theoretical orientation, and lack of basics is that Frigyes Karinthy does not at all recognize and does not refer to, or he even rejects, that *Szelek szárnyán* is such a literary/artistic album/breviary which was entirely created in the spirit of Art Nouveau; what is more, it presupposes – not only in a visual sense but also in the view of the world and mode of existence – a Secessionist manner, which, on the one hand, means leaving the rejected present and present-time society, while, on the other, a decadent attitude towards indulgence in life. Therefore, Herczeg, having sailed around the islands and the coast of the Adriatic in his twenty-

8 See more in the chapter *A magyar könyvkötészet szecessziós remeke.*

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six-ton cutter, was not only inspired by this aristocratic passion but also by his pursuit for the zest of life and the quest of seizing the moment of (decadent/ Secessionist) joys.

The story of the 'Sirály'

Ferenc Herczeg's passion for the Adriatic also reflects in his narrative in the author's memoires. Years before he wrote *Szelek szárnyán,* he had also spent his summer holidays on a sailboat. At the time, when he had not yet owned his boat called Sirály [Seagull], he rented a cutter (a fast, single-masted sailboat) in the Croatian coast, on the island of Lošinj (for which Herczeg consistently uses the name: Lussin), and in it he sailed the Adriatic and the Ionian Sea (Herczeg 1939). The reason why it was in Lošinj was because the Austro-Hungarian Empire had six shipyards there and its port was the second largest on the Adriatic coast. In addition, it was also one of the centres of the Austro-Hungarian navy. The people of Lošinj were reputed for being fine sailors. As Herczeg put it, they were "the toughest and craftiest seamen of the Adriatic" (Ibid. 191).

Herczeg explained his dedication to the sea and sailing the following way:

> The sailboat for me was neither a means of transport nor a piece of sports equipment but a place to be, for instance: a floating mansion which enabled me to spend the summer months at sea, almost in the bosom of the sea. I was not attracted by the techniques of sailing, which is in point of fact a rather mundane chore, but by King Neptune's waving, blue crystal realm with its heavenly silence, captivating beauty, magnificent wealth of life, its exciting and incomprehensible caprice. Could I have turned into a dolphin each summer, I would much rather have spent my vacations in that form.
>
> I presume that if I had not fled to the sea in good time I would have drowned in a cup of tea in Budapest. I could not have escaped otherwise from that so-called worldly life. I did not need aloneness more than anyone of my acquaintances; I could only find myself in being alone. If there is any human value in me, its seeds were ripened mostly by the vast silence of the crystal desert, the blazing heat of the Adriatic sun (Ibid. 192).

Having soon realized that he could sincerely be at home at sea while sailing in his own boat, he decided to purchase one. In 1904, accompanied by Sándor Hegedűs Jr., he travelled to Great Britain, to Cowes, a famous seaport and world-renowned centre of sailboat- and yacht-building. He bought a 26-ton, slim yawl (two-masted sailboat), which he first named Hajnal [Dawn] and later renamed it Sirály [Seagull]. This comfortable marine craft was 63 feet in length and, apart from the suite, it had a cabin and a double guest room (with a separate toilet and a bathtub embedded into the floor), a kitchen, a four-bed room for the crew, and a

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sail store-room. A certain captain Chambers, a red-haired Scottish seaman, sailed it in 23 days to the port in Fiume (today: Rijeka), where Herczeg could take it over. The new owner hired a four-man crew to operate and maintain the boat; he had uniforms tailored for them, and he ploughed through the waves of the Adriatic under their navigation. The boat's homeport, where it was moored in wintertime, was Portoré Bay (today: Kraljevica) near Fiume. In addition, it was accepted into the "K. u. K. Yacht Eskader," which entitled the boat to fly the military colours. "Sailing the sea, in many years, I only met two Austro-Hungarian yachts. One belonged to Ákos Pauler, a university professor, and the other was also owned by a university professor: E., a professor from Zagreb" (Herczeg 1939: 201–202) – Ferenc Herczeg wrote in his memoirs. According to him, the elite owners of yachts and sailboats in the Austro-Hungarian empire gathered in Pola (today: Pula): "[…] in the Port of Pola, the yachts of the Austrian gentry were anchored, but they were mostly sailed during 'the sailing week'. On that occasion, the yacht owners wore their white uniforms, invited each other's ladies for tea, sailed to the nearby Brioni, and afterwards returned home to Vienna or to their Czech castle. Weeks- and months-long voyages were undertaken only by the three of us: two professors and a writer" (Ibid.).

In the summer of 1904, in fine "weather for sailing" (Ibid. 205), Herczeg cruised around the Dalmatian isles accompanied by his two good friends from Budapest. In 1905 (the year when *Szelek szárnyán* was published), his itinerary was the Bay of Corinth; before that, however, he had sailed to Venice, which he regularly visited every year. In his words, he could find his way better "in the labyrinth of canals and alleys smelling of fish and seashells than in the outskirts of Budapest" (Ibid. 231).

In August 1909, the Sirály – sailing from Spalato (today: Split) to Sebenico (today: Šibenik) – off the island of Zirone – almost got shipwrecked. It ran into a windstorm, and only with tremendous effort and by lucky chance could the vessel escape bad fate. Subsequent to this calamity, Herczeg decided to dispose of his boat. L. Janko, an eccentric British gentleman living in Fiume, bought it from him and named it Helen. An interesting detail of the sailboat's further fortune is that the new owner later sold it to King Alexander, who eventually donated it to the Bakar Naval Academy. "I could not afford another boat" – complained Ferenc Herczeg – "the World War came, which pulled the Adriatic from under us. Whenever I stroll along the seafront in Abbazia (today: Opatija) and watch the blue water, I feel like a bankrupt landowner who goes on foot in front of his once owned castle. Sometimes I get a strange feeling that my long-gone youth wanders somewhere out there, in the distant south, out in the sunny Adriatic, among the silvery grey islands." (Ibid. 297)

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A Secessionist masterpiece of Hungarian book art

The first edition of *Szelek szárnyán* (1905)[9] was much more than a simple typographic work: it was a genuine masterpiece of Hungarian Secession, the publishing of which concurred with the flourishing of Secession. Secession as a direction in art at the beginning of the 20th century proved to be decisive not only in graphic art but also in fine arts and typography. The recognizable characteristics of this style propagating uniqueness, dynamism, and creative freedom are the elaborate, winding lines and floral motifs as dominating decorative elements. Typographic art all round Europe was "based on the tendency towards the perfection of paper, font style, the engravings, and artistic binding" (Pomázi 2008, www.mgonline.hu/.../tipo2008_pomazi_orsolya.pdf). It spectacularly renewed typographic art, for – in Orsolya Pomázi's words – "text processing is dominated by ornaments, while the text is wedged into a geometrical form, a decorative symmetry. Graphics and typography are linked, and should there be any misbalance, empty space is filled with an ornament" (Ibid.).

At the beginning of the 20th century, the more demanding publishers affirmed new decorative forms abiding the rule of Secessionist graphic art and typography, and strived to present the readers with beautiful and high-standard, crafty products instead of inornate, commonplace ones. Such a publication was *Szelek szárnyán*, one of the most impressive examples of Hungarian Secessionist book art. In it, we can find the Secessionist tendencies in all the phases of book making, from the cover and headers to closing ornaments, initials, and illustrations. It clearly brings out, or, to be more exact, it sets a standard to create a conceptual and formal unity.

The book was published by the Athenaeum Irodalmi és Nyomdai Rt. company, which was one of the most influential publishers in Hungary, having published the most significant works of contemporary literature between 1841 and 1948, and made such exquisite Secessionist volumes (with contributions from the most prominent Hungarian Secessionist artists) as Kálmán Mikszáth's book *Az én kortársaim*[10] [My Contemporaries] or the volume *Az Ujság albuma*[11] [Album of News] by multiple authors. Besides the publishers Nyugat folyóirat- és könyvkiadó, Korvin Testvérek, Singer és Wolfner-cég, and Herzig Miksa, it was surely Athenaeum that reared Hungarian Secessionist typographic art.

9 Herczeg Ferenc: *Szelek szárnyán*. A gift to the subscribers of Ujság. Athenaeum Irodalmi és Nyomdaipari Rt. Budapest, 1905, 111 pp. [quarter-page size, canvas binding].

10 Mikszáth Kálmán: *Az én kortársaim*. Athenaeum Irodalmi és Nyomdai Rt., Budapest, 1904 [rubber binding] with full-page and in-text graphics, richly illustrated with reproductions. Most of the full-page illustrations are protected with inscriptive parchment paper. The binding plate, the cover, and header ornaments were done after Árpád Basch's drawings.

11 [canvas binding] The volume was illustrated by prominent graphic artists: Árpád Basch, Tihamér Margittay, Károly Kotász, Ákos Tolnay, László Kimnach, Jenő Jendrassik, Andor Dudits, and Imre Gergely.

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Designing and publishing *Szelek szárnyán* was a result of joint artistic enterprise and at the same time a bravado of the printing industry: it was composed on Monotype setting machines in Athenaeum, the illustrations requiring various printing techniques were done by Athenaeum's printing, stone, and copperplate department, while the paper was delivered by Első Magyar Papíripar Rt. in Nagyszilabos. The colour reproductions were protected with parchment paper.

It was a genuine artistic joint endeavour that, besides Árpád Basch (1873–1944)[12] – who painted the front cover, the front plate picture, and the flyleaf –, the creative design was done by thirteen other prominent authors: Ákos Garay (1866–1952),[13] Ákos Tolnay (1861–?),[14] Tihamér Margitay (1859–1922),[15] Imre (Földes) Feld (1881–1948),[16] Imre Gergely (1868–?),[17] Károly Mühlbeck (1869–1943),[18] Andor Dudits (1866–1944),[19] Oszkár Mendlik (1871–1963),[20] Károly Kotász (1872–1941),[21] László Kimnach (1857–1906),[22] József Karvaly (1864–1928),[23] János Vaszary (1867–1939),[24] and Géza Udvary (1872–1932).[25] Another notable fact is that some of them (Imre Gergely, Oszkár Mendlik, József Karvaly) had first-hand experience of the Mediterranean, meaning they were richly inspired by the sea. It should also be mentioned that this illustrious group of artists contributed with almost a hundred (smaller or bigger) Secessionist style drawings, pictures, and paintings to embellish Herczeg's volume;[26] thus, they could rightly be seen as co-authors of the book.

12 Painter and graphic artist, one of the masters of Hungarian applied graphic art, poster artist, and illustrator, editor of *Magyar Géniusz* (Seregélyi 1988, 50).

13 Graphic artist, renowned for his specific technique of pen drawings; notable for his Hungarian folk style illustrations mostly presenting the life of hussars, gypsies, and shepherds. (Ibid. 1988, 197).

14 Portrait and landscape artist, member of the Benczúr Társaság (B. Society) (Ibid. 1988, 624).

15 Painter of salon life in the fashion of Bastien-Lepage (Ibid. 1988, 182).

16 Made decorative pictures and posters, ran an independent graphic studio in Budapest; after 1921, he was the artistic manager of the Helikon publishing company in Temesvár (Ibid. 1988, 182).

17 His fragments of Italian landscapes, streets, and flowers are colourful and inspiring (Ibid. 1988, 200).

18 Painter and graphic artist; became popular for his humorous and satirical drawings and illustrations (Ibid. 1988, 428).

19 Professor at the Fine Arts College in Budapest, devoted to historical paintings, painted altar-pieces; in his paintings, the historical and religious characters are elevated to gigantic heights (Ibid. 1988, 143).

20 Studied also in Italy, later sailed the seas around the world, and his art reflects his fascination by the ancient mysticism of the sea (Ibid. 1988, 404).

21 Wood carver, decorative designer, industrial artist, art teacher; his oil paintings are dominated by landscape and occasional blazing lights uniting the soft colours (Ibid. 1988, 335).

22 Painter, fresco painter, and art teacher, who was popular for his paintings and drawings of soldiers (Ibid. 1988, 308).

23 Tutored by Bertalan Székely, Bertalan Karlovszky, and Simon Hollósy; he went on study tours to Italy several times (Ibid. 1988, 292).

24 Teacher, painter, whose French-style lightness, witty, and at times superficial fashion often changed and showed the fauvist influence of Matisse, Dufy, and Van Dongen (Ibid. 1988, 656).

25 Painted academic style portraits and frescoes (Ibid. 1988, 637).

26 Bibliographies mention only Ferenc Herczeg's portrait and 25 illustrations, while the total number of drawings/illustrations in the volume amounts to almost a hundred.

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It seems that the unity of text and illustration was a dominant requirement to this volume. For instance, Árpád Basch's illustrator bravado was that in the header of the introduction to the book he drew the famous painting *Calm sea*[27] by Arnold Böcklin (1827–1901), "the giant of drama and decoration, and a great colourist, the extraordinary virtuoso of deep and bright colours" (Andrássy 1915: 193) – the mermaid with three seagulls, which Herczeg referred to in the introductory lines. The enlarged initial letters of the chapters meaningfully and authentically give a graphic illustration of the ports of call of Herczeg's luxury yacht, before the reader reads about it in the text. The layout of the text, and the type setting, is completely subordinated to the picture: in the parts of the text where it is important to show the picture the illustration simply 'steps into' the text, it brushes it away, and 'takes its place'. We could quote several examples of how the illustrations in the book become of the same importance as the text. What is more, we shall venture the statement that the illustrative material gives certain grandeur to the volume, and the interaction between the text and the picture definitely heightens, intensifies the reader's experience. Their eye rests longer on either the text or on the surprisingly appropriate pictures. The interaction of the two gives a (more) intense experience. This experience is enhanced by suddenly emerging drawings done with various printing techniques, which are sometimes simple, black-and-white pen, ink, or charcoal drawings, sometimes there are lithographic coloured pictures, or three-coloured illustrations or glued-in pictures made with a particular printing technique. It is exactly experimenting, 'playing around' with these particular printing techniques that gives the reader a light dynamic experience, a surprise effect when noticing an illustration commanding attention after turning the page.

Being a travelogue, there is almost an automatically arising requirement (besides the elaborate, crafty work) for genuineness and recognizability of the illustrations, which is unequivocal regarding people, places, and buildings. Thus, among the illustrations, in one of the ink drawings by Ákos Garay we can recognize Ferenc Herczeg himself (Herczeg 1905: 17).

In addition to what has been mentioned, these pictures have another important function: to show otherness and strangeness. To present in an exotic way the people, cities, and buildings belonging to other cultures, to point to the (cultural) differences, what can possibly be expected from such a volume.

Looking at the illustrations, we cannot but think that many artists, if not all of them, had had personal experiences in the sites presented in the book, meaning that their work was not based on photographs or postcards. This Adriatic experience is unequivocally reflected in their pictures.

27 Ferenc Herczeg in his introduction mistakenly mentions the painting, kept in the Museum of Fine Arts in Bern, as *Szélcsend* (Windlessness)

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After the first edition, *Szelek szárnyán* was subsequently published a few more times (in 1910,[28] 1925,[29] 1933,[30] 1936,[31] and 1957[32]) but never again with such luxurious, artistic workmanship.

In the introduction to the 1957 edition remade into a youth novel, Adorján Stella tried to direct the readers' attention to the misjudged Ferenc Herczeg: "'He lives in an ivory tower' – people would say without knowing him or his works. For Herczeg's colourful works that could fill a whole library, the fruits of a long and abundant life, after many decades still show that the outstanding writer not only knew the period he lived in and its people, but he also presented a lasting picture in a stainless frame" (Stella 1957).

Another important fact is that much before the institutional interest in the Adriatic [more precisely, the foundation of the Hungarian Adriatic Society (1911) and the start of *A Tenger* [*The Sea*] magazine (1911)], *Szelek szárnyán* (1905) popularized the beauties and attractions of the Mediterranean and the Adriatic Sea.

Herczeg's Adriatic breviary and Secession as a way of existence

Ferenc Herczeg's book *Szelek szárnyán*, considering its artistic and multicultural aspects, represents an exciting synergy of art and language forms. It can be viewed and interpreted as a ship's log and an album of fine arts, as well as an artistically set travelogue. Nevertheless, it is not only an alloy of design and fine arts but this worldview also brings a varied genre discourse of literary expression which inspires and runs Herczeg's specific prose.

The "softly unraveling female body" (Kovačev Ninkov 2002: 12) as the constant element of Hungarian Secessionist decorative and visual symbolism as well as content featuring lyrical experience of the world shows the influence of Viennese Secession, insomuch – as opposed to the trends following authentic folk motifs which became renowned in the Paris World Exhibition[33] – that the Viennese

28 Herczeg: *Szelek szárnyán*. Singer és Wolfner, Budapest, 1910.

29 Herczeg Ferenc: *Szelek szárnyán – Andor és András*. Singer és Wolfner, Budapest, 1925 [Works by Herczeg Ferenc VI].

30 Herczeg Ferenc: *Szelek szárnyán – Andor és András*. Singer és Wolfner, Budapest, 1933 [Anthological gift edition].

31 Herczeg Ferenc: *Szelek szárnyán – Andor és András*. Singer és Wolfner, Budapest, 1936 [Memorial edition of selected works by Herczeg Ferenc 9].

32 Herczeg Ferenc: *Szelek szárnyán*. Táncsics Könvvkiadó, Budapest, 1957 [stitched paperback edition, with black-and-white illustrations by graphic artist Lajos Kondor].

33 The World Exhibition in Paris (Exposition Universelle et Internationale de Paris) took place from 14 April to 12 November 1900 with magnificence. More than 80,000 exhibitors and 50 million visitors were present. At the turn of the century, the pavilions and exhibition halls exhibited the history of humankind and their endeavours in the past millennia. The thematic pavilions presented to the public the world's industrial, technological, and scientific marvels,

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Secession[34] has nothing to do with folk ornamentation. For instance, these symbols appear on the buildings in Subotica designed by the most illustrious representative of Secessionist architecture and decorative arts, Ferenc Raichle:[35] "[…] Two years after the establishment of the Viennese group Secession and building their exhibition hall, Ferenc Raichle, although he designed buildings of eclectic style, managed to smuggle onto the facade the lyrical figure conceived in the spirit of symbolism and Secession whereas containing the decorative elements of the baroque: it was the softly unraveling female body lying on a horizontally positioned crescent, like in a bed, or in a boat, turning her face to us; with the sun behind her, sprinkled with freshly opened flowers underneath and around her" (Ibid.).

If we look at the first lines of the introduction to *Szelek szárnyán* describing Böcklin's painting, and the header which contains Basch's drawing made after Böcklin, we cannot but notice the authentic symbol kit of Secession: "Under the azure blue firmament, a poriferous cliff spotted with saltwater emerges from the motionless sea. On the stone, there is a mermaid resting, accompanied by a few black-headed seagulls preening drowsily. Suffocating silence, scorching heat, blazing sunshine can be felt from the frame. The fishtailed girl makes a languid gesture with her arm as if meaning to stand up; nevertheless, her numb limbs draw her back down to the stone. Daydreaming, wistfully, with sweet faintness, though wickedly delighted, she looks out far beyond, as if expecting the upcoming storm which will give reckless life to the slumbering sea. Never has there been a more direct symbolism of the ominous calm before the storm than in this serene painting of demonic force" (Herczeg 1905: 1).

With the description of Böcklin's painting, Ferenc Herczeg intones the Secessionist experience of the Adriatic conveyed by the travelogue (literary diary), clarifying for us the antique experience of the world (i.e. Greek mythology)

but culture and arts were also given their due place. Among others, Art Nouveau attracted great numbers of visitors.

34 At the turn of the 19th-20th century, the Vienna Secession (Union of Austrian Artists) gathered the most influential Austrian artists (Gustav Klimt, Josef Engelhart, Maximilian Lenz, Alfred Roller, Kolo Moser) and artist groups (Hagenbund, Siebener-club) of the Secession. Its foundation and activities in fact meant the birth of modern art in Vienna. Its beginning was marked by the foundation (in 1897) of the Union of Austrian Fine Artists, also known as Secession, while it ended when Gustav Klimt and other artists seceded (1905) from the group. The group's exhibition house (*die Sezession*) was designed by Joseph Maria Olbrich and was built in 1897-98. The construction was financed by the members of the group. It is recognizable for a golden spherical cupola, and the motto of the Secessionist movement is written in golden letters above the entrance of the pavilion: "To every age its art, to every art its freedom".

35 Ferenc J. Raichle (also spelled as Raichl) (1869–1960) is an Apatin-born Hungarian architect, arts collector, entrepreneur, and businessman. At the turn of the 19th-20th century, he was one of the most influential representatives of Secessionist architecture in Vojvodina, and one of the founders of the Hungarian Secessionist national style. His most significant work was his own family house in Subotica, the Raichle palace.

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and cultivating the characteristics of the past – opposite to the varieties of folk Secession. It also refers to the statement that the experience of the Adriatic mediated by the writer and the landscapes are not of poetic character but visual images based on (visual) artistic views. In the book, Secession as the style which is suitable for receiving and presenting the landscape, there is also a direct reflection: "On the shore of Veglia [today: the island of Krk – author's comment], there are three cliffs of the size of a seal's head sticking out of the water. On the three cliffs, there are three big black birds, three cormorants. They were as strangely alike as a Secessionist upholstery pattern" (Ibid. 13).

For the expression of Secessionist experience, we can recognize the romantic adoration towards the antique and strange past in the references to Ariosto:[36] "This charming and cheerless nest seen from the sea is so romantic as if it had been dreamt out by Ariosto, while viewed from a close-up looks so barren like an extinguished lime kiln. Arbe (the island of Rab – author's comment), the mournful widow of the Adriatic, sits high on a mountain-top protruding into the sea. Around its bold towers, there are ruined little palazzos lying low, where hundreds of orphaned descendants of Venetian noblemen dwell, like a flock of sparrows in a deserted nest of eagles" (Ibid. 20).

The literary text formed by the attributes of the Secessionist way of life and understanding of the world luxuriates in the features, symbols, and signs of the forms typical of the style. We can underline a number of text pieces and images from the context of *Szelek szárnyán* as impressive examples of Hungarian Secession in literature and visual arts or the sense of life conveyed by the style. Such is, for instance, the adoration originating from the ruins of romance toward the exotic, mystic places and situations, toward the narration and presentation of the experience and situations of dreams or solitude (given by an island) in parts and chapters of the text of different genres.

The descriptions and narrative writing of the third chapter of the travelogue (*Zára* [Zadar – author's comment]) is broken by e.g. essayistic insert, a contemplation on dreams, which passes on towards its recipient the experience mythically rooted in the universe, the Secessionist images and feelings of desire, more precisely the experience of the opium haze of romanticism (e.g. Coleridge: Kubla Khan). "I do not know a more edifying work than sitting at the helm under the moonlit sky. One does not think then, but is in a strange state of waking dream when embroidered, graceful, and funny nonsense bubbles in the mind. As if in a hashish haze. Last night was magnificently glorious. It seemed the constellations in the sky multiplied; never seen diamond-eyed things emerged out of the infinite night. The pair of each star danced on the black water, and since the sky melted together with the water on the horizon I got a strange feeling

36 Ludovico Ariosto (1474–1533), Italian poet, 'the Italian Homer'. His chief work was the epic, *Orlando Furioso* (1516).

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that my soft-sailing boat soundlessly hovered in the starry universe. […] Stars above me, stars underneath, stars everywhere" (Ibid. 25).

The mythical experience of the world and the cult of the past featuring the Secessionist female principle appears powerfully in the fourth chapter of the travelogue/ship's log presenting Zaravecchia [today: Biograd na moru; Hungarian: Tengerfehérvár – author's comment]. The place evokes a glorious historical period of the Hungarian Monarchy: "[…] King Kálmán[37] was crowned here as king of shores and islands. It was here that he received his beautiful fiancée, the Norman Buzilla [Hungarian: Busila – author's comment], the daughter of Roger I., a Sicilian nobleman" (Ibid. 32). The Sicilian Norman princess, Buzilla, is presented as a Greek goddess, predominantly resembling Pallas Athena, both in the in-text engraving showing her 'sailing' into history and in a charcoal drawing (by Andor Dudits): "It must have been a magnificent picture when the dragon-prowed Norman galleys arrived off Tenger-Fejérvár where the towers were decorated with Árpád dynasty flags fluttering in the tramontana. I can see the yellow-haired, red-faced noble Norman pirates as their eyes meet those of the brown-faced mounted Turanian nobles. The grey eyes of the Normans sparkled with the Sicilian sun, while the walnut-coloured eyes of the Hungarians shone with the blaze of the Pannonian sun. When the first sailor shook hands with the first horseman, in their handshake they felt the steel force which had cut the way for each nation through foreign mazes. Then the fanfares and clarions were sounded: from the backboard of the commander galley, a female figure stepped ashore. In her linen-coloured hair there shone a gold rim; her purple robe waved around her figure in stiff folds; her slippers were golden. She is tall, slim and muscular, like a steel blade; the pirate daughter's look is hard and calm, like a hawk's; her cheeks, however, are rosy and clear, like that of the child of the north. Her look falls on a tiger-skulled, hooked-nosed man with blazing eyes, and then from the maiden's heart hot blood gushes into her white cheeks… Hail, on Hungarian land, young queen!" (Ibid.) In this image, the female ideal from ancient mythology blends in with the Hungarian Turanian legend,[38] while in the

37 Kálmán Könyves (around 1074–1114), Hungarian king of the Árpád dynasty (reigned 1095–1116). He succeeded his uncle (Saint) László I instead of his own brother Prince Álmos, whose raids he repeatedly beat, and consequently he had him blinded. He was an educated ruler, thus the nickname 'Könyves' [Bookish]. Since the subsequent kings of the Árpád dynasty came from Álmos's line, the chronicles paint them quite unfavourably. However, it is unlikely that he could have become either an archbishop or a king if he really lisped, was lame, cross-eyed, and hunchbacked; it is likely that he was not as athletic as his younger brother hardened in battle.

38 The Turanian territory today is a Central Asian plain covered in steppes. Turanian nations comprise peoples who once inhabited the Euro-Asian steppes, and their present-day descendants. The term was mainly used at the beginning of the 20th century although it still occurs. This term is not used by comparative linguistics. The idea lies in the observation that these peoples have had numerous mutual anthropological, cultural, and partly linguistic ties. Hungarians also fall into the group of Turanian nations. According to the legend, the disunity among Hungarians is a consequence of an ancient curse. The legend probably dates back to the late 19th century, since

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sea experience the past reminiscent writer's colourful language prevails over the spectacle and adventure.

The base of Secession as a form of existence consists of the thought of withdrawal from the society, alongside with the synchronous attitude, the conduct of the lonely traveller. Besides several smaller episodes[39] of escape from the noisy, ideologically burdened (e.g. by the Austrian hegemony and the Croat nationalist ideology), thus dismissed, socially regulated public life, *Szelek szárnyán* also contains whole novellas and short stories. Such is the story of the mysterious hermit of the island of San Nicolo (today: Sveti Nikola), or the one about the old men of Gomena. Of the two, the one about the hermit roughened by life on the barren island – of whom the narrator suggests to have been a victim of unrequited love – is a late sentimentalist story reflecting Rousseau, while the novella showing the strange world of the old tuna fishermen of Gomena; varying the duality of pretense and reality represents a surrealist/nightmarish 20th century novella. The imagery and the context, the artistic spectacle and the might of the language give a complete, full impression. The ninth chapter (Gomena) also begins – like all the chapters in the book – with a description of a view from the sea: "Near the cape of Gomena is possibly the most barren spot of the Sabbioncello Peninsula. Yellow stone hills embrace a small bay in a wide strip. There is not as much grass growing here as to feed a hungry caterpillar. From the cliffs on the shore there is a tall mast rising into the blue sky: there lies the tuna fishermen's dwelling. Their hut, which was made from stacked yellow rocks, can only be seen from a five-step distance" (Herczeg 1905, 67). The description of the barrenness of the place is illuminated by the in-text drawing by József Karvaly, which is followed by the narrative on the life of the old tuna fishermen living on the rocks of Cape Gomena having become outcasts and redundant in the society: "If on the neighbouring island of Curzola [today: Korčula – author's comment] someone mentions the tuna fishermen of Gomena, people smile pitiably. The crew of the fishing boat consists of five old men, each

there are no earlier mentions of it, and the idea of the Hungarians' Turanian origin spread only subsequent to the German linguist Max Müller's work *Science of Language*, published in 1861.

39 We might have stayed longer in Szebeniko [Šibenik – author's comment] if the Croat member of the Viennese Council had not got the idea of travelling to the coast by the Metković train. The appearance of the foreman of the Croat nationalist idea had a special effect on the citizens of Sebbenico: they howled day and night. They screamed really loudly, in the worst pitch of their lungs, and making a noise with some instruments whose loudness equalled firecrackers exploding in a mortar. A dozen of teenagers, who were entranced by the howling disease, were sitting all through the night on a turned-over boat, ten steps away from where the Sirály was moored, and they were singing heroic epics, which could have been a decent contestant in respect of length to the Kalevala epic. Among them, there were people with huge lung capacity, who could have cracked the cupola of a basilica; however, there was not a soul to have any musicality. When we already got used to their monotony, an orchestra marched along the seafront, drumming and trumpeting, as if wanting to wake up the dead. We listened to the noise till dawn, but soon we raised our anchors and sailed toward more silent seas" (Herczeg 1905, 47).

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of them over seventy years of age. They must be at least four hundred and twenty years old. The poor old gawks fool themselves that the world still makes use of them: however, the obstinate fish must be very suicidal to let themselves be caught by them. The tunas swim in big schools, usually near the shore. Whether a shoal of tuna swim towards Ragusa [today: Dubrovnik – author's comment] or towards Spalato [today: Split – author's comment], they have no business in the old men's bay. Even if they happen to get in there, it is questionable whether the short-sighted granddad on the lookout mast will notice the rare newcomer at all" (Ibid. 67). The reason why their life of outcasts is so upsetting as opposed to the narrator's rejection of social life is because it means lack of social status, being cast out and involuntary withdrawal. While for them there is no way back, the narrator's voyage is a chosen freedom, a decadent disillusionment – with ever so apparent reconnections towards civilization.

Conclusion

Ferenc Herczeg bought his twenty-ton cutter in 1904, which he later named Sirály and in which he had many adventures round the Adriatic until 1909. His voyages – as opposed to the general opinion – meant more to the well-off writer's high-class passion: he was the most prominent Hungarian example of the existential manifestation and a literary illustration of Secession, which gained ground at the turn of the century.

Published in 1905, *Szelek szárnyán* was Ferenc Herczeg's first travelogue, or one of the first ones, written on his own boat. The narrated and presented voyage was supposedly not his first one on the Sirály since the three-man crew (Tonio, steersman, from Lussin [Lošinj]; first seaman, the Lame General, a Morlach from Selze; second seaman, the old Zepe, also the cook) are quite familiar with the boat as well as with its owner's habits and way of thinking (this is also true vice versa), and who make an efficient, well-functioning team ('crew').

The voyage – from Baross Harbour in Fiume (Rijeka) to Bocche di Cattaro (Kotor Bay) and back – lasted from July 1st to August 25th, continuing and cruising towards the 'high seas of the Adriatic,' past the South Dalmatian islands and anchoring here and there – to finish back in the Quarnero (Kvarner) Bay and Fiume. "We sail across the Morlach channel to Arbe, from there – keeping to the Dalmatian shores – we sail to Zara, Sebbenico, Trauba [today: Trogir – author's comment], Spalato [Split – author's comment], and to Ragusa. Our southernmost point will be Bocche di Cattaro. On our way back, we shall sail out to the high seas and venture around the islands. In other matters, we do not make any preliminary arrangements. We anchor where we like. We stay in a place as long as we feel good there..." (Herczeg 1905, 4) Besides the crew and the owner of

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the boat, i.e. the narrator/log keeper, there is his best man and his 11-12-year-old son (Herczeg's godson), as well as his dog called Cezar travelling on board. The narrator introduces them as people who are not new, and this is not their last time, in such a cruise. About the boy, whom he calls 'the kid,' we learn, for instance, that "he gets two kinds of disciplining" (Ibid. 8): "During the winter, his mother and teachers strive to mould him into a tame, diligent and god-fearing young man, while during the summer, the mermaids of the Adriatic turn him into a tough and reckless sea rascal. Beside his mother's pantry, there is a cabinet with shelves full of neatly lined and signed compote jars filled with sea creatures conserved in spirit. The enrichment of this collection was one of the noblest tasks of the Sirály's expedition" (Ibid.).

It is not by chance that the travelogue starts with Herczeg's description of the painting *Calm Sea* by Arnold Böcklin. Later he reflects on this – within his oeuvre of a religious value – artistic view which is characterized by the mixture and synergy of fiction and reality, of the real and the unreal, of the everyday and festive: "We sailed around the whole island in the dinghy. The cliffs and the lagoons are all as if they had been created by Böcklin's fantasy" (Ibid. 73).

The dual conduct, i.e. the presentation of the voyage as a Secessionist/decadent way of life, is the most important content of Ferenc Herczeg's multi-genre, interdisciplinary, and intercultural feature of this cross-artistic book. These meant an appropriate content and form of the Pannonian man's attraction towards the Adriatic and its pan-artistic expression.

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