Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Philologica, **5**, 2 (2013) 169–183

The Population of Fejér County in the 18th Century Through the Eyes of Foreign Travellers[1]

Adrienn SZTANA-KOVÁCS[2]
University Archives
University of Pécs
kovadrienn@gmail.com

Abstract. Lack of source material makes it difficult to examine the population history of the times of the Ottoman domination in Fejér county. Therefore it is inevitable to use memoirs, travel diaries, travel books and country descriptions penned by foreign travellers. In our study we are following the change of the image of the Hungarians, and the images of other ethnic groups as they appear in the memoirs of foreign visitors.
In this paper we compare the descriptions of different ethnic groups inhabiting the county in the 18th century. We are interested in the following questions: first, how much of these descriptions are based on personal experience; secondly, to what extent these books reflect their authors' experiences or they are rather influenced by stereotypes of their age or earlier periods.

Keywords: Hungary, 18th century, ethnic groups, stereotypes

During the examination of different historical periods memoirs, diaries and letters are gaining more and more important roles. Amongst these subjective sources, accounts that depict trips and voyages are especially exciting and colourful. Travel literature, according to purpose, form or the goal of the author can be separated into different groups (Kulcsár 2006). In the collections our libraries and archives researchers can readily access many of these works about the voyages in Hungary, while in full translation only one has been printed (Hofmannsegg 1887). In text and reference books and essays we can find quotes and extracts (Gömöri 1994; Éder 1993; Birkás 1932; G. Györffy 1991).

In what follows we will try to follow up the changes in the images of the Hungarian ethnicity, and the depiction and view of other ethnic groups in the works of foreign travellers. In this study we extract and compare the details about

1 The presentation at the conference was supported by the Pécsi Tudományegyetem Alapítvány [University of Pécs Foundation].

2 The texts from old French into English have been transcribed by Mildred Delloye, the ones from old German into English by József Sztana.

BDD-A7551 © 2013 Scientia Kiadó
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 11:01:16 UTC)

the ethnic groups living in Fejér county in the 18th century. Our main aim is to answer how the travellers viewed the land and its population after the Ottoman domination had ended. We will also examine how these works are influenced by the stereotypes from previous centuries already in print at the time.

Although the subjectivity shown by the authors of these travel descriptions poses some issues for today's readers, it is exactly this attribute that gives them added value. The social structure of the time comes to us, filtered through the West-European traveller's personal experiences, previous knowledge and the impressions created by what he saw here. According to Harbsmeier's (2006) approach, these diaries are more about elevating the values seen in one's own country, and undervaluing—much for the benefit of the reader at home—the new and different, than showing real facts. Therefore, those things are given major importance by the authors which are different, even more so when the exotic is compared to the same at home. We do accept this opinion partially, but we must also be aware that exactly this is why these books may contain information that Hungarian sources never even mention (Doba 1999: 33).

If we approached these diaries from a mentality-historical angle, to measure them and the observations they contain, we would find them even more wanting. This is because we found that more often than not, these authors used stereotypes and generalisations from common knowledge or inserted them from their previous readings. For the 16th century a strong system of how to write these diaries was born (Kármán 2002). Most of the educated authors tried to follow the rules of this system, knowing that their works would be considered valuable and acceptable by their audience. One of the fundamental rules of this system was that the record of personal experience could be impaired by previous stereotyped knowledge. As Kármán (2002: 112) made us aware that Hungary, being constantly at war, lost its place amongst the targets of travellers, "*...the apodemic writing did not feel the need to thoroughly map its cities and inhabitants*". Contrary to this state of "being left out" we still came across several centuries old generalisations in descriptions and travel diaries and later in country descriptions.[3]

Another fundamental rule was to include the observation and to record ethnic characteristics. The stereotypes based on the classic climate-theory went on living in the works of the humanist writers, and between the 16th and 18th centuries they became an important part of scientific knowledge. Concurrently with the spreading of books and literacy, the same ideas entered common

3 The picture of the Huns as small, dark, ugly people, painted by Jordanes and Otto of Freisingen, is an example of this, and still living on in the 17th century. Out of the remarks of Bonfini, Ransanus and Jacobus Philippus Bergomensis, that the Hungarians were combative and always in pursuit of the pleasures of the table, the latter, as the love of culinary pleasures, was also maintained for a very long time. It is enough to mention the topos about the fertility of Pannonia, as continuously present throughout the 18th century. See also: Tarnai (1969); Csukovits (2009); Radek (2009).

BDD-A7551 © 2013 Scientia Kiadó
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 11:01:16 UTC)

knowledge[4] (Papp 2001). The picture formed in the 17th century about Hungary turned largely negative by the beginning of the 18th.[5] The image of the "*defender of the Christian faith*" became fertile, blessed with all the beauty and goodness under the sun, but backward, its inhabitants two-faced, sly German-haters, who were unable to use the riches given to them by nature, since they were lazy and disliked work. Their traders, craftsmen and citizens were all immigrants or locally born Germans. These observations were made by Hermann Conring[6] in 1666, who—surpassing others of his time—also recognised the presence of multiple ethnicities. He also claimed that no uniform body build or ethnic characteristics were present amongst the inhabitants, therefore a perfect state could not be formed there (Tarnai 1969: 36).

Diplomats, scientists and voyagers travelling to Hungary, all arrived with preconceived notions from these books, and recorded their own experiences influenced or challenged by these ideas. During the 18th century the rule-system for these descriptive works also changed. The strict forms lost their importance and the growing themes of personal experience were gaining momentum with the arrival of the "critical voice".

The Hungarians as the "others"

In the following we will try to summarise the changes in the image of the Hungarians and the other ethnicities inhabiting Transdanubia, mostly through the accessible German, but also through the already processed Swiss, English and Dutch travellers' writings.

The first traveller of the 18th century known to us, travelling through Hungary on diplomatic mission, was the Dutch Lodewijck van (der) Saan in 1705.[7] In his travel-memoirs he did not follow the accepted style of his time, but rather used great many of the stereotypes (Ablonczyné 2005: 182). Thus he readily applied the rich/fertile land—backward inhabitants antagonism, which, according to him, was rooted in the laziness of the Hungarians. He did not compare the population to the Turks, but to the Italians, painting a picture of very haughty, combative, greedy and cruel folks (Ablonczyné 2005: 189). This picture fitted the 18th-century "Völkerntafel".[8]

4 The refusal of foreign criticism, regarding Hungary being backward both in arts and culture, based on the ethnic characterology, gained stronger voice from the end of the 18th century.

5 The most influential piece on ethnic characteristics in the first half of the 17th century was the Icon Armorum by John Barclay. See also: Tarnai (1969: 32); G. Etényi (2009).

6 Herman Conring (1606–1681), German professor of medicine and politics at the University of Helmstedt.

7 Lodewijck van (der) Saan (1655–1722), diplomat.

8 The first ethnic characteristics descriptions, based on the climate-theory, were born in the first third of the 18th century, somewhere in German speaking territories of Europe. The very first was written by Leopold-Stich somewhere between 1719–1726, which was later also incorporated in the first "Volkertafel" between 1730–1740. The Hungarians were described as disloyal, cruel,

BDD-A7551 © 2013 Scientia Kiadó
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 11:01:16 UTC)

He found the Hungarians hostile towards foreigners, and an expression used at the time completely convinced him about the difference between the Hungarians and the Germans. The paraphrase says the Germans enjoy life less, but the Hungarians are hedonists[9] (Ablonczyné 2005: 190–191). In this picture we can see the outlines of an earlier one drawn by the Italian humanists beckoning to us.

About 40 years later the next ethnic characteristic description emerged, but the author remains unknown. He reported the state of the country in 1742 in letters, signed M. du B. The author clearly saw the differences between the echelons of nobility and the peasants. In his description he also talked about the war for independence led by Rákóczi, where he mentioned independence as the greatest value in the eyes of the people. "*The nobility is very proud and combative spirited, dislikes comfort, because that is not masculine. The independence of their country is important for them above all. Both noble and peasant are equally lazy and hedonist, fierce and vengeful. They do not make friends easily, but once they make friends with one, they never express their sentiment with words, but rather with actions"* (G. Györffy 1991: 20). He penned the ethnic character with old stereotypes although decades had passed in the meantime.

Readiness for mistrust was also found to be the most important characteristic of the Hungarians by Johann Peter Willebrandt, who travelled the country in 1758.[10] He also called attention to their honesty and their faithful spirit, and sensitivity. "*The trust and friendship of the Hungarian is hard to regain once he feels insulted*" (Kulcsár 1996: 102).

It is hard to judge of course which parts of these statements are based on personal experience gained through closer acquaintances, but we can say that those who spent only days, maybe a few weeks in the country, found the previously drawn pictures good and true, and were also more eager to use them, because of their superficial experiences and lack of local knowledge.

In the second half of the century, on his diplomatic mission of 1765, Johan Raye van Breukelerwaart, a Dutch traveller, spent a couple of weeks in the country, but he visited only the usual cities.[11] He also used the so-called "Fertilitas Pannoniae" motif, depicting the country as fertile and beautiful, but he thought it was not backward because of the people, but rather because of the Ottoman domination. He regarded the negative outlook on the Habsburgs, with the understanding that it was rooted in the times of the Ottoman domination. Very sensitively he also reacted to the poverty and backwardness of the people, and his description is rich

crude and rebellious, who die by the sword, in the first half of the 18th century (Ötvös 1999).

9 "Die Ungarn sagen, dass die Deutschen schönen weisse Stuben und schwarzes Brot haben, aber sie, die Ungarn essen schönes wittes Brot mit Fleisch in schwarzen Stuben oder Kammern" (sic!) (Ablonczyné 2005: 190).

10 Johann Peter Willebrandt (1719–1786), North-German historian and jurist.

11 Johann Raye van Breukelerwaart (1737–1823), diplomat. He visited: Pozsony, Komárom, Esztergom, Buda and Pest.

BDD-A7551 © 2013 Scientia Kiadó
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 11:01:16 UTC)

in these details. He drew sharp contrast between the palaces and the thatched huts standing in narrow streets. In the eyes of the Western traveller the thatched roof equalled to poverty and deprivation. He wrote about the Rác community living around Buda in great detail, their religion being orthodox and their huts being dug into the slopes. They served as soldiers of the emperor, but did not receive payment, so they had to supply their own arms, horses and food by other means. They looked as much like outlaws as soldiers (Ablonczyné 2005: 215). Later, after leaving Pest, he described in detail a hut in a village—though we can not know if the village he visited was inhabited by Hungarians, Razs[12] or Gypsies—, which had one bed and a hearth dug into the ground. A poor man, his wife and their six or seven children were living there (Ablonczyné 2005: 218). Raye looked at the country with the mentality of the conquerors. He divided the society into upper and lower echelon, and while he described the first with great criticism in detail in his book, he had high opinion about the latter (Ablonczyné 2005: 221).

François Xavier de Feller, a Jesuit monk from Luxembourg lived in Hungary between 1765 and 1767, so he had time to learn about the inhabitants and their means and ways. This is his description of the Hungarians:

> The Hungarians are truly sincere, cardinally good-willing, and quick to devote themselves, as long as one offers them a little friendship, but mark these words, never to offend the Hungarian nation, because then the whole world twists and turns, but if one praises Hungary, everything shall be just fine. This people guarded something of old, when the simplicity and straightness was the honour of the man. He is chaste, as is gravely serious and honest in his speech ut prisca gens mortalium, but these things are changing right in the front of the eye...The disposition of the nation is generally docile and modest, except when war is concerned, for they believe to be excellent at that. They love learning and perfecting themselves, but for the man of science, for they are intolerable. They have all the nature of their father Attila and their uncle Buda in them. The literature is in a pitiful state. Newton triumphs, and also Boscowich, and all new creators of order. The less cultivated nations are always fierce to mimic the good and the bad, the true and the false, as seen in celebrated peoples. (Feller 1820: 68)

Feller, beside being horrified by the spread of scientific thinking of the Enlightenment, also sensed tensions between the ethnicities:

> The Germans regard the Hungarians as barely civilised people, the Hungarians have no love for the Germans... The Germans successfully forgot

12 In the 18th century sources in both Latin and German call Rasciani/Razen the southern Slavic ethnicities indifferent of their origin or religion.

BDD-A7551 © 2013 Scientia Kiadó
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 11:01:16 UTC)

> that they fought this nation hand to hand, but the vanquisher always forgets more easily than the vanquished. The Hungarians detest the Sclavons, since their country is full of Slavons (Sclavons or Slavs), who are one dispersed nation, from different kingdoms, and just do not want to stay in Sclavonia. The Slavons respect the Hungarians as the dominant nation, but envy and hate accompany this respect. The Armenians and the Greeks are banding up apart. I never saw or imagined a more nationalist spirit. It really is Regnum in se divisum. The Greeks, whom I saw often, are above all schismatic, which is their perfidy of old, with ferocity they forefathers never knew. They are equally barbaric and ignorant; their habits in Hungary differ not a little bit from those of the Hungarians (Feller 1820: 68).

Antoine-Joseph Zom de Bulach took a longer trip to Transdanubia in the summer of 1772.[13] He also mentioned the fertility of the land, and that it was not worked, seeing the reasons for this in the diminished number of inhabitants, in the difficulties in goods trading and in the social system of the country, rather than in the laziness of the people. The serf doing "servitude" was neither working the lands of the noble, nor his own one properly (Birkás 1932: 11). He described the Hungarians in the following way:

> He is proud, bold, bellicose, which suits him all the better for the gentleness and the zeal he shows when treated with kindness, but when pressed, he bites back. He cannot be forced to act, and that irritates them most about the Germans, that they want everything through force, haughtiness and coercion. (Birkás 1932: 14)

Around Moson, he also observed the local peasants' behaviour and clothes: "*Hungarians are medium-height men, they look agile and spry, they are honest*" (Birkás 1932: 13). Bulach regarded Hungary with the eyes of a traveller from a both socially and economically more advanced country. He used the same stereotypes as the previous voyagers, or Feller, for that matter, and accepted the sentiments of the inhabitants towards the Germans with understanding. Of course, in the shaping of his opinion, the nobility must have been the major influence, since he observed the other ranks only from a distance, like the others before him.

The year 1780 saw Johann Kaspar Risbeck arrive in Hungary, but he only visited Pozsony, Pest, Buda and Esterháza.[14] He summarised his observations in fictive letters, taking to a pejorative tone. In his opinion the Hungarians were barbarians

13 Antoine–Joseph Zorn de Bulach (1736–1817), as member of the entourage of prince Luis de Rohan, personal envoy of Louis the XV (of France) to Vienna, travelled to Sclavonia (Slovenia) through Pozsony, Magyaróvár, Győr, Komárom, Buda, Adony, Mohács, Eszék and Zimony.

14 Johann Kaspar Risbeck (1749/1754?–1786), Swiss-German publicist.

BDD-A7551 © 2013 Scientia Kiadó
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 11:01:16 UTC)

or backward drunkards. Their major traits were laziness, carelessness, and they would not take to force or discipline. There was an impassable chasm between the nobles and their serfs. The nobles lived pompously, wasting their wealth, their rank being defined by the size of their debts. According to his observation, the nobles of Western-Hungary were copying the French (G. Györffy 1991: 27). Risbeck's opinion was also shaped by his own prejudice. He was quick to judge, and coming from a puritan background he considered the nobility's pompous lifestyle, both their castles and lavish city homes, a waste.

As a sharp contrast, using mostly the images of soldiering and courage, Christoph Friedrich Nicolai noticed the positive attributes more.[15] He described the body build of Hungarian men as strong, heavy muscled, made for soldiering and the women as even more beautiful than their Austrian counterparts. The people expressed their love for their country in the way they dressed. They were loyal and honest, but because of the foreign rule, easy to become slick and humble (Kulcsár 1996: 102). He showed their love for their country and loyalty using the "vitam et sanguinem"[16] image. "*The courage of the Hungarians is well known; but what is not known well enough is that whatever they set their minds to, they have enormous capacity to accomplish*" (Kulcsár 1996: 103).

In 1785 Karl Ehrenfried Dreyssig was travelling from Vienna to Buda by boat, accompanying immigrant artisans and families, who came with their six or seven children all the way from Germany. His opinion was still shaped by and rested on previous stereotypes, so it reminds us of that of a superficial visitor: "*What a rich and powerful kingdom could Hungary become if her people were a bit more diligent, and her produce had a greater market"* (G. Györffy 1991: 29).

Johann Lehmann[17] and Christoph Ludwig Seipp was the same person, who published his travel experiences in 1785 and 1793 (Kulcsár 1996: 113). In his 1785 work he rebuffed the prior prejudice, showing that one could travel in Hungary safely and comfortably. He also stated that he would rather travel between Pest and Szeged, than on the less inhabited land between Würtzburg and Frankfurt. His experience was that speaking German was easy enough to get by all the way to Wallachia. He also said that if one arrived with letters of mark, he was welcomed, but to become friends with the Hungarians was only possible for someone who spoke their language (G. Györffy 1991: 28). Though he advised the English and French travellers to arrive with a German speaking guide, he also stated that the English voyagers are well loved and respected in the country. He voiced a very negative opinion about the German settlers stating that "*throughout the entire voyage, we could count on the German peasants neither out of duty, nor in dire need. These are the most ill-mannered,*

15 Christoph Friedrich Nicolai (1733–1811), book trader, editor, writer from Berlin.

16 The Hungarian nobles offered their life and blood to Maria-Theresia in 1740, at the beginning of the war with Prussia over the throne.

17 Johann Lehmann (1747–1793), actor, theatre director, writer and publisher.

BDD-A7551 © 2013 Scientia Kiadó
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 11:01:16 UTC)

most insensitive peoples. They only shall aid in danger and need, if it is lucrative" (Lehmann 1785: 11); he also wrote about the Gypsies, who were forced into settled lifestyle in the country. He said that people were afraid to travel in the centre of Hungary because the Gypsies "*are begging, [running around] uncovered, attack and try to stun with prestidigitation.*" He also tried to show the reasons for the attacks and robberies, as "*up until now it was necessary for them to beg for their living. If this is not helping anymore, they are forced to take it*" (Kulcsár 1996: 101–102).

About the Hungarians he wrote the well-known stereotypes, like they were perfect for soldiering, as one "*can not find a more beautiful soldier ... the Hungarian infantryman [is] steadier, rounder, fuller, stronger, than any infantryman of all the other mights one has ever seen*" (Lehmann 1785: 70). He had high opinion about other traits of the Hungarians, too, as "*they are taking to everything with unbelievable diligence, and they do not falter, until they reach the object of their desire*" (Kulcsár 1996: 103). He also found that amongst the youth and the populace in general the search for sensual pleasures was intense, but he could not find its reasons. He tried his best to rebuke and dissolve the prejudices about the haughtiness and the coldness of the Hungarians, mostly born out of the lack of knowledge of the German tongue. According to him there was no hatred in the Hungarians toward the Germans because they felt, that "*every step made towards knowledge and wealth is born out of the bond with the Germans; they feel how backward they would be, left to their own devices*" (Kulcsár 1996: 107). This phrase by itself states the sentiment of the high and mighty traveller, who labels the different as barbarian and backward, without the positive influence of the Germans, showing his own nation superior and more advanced.

His second book, printed in 1793, retold the pleasures of his second trip, to Szepes county and to Transylvania, then back through Szeged, Kecskemét and Pest all the way to Pozsony. In great detail he described a colourful mix of ethnicities, and he highlighted the differences between Hungarians and aliens, nobles and peasants. The inhabitants of the German cities in Szepes county are described as chaste and hard working, stating that "*The people of the Syps belong to the enlightened. Both in their education, offices, and in all their public life there reigns order, a kind of order that is missed in all other parts of Hungary*" (Seidler 2009: 150). Interestingly, and as opposed to his work in 1785, he wrote that the Hungarians were arrogant, and that with the dumb Slovaks and the lawbreaking Gypsies, they always landed in trouble (Seidler 2009: 151). This was in sharp contrast with the previous book, where he wanted to understand and to make the Hungarians be understood.

In 1793 two natural scientists visited the country, namely the baron Johann C. von Hofmannsegg from Saxony and Robert Townson, an English noble.[18] In his preface Townson wrote:

18 Johann Centurius Hofmann von Hofmannsegg (1766–1849), a noble from Saxony, naturalist; Robert Townson (1762–1887), English noble and naturalist.

BDD-A7551 © 2013 Scientia Kiadó
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 11:01:16 UTC)

> Though to many Tours have appeared of late, Hungary has never been a subject of one of them; it is nevertheless a country, though so circumstanced as to be of little political importance to Britain, worthy of our attention: its constitution, its people and their manners, and its natural productions, are remarkable. (Townson 1797: ix)

In their descriptions both travellers gave major importance—beside the natural treasures—to the observation of cities and the nobility. Townson, based on the works of contemporary statisticians, wrote about the inhabitants and the newly arriving settlers in the fifth chapter of his book (Townson 1797: 182–205).

As we saw in the descriptions above, the image of the Hungarian depends on different influences. On the one hand, most decisive of these are the traveller's heritage, his upbringing, social background, prior knowledge, ideological or religious beliefs, personal interests, observing and deductive skills, while, on the other hand, the social background and the amount of time which was spent gathering the information, and last but not least, how the authors try to use and pass on the information to other voyagers, sometimes being satisfied with old stereotypes, sometimes daring to embark on a more challenging social observation or even wording judgement. More than once the travellers used the data collected to place value on the superiority of their own nation – both culturally and economically –, painting a positive self-image for their readers.

So the image at the beginning of the century was strongly negative, dominated by combative and anti-foreigner images, supported by the antagonisms (fertile land—backward country—lazy inhabitants). This is supposed to show how much superior the author's country and hard-working nation was to the Hungarians. Independently of social standing, the image of the lazy and hedonistic Hungarian showed up in 1742, changed only a little by the love for their country, and longing for freedom, as strongly positive attributes. This was probably put into the descriptions as part of the French outlook on Rákóczi's war of independence, and was made whole by the "vitam et sanguinem" scene, as the attributes 'honest' and 'loyal' were added to the ethnic character. With the following military successes of the hussars, by the end of the 1760's the Hungarian people became a nation made for soldiering. The criticism of social differences, the search for reasons behind backwardness, ethnic differences, and the tensions born thereof, gained stronger roles in the descriptions filled with the ideology of Enlightenment (Raye, Feller, Lehmann).

Fejér County through the eyes of the traveller

Researching the works of the German authors, Krisztina Kulcsár found that there were only very few who braved longer trips toward the centre of the country

BDD-A7551 © 2013 Scientia Kiadó
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 11:01:16 UTC)

(Kulcsár 1996: 91). This was mainly so due to the travel diaries like the one printed in 1760, written in German by Johann Leopold Montag (1760), who used the road along the Danube, and who stated:

> …the road between Buda and Eszék is a dangerous and unsafe one to travel, even in times of peace, and is without guarding soldiers.... as the author of this short news recalls... at the dangerous places the carriage got equipped with 6 or 8 Gypsies (who have settlements all over Hungary) and for a meagre contribution offer their protection. (Seidler 2009: 143)

Most of Fejér county was under Ottoman domination. The road network here was never as dense as in other Transdanubian counties, even in medieval times. The main reason for this was that large parts of the county—around and all the way from Székesfehérvár along the river Sárvíz to the county border—were covered in swamps. The Ottoman domination and the ensuing wars to dominate the land probably made the situation worse in this regard since the inhabitants of the destroyed villages, forced to seek refuge elsewhere, were not present to take care of the dams and ditches that once protected against floods. At the end of the 17th century there were only a few remaining settlements south of Lake Velence. The villages could only be revived with great difficulty by the returning or newly arriving settlers, if they even had the intention to resettle them. More than once did we find mentions of fallows in diaries and letters, penned by the travellers of the age, for days on end.[19] So people travelling through Transdanubia rather used the main road along the Danube, or the waterway of the Danube itself for their trip. The other, also more often used road was the one leading from Buda through Székesfehérvár to Veszprém, on which settlements were closer to each other.

In 1715 Sir Simon Clement was travelling from Buda to Légrád.[20] As he arrived at Tárnok, he noted that Slovaks and Razs were living there, in huts dug into the ground, and only the roofs were above the ground level. In his opinion they were dressed as poorly as their accommodation looked, but they had a good life (Gömöri 1994: 99–100). The next settlement he mentioned was Juro [Gyuró] with Hungarian inhabitants who lived in huts built out of saplings and branches. The peasant family bedded the guests on fresh hay. The next day, before reaching Székesfehérvár, he travelled through three or four poor villages, but Clement did not take down any notes on them. The only thing he penned about Székesfehérvár is just a note saying that it lies in the middle of a swamp, with two large suburbs and with poor houses at both ends.

19 Most historical studies quote the letter of Mary Wortley Montague, written during her trip in January 1717.

20 Sir Simon Clement (1654?–1730?), between 1711 and 1714 the secretary of the Earl of Peterborough, in Vienna.

BDD-A7551 © 2013 Scientia Kiadó
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 11:01:16 UTC)

Two years later, Mary Wortley Montague travelled with her husband through here, on her way to Constantinople.[21] In her letter of January 23rd, 1717, passing through Adony, she mentions this settlement, which used to be a city during Ottoman domination, but by the time of her arrival, it was in ruins. About the countryside she wrote that it was covered by a thick forest, and it was foreboding. She did not write about the villages because, as she claims, she could not find anything worth mentioning about them. According to her, the people around here were living a very easy life because of the abundance of water and forest animals. She particularly found it important to mention that the local serfs were surprised that they got paid for the food, and therefore heaped the travellers with gifts (Gömöri 1994: 106–107).

Richard Pococke and Jeremiah Milles travelled on the road from Buda through Székesfehérvár to Veszprém together in 1737.[22] Leaving Buda and the mountains behind towards Székesfehérvár, Pococke noted:

> We travelled over rich downs through an unimproved country, very thinly inhabited, the nobility having a great number of oxen on their estates, which they fell mostly in Germany, send some of them even as far as Italy. The sheep here have twisted horns something like antelopes (Pococke 1745: 249).

Regarding settlements or populace we are unable to learn much from Pococke's writings, since he only reinforces his previous statements, saying that the nobles were using most of their land to herd animals, and so kept the land, as important and lucrative income source, in their own care. In his description he pays great attention to the exotic, such as the shape of the sheep's horn. This was the tool used—showing the different and the exotic—, to wake up the interest of the reader at home, forming a very important part of the travel descriptions of the time. The description of Székesfehérvár in his view was very peculiar, saying "*We arrived at Stool-Weissenburg* [Székesfehérvár]*, the air of this place is very bad, being situated in a great morass, which continues a considerable way on each side of the river Sarwitz* [Sárvíz] *as far as Symontornya* [Simontornya]" (Pococke 1745: 249). Other than that, he only mentioned the buildings of the time of Ottoman domination.

In 1772 Zorn de Bulach wrote more elaborately about his experience while travelling in Transdanubia. He travelled the road alongside the Danube, and leaving Buda he wrote about the scenery where well-worked farmlands and huge swamps fell in line. Ercsi, Adony and the other villages of the area were more

21 Mary Wortley Montague (1689–1762).

22 Richard Pococke (1704–1765), solicitor, preacher and Jeremiah Milles (1714–1784), theologian, preacher.

BDD-A7551 © 2013 Scientia Kiadó
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 11:01:16 UTC)

impoverished than those he saw along the way from Vienna to Buda. His notes on the fertility of the land and on its lack of use, were already quoted above, but he repeated that he saw villages with huge borderlands, and that he also saw huge abandoned fallows. About the populace he wrote that both because of natural breeding and immigration, its numbers were swelling, but the nobles were regarding this with distaste, since the amount of land available for herding—their major income—was reduced by it (Birkás 1932: 11). The ethnic multitude of the landscape is described as follows:

> Until now the policy was to accept people from all nations, the main ones being the Hungarians and the Germans, as well as Croats, Raziens, Egyptians [Gypsies], Jews, some Valacs, and each and every one, like in Esclavonic, has its own tongue, the dominant one being the Hungarian (Birkás 1932: 13).

Besides clothing, he was interested in the lifestyle and circumstances of the people. He observed that while on the western parts of Transdanubia people started living in brick houses, in the eastern parts people still built their huts out of mud bricks. He formed the opinion that the people were living under very simple and modest circumstances, but they were perfectly suitable to be a farmer or a soldier, only the Austrians did not know how to handle them (Birkás 1932: 14).

In the same year Carl Gottlieb Windisch[23] published his encyclopedic work, which said about the county that it was inhabited by both Hungarians and Germans, but also Slavs (Slaven) were living here in small number. Besides describing the history of Székesfehérvár, it also mentioned the Jesuit college, the Franciscans and the church of the Carmelite order. It contained a couple of words about Csíkvár, but only as a fort during the Ottoman domination, and Mór, Sárkeresztúr, Adony and Ercsi were included together as insignificant villages (Windisch 1772: 68–69).

The changes as they happened in the county during the 18th century are clearly visible in the descriptions of the foreigners. At the beginning of the century villages with huge borderlands and huge pastures, far away from each other were the characteristics of the county. There were visibly huge fallow lands, forests, bushes and water logged areas, reclaimed by nature, because of the small numbers of the people. The idea that it was more lucrative to keep the land in one hand and use it for herding animals than building villages, was also incorporated into the description of Bulach in 1772, and had already been noted in local sources before that time. This remained the typical form of agriculture in the southern part of the county, putting its mark on the resettlement there. The villagers were living in poverty, and in their descriptions the foreign observers remarked the

23 Carl Gottlieb Windisch (1725–1793), salesman, self-taught, publisher and historian.

BDD-A7551 © 2013 Scientia Kiadó
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 11:01:16 UTC)

differences in building habits of the ethnically diverse populace. As a curiosity, the ethnic diversity, shaped by the resettlement policies, always gained an important role in the descriptions. Windisch could not mention one important village or town in the southern parts of the county, which is in accordance with Bullach's and other coevals' observations.

References

Ablonczyné Nádor, Zsuzsánna. 2005. *Ungarn - Das gesegneteste Land Europas. Das Ungarnbild der niederländischen Reisbeschreibungen in der Periode 1555–1774. Eine vergleichende Analyse im Spiegel der retorisch-apodemischen Traditionen dargestellt an Werken der niederländischen, deutschen und englischen Reisbeschreibungen.* [Hungary the most blessed land of Europe. The image of Hungary in the Dutch travel guides between 1555–1774. A comparative analysis in the mirror of rhetoric-apodemic traditions shown through Dutch, German and English travel guides.] Debrecen. Web. 12. April 2010. *ganymedes.lib.unideb.hu:8080/dea/bitstream/2437/3129/1/de_2635.PDF*

Birkás, Géza. 1932. *Egy elzászi francia nemes dunántúli utazása a 18. század második felében.* [The voyage of an Alsace noble in Transdanubia in the second half of the 18th century.] Különlenyomat [Offprint] *Győri Szemle* III (3), numbered from 1 to 15.

Csukovits, Enikő. 2009. Források, műfajok, lehetőségek: a középkori Magyarország-kép elemei. [Sources, genres, possibilities: elements of the medieval image of Hungary.] *Korall* 38: 5–29.

Doba, Dóra. 1999. *Német utazók Magyarországon a XVIII. században.* [German travellers in Hungary in the 18th century.] *Világtörténet* 21: 28–41.

Éder, Zoltán. 1993. *Egy olasz utazó Vácott 1780-ban Migazzi püspök udvarában.* [An Italian traveller in the court of bishop Migazzi at Vac in 1780.] In: Békési, Imre et als. (eds.), *Régi és új peregrináció. Magyarok külföldön, külföldiek Magyarországon* [Old and new peregrination. Hungarians abroad, foreigners in Hungary] Vol. II., 1020–1032. Budapest: Scriptum Kft.

Feller, François Xavier de. 1820. *Itinéraire ou voyage de M. l'abbé de Feller en diverses parties de l'Europe.* [The itinerary of the travels of the noble abbot de Feller in different parts of Europe.] Paris: Delalain. Web. 12. May 2011. *http://books.google.ie/books/about/Itin%C3%A9raire_ou_voyages_de_Mr_l_Abb%C3%A9_de.html?id=VphCAAAAcAAJ&redir_esc=y*

G. Eténi, Nóra. 2009. *Toposzok és újítások a kora újkori Magyarország képben a 17. századi német nyomtatványok tükrében.* [Topoi and inventions in the image of Hungary in the early modern era through the 17th century German prints.] *Korall* 38: 112–139.

BDD-A7551 © 2013 Scientia Kiadó
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 11:01:16 UTC)

G. Györffy, Katalin. 1991. *Kultúra és életforma a XVIII. századi Magyarországon, Idegen utazók megfigyelései, Művészettörténeti füzetek 20.* [Culture and lifestyle in the 18th century Hungary, Observations of foreign travellers, Booklets of art-history 20.] Budapest: Akadémiai.

Gömöri, György. 1994. *Angol és skót utazók a régi Magyarországon (1542–1737).* Válogatta, fordította, a bevezetést és a jegyzeteket írta: Gömöri György. [English and Scottish travellers in Hungary of old (1542–1737). Selected and translated, preface and notes written by: György Gömöri]. Budapest: Argumentum.

Gróf Hofmannsegg utazásai Magyarországon 1793–94-ben. [The travels of Baron Hofmannsegg in Hungary in 1793–94.] Translation and preface by István Berkeszi. 1887. Budapest: Franklin.

Harbsmeier, Michael. 2006. *Az útleírások mint a mentalitástörténet forrásai.* [Travel descriptions as sources of mentality history.] Translated by Gábor Kármán and Judit Klement. *Korall,* 26: 25–53.

Kármán, Gábor. 2002. *Fatányér és kőkorsó. Magyarok és havasalföldiek egy 17. századi svéd diplomata szemével.* [Wooden plate and stone jar. Hungarians and Wallachians through the eyes of a 17th century Swedish diplomat.] *Korall* 9: 107–136.

Kulcsár, Krisztina. 1996. *18. századi német utazók Magyarországon (1740–1785).* [18th century German travellers in Hungary (1740–1785)]. *Sic Itur ad Astar,* 1–3: 83–113.

---. 2006. *A politikai és társadalmi elit utazásai, 18. századi utazások vizsgálatáról németországi kutatások kapcsán.* [The travels of the elite of society and politics, about the 18th century travels in the context of research in Germany.] *Korall* 26: 99–127.

Lehmann, Johann. 1785. *Reise von Preßburg nach Hermannstadt in Siebenbürgen.* [The voyage from Pozsony to Nagyszeben in Transylvania.] Dinkelsbühl-Leipzig: Christian Gottlib Hertel.

Montag, Johann Leopold. 1760. *Die Donau-Reise, das ist kurzverfasste Nachricht von denen Ströhmen, Flüssen und Bächen, welche der Donau zugerbacht.* [The Danube voyage, these are news in short about the flows, rivers and streams flowing into the Danube.] Regensburg: von J. F. F.

Ötvös, Péter. 1999. *Aktualisierung alter Klischees. Die Ungarn auf der Völkertafel.* [Reviving old clichés. Hungary on the "volkerntafel".] In: Franz K. Stanzel et al. (Hrsg.): *Europäischer Völkerspiegel, Imagologisch-ethnographische Studien zu den Völkerntafeln des frühen 18. Jahrhunderts* [European nation-images, imagologic-ethnographic studies of the "Völkerntafeln" of the early 18th century], 265–282. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter.

Papp, Júlia. 2001. *A hazai és külföldi tudósítások beszámolója Peter Kraft I. Ferencet ábrázoló festményéről 1818-ból.* [Foreign and domestic accounts

BDD-A7551 © 2013 Scientia Kiadó
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 11:01:16 UTC)

on the 1818 portrait of Franz I. by Peter Kraft.] *Magyar Könyvszemle* 117(2): 220–232.

Pococke, Richard. 1745. *A description of the East and some other countries.* Vol. II. Part. II. London: X. Bowyer. Web. 12. May 2011. *http://books.google.hu/books?id=94hMAAAAcAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=hu&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false*

Radek, Tünde. 2009. *A középkori német nyelvű historiográfia magyarságképéről egy imagológiai kutatás nyomán (1150–1534).* [About the Hungarian image of the medieval German historiography through an imagologic research (1150–1534)]. *Korall* 38: 47–78.

Seidler, Andrea. 2009. *Üzleti úton a színigazgató: Christop Seipp 18. századi útleírása Magyarországról.* [The theatre director on a business-trip: 18th century travel guide to Hungary by Christop Seipp.] Trans. Lilla Krász. *Korall* 38: 140–155.

Tarnai, Andor. 1969. *Extra Hungariam non est vita*...egy szállóige története [History of a paraphrase]. Budapest: Akadémia. Web. 23. April. 2010. *http://mek.oszk.hu/05400/05453/05453.rtf.*

Townson, Robert. 1979. *Travels in Hungary with a short account of Vienna in the year 1793.* London: G. G. and J. Robinson. Web. 12. May 2011. *http://books.google.ie/books?id=SNEBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA182&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=4#v=onepage&q&f=false*

Windisch, Carl Gottlieb. 1772. *Politisch-geograpische- und historische Beschreibung des Königreichs Ungarn 1772.* [Political, geographical and historical description of the Hungarian Kingdom 1772.] [S.I][s.n]

BDD-A7551 © 2013 Scientia Kiadó
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 11:01:16 UTC)