

**Loránd Eötvös University of Sciences
Faculty of Humanities**

**DOCTORAL (PHD) DISSERTATION'S
THESES**

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**History of Press in Historical Bereg,
Szabolcs, Szatmár, Ugocsa and Ung Counties
1845-1920**

Doctoral School of Literary Studies

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1. The chosen project and its' importance

We can be the witnesses of the breakdown of researches, concerning newspaper publication; of searching for new ways and changes of paradigms nowadays. The Hungarian synthesis of press history reached the year 1892. At the same time in each county, the bibliography of press was also completed for bigger or smaller parts of the former counties, which are still on the given administrative territory, extended for the whole historical county.

Publishing national press history series has been accelerated. The publish-history of the temporary papers in the historical Bereg, Szabolcs, Szatmár, Ugocsa and Ung counties constitute the part of the Hungarian press-history. Similar to the tendencies of the national press-history, the researches of this territory came to a standstill too with the history of some newspapers, which were declared to be important by researchers; and this way the summary of newspaper publishing history was not finished nor in the county nor in the region (in our case: Upper-Tisza-Area). A big part of this mentioned historical administrative territory is practically outside of the borders of present Hungary since the peace-treaty of Trianon (except for the period when they were reunited after the first and the second Vienna Awards, which lasted until the end of the second World War), which contributed considerably to the scattering and destruction of the published periodic publications as well as the unprocessed publication history. I was convinced of these facts during the research-, the collecting- and the editor works of press-bibliography concerning the historical Bereg, Szabolcs, Szatmár, Ugocsa and Ung counties, which can be considered as the antecedents of the theses. The chronological starting point of this present dissertation is from the publication of the first printed matter, from 1845, necessarily finishes with the date of the peace-treaty of Trianon, at the breaking of the mentioned historical-administrative territory.

As the research worker of the local-knowledge special-collection in the Zsigmond Móricz County and City Library of Nyíregyháza, during the last few decades, I often faced the absence of the data relating to the published press-products and their history of the above localised territory. Actually the readers' expectations and the librarian's helplessness induced me to move the problem out of its' standstill.

2. The research task, aims of the research

I try to analyze and present the characteristics and relations of the periodical-publications of the five counties on the Upper-Tisza region in this dissertation, which was not examined before. This survey was completed by taking the contemporary media in hand 302-times. My aim was to present the typical and the infrequent newspapers as well as the social processes which influenced their starting, remaining and ceasing. I could discuss some questions (e.g. development of local journalism, the biography and life-work of persons who played a determining role in local press, problems of advertisements, distribution issue etc.) only tangentially. I examined this theme in a cultural-social context, by taking into consideration new social-history expectations.

During the writing of the newspaper publishing history I chose the chronological approaching method, connecting it with the ideological-professional themes. I decided to do it like this because I think that I can demonstrate the rhythm and chronological order of embourgeoisement best with this method on the territory of the five examined counties and on those settlement islands, where the progress of embourgeoisement required information through press.

For the definition of periodic publications I applied the definition used in the examined period. Referring to press I used the expressions periodic printed matters (periodicals), accepted in press-terminology and everyday usage: so newspapers, periodicals and occasional papers.

The characteristic features of these are: topicality (currency), seasonality (periodicity) and publicity, the variety of content and implicitly promising the endless existence by the editor.

The press-bibliography of this historical-administrative area forms the basement of the dissertation, this is the most important assistance, which items I collected through a long research-work inside and outside of the country borders and I completed it with an attempt to be comprehensive.

The most important primary resources were considered from this bibliography, the biggest part of it I could read only on microfilm. The biggest surprise for me was to find the disappeared numbers of '*Kassa-Unghvári Hírdestményi Lap*' (*Advertisement paper of Kassa-Unghvár*), what I could find first in the National Archives of Hungary after 165 years after a long research work. I had to pass a long way to the examination of papers as resources, to form the required methods and to find the necessary pieces of information. The data (today these would be called newspaper-historical about themselves and other papers) published in newspapers provided important details, orientation points. I found a great help for my work in the book of Éva Lakatos: '*The Selected Bibliography of the Hungarian Press-history*', its last volume is before publishing, but I could see it in script. I used the synthesis: '*The History of Hungarian Press*', the newest short press-history summaries, studies in connection with some local papers as well as Nyíregyháza and the county press and the contemporary press laws.

A problem was indicated at the introduction of the social-historical background, that concerning this period there was not any summary published yet in connection with two of the examined counties: Ugocsa and Ung. The monography of Bereg County appeared in 1881 and of Szatmár County in 1907 – that is why the period of dualism only partially appears in them. I could rely on statistical data concerning the period (census, agricultural statistics), important local essays and part-

essays; instead of the broken historical researches and unpublished monographies, uncompleted because the archive documents were left out of the country with the change of the borders.

3. Summary of the results of the research work

Thesis I

It is possible to complete the examination of the territorial journalism in a cultural-social context by exploring the social-historical relations (population, social structure of the area, relations of economy, culture, politics and parties).

The continuously growing population of the Upper-Tisza region lived mostly in small settlements, about 200-1000 inhabitants. The number and rate of the Rusyn nationality is outstandingly high in this region, in the first place they lived in Ung, Ugocsa and Bereg counties. The second biggest nationality was the Romanian in Szatmár County. Examining the denominational conditions we can state that except for Szabolcs County (where the Reformed inhabitants were in the biggest scale) in all the other counties the Greek Catholic population was the majority. Capitalisation and embourgeoisement during the dualistic period were realised slowly on the examined territory than the national average. The structure of occupation of the population moved from the main employment sectors to the servicing industry (servants, day-labourer) in the 1870-80's. Agriculture ensured the living for 72,6% of the population, while 17,4% lived out of industry and traffic in 1910. The dominance of small farms and belt lands characterised the conditions of landowners. Agrarian society suffered from a general lack of capital. The company statistics of the industry in Upper-Tisza region shows a majority of small-industry and within it a 60-65% rate for the self-employed craftsmen who worked without an assistant. Analysing

the cultural level of the population, we can see a shocking picture. Illiteracy was so huge, that it was around 44% in this region, while the national average was 31% in 1910. All these circumstances led into emigration, losing a huge number of the population. I examined the relations of politics and parties based on the results of the general elections. The representatives of the party called: 'Independence and 48' had the majority in Szabolcs and Szatmár Countries and the governing party in the counties of Subcarpathia.

Thesis II

Newspaper-publishing is the mark of the social-historical relations of the region. This is reflected through the division of temporary papers according to the languages, professions, denominations and parties.

With growing embourgeoisement there was a growing demand for information and press, which helped foundation of papers and their support. 91,7% of the published media was Hungarian and 8,3% other language. Most of the papers in minority languages, altogether 16 (31,4% of all the minority papers), were published in Ung; 14 were in Rusyn and Russian and two were in German language. The government and its local representatives, school-teachers in the area of minorities did their best to spread the Hungarian language. The intelligentsia of minorities and the church leaders in Subcarpathia and in Szatmár fought with similar power and persuasion for saving their mother tongue. This struggle spanned through the whole period of dualism and affected not only the schools but also the journalism of the counties. Periodicals were established to defend the mother tongue and spread the Hungarian language. This is reflected by the relatively high rate, almost 23%, of pedagogical and youth papers within the special journals. The rate of nearly 29% of the religious media within the special journals shows the

very important role of the churches in journalism; this rate acts on the denominational division of the local population. The remarkable number of agricultural papers reflected the occupation-structure of the population.

The local political life (especially in Szatmár and Szabolcs County), similarly to the language issue, was determined by a hopeless fight against the Compromise and for the ideas of 1848, which also had an effect on the journalism in these counties, on the dominance of the Independent and '48 political papers.

The underdeveloped industry in Upper-Tisza region had an effect on the press-industry and journalism as well. Publishing could only become continuous with a technically well-equipped press which had enough capacity (was able to produce a publication in huge number of copies in a short time). The newspaper 'Bereg' is a proof for it, after it was published the first time (1874) six years had to pass to the realization of the technical conditions of newspaper printing. Publication in Szabolcs became continuous only in 1880, 13 years after the first paper was published; half year after the Piringer-Jóba press was opened. The close connection and interaction between these two were made clear on a congress of country journalists, viz.: a county paper without local press, county press without local paper could not become a profitable business.

Thesis III

Classification of periodicals in Upper-Tisza region according to chronology, geography and paper-types is suitable for demonstrating the characteristics of journalism and the factors at the background.

It is possible to prove again the determinative role of the law-acts (especially in 1867, when they restored the law-act in 1848), the relations of local embourgeoisement and politics (elections, Astar Revolution, Soviet Republic in Hungary in 1918) during the examination of the chronological distribution of paper-foundation. As a result we can observe a rising process from 1867 in paper-foundation, which kept on growing in the first decade of the century by the influence of embourgeoisement and that the press became business; and it came to a sudden stop because of the press-law in 1912 and 1914 (which made exceptional arrangements in case of a war) and because of the outbreak of World War I. Revolutions in 1918 and 1919 resulted in a rising newspaper number.

Studying the newly and the formerly published newspapers year by year also proves the above mentioned facts. In the last decade of the 19th century the highest number of newspaper (33-34) were published between 1897 and 1899. This number almost grew double; it reached 60 in 1909. Rising started in 1875 and it continued on until 1911 sometimes with a slower sometimes with faster increase – the most periodicals appeared at this time in this region were all together 66.

According to the examination of geographical division of periodical papers, 44% appeared in Szatmár, 27,2% in Szabolcs, almost 17% in Ung, 8,3% in Bereg and 3,6% in Ugocsa. We can explain the advantage of Szatmár with developed industry, better civilized society and also with the historical past of Szatmárnémeti.

Checking the papers according to their types, the dominance of mixed-content papers is visible (34,1%), which is followed by specialist journals (27,5%) and political ones (12,3%). Founders of papers found the newspapers with miscellaneous contents the most suitable to win the rural population over reading papers and then publish those through the whole era addressed it to the biggest scale of society and families. They could read about the questions concerning the local administration's (county, town, village) life (education, economy, commerce), weekdays and the population as well as the problems of inhabitants. They supplied their readers with practical information needed for everyday life. They tried to win the woman members of the family by literature in the feuilleton or in the hall column. Local literary and society papers were not well received besides mixed papers. The biggest scale within the specialist journals were in connection with professions and society-fields; they represented 37,3% in this category. Within the specialist journals, those who had a living out of agriculture, they were represented in 45%. Within the religious media the catholic denomination owned 45% and the Reformed church 30%. The so-called educational papers were distributed at the same scale between the state- and the denominational education. Newspapers in connection with the social democrats or the socialist party represented the biggest part from political papers; on the other hand, they were short-lived, they did not have a determining characteristic during the examined period. These were followed by the papers of the Independence and '48 Party with 25% and the ones called themselves independent had 19%.

Thesis IV

To start publishing newspapers and keep them alive demanded fanatic and committed persons (editors, journalists, newspaper-readers), who recognising the power of media made sacrifices for the newspapers by supporting them.

The editors, journalists of the examined papers most of the times functioned as non-professional newspaper-writers (teachers, priests, lawyers, politicians), they usually worked without compensation. Authors of literature articles were generally belletrists, poets living and working in the neighbourhood. The paper-publishing history of the region can be connected to the starting of the career of such prominent notabilities like Vince Nagy and Gyula Krúdy, as well as such great writers and poets (e.g. Endre Ady), whose writings were published the second time here. We can mention as fanatic and eminent journalists and editors like István Kmethyl and Lajos Inczédy in Nyíregyháza, Sándor Janka in Beregszász. The press-laws stated that a person responsible for the publication had to be named, which made it difficult to find the real publishers behind these names. The programme-articles of the papers and the data of the subtitle referred to the fact, which ecclesiastical denomination, association or party was the given paper sponsored by.

Illiteracy and poverty excluded a significant part of the population from reading newspapers. Only a few data are available about the subscribers and about their number. The subscribers belonged to these lines of occupation and layers. Most of the miscellaneous weekly papers tried to convince teachers and clerks to be their subscribers for half price. The narrow civil and administrative layer of the region had to know the local journals of their county besides the national news to acquire their knowledge. The deputy sheriffs could obtain the national and local orders and laws, which were needed for their work, from semi-official

and official national and county-papers, gazettes. Also medium estate-owners (lands between 100 and 1000 Hungarian acres) and bigger land-owner aristocracy members could not do without periodic papers, especially the news of local newspapers. Party members and sympathizers got their political knowledge from national party-newspapers. It was important for the experts of special occupations to know the different specialist periodicals of their own fields. The everyday news, cereal-prices, stock exchange prise-lists, for sale-to rent kind of real estate advertisements of local papers were essential for the work of contractors, merchants, estate agents. Unfortunately only a part of these listed persons were newspaper- or magazine-readers; this is suggested by the continuous requests for subscription and for paying the subscription fees. The readers could turn to national newspapers and to general, political, fashion, literary and family type of papers, published in the capital to fulfil their special demands; but we do not have accurate facts about the distribution of these papers in the region. Not only by subscription could the readers have access to the papers – they could read those in casinos, cafés, shops, workshops, inns and pubs too.

Thesis V

Newspaper content fulfilled its triple function during the dualist period on the examined territory: forming public opinion, mediation in education and agricultural factor (mainly through advertisements).

The citizens of county towns and bigger cities were not any more satisfied with the late information of national papers and articles only dealing with sensations at the beginning of the 1860's and after the Compromise, which accelerated the foundation of local papers. Press had a big effect on public opinion, it acted with convincing. It helped 'news' to reach a wider public during a shorter period. It was even able to influence political opinions. There was a place for the election speech of representatives before parliamentary elections in the papers (it depended on the political line of the paper, which representative's program was published in full). If it was necessary, the paper could mobilize the public besides an important issue (e.g. prevent the administrative union of Bereg and Ung, assisting in the change of county-towns). Newspaper-notices mediated education, knowledge (literature, theatre-reviews, pedagogical articles) to the readers. These papers taught, educated (e.g. how to prevent expansion of epidemics, how to protect plants from diseases), expanded the knowledge of the readers, helped them to find their ways and manage in everyday life. Specialist periodicals spread specialized knowledge. Contents of periodicals not only highlight on facts but also how local inhabitants experienced historical events.

Mainly because of the advertisements, newspapers were also counted as economical factors. Besides the subscription, the income from advertisements ensured the surviving of the paper. Information in advertisements stimulated business and even carried the possibilities of profit in it.

4. Exploiting the results of the dissertation

As a librarian of the collection of local knowledge of the library, I am planning to use the results explored during the research-work and the methodology knowledge to help the work of local-historians and readers. I would like to use every means to make the knowledge in newspapers and periodicals popular. I would like to draw the attention of the public interested in history and past of this region that there is not any history book where we can follow the local events of social, economical and cultural life, the holidays and weekdays of the local people through decades with similar precision to the local newspapers. We can consider these writings made at the same time with the happenings as quite authentic historical sources, for which the atmosphere of the period brings a special spot through the facts.

I hope that the colleagues and readers of the county library and also of the libraries through the county and the borders, the teachers and students of higher and middle education will take a lot from these theses. The dissertation can also be assistance for researchers of press-history, as well as of advertisement-history, more widely for those who are dealing with politics-, economy-, society- and cultural history and it can give those view-points, information.

I believe that the results of the theses with exploring the local characteristics of paper-publishing can contribute to a better recognition of press-history of the Upper-Tisza region. This work can expand the results of the national press-history researches made until now, by presenting the unknown individual characteristics and data mostly by thorough studying of the country press conditions. This work cannot be finished, only interrupted. This offers extra data for press-history and advertisement-history by encouraging, offering new possibilities for new essays, analyses some papers' political, social, intellectual aspect,

assesses the values transmitted to the readers, and explores the life-work of influential, determining editors, local journalists. I also would like to participate in it.

This dissertation can draw the attention of researchers' and Hungarian intellectuals abroad to the rich local press-history and it can be an inspiration for further researches. Digitalization can create new possibilities that the press-matters kept in inland public libraries will be able to be read outside the boarders of Hungary too, at the original place where these were published. The same way it is possible for the Hungarian researchers to reach the media stored in Subcarpathia and Romania. The dispersed printed matters, which were separated with the new boarders and are the pearls of our cultural heritage, can become complete or more complete in a virtual database, this way it would ensure their subsistence.

A book published in the theme of the dissertation

Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg megye (a történelmi Bereg, Szabolcs, Szatmár, Ugocsa és Ung vármegyék) sajtóbibliográfiája (1845-2000). – Nyíregyháza : Móricz Zsigmond Megyei és Városi Könyvtár, 2002. – 523 p.

Articles, studies

A „Kassa-Unghvári Hírdetményi Lap” Időutazás egy eltűntnek vélt hírlappal a reformkori Magyarországra és Kassára. In: Magyar Könyvszemle, 126. évf. 2010. 2. sz. p. 212-225.

Az első hírlapok nyomában Beregen, Szabolcsban, Szatmárban, Ugocsában és Ungban (1845-1885) In: Szabolcs-szatmári-beregi Szemle, 45. évf. 2010. 2. sz. p. 203-211.

A sajtókiadás kezdetei a szabolcs-szatmár-beregi térség történelmi vármegyéiben (1845-1885). In: Könyvtári Kis Híradó, A Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg megyei könyvtárak lapja, 14. évf. 2009. 1. sz. p. 15-16.

Lectures

Szabolcs megye sajtótörténete a dualizmus korában.

Presented within the program series: 'About the Past for Everyone' in the Hungarian National Archive of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County Archive on the 25th of March, 2013.

Legjelentősebb hírlapunk a Nyírvidék.

Presented within the adoption program of Nyírvidék on the Day of the Hungarian Culture in Zsigmond Móricz County and Town Library on the 23rd of January, 2012.

Az első hírlapok nyomában a Szabolcs-Szatmár-Beregi térség
történelmi vármegyéiben.

Presented within the program of the Hungarian Press Day in the Library
of Szabolcs-Szatmár County on the 16th of March, 2009.