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**The Urban Life Described by A. A.
Paton in *The Goth and The Hun***

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1.Introduction

The tragic events of 1848-1849 left a lasting impact on the population living on the territory of what was once called the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This era is considered as a period of melancholy and nonchalance. As a part of a longer journey across three continents, Andrew Archibald Paton, a Scottish diplomat, orientalist, and writer, travelled through the defeated regions of Hungary and Transylvania shortly after the rebellions, in 1850. His travelogue entitled *The Goth and the Hun; Or, Transylvania, Debreczin, Pesth, and Vienna, in 1850*, describes a broken nation as well as defeated and neglected cities. The main focus of the present research is on the representations of urban culture and society in the major cities of Hungary and Transylvania as reflecting both the British traveler's personal approach and the contemporary social and political realities. Consequently, the research aims to prove that the travelogue is not a work of fiction, but belongs to the non-fictional genre of travel writing, thus containing relevant description on three of Hungary and Transylvania's political, strategical and military junctions: Cluj Napoca, Debrecen and Oradea, as well as the aftermath of the events of 1848-49 in these urban areas.

1. i) Short Overview of Andrew Archibald Paton's Life

Andrew Archibald Paton was born in Edinburgh, Scotland on 19th March, 1811, as the son of Andrew Paton, saddler and government contractor, and of Anne Gilchrist. He attended the local high school, and continued his studies at the Edinburgh Academy. He started travelling in 1836, his first destination being Naples, and later on Vienna, as he wrote "as a mere youngster I entered Vienna with staff in hand and knapsack on back, having walked thither from Naples." (Paton 7) He became the personal assistant of Colonel George Hodges in Egypt, therefore he got the chance to travel to Syria for a political mission. In 1843, he occupied the position of the British consul in Serbia and spent almost two decades there. He published his first travelogue about Syria under the following title: *The modern Syrians, by an Oriental Student* in 1844, starting his career as a writer. As a tribute to the years spent in Serbia, Paton published his second travelogue, *Serbia, or a Residence in Belgrade etc. in 1843-44*.

Travelling through the Balkans and Austria, he got acquainted with the Austro-Hungarian Empire's political status, which sparked his interest. (Módy 516) After two visits, he published a travelogue mentioning Hungary and Transylvania alongside Austria. In 1851,

Paton published the travelogue that the present paper deals with, entitled *The Goth and the Hun; Or, Transylvania, Debreczin, Pesth, and Vienna, in 1850*. He travelled to the country “shortly after the news had arrived in England of the surrender of Georgey at Vilagos,” (1) as he noted in the said travelogue. This event took place on 13 August 1849 hence the description of the areas mentioned through the book gives a realistic and up-to-date picture on the consequences of the rebellions’ failure and the strict rules imposed by the new leadership. (Módy 514)

Andrew Archibald Paton published several other travelogues, mentioning almost every country throughout Europe and he even published a controversial philosophical essay on Stendhal. He passed away on 12 April 1874, in Croatia.

1. ii) *The Goth and The Hun*

According to Britannica.com, travel writing is a “nonfictional prose form” in which “the traveler himself has always counted for more than the places he visited, and in the past, he tended to be an adventurer or a connoisseur of art, of landscapes, or of strange customs who was also, occasionally, a writer of merit”(4). Donald George, in his book entitled *TravelWriting*, describes the travelogue as a non-fictional prose, which contains “a combination of factual information and vividly rendered descriptive details and anecdotes, characters and dialogue”(65). To this definition he also adds that “such stories transport the reader and convey a rich sense of the author’s experience of the place”(65). Essentially, the travelogue is a non-fictive genre, written by a traveler, who preferably has an experience in the fields of art, politics, geography, sociology or any others that could help in understanding the structure of a country geographically, politically, or nationality wise. Andrew Archibald Paton occupied several political positions in different countries, thus he developed political connections within the Austrian and English governments, (Módy 514) also had experience in traveling and travel-writing, as *The Goth and The Hun* was the fifth travelogue he had published.

Based on F. Ankersmit’s statement, a travelogue will contain three basic ideas, which have to be kept in mind when reading or analyzing a travelogue. The first idea is that the book has to contain a form of representation of the past; the second one is closely linked to the first: these representations of the past have to be based on true statements that can be confirmed by other historical resources. The last idea is the fact that the differences between ethical values between nations most probably will alter the author’s perception of the past (96).

The Goth and The Hun contains thirty six chapters, each of which deals with different parts of Hungary and Transylvania, as the writer progresses on with his travel. Paton's political opinion is stated clearly in the Preface, where he writes: "this work is, therefore, sure to displease both the party of ultra-Magyarism and the party of ultra-Centralisation" (n.p.). He mentions politics in almost every chapter, writing about the ways the ultra-Magyarist party had affected relationships between nations, thus underlining the fact that politics is strongly entwined with the lives of common people, who either had or had not taken part in the rebellions. Although Paton may seem biased due to his strong negative opinion towards the country's political leadership, he also mentions in the Preface that his "sole object is the truth." (n.p.) Ben Stubbs, emphasizes that the presence of subjectivity in a travelogue is important, as it gives insight into the past from several different perspectives (38). In addition, Stubbs states that "much of travel writing's subjectivity comes from the relationship between the external journey and the internal realizations of the traveler" (38). In Paton's travelogue, the emphasis is mostly on the external journey, descriptions of geographical placements and architecture, people's behavior and customs, rather than on an inner monologue of the author's thoughts. This is the reason why this travelogue can be considered—up to a certain extent—an objective description of Hungarian and Transylvanian cultures and societies.

2. Debrecen and Cluj Napoca

2. i) The Cities' Roles in the Hungarian Revolution

Debrecen and Cluj Napoca had been of crucial importance throughout the events of 1848-1849. Cluj Napoca was the capital of Transylvania in that period and a cultural and political junction, also, Ákos Egyed states that the city had a headship in starting and forming the revolution (par. 16), mainly because the Gubernium or the Transylvanian Parliament's national councils took place in Cluj Napoca. One of the most important gatherings of the Gubernium was on twentieth of March 1848, after the news from the outbreak in Budapest reached Cluj Napoca. The Gubernium decided that the city would join the Revolution, and the two Hungarian parties: the liberals and the conservatives agreed on a list of requirements that would later be sent to Vienna for overview. This list was similar to the renowned twelve points that the youth from Budapest assembled as a petition for freedom in Hungary. Ákos Egyed, in his article about Cluj Napoca mentions that on the twenty-first of March the main square of Cluj filled with young students,

apprentices, reporters and writers holding Hungarian flags and reciting the Revolution's unofficial hymn: Sándor Petőfi's National Song (Nemzeti Dal), thus the city officially joined the Hungarian Revolution. Alongside joining the Revolution, the Gubernium decided, that Transylvania would join Hungary, which had horrible consequences. The Romanian and Saxon minorities did not agree with the union of Transylvania and Hungary, therefore, at Blaj, these minorities stated war against Hungarians. This resulted in the Massacre in Transylvania, by which almost nine thousand Hungarians were killed, thus resulting in a change of ethnic composition in the South area of Transylvania. The Hungarian citizen's of Cluj Napoca, albeit living through tragic events, held on to their national identities and pride, preventing the down-fall of the city (par. 13-14).

Debrecen, due to its geographical placement between Hungary and Transylvania, was a strategically chosen capital of the Revolution. Lajos Kossuth, the leader of the liberal party, held several conferences in Debrecen, as the letters and decisions were faster to arrive from Debrecen to Cluj Napoca, than from Budapest. This fact was very important in the Revolution, where everything had to be in sync in order for the reformers to succeed with the outbreaks. In addition, it was important that the citizens of Debrecen, according to Gyula Antalfy, were mostly illiterate merchants and farmers (348), who had no political opinions, therefore showed no opposition towards decisions taken regarding the war. However, one of the most important events that happened in Debrecen during the Hungarian Revolutions was not a political event; it was the Battle of Debrecen, on the second of August in 1849. The Hungarian army was acting under the commandment of General Sándor József Nagy and fought against the Russian army, which intervened on behalf of the Austrian Empire to suppress the Revolutions. According to József Bánlaky, the Hungarian army contained over nine thousand soldiers, while the Russian had over fifteen thousand. The battle ended in the surrender of the Hungarian army after eleven days of battle, symbolically representing the end of the Revolution, as it was among the last battles of that period (Bánlaky par. 1).

2. ii) "Debreczin"

Paton arrived at Debrecen, or Debreczin, as he registered it in his book, after a long journey from Oradea at the end of the winter of 1849. He was pleasantly surprised by the inn, he had been accommodated at, writing that it is "much better than I expected," he had logs brought up into his room, and albeit the cold winter, he had felt comfortable and warm, which cannot be said of the inn he had stayed in at Oradea. His acquaintances in Pest told him, that the inns in Debrecen are poorly taken care of, meaning they were uncleaned and cold (263).

Although the writer was previously deluded by the fake descriptions of the city, he had to admit that Debrecen's reputation was just as bad among the Hungarians and other travelers as he had heard, mostly due to the condition of the roads. Antalffy's book about Hungary in the nineteenth century entitled *Reformkori Magyar Városrajzok* is a detailed and well-researched historical depiction of several Hungarian cities, based on a great amount of geographical studies, articles and letters. In the said book, Antalffy describes Debrecen in the following way: the roads were covered in mud, the whole area was surrounded by water, with people living in old huts made of reed (347). The city had a population of 50,000 souls, according to Paton (265); this information can be confirmed in János Mazsu's research on Debrecen's territory and commerce, where he states that in 1850 the population was indeed 50,000, and despite the poor living conditions, constantly growing (64).

"As to what is commonly called as society, it cannot be said to exist in Debreczin," confesses Paton, while exploring the city. Education was negligible in a city, where commerce was so successful, also due to the state that the country was in, there was a lack in schools and professors. The basic intellectual layer was composed by a few lawyers, merchants and professors, who "might be counted on the fingers" (Paton 267). The citizens were "by no means revolutionary (Paton 267)" as most people would expect of a city which played a major intellectual role in the Revolution, but were "jolly, simple, good-natured, ignorant people" (Paton 268). The traveler firmly believed that these simple farmers, in their "sheep-skin cloak and long boots (267) had no idea about complicated political questions such as the ones Louis Kossuth and other reformers had been keeping councils about in 1848-1849. Sándor Petőfi, Hungary's national poet, despite the fact that he was a proud Hungarian, shared this belief about the local people. In a letter addressed to his friend, Frigyes Kerényi in 1847, Petőfi talks about illiterate, nonchalant people, who represented the vast majority of the city:"How much bacon, how many fatted pigs there can be found here! And still, the spirit is so scrawny, that its ribs are showing (...) Here, if they buy books, they only do so to roll bacon into its pages!" (Petőfi 1847, *my translation*)

The lack of education and civilization among the citizens was in sharp contrast with the elegant main square of the city. It was more "noble and civilized" (264) than the traveler was told before. As a huge contrast to the poor shacks that surrounded the city, a few mansions and elegant buildings dominated the center, which was reminiscent, in Paton's opinion, of the Turkish provincial capitals, where "a great mosque or two of magnificent architecture

contrasts with streets of extensive unvarying meanness” (265). Paton compares Debrecen to the Turks several times, including the time he saw the main square at Market Day, when the merchants lay their goods on the ground (267). According to the author, the most eye-captivating sight in the main square was the recently built “Calvinistic church” or officially named Great Reformed Church. It was a “building of great size” built at the beginning of the century in “Italian sort of architecture” (265) which is confirmed in Módy György’s descriptions (348).

The explanation to the discrepancy that the British traveler observed between the outer edge and the centre can be found in the history of the city. Preceding the nineteenth century, several conflagrations took place on Debrecen’s territory. However, the most devastating was the one starting in 1802, which destroyed the old church built from the remnants the of the Saint Andrew Church or the aforementioned Great Reformed Church from 1628, that contained the gift György Rákóczi I. gave to the city, a 35 quintal heavy great bell, and also ruined the main wing of the Calvinist university, as well as destroyed numerous amounts of chronicles, along with the houses of professors and priests (Módy 348-49). In spite of having endured a great loss, the citizens started rebuilding the main square. This time, the architecture was planned in a classicist style, and the surrounding buildings and houses started to form a unity, that was missing before (nagytemplom.hu pars. 1-4). However, the architect, who was not a citizen himself, was killed in a robbery before the construction was complete (Módy 350) so the renewal process came to a halt. As a result, Debrecen was a city with a neo-classical, elegant main square, and an unvaried, uncivilized outer rim.

Paton’s subjectivity towards the city is a consequence of his strong opposition to Hungary’s political leadership and can be observed when he mentions the place where Kossuth held councils (269). “We should welcome subjectivity as an indispensable contribution both to our knowledge of the past and to contemporary and future politics,” (100) states Ankersmit about the subjective matter of a historical description, therefore proves that Paton’s subjectivity cannot be averted, yet it still does not alter the credibility of his writing. Although Debrecen had the reputation of being one of the main centers of the Hungarian Revolution, Paton felt compassion towards the great number of families who had suffered losses (269). Paton did not blame the citizens for the war, he blames the Kossuth-party: “small a number of persons could be deliberately responsible for their sufferings”(269).

To conclude with, Paton felt compassion towards the people living in Debrecen, mostly due to the fact that he saw them as illiterate simple people, whose main purpose was to

survive. The lack of raw judgement, present in the chapter about Cluj Napoca, may be due to the realization of Paton about the innocence of the Debrecen citizens.

2.iii) "Clausenburg"

On his journey in Transylvania, from Maros-vásárhely (Maramures) to Clausenburg (Cluj Napoca) Paton encountered the mix of several nationalities such as Saxons, Szeklers, Daco-Romans or Romanians, and Hungarians. He was surprised by the contrasts he encountered in different parts of Transylvania: he saw "over-populated" lands and hard-working farmers in one town, and scattered houses, fellow lands in another (180).

Once arrived to the city, Paton noted that he was greeted by renowned noble personalities, such as Bethlen, Theleki, Wesselényi and Bornemissza, all of whom had suffered severely after the Revolution (181). Paton discovers Cluj Napoca, and is surprised by how "well-built" (181) it is. According to an article by Ákos Egyed about the said city, Cluj Napoca was "consciously preparing itself to become a capital" (n.p.) after the so-called Gubernium, or Hungarian Government moved into the city in 1791. Consequently, as stated by Elek Jakab, this resulted in the building of new structures, the repairing of roads, the cleaning of the main square and founding several educational institutions (qtd. in Egyed par. 15). The sudden change of the city can be owned also to the fact that several noble families moved to Cluj Napoca because of the Gubernium, bringing along their high expectations towards the city's appearance. "The principal Transylvanian nobility, having resided here, built large and substantial houses, many of them distinguished by considerable elegance, both internal and external" (182) noted Paton, and indeed, the baroque sophistication and flamboyance was replaced by the simple and elegant classicist style at the beginning of the century in Cluj Napoca (Makkai 1).

Cluj Napoca is compared to Debrecen in Sándor Petőfi's letter from 1847: "When we entered Cluj Napoca's suburb, I suddenly thought we arrived to Debrecen: small traditional huts, bottomless sea of mud" (Petőfi 1847). Nevertheless, the centre of the city differentiates it from Debrecen. Paton states that the great square was built entirely in German-style and there was no evidence of the Turkish or Saxon population that occupied the city in the middle-age (182).

However, the appearance of a wealthy and noble town was sustained only by a handful of families, who had properties in the regions of Hungary untouched by the consequences of the war. The above mentioned families and many others played substantial roles in the

Revolution, therefore after the Revolution was crushed they “declared themselves ruined” (Paton 185). They lost properties, workers, and mostly money invested in the Revolution. Still “in spite of all these distresses, dinners, conversazionés and musical soirées went on just as usual” (187). The feminine society of Clausenburg was very extrovert, “musical and not unliterary” (196), also exceptionally warm and friendly, for most of the families already knew each other, so there was no need for formality. However, there were women who were mourning their lost family members, so they were dressed in black attire, yet were still attending these unions. Egyed stated that the aristocracy’s aim with opening casinos alongside theaters, also holding events like balls even after the tragic events, was to keep the literacy growing among the citizens, also to keep up the mentioned reputation of the city (par. 18). Contrasting the elegant women of the aristocracy, Paton mentioned a young lady, who was “of great beauty” (197) but was unapproachable due to her timidity and silence. Her father replied to Paton’s questions that the girl bought two pairs of pistols at the beginning of the war, and “kept them in perfect order until the end of the war” (Paton 197). Although, it is unclear whether the girl, Paton wrote about actually used her pistols or not, it was not uncommon for ladies to join the fight for their freedom in Transylvania. In contrast with the negligence of Debrecen’s citizens, Hungarian women from Cluj Napoca and not only, joined the fight for their freedom and reached high position in the army.

Paton valued these sacrifices that the people of Cluj Napoca made, and just as in the case of Debrecen, blamed the political leadership for their downfall. He mentioned General Urban, who betrayed the Hungarian forces, and leaked information to the Daco-Roman and Saxon troops (187), and claimed that he did not approve of the choices the aforementioned General had made (188). Cluj Napoca, in Paton’s eyes was just another victim of the political leadership.

2.iv) Grosswardein

“I now left Transylvania and took the diligence to Grosswardein Hungary” (211), noted Paton about Oradea, which was a part of Hungary in 1848. He wrote that the city was not only important for it being “the arsenal of the Magyar army during the late struggle, but for being at the present time the capital of the largest civil and military province in Hungary under the new organization”(211). On the city’s official website it is stated that in Oradea, weapons and armors were not only stored but even manufactured (n.a. par. 22). Oradea as a city, in contrast to Debrecen’s symbolical and strategic role, also Cluj Napoca’s political role, played a significant part in the military field throughout the Revolution.

Oradea “was a great city in the middle ages” (213), the traveler mentioned. Even before the nineteenth century Oradea had an important strategic role. A fortress was built, which was later on destroyed by the Turks along with the whole city. The traveler praised the citizens for their courage while defeating the citadel against the Turkish siege in 1598 (Crisan 6). After taking back the city under Hungarian commandment, under István Báthory leadership, a new fortress was built, which was seen by the traveler on his journey. Paton stated that the city contained about twenty thousand souls “half of whom are Magyars and the rest Daco-Romans, with some Slovacks and Jews” (217). Similar numbers can be found in Charles Loring Brace’s travelogue about Hungary, in which he stated that the city had twenty thousand inhabitants in 1851 (272). According to Paton the city was “a very scattered place, extending on both sides of the river Koros” (218), compared to the organized British streets. The most compact part of the city in his opinion was the principal square “on which the Greek Catholic church is built, and which is surrounded by well-built modern houses of the Vienna and Pesth pattern” (215).

The mood of the inhabitants was very melancholic, similar to the one Paton experienced in Debrecen, where people were not able to move past the consequences of the Revolution. In contrast, the Hungarian population of Oradea coped with the trauma in the same way as Paton observed in Cluj Napoca: by attending social gatherings. About the overall mood of the guests he wrote: “although the waltzes and quadrilles succeeded each other in rapid succession, it was the most political ball I ever was at, and the grave situation of the country seemed to occupy the people much more than the carnival” (217).

Nevertheless, the traveler felt sympathy towards the citizens of Oradea, due to the fact that he met a man whose son got exiled in Turkey, and understood that at the core of the melancholic state of Oradea was the fact that many families suffered great losses after the Revolution, and “had not yet recovered” (216) from it. The blame is put once again on Kossuth and his party for misleading the whole Hungarian population into a greater misery than they were in before.

3. Conclusions

Andrew Archibald Paton’s *The Goth and The Hun* contains relevant information about Debrecen, Cluj Napoca and Oradea, because it describes past events by using objective information that could be confirmed by other historical resources. The British traveler even

included his personal thoughts about mostly political issues he had observed, thus contributing to the historical descriptions of Hungary and Transylvania. In this sense the travelogue might serve as a partly subjective source of information for the study of Hungary's and Transylvania's nineteenth century.

It can also be stated, based on the analysis of the descriptions of the aforementioned three cities that the citizens of Oradea and Cluj Napoca were coping with the tragic events of 1848-1849 and the changes that followed in a positive and constructive way, which could be observed even very shortly after the Revolution, when Paton visited those areas, resulting in the two cities' development, whereas the citizens of Debrecen clinged to the past, causing the downgrade of the city, an aspect that could only be changed in the many years to follow.

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