

UNIVERSITY OF SZEGED  
DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF HISTORY

**DOCTORAL DISSERTATION THESES**

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Education and Culture of Magyarokizsáka in the Dualist Era (1867–1918)

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## **I. Choice and importance of the topic**

My doctoral dissertation deals with the cultural history of Magyarkanizsa by looking at the four decisive platforms of the cultural life of the given era: education and its aims to fill in gaps of social life, the community-building power of thriving social organizations, the emergence of the local press, and the development of a new branch of industry, tourism, around the medicinal spa.

In the selection of the topic, I was motivated by my attachment and respect for my homeland since I have started this work during my university years and as a result, I concluded a research on the history of the spa of Magyarkanizsa. As a member of the Southern Region Research Center, I am interested in the education and culture in the Northern Bácska region, especially of Magyarkanizsa, in the Dualist Era. A few years ago, the historians of the University of Szeged came up with the idea that, together with local history researchers, they should write the history of the city between 1848 and 1945. As the editor of the volume, *The Monograph of Magyarkanizsa (1848-1945)* - which is about to be published in 2018 – and the author of the part on the events of the turn of the century, I have aimed to gather and present the newest research material available from me and my colleagues on this given topic.

When planning my paper, I considered it important to present the period between 1868 and 1918 of the history of Magyarkanizsa in order to have a complex picture of the political, economic and social events of the town. When elaborating this topic there is special emphasis on the realization of compensation contracts (with land reform), the adoption of the issue of the county court and the municipality law which let Old Kanizsa develop into a legislatively autonomous town. With all of its controversies, the turn of the century was the most prosperous era in terms of economic, social and cultural development of Magyarkanizsa, since the settlement gained the rank of town for the second time; furthermore, the biggest investments (new town hall, school, brick factory, modern spa) are also related to this time. In addition to the economic and social changes, modernization also took place in the field of education and culture. Modern middle-class development had changed the lifestyle of the different social strata, i.e. reading, going to the theatre, social life, sports and bathing all became fashionable with the desire to spend free time in a meaningful way. One of the main reasons for the development of education and culture was the growing demand for higher literacy. On the other hand, when the institutional system of the dualist state was established, the civil state sought to

satisfy an increasing demand of professionals. The establishment and operation of the modern Hungarian civil state - through the Legislative (1870) and the Municipal (1871) Act - resulted in the reorganization of local governments, the continuous differentiation and professionalization of public administration, a legislation that promoted the middle-class, and also the growth of administration, and the professionalization of the officials. Professional knowledge and school qualification became a basic requirement at the turn of the century even in the microenvironment of the town. Considering the sources, I valued this topic, the cultural life and history of Magyarkanizsa in the Dualist Era, worth of researching in a doctoral dissertation - taking into consideration the quantity and importance of these sources.

## **II. Research methodology and sources**

The main course of my dissertation is the presentation of the chosen four areas of research of education and culture in the Dualist Era, and the examination of their impact on the political, economic and social life of the town. During my analysis, I tried to show how the sectors studied in the field of public education influenced the town's urbanization process and how they instigated the formation of new sectoral structures of the capitalizing economy.

When discussing education, social clubs, local press organs and bath investment, I also monitored the main trends of national and regional development for the era together with the main features of their influence on the microenvironment. Using the analytical method, I tried to present the aspirations of different segments of public education by evaluating the results of statistical surveys.

The 1868 Law on People's Education had a very positive effect on the development of Ókanizsa's education. The proportion of children with compulsive education increased, and illiteracy showed a downward trend. In this chapter I highlighted the questions of the public and denominational type of lower education institutions, the struggles of the municipality, in which they attempted to transform the denominational schools into a communal nature. Apart from outlining the types of schools in the town, I have analyzed the growth indicators of local staff as well as the number of children with compulsory education – with a statistical chart –, highlighting the most important factors of their development.

The second area of cultural history in my dissertation is the topic of social organizations, within which my research focused on the evaluation of the role of the social clubs of Magyarkanizsa in the Dualist Era and their influence on the microenvironment. During my research, I tried to give an accurate picture of the social groups that set up civil organizations and to what extent they contributed to local and regional development of education and culture. During a new type of processing of the subject, I analyzed the 48 urban self-organizing associations I found by their function and social-layer characteristics. I compared the findings of these studies with the national data of Hungarian social associations (based on 1878 statistics).

During the study of the local press, following the new type of social-historical analysis of Gábor Gyáni, in addition to the traditional, descriptive (only content-based, and thus nonconsidering the sociocultural context) method, I tried to present the two local weekly paper's, the *Kanizsai Újság's* and the *Kanizsai Ellenőr's*, socio-cultural role by the method of interpretation, i.e. an analytical approach. The essence of this method is that it concentrates not only on the final product, the newspaper, but also on the entrepreneurs (publishers) and editors involved in the production process; and also the aims of the authors, as well as the social layer and the cultural and sociological background of the readers. During the course of analysis it becomes clear that on which social groups did the opinion-forming mass media - operated as a capitalist enterprise from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – have the greatest influence and to what extent. It is not negligible what other secondary goals the entrepreneur sought to achieve beyond profit from the sale of the press product.

In the fourth chapter, dealing with the history of the medicinal spa of Magyarkanizsa, I examined the nationally growing scale of bath culture and the socioeconomic characteristics of the formation of Southern Region salt water spas at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I found it important to highlight a new discipline, balneology, and in the industrial sector, which was reviving in the age of dualism, the role of tourism. The creation and development of the bath culture of the Monarchy was influenced by several important factors. Due to the more differentiated division of labor with the rising middle class, the need for meaningful spending of leisure time arose. In addition to this, there was the desire to invest from the part of capitalist entrepreneurship in a new, emerging industry, tourism.

In the course of my researches, I mainly worked with primary sources in the knowledge of Hungarian and Serbian literature and local historical works. I have examined the archives on Magyarkanizsa in the Historical Archives of Zenta, the Council Meeting records from 1870 to

1914 of Magyarakanizsa, City with Organized Council (F. 004.), the documents of the Local Military Command Headquarters (F. 096.) and the collection of the local newspapers (F. 435.). I have examined the documents containing the statutes of social organizations in the Hungarian National Archives in the general archives of the Ministry of State (K. 150.), in the Historical Archives of Zenta (F. 034.) and in the Archives of the Southern Region Research Center. Moreover, I have looked into the death records of the Csongrád County Archives of the Hungarian National Archives and the database of the Main Diocesan Archives of Kalocsa. When dealing with the topic of local public education I have examined the public school reports of the primary school of Magyarakanizsa in the collection of the National Széchényi Library. The periodicals *Kanizsai Újság* and the *Kanizsai Ellenőr*, which were both published in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, served as very useful primary sources in case of political, economic and social matters. I have used all possibly attainable volumes of the *Kanizsai Újság* (1909-1915) and the *Kanizsai Ellenőr* (1911-1914, 1915, 1918) that can be found in public archival collections – in the National Széchényi Library, in the Historical Archives of Zenta and in the József Attila Library of Magyarakanizsa. During the course of research on the history of the medicinal bath, I have processed all the sources which were available in the Historical Archives of Zenta: *A kanizsai csodafürdő iratai 1908–1913* (F. 004.), *Kanizsai Gyógyfürdő Szakosított Utókezelő Intézet* (1963–2012), *Zavod za specijalizovanu rehabilitaciju „Banja Kanjiža”* (F. 770.).

### **III. Main conclusions**

In my dissertation, I tried to point out the development and most important events of the education and culture of this small town in the Southern Region (Délvidék, Hungary) in the Dualist Era by examining the major scenes of cultural life (education, social organizations, press, bath culture), as well as the aim of certain segments to fill in the void in social and cultural life.

I have pointed out in my dissertation that the social and economic changes that took place in the Dualist Era were decisive in the every day life of Magyarakanizsa. When fighting against the flood, the construction workers of Kanizsa gave proof of their outstanding strength and also the municipal leaders gave proof of their organizational and professional skills. Due to the development of public health services, the number of lethal epidemics fell back, thus somewhat lowering the sad statistics of child death. At the same time the path of development can also be seen in the fields of education and culture (public education, social organizations, press, etc.). The level of literacy rose as there was a growing desire for education from the part of an upcoming middle-class.

I have stated that the public education of Magyarakanizsa, with all its controversies, went through a major change in the Dualist Era. The modernization of public education had a positive impact on the cultural life of the town. With the passing and implementation of the Public Education Act, new preschools and primary schools were established which resulted in a decreasing number of illiterate and unschooled people in town. The increasing level of general literacy was made possible by professional teachers and well-equipped (taking into consideration the local conditions) educational institutions.

By presenting the results of my research, I have described how local public organizations, social clubs had a positive impact on the development of local culture in the Dualist Era in Magyarakanizsa. They had a major influence on the taste, emotional wellbeing and educational level of this increasingly middle-class town. High quality social life, theatre, music and sport all became part of the every day life of this forming community. Social clubs showed a great example for a wide range of their microenvironment with their selflessness, their charity work and by taking responsibility for the community. They had a role of conveying culture since within the framework of readers' and culture clubs they increased literacy but also promoted the widening of professional skills and the acquisition of new knowledge. During my

work I have examined the history of 48 social organizations of Magyarkanizsa. With the help of a statistical analysis I could show that the social organizations of Magyarkanizsa followed the national trends in terms of their function and their social layer characteristics, but at the same time stayed back in number with non-social layer specific associations. However, in the category of middle-class intellectual clubs the number is almost the double of the national average.

In my dissertation I have examined how the appearance of local press products (*Kanizsai Újság*, *Kanizsai Ellenőr*) aimed to fill in century-old gaps in the cultural life of the community. I tried to clarify how the late appearance of local press (much like the political press in the decade after the Compromise) was related to the becoming of Magyarkanizsa a city with organized council as cause and effect. Beside describing and analyzing the topics in the periodicals, I also presented the socioeconomic background of the press, made up of entrepreneurs, the interests of the publishers and their role in local politics. I have stated that mainly the *Kanizsai Újság* (*Kanizsa Newspaper*) and somewhat the *Kanizsai Ellenőr* (*Kanizsa Controller*) contributed to the development of modern mass media in Magyarkanizsa in the Dualist Era by publishing tabloid news, contemporary novels in series and by operating as capitalist press companies.

In my dissertation the chapter on the history of the medicinal bath of Kanizsa examines the sociocultural aspects of the introduction of a new branch of industry, tourism. I aimed to point out how the leaders of this increasingly middle-class city with an organized council wished to stimulate local capitalist entrepreneurs and companies. The most prominent example of this was the investment of a group of local entrepreneurs in the building of the spa. According to the concession agreement, which was signed in 1912, the municipality donated the land property necessary for the construction to the Artesian Spa Incorporation. In exchange the company agreed to provide the money to build and operate a modern spa satisfying every need.

By contrast, at the turn of the century, the establishment of a telephone network that revolutionized communication (besides the radio) was delayed, in addition to the fact that large corporations, which could have been capital-intensive and industry-boosting, could not be brought into our region. Magyarkanizsa achieved city status in 1908 and was on the brink of great opportunities but sadly, the shortness of time and the bloodiest and most terrible war in history cancelled all plans. It is not negligible, however, that after the change of power (1920), the town succeeded in preserving the educational and cultural achievements even under the changed political and economic conditions. As a proof of this, the schools and social

organizations originating from the Dualist Era had a well-perceived continuity between the two world wars.

#### **IV. The author's publications in the topic**

–*A Csodakút. A kanizsai gyógyfürdő története.* (*The Magic Well. The History of the Medicinal Bath of Kanizsa*) Szeged, 2008.

–*A Csodakút.* (*The Magic Well.*) In: Kanizsa kincsei. Magyarkanizsa Község helyi értéktára. Ed.: Fejős Sándor–Forró Lajos–Mózes Anita. Szeged, 2014. p.125–128.

–*A fürdő kultúra elterjedése a dualizmus kori Magyarkanizsán.* (*Spreading of Bath Culture in Magyarkanizsa in the Dualist Era*) In: Fejezetek a Délvidék múltjából. Ed.: Döbör András–Forró Lajos–Zakar Péter. Szeged, 2018. p.49–80.

–*A kanizsai gyógyfürdő története.* (*The History of the Medicinal Bath of Kanizsa*) In: Belvedere Meridionale, Vol. X. (1998) No.3-4. p.6–24.

–*A Magyarkanizsa községi zsidóság története.* (*The History of Jews in the Large-municipality of Magyarkanizsa*) In: 67 évre titkosítva. A Martonosi Emlékház. Ed: Forró Lajos–Mózes Anita. Szeged, 2016. p.20–23.

–*A magyarkanizsai Író tábor.* (*The Writing Camp of Magyarkanizsa*) In: Kanizsa kincsei. Magyarkanizsa Község helyi értéktára. Ed.: Fejős Sándor–Forró Lajos–Mózes Anita. Szeged, 2014. p.53–56.

–*Education and Culture in Magyarkanizsa during the Dualist Era.* In: Délvidéki Szemle, Vol. II. (2015) No. 2. p.17–32.

–*Gyógyfürdő.* (*Medicinal Spa*) In: Kanizsa kincsei. Magyarkanizsa Község helyi értéktára. Ed.: Fejős Sándor–Forró Lajos–Mózes Anita. Szeged, 2014. p.103–108.

–*Kanizsai képeslapok.* (*Postcards from Kanizsa*) Ed.: Fejős Sándor–Forró Lajos–Kávai Szabolcs. Szeged, 2013.



–*Magyarkanizsa rendezett tanácsú várossá válásának főbb momentumai.* (Major events of Magyarkanizsa becoming a city with an organized council) In: Délvidéki Szemle, Vol. IV. (2017) No.2. p.19–29.

–*Magyarkanizsa története 1895–1914.* (The History of Magyarkanizsa 1895-1914) In: Magyarkanizsa monográfiája 1848–1945. Main editor: Sándor Fejős. Magyarkanizsa, 2018. p.127–179. (Manuscript, ready to print. Southern Region Research Center Archives, Csíkos Press, Szabadka)

–*Nemzetközi Futó- és Úszómaraton.* (International Running and Swimming Marathon) Magyarkanizsa Község helyi értéktára. In: Kanizsa kincsei. Ed.: Fejős Sándor–Forró Lajos–Mózes Anita. Szeged, 2014. p.57–60.

## V. Lectures of the author on this topic

– “Conditions of Hungarian-Serbian historical reconciliation then and now”

International history and cultural history conference, organized by the Southern Region Research Center.

Title of lecture: *Economy and society in Magyarkanizsa in the Dualist Era*

Szeged, January 14, 2013

– “Chapters of the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century history of the Southern Region”

Summer Course at the I. Kanizsa Festival, organized by the Southern Region Research Center.

Title of lecture: **Social and Economical Characteristics of Magyarkanizsa at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Century**

Magyarkanizsa, July 3, 2013.

– “Chapters of the history of the Southern Region. Hungarian-Serbian connections – Common past, common future”

International history and cultural history conference, organized by the Southern Region Research Center.

Title of lecture: **The Monograph of Magyarkanizsa 1848 - 1945**

Szeged, January 23, 2014.

– “XIV. Apáczai Summer Academy”

International conference.

Title of lecture: **Education in the Southern Region in the Dualist Era**

Association of the Hungarian Teachers of Vojvodina

Novi Sad, July 7, 2014.

- *“Chapters of the history of the Southern Region. Hungarian-Serbian connections – Common past, common future II.”*

International history and cultural history conference, organized by the Southern Region Research Center.

Title of lecture: **The Tragic Fate of Miksa Dömötör, town physician**

Szeged, January 23, 2015.

- *“VII. Formation and disintegration of multicultural states in Central Europe”*

Conference series for historians, geographers, regionalists and economists.

Title of lecture: **Magyarkanizsa in the Dualist Era - especially its political, economical and social characteristics at the turn of the century.**

Szeged, March 6, 2015.

- *“Chapters of the history of the Southern Region. Hungarian-Serbian connections – Common past, common future III.”*

International history and cultural history conference, organized by the Southern Region Research Center.

Title of lecture: **Education and Culture of Magyarkanizsa in the Dualist Era**

Szeged, January 22, 2016.

- *“VII. Formation and disintegration of multicultural states in Central Europe”*

Conference series for historians, geographers, regionalists and economists.

Title of lecture: **Education and Culture of Magyarkanizsa in the Dualist Era**

Szeged, March 4, 2016.

— *“Chapters of the history of the Southern Region. Hungarian-Serbian connections – Common past, common future IV.”*

International history and cultural history conference, organized by the Southern Region Research Center.

Title of lecture: **History of Magyarkanizsa 1895-1914**

Szeged, March 23, 2017.

– *“Common past and reconciliation in the Southern Region”*

Conference organized by the Southern Region Research Center

Title of lecture: **Main Events of Magyarkanizsa Becoming a City with Organized Council**

Magyarkanizsa, October 14, 2017.

– *“Chapters of the history of the Southern Region. Hungarian-Serbian connections – Common past, common future V.”*

International history and cultural history conference, organized by the Southern Region Research Center.

Title of lecture: **Bath Culture of Magyarkanizsa in the Dualist Era**

Szeged, May 17, 2018.

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