PhD thesis summary
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1. Objectives

The PhD thesis explores the origin, the progress and the publication history of one of Ferenc Kazinczy's autobiographical texts entitled *Erdélyi Levelek* (Letters from Transylvania). It takes into account that this could be Kazinczy's very first original literary work in which he played the role of the "author" instead of that of the "translator", which he had been used to. However, the fact that he kept rewriting the work and made corrections continuously seems to suggest that ultimately Kazinczy failed to cope with the task. The first half of the thesis deals with Kazinczy's search for his authorial self, focusing on those important factors through which the existence of such a large number of revisions becomes interpretable and begins to make sense. Then the second half of the thesis describes the process of preparing the work for publication. Lastly, the appendix following the thesis contains the critical edition of the work.

The publication of the critical edition as well as the examination of the progress and publication history of the text is in accordance with the publication history project, started by the Classical Hungarian Literary Textual Criticism Research Group operating as an academic workshop within the Institute of Literary and Cultural Sciences at the University of Debrecen, which aims at publishing the critical edition of Ferenc Kazinczy's lifework.

2. Methodology

As the texts of *Erdélyi Levelek* have mostly lain undiscovered, before preparing the text for publication such fundamental research work had to be carried out in the manuscript collections and libraries holding the Kazinczy legacy as the discovery and digitization of manuscripts as well as the transcription and systematization of the digitized texts.

However, while collecting the manuscript sources we had to realize that the work does not equal the entirety of the partial and complete variants entitled *Erdélyi Levelek,* but its passages and narrative motifs, usually with the same wording, also reappear in completely different writings in the oeuvre. As the number of potential manuscripts was increasing, more and more did the work begin to resemble a whole broken into pieces, the splinters of which could be found in the most distant corners of the lifework. And here we do not just mean the overlapping parts of various autobiographical texts written simultaneously (for example, Kazinczy's *Fogságom naplója*) but also

other texts of unrelated subjects and of different genres and modality, written before his travel to Transylvania. These tiny text motifs, these splinters were partly embedded in their own primary context, and partly reappear in *Erdélyi Levelek* as well, there connected by the common topic of travel experiences. These Kazinczy manuscripts have revealed a new facet of the oeuvre, and an internal structure become visible in the legacy that denied the traditional separation of individual works as well as the multi-tone genre and style requirements, which was partly characteristic of Kazinczy.

Here we can also mention another aspect of Kazinczy's peculiar work method. During the years while he was polishing the text, he recorded his travel experiences not only in letters but in other genres as well. We can regard his epistles written to his Transylvanian hosts *(Emil Buczy, Pál Sipos)* or the epigram snapshots of his travels *(Vajda-Hunyad, Búcsúzás Erdélytől)* as members of a rhizomatic group of texts, in which each poem or letter sent from Transylvania indicates another fixed point of memories. Moreover, some of the memories related to the travel, such as the description of the horses of Zsibó or the foreign visit of Miklós Vay, appear both in his works meant to be published *(Pályám Emlékezete)* and in his *Pandekta* manuscript volumes. The memories scattered through different works that appear as impressions of the Transylvanian journey connect the autobiographical and poetic pieces of the oeuvre like an invisible web.

As we looked on *Erdélyi Levelek* as a group of texts connected by the common subject of travel experiences, in the manuscript-research phase we have collected everything–from the shortest excerpts to multipage notes–related to the travel in Transylvania, to the memories described in the finished variants and to the topics mentioned in them. A couple of notes and drawings related to the journey have survived, which were later left out by Kazinczy from some of the variants, and we have found several manuscript notes in his legacy, which were not originally written during the Transylvanian visit yet, due to the nature of the texts and the closely related subjects, we had to take them into account during the study of progress history. We have identified seven individual groups of source manuscripts related in some way or another to the textual world of *Erdélyi Levelek*: A) autobiographical fragments; B) travel sketches; C) reminder information fragments; D) notes related to the history of Transylvania; E) texts from other authors included in *Erdélyi Levelek*; F) private correspondence; G) illustrations, sketchy drawings. As a result of these peculiar features, the goal of the manuscript research summarized in the thesis, the description of progress history and the publication of the text was not text editing following the classical historical-critical principles or the origin and progress history of that, but rather such a dissertation that uses a genetic notion of text and examines questions of genre theory that helps us refine Kazinczy's portrait as an autobiographer.

The thesis also discusses those factors affecting the decisions of the author which

contributed to the development of the text. When writing the individual variants, Kazinczy was influenced by several factors beyond authorial inventions, such as satisfying the demands of readers, market considerations or different pieces of advice coming from friends. Looking at the numerous text sources, we can rightly ask why Kazinczy did not consider final any of the variants, and why the work was not published in its entirety in Kazinczy's life. Reception history usually accounts for the repeated "nonoccurrence" of the publication by referring to Kazinczy's "intent for improvement", and attributed the existence of a great number of variants to his unique work method. We believe, however, that given the quantity of text variants, the reasons require a closer examination. The progress history of the work can turn our attention to the cultural role pattern, or more precisely: role pattern shift, which–if looked at more closely–can make the multi-decade long process of polishing the text more understandable. In the middle of the 1810s, the work reporting on his visit in Transylvania was hailed by the literary elite as a new beginning, as an overture to Kazinczy's original literary works. By 1817-1818 it became a symbol of the maturity of the *author* who had outshone the *translator*. Listening to the reviews of or comments on the already completed parts, Kazinczy, who had always considered himself a better translator than author, found himself in a new role totally inconsistent with his concept of literature, while opening up new possibilities in the diffusion of elitist literature. From the thesis' perspective, all this is very important as if we look at the problem from the viewpoint of Kazinczy's notion of classicism and interpret it in the wider context of the contrast between translation and originality, we can easily see that the program he had advocated as a translator (that is, our literature born on the model of translations would become the breeding ground for our originality) was difficult to put into practice even by the very author who had done the most to achieve this kind of development. It was along a poetic aspect of the Enlightenment, specifically looking at how bucolic poetry had influenced Kazinczy, that we analyzed the problematic nature of using patterns from translations as well as his quest for a new authorial voice. In the detailed analysis, we examined those prose-poetic processes, which Kazinczy tried to naturalize as a translator walking in the footsteps of German classicism and following Goethean patterns, but as an author it was him who had to create a poetic world capable of producing an artistic effect. Since we can regard *Erdélyi Levelek* as an outstanding piece of the oeuvre not only because contemporaries held that it was the best prose work written by the master of Széphalom until that time, but also because it was the first time that Kazinczy had the opportunity to show through his own prose work how to organically introduce foreign patterns in Hungarian literature, just as he had been emphasizing in his ideas about language and translation theory. The dissertation examines in detail how Kazinczy was capable of repositioning the bucolic poetic prose diction inherited from Gessner in *Erdélyi Levelek* and the related texts in such a way that they could simultaneously comply with Schiller's criteria and the golden age narrative, while

retaining the subtle balance between myth and reality.

The most important methodological novelty of the volume, which follows the principles for text publication developed by the Textual Criticism Workgroup of Debrecen, is to present that genetic network of connections that interconnects the texts and to construct a linearly structured book as if it were a digital database. For this purpose, our publication not only did incorporate the main elements of vertical genetic, traditional critical and digital editions, but its philological apparatus is also structured in a way similar to them. Beside the notes related to the subject, the language or textual criticism, the goal of the publication is to make the relationship between the primary texts and the notes more manageable. On the page margins, two kinds of page numbering are displayed, typically more than one typeset in normal and one in italics. Those set in normal type refer the reader to another text unit corresponding to the given one. Thematic notes added to identical text fields are found after the primary texts, these are referenced by the page numbers in italics. All language-, subject-, word- or notion-related explanations are given in the notes.

The text fields mentioned are also related to the structure of the philological apparatus. In the volume, the texts having an independent status as well as the five *Erdélyi Levelek* have been given a sequential numbering: [1], [2], [3] etc. Evidently, the first text field of each text starts with a 1 and then the numbering increases by one for each field. A text unit having such a serial number is either identical at least partly with other text fields found in other variants, and its length depends on the extent of similarity between a minimum of two variants, or stands alone if it is only found in one variant. Connections between the numbered text fields are listed in the Summary table of text fields, which shows the related texts next to each other.

Published here for the first time, the *Feljegyzések* (Notes) were not divided into text fields as we could not find such similarities with the other variants that would have justified a division of this kind. The Feljegyzések is comprised of short text units written during the travel as reminders as well as the fair-copied autographs of these. Kazinczy most probably committed the sketchy drawings and the notes to paper during his travels, and then–upon his return home–he fair-copied them and included certain parts of them in the work in preparation. Because of that, we were able to reference the Feljegyzések too to certain text units, and indicate the intertextual connections by page numbers on the margin. This way, all the texts, the Feljegyzések and the five *Erdélyi Levelek* are inter-referenced through the page numbers seen on the margins.

3. Results

The outcome of the thesis and the edition published in the appendix is that it followed text publication principles rarely used for paper-based formats to prepare for publication a text that

provides valuable contributions to Kazinczy's portrait as an autobiographer. This novel way of editing the text opens up possibilities for a new way of reading, too.

The reader has the opportunity to read the texts sequentially following each other in a linear manner, or using the editorial apparatus they can also keep track of individual stories following the connection points between the texts. If we truly absorb ourselves in Kazinczy's text, we will see that the variants of *Erdélyi Levelek*, the stories told in them, the events are interconnected not only with each other but with other texts and narrative motifs from the lifework as well. For example, his personal encounters with baron Miklós Vay or Miklós Wesselényi, both of which took place in 1816 in Transylvania, are related in another work of his, in *Pályám emlékezete* using almost the same wording.

Naturally, such an examination of the oeuvre will require a long research work, and the full completion of this is conceivable in a digital framework only, but the philological and textual critical work carried out here brings us closer to completing the discovery of the interconnection system of the entire oeuvre.

4. Publications related to the subject

- *Az Erdélyi Levelek kánonban*. Klasszikus – magyar – irodalom – történet. Tanulmányok. Eds. Pál DAJKÓ, Gergely LABÁDI. Szeged, Tiszatáj, 2003, pp. 109–131.

- *Kép, szöveg, örökkévalóság. (Az intermedialitás tere Kazinczy verseiben)*. In: A látható könyv. Tanulmányok az irodalmi medialitás köréből. Ed. Katalin HÁSZ-FEHÉR. Szeged, Tiszatáj Alapítvány, 2006, pp. 317–344.

- *A szászok lázadása – avagy a vérremenő irodalom esete Kazinczynál*. In: A leleplezett mellszobor. Ed. Mariann CZIFRA. Bp., 2009, pp. 146–173.

- *Az idillikus költői prózanyelv újrapozícionálása Kazinczynál*. In: Tiszatáj, 2009, pp. 64–84.

- *„S ezzel a fináléval ért véget a' szép scéna" (Kazinczy Ferenc és Gyulay Lotti kapcsolatáról)*. In: Ragyogni és munkálni. Ed. Attila DEBRECZENI, Mónika GÖNCZY, Debrecen, 2010, pp. 465–473.