

Peculiarities of aristocratic education at the beginning of the 19th century

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THEMATIC ARTICLE

Received: March 15, 2022 • Accepted: December 1, 2022

Published online: June 2, 2023

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the education of the Hungarian aristocracy in the period from 1790 to 1848. Since the progressive-minded members of this social class, which was highly qualified by European standards, played a significant role in promoting culture and education, especially since the Reform Era, I wanted to find out what educational characteristics underpinned their education. I explored the question of what trends prevailed in the different directions of home education and how the political, social and intellectual challenges and changes in the first half of the 19th century affected private education. In the course of the research, I applied the traditional method of educational history, source and document analysis and the analytical (deductive) research strategy. After studying the Hungarian, German and English literature on the subject, I examined and evaluated the primary sources available in Hungary - diaries, memoirs, journal articles, autobiographical writings, records of foreign travellers, archival and manuscript sources. In addition to asserting their primary power interests and their role as patrons, a small but crucial group of aristocrats took an active role in raising the level of national culture and education. They championed the cause of education, founded educational institutions and thus became mediators of culture for other strata of society. Their education, enlightened thinking and European erudition undoubtedly contributed to their recognition of this role and task and their commitment to it.

KEYWORDS

private education, educational theories, role of education

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DELIMITATION OF THE TOPIC

In the first half of the 19th century, the aristocracy, the leading social class of the time, was at the top of the Estates hierarchy due to its political and administrative privileges, but its social prestige was mainly based on its enormous wealth (Gergely, 2003; Vörös, 1980b). The aristocracy in the reform era is to be found - though not in equal parts - at the courtier-conservative and the reformist-patriotic poles of political life (Kosáry, 1990; Pálmány, 1984, 1997). Among the members of the great Hungarian high nobility we find a significant number of reformers who stood out for progress in politics, economics and culture from the reign of Maria Theresa until 1848, e.g. the Counts Széchenyi, Károlyi, Batthyány, as well as some Andrassy and Zichy Counts (Bényei, 1998; Gergely, 2003; Gyáni & Kövér, 1998; Vörös, 1980b; Zimányi, 1985) We also find a large number of aristocrats among the representatives of educational policy and education, to name but a few examples: education in the national spirit, the educational reform plans (educational programmes of Széchenyi and Wesselényi, reform plan of Count Alajos Mednyánszky on public education), the institutions (Georgikon, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, libraries, museums, casinos, women's educational institutes, Teréz Brunszvik's institute for kindergarten teachers) and the most important supporters of the kindergarten movement in the reform era (József Eötvös, Leó Festetics, Miklós Jósika, László Teleki, Miklós Wesselényi), etc. (Csorba & Velkey, 1998; Gergely, 1998; Kosáry, 1988)

I regarded as aristocrats all those who owned large estates and were of noble origin, held at least the title of baron, count and possibly prince, i.e. were part of the order of magnates, belonged to the parliament in this capacity and, moreover, held the highest positions in absolutism, were naturalised despite being foreign aristocrats or, as naturalised nobles, already owned large estates and titles, and had married into the exclusive circle of like magnates through endogamy.

On the eve of the abolition of the estate society, the importance of the nobles in culture increased; as the leading class of the time, they served as a model of behaviour for the rest of society. Despite its somewhat controversial political role, the aristocracy has earned undisputed merit in promoting culture and education (Benda, 1980; Bibó, 1994; Veliky, 1993, 1999; Vörös, 1980a).

OBJECTIVE AND PRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of my research is to present the education of the Hungarian nobility in the first half of the 19th century based on sources. By examining the private education of the aristocrats, who were highly qualified even by European standards, I hope to contribute to a better understanding of home education and this period.

In my study, the educational traditions of the aristocracy, their possible directions, trends and perspectives are considered in a historical approach, as I assume that beyond their birth privileges and lifestyle, their education and their Western European upbringing also play a role in their differentiation from the rest of the nobility. I also explored the question of how the political, social and intellectual challenges and changes in the first half of the 19th century affected private education.



I assumed that in the first half of the 19th century the tendency still prevalent in the 18th century, according to which the children of aulic magnates of the Catholic faith received their education mainly in Vienna, while Protestant nobles sent their sons to study in Prussia, which was considered a stronghold of anti-Habsburg politics and was therefore unpopular with the Viennese court, would probably disappear or at least weaken. I assumed furthermore that after the edict of tolerance, the educational institutions of Vienna were also open to Protestant nobles and they even had the opportunity to hold high civil servant positions (Kornis, 1927; Kosáry, 1998). I also examined what criteria determined the direction and spirit of education. In choosing the disciplines studied, I assumed a certain normativity (paternal, possibly family traditions, parental guidance).

At the beginning of the 19th century, Hungary was marked by an awakening of national consciousness, which was also felt in many other European countries (Barker, 1982; Blum, 1978; Cannadin, 1991; Demel, 1988; Dewald, 1996; Higgs, 1987; Jedlicki, 1988; Lieven, 1992; Myska, 1988; Vetter, 1988). This was accompanied by a greater cultivation of Hungarian customs, the national language, Hungarian society and economy, national culture and education (Jeismann, 1989; Karady-Mitter, 1990, Reden-Dohna & Melville, 1988), which presumably did not leave private education untouched. I assumed that from 1825 onwards the national elements were incorporated into the education of the nobles and that they were taught the Hungarian characteristics and the Hungarian language in addition to the traditional educational content. I expected that this process would lead to public educational institutions becoming more popular among aristocratic youth, which would allow them to have more direct contact with other social classes. The high nobility did recognise the importance of the school and there was even a certain loosening in their social isolation, but they still clung to their position as a closed social class.

In the course of the research, I applied the traditional methods of historiography and educational history, as well as the analytical (deductive) research strategy (Kéri, 2001). I identified, critically examined and then interpreted the primary sources. In the analysis of sources and documents, I focused on uncovering contextual connections.

The following source groups could be distinguished: 1. diaries, memoirs, 2. educational works and studies written by the persons studied, 3. writings in journals on the relationship between private and public education, the education of the high nobility, autobiographical writings, 4. records of foreign travellers, 5. archival and handwritten sources (contracts with educators, educational plans, correspondence between parents and educators, educators and pupils, parents and children, documents on education, school progress, school reports).

To examine the entire range of sources would have gone beyond the scope of the research, so I have undertaken an almost complete investigation of the most important Hungarian and German-language sources and a partial investigation of the Latin, French and English-language texts in six selected archives and manuscript archives in present-day Hungary. Full research of the source material has been hampered and limited by the fact that the archives of many high-ranking families have either been destroyed or the manuscripts are kept abroad. Source criticism is a priority in my work. This was ensured by separating the source groups, as I made several efforts to verify the accuracy and authenticity of the data.

Since the aristocracy as a whole cannot be researched, I had to consider the sources, their availability and accessibility when selecting the people to study. The group under study consists



of the members of the Hungarian upper class who were active in the first half of the 19th century, especially those representatives who held a dominant position in the era due to their role in public life, academic life and educational and cultural policy (Borovszky, 1909; Nagy, 1857, pp. 1987–1988; Szerencs, 1885; Vörös, 1990).

Among the selected families we find families of older and younger origin, Protestant and Catholic, wealthy and less wealthy families, and families that followed foreign patterns or, on the contrary, adhered to national traditions. Due to a lack of sources, I was unable to fully record all members of the 33 families that were active during the period studied, so the number of principal nobles was reduced to 141. The focus is on the Andrassy, Batthyány, Dessewffy, Festetics, Fiáth, Jósika, Lónyay, Mednyánszky, Podmaniczky, Splény, Széchenyi, Teleki, Vay and Wesselényi families.

Taking into account the historical and educational-historical peculiarities, the periodisations found in the literature and the availability of sources, I have examined the first half of the 19th century, more precisely the period between 1790 and 1848, concentrating in a narrower sense mainly on the changes in the reform era (1825–1848).

EDUCATION-SPECIFIC FEATURES

Home education

The high nobility received home education. Their members were looked after from an early age by a foreign nanny and a governess. Although the educational level of the foreign educators was highly questionable in most cases, they cared for the children until they were five or six years old (Virág, 2004). The children were taught the basics of German or French by the foreign educators or, in some cases, the foreign mother, while the Hungarian language and customs were completely excluded in the first years of education (Virág, 2007a). In many cases, the parents themselves were involved in the education, which was mainly under the control of the father; the mother was responsible for foreign languages, and learning to read and write (Desiderius, 1833). Count Aurél Dessewffy's diary says that he learned French and Italian from his mother and that he could write and speak French well. The children's education was in the hands of the mother, who also took care of the household and the farm, while the father occasionally helped with the education (Dessewffy, 1885). In Baron Béla Splény's family of six children, the mother played the dominant role in their upbringing, as the soldier father was usually stationed far away from his family. "Because of our German nanny, we only spoke German and no Hungarian," he recalls in his memoirs (Splényi, 1984:13).

Although a lot of emphasis was placed on education at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, it can be assumed that there were hardly any differences in the upbringing of children up to the age of six, regardless of whether they grew up in Transylvania, Hungary or Vienna: for all of them, ball games, rounders, blindfolds, hide-and-seek, swinging, boating, sledging, swimming and bathing were the most popular play activities. Sometimes the father and the mother were equally involved in the education, as for example in the Teleki, Lónyay, Fiáth and Dessewffy families (Virág, 2013).

The approach to education was often co-determined by pedagogical programmes created by the parents themselves, such as those of György Festetics, László Teleki, József Teleki and



György Mikó. From the plans¹ it can be concluded that the pedagogical orientation of the education of the high nobility was influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment and the division of educational spheres was mainly according to Locke, although intellectual, physical and moral education often had different roles. In almost all cases, the focus was on the individual needs of the children, the principle of gradualness and the importance of independent learning. Beyond that, however, the content of education was primarily determined by the economic interests of the Hungarian magnates of the time (Virág, 2009).

Home teachers/educators

When the children reached school age, the parents hired a home teacher/educator for them. When choosing the educators, the parents sought the help and opinion of boarding school professors or respected acquaintances (Virág, 2008). In some cases they knew the chosen homeschool teacher from before, such as Piarist priests, outstanding students of renowned boarding schools, as well as theologians, philologists, doctors and lawyers who came from abroad to try their luck in Hungary or had already completed their studies (Virág, 2007b). The preserved documents show that the educators were contracted for a specific period of time (usually until the completion of the scheduled classes or exams) and for a pre-determined fee. The agreements specify the duration of their assignment, the amount of their remuneration and their duties. The most important of these include: taking account of parents' instructions and keeping them informed of their children's progress, preparing pupils for the examinations, taking account of their needs in the choice of learning methods, promoting pupils' intellectual and moral development, taking account of their physical needs and, in the case of study abroad, closely monitoring and accompanying the pupils. The contracts also stipulated a notice period and the amount of severance pay.²

Most educators did not consider their work as a profession, but merely as a stopover to finance their academic education. Thus it happened that one and the same educator worked for several families and, after fulfilling his duties with the commissioning family, continued his work with another noble family. In the magnate families, where the young people were educated by several educators one after the other, I found only a few examples of the existence of a close relationship. There are only a few educators for whom this profession was also a life's work. When working together for a longer period of time, the relationship between the pupils and their educators was usually not limited to the official, contractually agreed period of time, but in many

¹P 246 Festetics I. György 5. bundle 9. Documents on the education of his son László. Agreements with József Takács and István Kultsár, P 264 Festetics Leó, P 624 1. bundle 1. Lunkányi János. P 654 18. d. Item 39. Documents by László Teleki (1811–1861), letters addressed to him., *Analekta* 42/10.088 István Széchenyi's contract with Lajos Podhorszky, the educator of his children, Pest 1. November 1842. Mikó György (1817): Rövid megjegyzések, egy férjfi-gyermek neveléséről [Brief Notes on Raising a Boy]. In: *Erdélyi Múzeum*, 7. füzet 5–21. p., Régi s új írók 4-r. 133. (RUI 4 133.) Teleki László: *A nevelésről [On Education]*.

²P 246 Festetics I. György 5. bundle 9. Documents on the education of his son László. Agreements with József Takács and István Kultsár, P 264 Festetics Leó, P 624 1. bundle 1. Lunkányi János. P 654 18. d. Item 39. Documents by László Teleki (1811–1861), letters addressed to him., *Analekta* 42/10.088 István Széchenyi's contract with Lajos Podhorszky, the educator of his children, Pest 1. November 1842. Mikó György (1817): Rövid megjegyzések, egy férjfi-gyermek neveléséről [Brief Notes on Raising a Boy]. In: *Erdélyi Múzeum*, 7. füzet 5–21. p., Régi s új írók 4-r. 133. (RUI 4 133.) Teleki László: *A nevelésről [On Education]*.



cases developed into a friendly relationship, with the former educator also having an influence on the young person's later life in some form. (Szinnyei, 1891–1914; Virág, 2009). It even happened that the chosen educator determined the content of a nobleman's higher studies, as in the case of the Teleki family. Educators mainly graduated in humanities, theology and law, and they often took on the role of educator only to cover the costs of their studies. After graduating, they dedicated their lives to their chosen profession; some nobles, however, pursued teaching at a high level and considered it a life vocation, such as Elek Peregrinyi and Sámuel Brassai. The educators worked according to the principles laid down by the parents, in many cases on the basis of a previously prepared educational plan. Parents were in regular contact with the educators to monitor their children's academic progress and requested a written report on the pupil's examination results and behaviour.³ When the educators spent longer time with the pupils, they often later became personal friends, like János Lunkányi, János Váradi Szabó and Pál Hunfalvy.⁴ If the educators were frequently alternated during the school years, no incisive ideological or moral connection could develop between educator and child. The educators worked in the spirit of the Enlightenment, but the spirit of German pedagogy (Salzmann, Campe) and Pestalozzi's world of ideas are also noticeable (Virág, 2013).

Studies

The aristocratic boys acquired the learning material of the grammar school classes (the initial three grammar and two humanities classes later expanded to six classes) either privately and attended school only for the examinations, or they studied in a boarding school (Virág, 2004). The children of Catholic families no longer attended the Theresianum most frequently, but a Piarist or Benedictine grammar school (Tata, Buda, Győr Sopron, Pest, Sátoraljaújhely), where they took their due exams. However, in the examinations that marked the completion of a class, they did not always stick to the same school. The sons of Reformed families occasionally chose the boarding school in Debrecen and Kecskemét in addition to the very popular one in Sárospatak.⁵ The Transylvanian aristocrats were mainly educated at one of the Transylvanian institutions, some of them at the Catholic Lyceum or at the Reformed and Unitarian boarding schools in Kolozsvár (today Cluj-Napoca in Romania), others at the Reformed boarding school in Nagyenyed (today Aiud in Romania). The basic framework of education consisted of religious instruction, Latin, arithmetic, history, geography, natural history, natural sciences, foreign languages (German, French, English), supplemented by elements of chivalric culture - drawing,

³TREL. Kii. IV.2.-HI. Letter from Baroness Johanna Adelsheim, TREL H1-10 Letter from János Szabó 7 March 1816. Alsózsolca

⁴Quart. Hung. 1297 Podmaniczky Frigyes: „Naplótöredékek. Irta Br. Podmaniczky Frigyes. Budapest 1887.” [Diary Fragments by Baron Frigyes Podmaniczky. Budapest 1887] (1824–1887.), Quart. Hung. 1572 Podmaniczky Frigyes: Br. Podmaniczky Frigyes Emlékiratai [Frigyes Podmaniczky: Memoirs of Baron Frigyes Podmaniczky]. XIX. k. 1900., P 624 I. bundle 1. Lunkányi János

⁵P 2055 bundle 1, item 3: Documents about the College of Sárospatak (1731–1852), P 95 bundle 3: manuscripts, mainly by József Dessewffy, study notebooks, P 1059 bundle 4, item 5: Documents on Béla Splényi's studies in Selmecbánya (Banská Štiavnica) and his membership of the Körmöc (Kremnica) Municipal Parliament (1842–1847)., P 246 Festetics I. György bundle 9. Documents on the education of his son László. Agreements with József Takács and István Kultsár, P 264 Festetics Leó



dancing, fencing, riding, playing instruments. (Fináczy, 1927; Kornis, 1927; Kosáry, 1988; Várkonyi, 1985; Virág, 2006).

According to the sources, all nobles took a philosophy course as a prerequisite for university studies, and a great many of them also studied law, mostly at the University of Pest, followed in popularity by Sárospatak, Pozsony (today Bratislava in Slovakia) and Kassa (today Košice in Slovakia), but the magnates also liked to go to Kecskemét, Késmárk, Győr and the Theresianum. Of the universities, the University of Pest was clearly the most popular, while abroad the universities in Vienna, Berlin and Göttingen were the most frequently visited, although mostly only as part of a study trip. At the end of their studies, the young nobles went on a longer or shorter study trip, the duration and direction of which depended on the financial situation of the family. The trips covered almost the whole of Europe or occasionally one country. In addition to official programmes, visits and institute tours, they usually deepened their knowledge through university studies abroad. They realised the importance of travelling abroad and as a result they saw the conditions in their country with different eyes (Dessewffy, 1885; Podmaniczki, 1984; Splény, 1984; Széchenyi, 1889).⁶

In the first decades of the 19th century, the tendency was not yet clear that the Catholic nobility, especially from Transdanubia, preferred Vienna, while the Protestant nobility, especially from the area beyond the Tisza and Transylvania, preferred the German (especially Saxon) universities, thus forming a kind of antipole to Vienna. The noble families Széchenyi, Festetics, Batthyány and Reviczky, for example, seemed to have a clear Viennese orientation; but as a counter-example, we can mention the Protestant Miklós Jósika, Ferenc Teleki and Miklós Vay sen. who also studied in the imperial city, where institutions were already open to Protestants, who even had the opportunity to hold high office. The most important families of the Transylvanian nobility, Haller, Gyulay, Wesselényi, Bethlen, Wass, Mikó, Kemény, Teleki, Vas, Bánffy and Mikes completed their grammar school education at the Catholic Lyceum or the Reformed boarding school in Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca), or at the Reformed boarding school in Nagyenyed (Aiud).

The orientation and spirit of education were not primarily determined by regional and religious aspects or by the official positions of the parents or their political involvement, but rather by family traditions, so that there were no typical differences. Only between Transylvania and Hungary is there a sharp border. In the choice of field of study, I could not find convincing and universally valid examples of a manifestation of familial normativity. In some cases, the example of the father or other dominant male family member is decisive, but the direction of education was more influenced by the individual needs of the children.

Girls' education

The early education of Hungarian girls was entrusted to a governess of foreign, mostly French or German, origin, who taught the children the foreign language at a native level. In addition to the governesses, home teachers were hired to teach the girls a culture that was influenced by elements of French and German culture (Kéri, 2018; Pukánszky, 2006; Virág, 2010b, 2013). Most of

⁶TREL. Kii. IV.2.-H5 Letters from Baron Miklós Vay senior to his son, Quart. Hung. 1572 Podmaniczky Frigyes: Br. Podmaniczky Frigyes Emlékiratai [Frigyes Podmaniczky: Memoirs of Baron Frigyes Podmaniczky]. XIX. k. 1900., P 626 Széchenyi István Collection.



the girls did not speak or understand their “mother tongue” at all, although some of them later tried to learn Hungarian at some level, either out of conviction or to help their husbands with their official duties. We also find examples of this among wives of foreign origin, although much less frequently.

In many cases, the girls’ home education was supplemented by institutional education, which took place in foreign-language monasteries or in private educational institutions that were also foreign-owned. According to the diaries, there was a private institute for girls’ education in Győr and Pest, which was also attended by noblemen, but most of them sent their daughters to study in Vienna, where their education was guided by the expectations of social conventions. Besides teaching elementary skills, great emphasis was placed on the perfect acquisition of music, foreign language conversation, drawing, dance and various handicrafts that prepared the girls for their role in society (Czeke, 1938; Fáy, 1840, 1841; Kéri, 2018; Pukánszky, 2006; Seltenreich, 1848; Steinacker, 1837, 1841; Takács, 1826; Virág, 2010b, 2013). The European education of the Hungarian noble ladies cannot therefore be questioned, but what was considered a virtue in international comparison was considered a disadvantage at the national level and formed the basis for all criticisms directed against their lack of knowledge of the national spirit and Hungarian conditions (Desiderius, 1833; Kéri, 2018; Steinacker, 1840; Takács, 1825; Virág, 2010b).

The first institution specifically dedicated to the education of noble ladies, with already nationalistic traits, was founded only in 1846 on the initiative of Countess Blanka Teleki. (Teleki, 1845) The scheduled education of the ladies was usually completed by the age of 16. Within a few years afterwards, they married and immediately became mothers and wives without being able to use their knowledge in any way. Some used their knowledge to solve a national or social problem, but most of them were committed to philanthropic causes (Kéri, 2018, Pukánszky, 2006, Virág, 2010a,b, Virág, 2013).

The matter of national education

From the 1920s onwards, the growing national consciousness became noticeable among both men and women, which also gradually filled the education of the aristocracy with a national spirit. Furthermore, the private education of the aristocrats, the lack of Hungarian national spirit, Hungarian language skills and their lack of sense of responsibility towards the nation were criticised more and more harshly at the parliamentary sessions during the reform era and seen as a consequence of their hermetically sealed education. More and more public representatives rejected Locke’s concept of education, according to which the ideal of gentlemanhood could only be achieved by private means, and they advocated public schools instead (Virág, 2010a).

The concept of public education was gaining more and more acceptance (Horváth, 1825; Karacs, 1846; Kovács, 1823; Kovacsóczy, 1825). Arguments put forward included: well-founded curriculum, central administration and supervision, the commitment and competence of teachers, the benefits offered by peer groups, broader horizons, more effective learning conditions, adaptation to norms, the development of social sensitivity and the overcoming of mutual prejudices of social classes. As a result of the criticism, changes became noticeable during the reform era: In certain circles, the wearing of Hungarian clothes and Hungarian-language conversation came back into fashion, the teaching of Hungarian in the noble houses was included



in the curriculum, reading societies were founded to spread the national language, and it was no longer considered shameful to attend performances in the Hungarian theatre. The aristocrats themselves initiated the founding of institutes for women's education and the training of kindergarten teachers, which they hoped would lead to the "Magyarisation" of the entire population (Czeke, 1938; Dessewffy, 1887; Kornis, 1927; Szabad, 1990).

Many nobles recognised the advantages of public schools, which some of them no longer attended only as private pupils. However, the majority held on to a separation from the rest of society. We must mention Aurél Dessewffy, who considered the national education of the young generation as a prerequisite for the future of the political and social importance of the aristocracy. He saw the role of his aristocratic contemporaries as leading by example, passing on education to the rest of the people, promoting the national language and the nationality question. However, the nobles were strongly divided on the question of national spirit. Their more progressive representatives recognised the need to profess their nationhood and to take an active part in public affairs, which had been inconceivable without a revival of the national language and Hungarian customs (Dessewffy, 1887; Széchenyi, 1934; Virág, 2013).

Looking at the career paths of the aristocrats, we can see that most of them (42.5%) held high public offices in central government bodies. 17% of the nobles were active in the counties, which did not mean, however, that they could not later attain high state dignities. One in five aristocrats (19%) chose the military profession, although with the exception of the Baron Jósika and Splény families, no military families can be traced back several generations. Only 7% worked as diplomats. Fifteen percent of the nobles were artists (writers, poets, composers, sculptors), eight nobles (less than 1%) worked as publicists or economists, and two each chose a technical profession or embarked on a career as historians. Among the geologists and mathematicians we found one nobleman each. Only about 7% retired to their estates after completing their studies to focus on administrative tasks (Virág, 2013).

As for the role of the upper classes in the first half of the 19th century, a considerable number of them were actively involved in various areas of public life. Their political activity was most pronounced, with about a third of them actively involved in politics. In the fields of science and art, about a quarter of the overlords made significant contributions, which earned them a place among the exclusive members of the Academy, but also in the fields of industry, transport and agriculture they championed progress with their initiatives and innovations. In equal measure, they assumed a patronage role by providing considerable funding for the promotion of art, science, entertainment and culture, as well as for the creation of cultural and educational institutions. I assumed that while many nobles were involved in education and culture, this activity was limited to certain families (Virág, 2013).

SUMMARY

The study presented the peculiarities of home education among the nobility, addressing how the political, social and intellectual challenges and changes of the first half of the 19th century affected private education, as Hungary was also marked by the awakening of national consciousness.

The objective, economic reason for the aristocrats' commitment may lie in the realisation that the modernisation of the economy, while a self-interest, is also part of the inexorable



bourgeois transformation sweeping the entire country. In the course of this transformation, the aristocracy insisted on retaining its leading position. Whether the nobles saw greater opportunities for this at the Viennese court or in the ranks of the bourgeois-liberal opposition depended on their chances of participating in economic modernisation, on regional and family traditions, but above all on the individual attitude of each person. However, there were some representatives of this group who became sincere followers of the liberal thought and ideals of the time and who in their personal relationships and lifestyle distanced themselves from their class and moved towards a kind of bourgeois intellectual way of life.

If one sees one of the main tasks of the aristocracy as being to create culture, then the Hungarian aristocracy - even if not to the same extent - was definitely striving to fulfil this task, not only as an end in itself, but by using its wealth to promote national progress and culture. Of course, one must not forget the considerable proportion of nobles who, although aware of the opportunities and perhaps also the responsibility that resulted from their political, economic and social superiority, were only concerned with asserting their own interests and maintaining their position.

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- P 95 bundle 3: manuscripts, mainly by József Dessewffy, study notebooks.
- P 624 bundle 1: Lunkányi János
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- P 654 18. d. Item 39: Documents by László Teleki (1811–1861), letters addressed to him.



- P 1059 bundle 4 item 5: Documents on Béla Splényi's studies in Selmecbánya (Banská Štiavnica) and his membership of the Kőrmöc (Kremnica) Municipal Parliament (1842–1847).
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