**THE STRUGGLE AND PERSEVERANCE OF A NOBLEWOMAN**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Edit Fabó1\* | | |
| 1Institute of Hungarian Research, Budapest, Hungary. | | |
| \* Edit Fabó – [dr.fabo.edit@gmail.com](mailto:dr.fabo.edit@gmail.com) | | |
| Received:  DOI:  Category: |  | |

**ABSTRACT**

Countess Ilona Zrínyi is one of the most well-known and venerable figures in Hungarian history. Descended from a prestigious noble family, she became the wife of Ferenc Rákóczi I and after his death Imre Thököly, Prince of Transylvania. Her life was marked by the fact that royal Hungary, led by the Habsburgs, was at that time repelling the Ottoman Empire, and the Principality of Transylvania, which was regarded as an eastern continuation of the Kingdom of Hungary, was under the latter’s jurisdiction, as the Treaty of Nagyvárad in 1538 only separated its government from the royal part of the country, without separating it from it. The Habsburg advance was accompanied in some parts of the country by an even stronger anti-Habsburg sentiment than the antipathy towards the Turks. The princess, on behalf of her Turkish vassal husband, successfully defended the castle of Munkács against the imperial troops for a long time, but was finally forced to surrender it only by persuasion. Under the terms of the agreement, she went to Vienna, where she was separated from her children, and then followed her husband into Turkish exile. Countess Ilona Zrínyi would have had a good life, given her wealth and rank, but in the violent power games of history she bore the hardships with courage and dignity, and stood by her loved ones, her country and her principles. The first scholarly biography was published in the second half of the 19th century, in which the countess, who stood her ground even in hardship, was portrayed as a model of patriotism, educated femininity and a faithful wife. This assessment of the princess’s life became commonplace and was confirmed by the press of the time, including the *Vasárnapi Ujság*.

**Keywords**: power, violence, morality, heroism, femininity, family, defence, social history, press history, historiography

# 1. Introduction

This study explores the 19th century interpretation of the memory of Countess Ilona Zrínyi through the publications of the *Vasárnapi Ujság*, the most popular cultural newspaper of the time. For a more complete intellectual picture of the period, the analysis took into account the reports of another literary daily, the *Fővárosi Lapok*, which also reacted to public events, as well as some articles from the history journal *Századok*.

Throughout her life of hardship, the princess attempted to maintain her independence and dignity by loyalty, compromise and resistance to the pressure of royal power, while educating and protecting her children, her spouses – especially her second husband – and through them, and supporting the cause of self-determination with self-sacrificing perseverance. The countess’s conduct was in fact a response to and reflection of the excessive, i.e. dubious legitimacy of the violence of power, which at the same time attested to and enhanced the moral justification of her actions, and thus set her on the (bitter) path to heroism and role model status, weakening the authority of power (Arendt, 2011, p. 192, p. 195; Navarro Díaz and Romeno-Moreno, 2016, pp. 68–69). In principle, her options were limited by her femininity (Russell, 1938, pp. 188–189), but as a lady of high rank, she had more room for manoeuvre than a woman of common rank could enjoy in her traditional feminine role. Her life path, seen as a role model, displays a wide range of heroic virtues and values, which can be idealised according to the needs of posterity.

The revival of the memory of the 17th-century countess came in the 19th century, when she emerged as a role model of the educated, beautiful, courageous and patriotic woman, wife and mother, because according to the mainstream liberal view of the period, pro-freedom was synonymous with pro-independence (the country’s independence), and progress, modernisation, or civilisation, was conceived as a continuation of the historical past (Coing, 1996, pp. 41–52). The following analysis sheds light on attitudes of resistance to the violence of power with a damaged morality, which aimed at balancing and transcending the damaged moral values, and shows the development of a heroic canon based on this behaviour.

The history of the reception of the countess’s memory in the 19th century mainly relies on some of the most important popular newspapers of the period (*Vasárnapi Ujság, Fővárosi Lapok*). All publications that mentioned Ilona Zrínyi’s name in some context, whether it was a short news report or a longer article, were included in the selection. This amounts to 74 publications from the 1820s to 1903, of which 68 made reference to her ordeal (see violence). The analysis therefore concentrates on these 68 articles by interpreting them in the context of the intentions, social events and aspirations of the opinion-makers of the time. The womanhood of Ilona Zrínyi explicitly motivated the politics of memory, in which traditional female roles were valorised, but for reasons of space, a detailed discussion of the impact of the nineteenth-century role expansions on model-building is omitted. However, a sketched biography of the princess is indispensable to enable the wider world to understand the later, nineteenth-century narrative about her. The presentation of the politics of memory in the modern era also requires an account of the antecedents, because the opinion-makers had to take account of the content of the various printed products (literary works, popular folk school textbooks, journals) of the 18th and early 19th centuries that were reaching the general public in increasingly large numbers.

# 2.1. A woman’s life burdened with hardship

Countess Ilona Zrínyi was born in Podbrest (Drávaszilas) in March 1643[[1]](#endnote-1) into a Croatian noble family of Bans (governors), whose previous generations had sacrificed themselves to defend their estates, Croatia, Hungary – Europe – against the Ottoman Empire at a time when the historic Kingdom of Hungary was being divided into several parts. The struggle was exacerbated by the insecurity caused by divided power interests, which was compounded by Habsburg excesses and the limited room for manoeuvre of Transylvania and the Felvidék (Upper Hungary) under the Ottoman rule, which inevitably led to renewed factional infighting, conspiracies and intrigues. The Habsburgs fought on two fronts: in the East they had to fight off the Ottoman Empire, while in the West they were rivalled by European kingdoms, especially France. After the victorious battle of Szentgotthárd on 10 August 1664, the armistice (“Peace of Vasvár”), signed near Vasvár, gave two counties to royal Hungary, destroyed Zrínyiújvár to please the Turks who could retain their existing conquests, to the detriment and disappointment of the Hungarians, who expected the court in Vienna to continue the fight against the Turks. The Hungarian legal system of the time included the right of resistance, in case the ruler acted to the detriment of his people (Luhmann, 1994, pp. 161–170). At the Diet of 1687, the orders renounced this right. The Habsburgs were able to turn their attention to the Western European arena, but they used force to crush the “rebellious” organisations and the anti-Habsburg Kuruc movement of the Hungarians who were suffering injustice.

The ancestors and relatives of the countess could not exclude themselves from the power games of the time. In the straitened situation of life, the common interest bonded the family members even more, and the spouses became each other’s most devoted allies. Moreover, as the noble families administered territories over large parts of the country, they had many links with the cultural, economic and political centres of almost all Europe, especially France. In this light, it is easier to understand the French sympathies towards the Hungarians and the fact that their ancestors left behind an outstanding cultural and literary legacy, the most famous of which is the epic poem *Szigeti veszedelem* (The Peril of Sziget) (1651) by Count Miklós Zrínyi (1620–1664) or the pamphlet *Az török áfium ellen való orvosság* (An Antidote to the Turkish Poison) (1661). In 1666, Ilona Zrínyi married Ferenc Rákóczi I (1645–1676), Prince of Transylvania, and moved from Croatia to the northern part of Transylvania, to Munkács. The marriage resulted in two children, Julianna Rákóczi (1672–1717) and Ferenc Rákóczi II (1676–1735), who later became Prince of Hungary.

From the 1670s onwards, a series of misfortunes blighted the life of the Transylvanian prince’s wife. Her father, Count Péter Zrínyi (1621–1671), was tried by the Habsburgs for conspiracy and executed in 1671, and their property was confiscated. Ilona Zrínyi’s younger brother János (1650–1703) was stripped of his family name, conscripted as a soldier and eventually imprisoned; her two sisters Judit Petronella (1652–1699) and Aurora Veronika (1658–1735) were forced to become nuns. In addition, György Rákóczy I and Ilona Zrínyi, who were loyal to the Viennese court and refrained from active conspiracy, were fined so heavily that the Rákóczi family had to resort to borrowing. On hearing of the shocking events, his deeply anti-Habsburg mother, Catherine Frangepán (1625–1673), suffered a mental breakdown and died soon afterwards. As a member of the House of Rákóczi, the noblewoman could not live a peaceful family life for long either, as her husband died unexpectedly, young, in 1676, and she had to retain custody of her children, a right which her husband had previously offered to the Habsburg court as a sign of his loyalty. The young Catholic widow, however, met the handsome and aspiring Count Imre Thököly (1657–1705), a Protestant and a Kuruc leader of the movement for independence from the Habsburgs. As a result of the mutual love that grew between the two, Countess Ilona Zrínyi married for the second time in 1682.

The marriage had also received the prior blessing of the Viennese court. Despite this, Thököly entered into an alliance with the Ottoman Porte, and in 1683 the short-lived Principality of Upper Hungary was established. The prince of the new province was accused by the Habsburgs of disloyalty, but the Turks did not trust him either, so he was arrested in 1685, but was released in 1686 in Transylvania, where he fought on behalf of the Porte, and was appointed prince of Transylvania in 1690. However, after Thököly’s capture in 1685, his wife, Countess Ilona Zrínyi, defended the castle of Munkács alone for almost three years, and the imperial troops were unable to take it. The princess, claiming to be a mother protecting her children and a helpless woman, tried to intervene with the king to prevent the war, but to no avail. Even during the siege of the castle, she did her utmost to foster family life, to educate her children and to keep the castle's inhabitants together. The countess personally supervised the children's daily routine and their education, but she also gave them the opportunity to celebrate holidays and gave aid to those in need. Of course, for the young Ferenc Rákóczi II, military activities were often more exciting than learning, so he had to be pushed back more vigorously to follow the curriculum. And in spite of all this, she maintained her international contacts.

The news of the prolonged siege of the fortress of Munkács spread throughout Europe, to the glory of the defending princess. “The Viennese correspondent of the *Mercure historique et politique* in the Netherlands wrote of the Lady of Munkács in the context of world history: ‘If we were in the time of the ancient Romans, no doubt the emperor would be granted a great march of triumph [...] for his conquests. [...] But since we live today in a more enlightened century and one in which the mind is more sophisticated, we must believe that when the Princess Ragoczki arrived in Vienna it was not so much the emperor as this noble woman who would have triumphed [...] if anyone, it is now this princess who triumphs, for it is a thousand times more glorious to preserve our courage in adversity...than to win battles, to conquer castles [...]’.” (R. Várkonyi, 2008, pp. 200–202)

They could only persuade Ilona Zrínyi to surrender Munkács, who was able to negotiate relatively favourable terms. Under the agreement, the castle defenders were allowed to leave with impunity, but the countess and her children had to go to Vienna in January 1688, where, contrary to the agreement, she was separated from her children and never saw them again. The emperor had designated the countess’s “residence” in the Orsolya convent, and she was in fact held hostage. “In a detailed report written on their arrival, Federico Cornaro,[[2]](#endnote-2) the Venetian envoy to Vienna, praised Ilona Zrínyi’s fortitude and perseverance, and said that she had been brought to Vienna ‘as a prisoner rather than free’.” (R. Várkonyi, 2008, p. 202) “In Vienna the pamphlet war continued around her. An unknown author, using the name of the famous writer Le Noble,[[3]](#endnote-3) mocks Thököly, and hits on Ilona Zrínyi when he writes that Thököly wanted to get the crown ‘because his wife was above him in rank’. Now his wife had retired to the convent of the nuns of the Orsolya order and was ‘licking her two little bear cubs so that she could educate them as princes and so that they could bear a majestic title like their father, leaving the poor count’. Jean Leclerc,[[4]](#endnote-4) the eminent French Huguenot writer and philosopher, friend of John Locke,[[5]](#endnote-5) published a detailed biography of Thököly. The second edition of the book was widely distributed, and its English translation was also profitable. This famous book described the siege of Munkács in detail and praised with rapture the courage of the princess defending the castle.” (R. Várkonyi, 2008, p. 204)

The war between the Habsburgs and the Turks ended with the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699, which included the exile of Thököly to the Ottoman Empire. The prince requested that his wife be allowed to join him in Constantinople as part of a prisoner exchange, which was granted, and from there they eventually moved to Nicomedia. The countess tried to create a joyful atmosphere in order to cheer up her companion and the people around her and to keep their spirits up in the isolation of increasingly modest living conditions.

Countess Ilona Zrínyi was a beautiful and clever woman, as well as an excellent diplomat, and she did not lose her dignity in her predicament, as her letter to the Grand Vizier proves: “It is evident before God and the world, I say, that my husband considered himself king in his own country, and I was also queen. For three years I defended and held the castle of Munkács as a pasha against the German enemy in the sight of the world [...] By the will of God and the loyalty of the Turkish nation we lost everything we had; what remained of us, in the service of the Sultan, holding a royal gate and half an army at the ends, we lost everything we had; [...] My husband gathered and held armies with the fermans, and their supply was promised: and I, being a woman-man, shall pay out of mine own? [...] for the honour of the mighty emperor and the Turkish nation, let us therefore be provided for in such a way that it may be known to other nations [...]”. (R. Várkonyi, 2008, p. 244)

Countess Ilona Zrínyi was extraordinary in life and in death. After her death on 18 February 1703, she was laid to rest on 10 March in the Jesuit church on the outskirts of Galata, Constantinople.

# 2.2. Awakening memory

The nineteenth-century readership of newspapers was informed of the disturbance of the tomb of the princess whose memory represented the spirit of independence of the Hungarians and at the same time their anti-Habsburgism.

In the summer of 1839, during renovation work, the marble stone beneath the altar of St. Anne had to be moved, and on 21 June the double coffin was opened, in which the body laid in a Dominican nun’s habit, in a desiccated state, but intact, remained. After the miracle was discovered, the body was barely rescued, as superstitious locals dismantled the remains as relics. Baron Bartholomäus von Stürmer (1787–1863), the Austrian Imperial Ambassador at the time, reported on the incident, and the news was also published in Hungarian-language newspapers of the time.[[6]](#endnote-6) The *Vasárnapi Ujság* repeated the report decades later, accompanied by a Hungarian translation of the epitaph: “Here lies that woman of firm character and heroic spirit, the glory of her gender and her century, the majestic Ilona Zrinyi, the last flower of the Zrinyi and Frangepán families, the wife of Prince Tökölyi and formerly of Prince Rákóczy, and a worthy companion of both. Her name is famous among the Croats, Transylvanians, Hungarians and Szeklers, and even more famous throughout the world for her outstanding deeds, she endured the various vicissitudes of fate with equal fortitude, worthy of her fortune, she gave her strong soul, full of Christian piety and military glory, back to the Lord, in the field of flowers, in Nicodemia, near the Bythine Bay, in the 60th year of her redemption, 1703, on the 18th of February, in the 60th year of her life.”[[7]](#endnote-7) The report was published in the issue of the weekly newspaper, whose front page, for the sake of Heckenast publishing house, which also published history books and the journal, featured the biography and portrait of the historian Mihály Horváth (1809–1878), who published the first scholarly biography of the countess a few years later.[[8]](#endnote-8) The countess’s memory, though faded, has not vanished from the historical memory,[[9]](#endnote-9) not only because she herself was a member of a family of historical importance, but also because the love story of her second marriage has been preserved in a well-known literary work.

# 2.3. The paths of memory to the first synoptic biography

István Gyöngyösi (1629–1704), a writer and member of the Hungarian aristocracy of the 17th century, became the most popular poet of the 18th century. Gyöngyösi, although he was a contemporary witness to the infatuation of Countess Ilona Zrínyi and Count Imre Thököly, concealed the identity of his heroes through the idealising Baroque symbolism of his idealised song of aristocratic love. The *Palinodia (Sorrowful Nymfa)*, written in 1681, was published in Pozsony in 1695 (Demeter, 2014, p. 269), and a simpler version of the text, written for the marriage ceremony, *Thököly Imre és Zrínyi Ilona házasága* (The Marriage of Imre Thököly and Ilona Zrínyi) (1683), was found later (Jankovics and Nyerges, 2000, pp. 141–156). The poem *Palinódia tristis Hungariae*, i.e., *azaz a Maga gyámoltalanságát kesergő és abban az kardos Griffnek szárnya alá folyamodó Nimfa, amellyel Magyarország mostani állapotját példázza* (The Nimfa, lamenting its own helplessness and resorting to the wing of the sword-wielding Griff, illustrating the present state of Hungary), was written during the Diet of Sopron, convened in 1681, on the happy occasion that the contentious issues could finally be clarified. Because of its political allusions, the poem is, according to literary history, “[...] an expression of the fervour taken from the situations or the subject, the bright characteristics of the protagonists, a declaration of patriotic feelings, always fiery and patriotic, pondering on the glory of the country’s past and lamenting the present state of affairs – in his always admired fervent poems: qualities which [...] show Gyöngyösi’s poetic power in its full light” (Jankovics and Nyerges, 2000, p. 146). The work was published in 1743, 1763, 1771, 1775 and in 1789, and a shorter version was selected by András Dugonics (1740–1818) as one of Gyöngyösi’s surviving poems in 1796 (pp. 129–143).

The organised arena of historical legacy is education. The history of Hungarian pedagogy records that “from the middle of the 18th century, the teaching of history became widespread in Hungarian secondary schools” (Szebenyi, 1999, p. 129). The grammar schools adopted the structure and method of the most popular textbooks of their time and denomination, which sought to develop a general view of history – of Creation and the Earth. In Hungary, the first textbook (*Rudimenta Historica*), which included 22 pages of Hungarian history, was published in 1735 (Mészáros, 1981, pp. 467–468). After these precedents, a real breakthrough came in 1771 with the introduction of a Hungarian-language elementary school textbook *Hármas Kis Tükör* (Triple Small Mirrors) by István Losontzi Mányoki (1704/1709–1780), which became so popular that it had at least 73 editions by 1854 (Katona, 2010, p. 4). The textbook mentioned only two periods in Countess Ilona Zrínyi’s life, both in connection with her family members, namely her marriage to Ferenc Rákóczi I (1645–1676) ([Mányoki] Losontzi, 1773, p. 183) and her forced stay in Vienna beginning in 1688 after the surrender of Munkács Castle, and her return to her second husband, Count Imre Thököly ([Mányoki] Losontzi, 1773, p. 189–190). Among the descriptions of the fortunes of war and the changing balance of power, it is important to note that the Rákóczi family was “a princely house with many treasures” ([Mányoki] Losontzi, 1773, p. 184).

The public opinion that shaped the public thinking and public taste of the Hungarian society in the course of embourgeoisement was not only represented by the print media, but the institutions of entertaining culture (see theatres, museums, galleries) also influenced the value orientation of the audience by the condensed representation of ideal formations or ideal losses.

During the time of authoritarian rule, the hidden message of all historical representations kept hope alive and encouraged further perseverance (Arendt, 2011, p. 195). The few examples from the 1860s focusing on the figure of Countess Ilona Zrínyi attest to this. In 1861, the actor Károly Mártonffy (1832–1889) wrote to enlighten his profession about the realities of the past,[[10]](#endnote-10) in the light of the increasing popularity of historical works, and mentioned Countess Ilona Zrínyi among the brave heroines.[[11]](#endnote-11) In May of the same year, the National Theatre staged the drama *II. Rákóczi Ferenc fogsága* (The Captivity of Ferenc Rákóczi II) by Ede Szigligeti (1814–1878), and the character of Ilona Zrínyi also appeared in the sold-out play.[[12]](#endnote-12) Later, the journalist Elek Sárváry (1834–1896) published his collection of stories entitled *Történelmi képek* (Historical Pictures), the cover of which was decorated with a picture of Ilona Zrínyi,[[13]](#endnote-13) and Iván Nagy (1824–1898) published the diary of János Komáromi (16??–1711), secretary to Count Imre Thököly.[[14]](#endnote-14) Viktor Madarász (1830–1917) sent several of his paintings to the 1861 World Exhibition in Paris, and his work *Ilona Zrínyi* won the gold medal and the accompanying title of “historical painter”.[[15]](#endnote-15)

At one of the National Theatre’s charity gala evenings in 1861, Róza Laborfalvi Jókai (1817–1886) recited János Garay’s (1812–1853) poem *Ilona Zrínyi*, which conveyed the greatness of the countess by listing in metaphors the trials and tribulations that had befallen her and her family for generations.[[16]](#endnote-16) Róza Laborfalvi was the most famous physical portrayal of the princess, and her role as the heroine was considered one of the actress’s most memorable performances.[[17]](#endnote-17) “With her, Ilona Zrinyi, Gertrud, Anna Bornemisza and other glorious ladies of the old Hungarian history resurrected on our stage. [...] Her beautiful appearance, her southern stature, her noble movements, the serious dignified look of her face, and her supple varied voice, which is capable of expressing both tender emotions and the highest female passions, make her *pure*, beautiful manner of speaking one of the most touching *stage* performances.”[[18]](#endnote-18) The credibility of Róza Laborfalvi’s portrayal of Ilona Zrínyi was only enhanced by the fact that in her own life she was the artistic equal and supportive partner of the greatest contemporary literary master, Mór Jókai (1825–1904), and that both spouses were committed to the independence and greatness of their country. The struggling life of the princess also captured the imagination of writers, since even beyond the historical background, it provided ample scope for an emotional romantic plot. One such narrative[[19]](#endnote-19) was published by *Fővárosi Lapok*, which, unlike *Vasárnapi Ujság*, focused on literary life.

In 1865, a manuscript source was found which recalled an important period of the siege of Munkács Castle, when Ilona Zrínyi, the defender of the castle, was greeted on her name day on 22 May 1686 by her children, Count Ferenc Rákóczi and his sister Julianna, who recited a long poem in her praise. Kálmán Thaly (1839–1909) presented this valuable document to the readers in the pages of the *Vasárnapi Ujság* with the following introduction: “'The greatest woman of Hungary: the admirable ideal of the most elevated souls, noble hearts, the most glorious patriotic women, the most devout fellow believers, the most loving mothers, the most steadfast character of a weak woman, the most sacred ideal of self-sacrifice – *Ilona Zrinyi*! [...] I want to bring to light a soul-stirring picture, a touching testimony of this. Let us see what the heroic Ilona Zrinyi was like as a mother, just as she was giving the most glorious tests of her heroism!”[[20]](#endnote-20) Thaly briefly sketches the background of the events, summarizes the siege of Munkács, and highlights the gesture of maternal care and filial love, and then delivers the poem, which the celebrant herself received with emotion. “May God never give a mother better children than they have had up to this time, for I have never known anything but true love and obedience to me, no matter how much the circumstances have changed; I have taken the greatest delight in them. They were in true brotherly love to one another; if they continue to be with me and my sweet husband (meaning Tökölyi), they shall remain in it: they shall receive reward from us, blessing from God, and shall be a good example to the children of the world.”[[21]](#endnote-21) Thaly concludes by describing the path of the manuscript, and then points out that further results could be expected from the research of Iván Nagy (1824–1898). The noblewoman – although with an incorrect year of age – was included among the historical figures who had reached old age.[[22]](#endnote-22) In 1866, the *Vasárnapi Ujság* published a biography of Count Imre Thököly, and the countess was mentioned only once as his wife.[[23]](#endnote-23)

In 1867, the parliamentary debate on the legislative provisions surrounding the Compromise began. At that time, the *Vasárnapi Ujság* published on the front page of the first issue of the year the illustrated biography of Ferenc Rákóczi,[[24]](#endnote-24) stressed, with regard to the female ancestors, that the orphan, “richly endowed with all spiritual and physical talents, was brought up by his grandmother, Zsófia Báthory, and his mother Ilona Zrinyi, princesses [...] who already in his adolescent youth had a manly maturity, in whose soul the words and principles of his glorious mother Ilona Zrinyi were indelibly engraved [... ] [and at the end of his life] his ashes were, at his own request, placed in a tomb with the earthly remains of his glorious mother, Ilona Zrinyi, in the church of Constantinople in Galata [...]”.[[25]](#endnote-25) Miklós Soós (1835–1875) commemorated the Turkish captivity of Count Imre Thököly with a poem, in which his wife also appeared.[[26]](#endnote-26) Károly Reményi (1837–1896), a lawyer, visiting the tomb of Count Richard Guyon (1813–1856) in Turkey enumerated the graves of all those who rest on the shores of the Bosphorus, just like that of Countess Ilona Zrínyi.[[27]](#endnote-27) Then, at the end of the year, the weekly announced the discovery of Ferenc Rákóczi II’s cradle, on which they discovered the engraved initials of his parents’ names.[[28]](#endnote-28)

# 2.4. Historical evaluation

However, comprehensive historical literature in Hungarian has yet to be published in the Hungarian language. The reform efforts of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were influenced by a liberal conception that sought to emulate the society and economy of Western European countries. In Hungary, a process called embourgeoisement was expected to bring about changes through the emergence of a middle class, representing the nation, with a broad knowledge base, a desire for cultural development, an ethical sense of morality, and a self-conscious and purposeful confidence in accordance with the needs and future of the community. This required modernising the various fields of knowledge, including history. An approach that maintained the historical continuity rejected the exaggerated romanticism of the nobility and worked towards writing a more objective, detailed synthesis that explored and evaluated causes and contexts (R. Várkonyi, 1973, pp. 186–187).

Mihály Horváth, one of the most prominent and popular founders of the positivist movement, published *A magyarok története* (The History of the Hungarians) several times in the 1840s, initially for students of the humanities and only later for the general public. The historian’s overview of Countess Ilona Zrínyi also focused on some of the more characteristic circumstances: her engagement to her first husband, which was explained as part of her anti-Habsburg sentiments (Horváth, 1844, p. 287), her tenacious defence of Munkács and its surrender (Horváth, 1844, p. 334, pp. 347–348), and finally the fact that her son, Ferenc Rákóczi II, was buried next to her in Constantinople (Horváth, 1844, p. 412). The scholar’s work later published in an abridged edition shared more or less the same information about the countess (Horváth, 1862, p. 391, 404, 413). Mihály Horváth, who had played a leading role in the 1848–1849 War of Independence, was forced into exile, but was allowed to return home after winning a pardon in 1866.

Towards the end of his career, the elderly historian turned to historical biographical monographs in order to present an era through the lives of outstanding personalities. His book on Countess Ilona Zrínyi, published in 1869, has been described as one of his “most beautiful” works (Pamlényi, 1989, p. 70). Mihály Horváth gave a taste of his new volume in a reading for a more than one-hour to an educated audience at the Kisfaludy Society’s general meeting on 14 February 1869.[[29]](#endnote-29) The completion,[[30]](#endnote-30) expected publication[[31]](#endnote-31) and actual appearance of the work[[32]](#endnote-32) was also announced by the journal of academic history,[[33]](#endnote-33) which was then in its third volume. The editorial staff of the academic journal particularly recommended this ornate, illustrated publication, which was also suitable for women’s tastes, to ladies in order to encourage them to take a wider interest in the history of the subject, which was also instructive for them.[[34]](#endnote-34) An influential colleague, Gyula Pauler (1841–1903), who reviewed the book, praised the unbiased author’s enjoyable and readable style. The historian acknowledged that the noblewoman, who stood her ground in a manner worthy of a man, was a lovable, “true, almost ideal woman”, because in his opinion, a strong character could only prevail at the expense of femininity, but the heroine, in her role as a wife, was a true role model for “Hungarian patriotic young ladies”, and then quoted the lines expressing affection: “Let not my God grant me [...] that I may be able to live in any safe fortress or place without my sweet husband. I will not desire it, but either life or death: neither fear nor affliction shall keep me from his grace. But let not your grace forsake me; I am ready to go, even if on foot, to hear him be somewhere. What a great thing true love was in all times!” (Pauler, 1869, pp. 397–399).

To complete the story of the biography of the countess, the historian, who also served as a Catholic pastor, was a family man, and also experienced husbandly and fatherly joys and sorrows. During his exile, he had no ecclesiastical duties, and in 1864 he entered into a civil marriage with Marie Michelle Voignoux (1834–1904), who bore him five children, a marriage which was not recognised by the Church, although he was allowed to make a will as a bishop (Márki, 1917). In the foreword to the book, Horváth makes no secret of his historical motivation to set an example: “I want to sketch the biography of a woman whose tragic misfortunes, as well as her personal qualities, expressed in prosperity and adversity, arouse a warm interest in our hearts [... ] And yet, far stronger than the feeling of pity which so much misfortune may inspire, it is admiration, respect and love that we feel for this glorious woman, for the greatness of her soul, the richness and beauty of her character, and not least for the sublimity of her aims and ambitions, and the virtues which she manifested in her struggles with adversity. [...]” (Horváth, 1869, pp. 1–2). This monograph, which is undoubtedly respectful and sympathetic, includes a picture of the countess at the beginning and photographs of some of her letters in her own handwriting at the end.

Based on the book, the literary scholar Károly Szász (1829–1905) wrote a longer biography of Countess Ilona Zrínyi for the *Vasárnapi Ujság*, adopting the thesis of Mihály Horváth’s exemplary work on the countess’s conjugal dignity and fidelity, and on her unbroken Christian sacrifice and serenity: “This name is the personification of the most sublime female, maternal and daughterly virtue in our history. Born in high rank, raised still higher by marriage, yet constantly pursued by the vicissitudes of fate, and assailed in her most sacred emotions; enjoying her few fortunate days with such noble serenity and moderation, bearing the blows of adversity with such great spirit, manly courage and Christian self-surrender, in good and bad fortune Ilona Zrinyi stands before us as a specimen of noble womanhood and feminine majesty.”[[35]](#endnote-35) This work was followed by a poem by Mihály Tompa (1817–1868), written in 1861, entitled *Zrínyi Ilona keserve* (The woes of Ilona Zrínyi).[[36]](#endnote-36) The *Vasárnapi Ujság* published a depiction of the house in Bors where Ilona Zrínyi gave birth to Ferenc Rákóczi II.[[37]](#endnote-37)

# 2.5. The impact of the biography

The princess became an indisputable figure in the pantheon of women in bourgeois historiography. Readers of the *Vasárnapi Ujság* may have read about how Ilona Zrínyi’s envoys sat at the table of the royal delegates at the 1682 Diet in Sopron,[[38]](#endnote-38) and later learned that the Minister of Religion and Public Education commissioned Miklós Izsó (1831–1875) to create the busts of Ilona Zrínyi and Ferenc Rákóczi II,[[39]](#endnote-39) which were on display two years later.[[40]](#endnote-40) Mihály Zsilinszky (1838–1925), a history teacher, included the countess in his album of historical biographies and character sketches entitled *Magyar hölgyek* (Hungarian Ladies), which the author compiled for Hungarian mothers and daughters “with the aim of awakening and cultivating noble female and daughterly feelings”.[[41]](#endnote-41)

The later publications carried forward the assessment of the life path laid down by Mihály Horváth, as it can be read in a collection of 1886 for young people:[[42]](#endnote-42) “A character is best and most vividly revealed to us by the crisis situations of life. This is the acid test. [...] The master of creation, man, believes that he alone has the privilege, the right and the power to defy his destiny, to confront the hostile powers and to denounce fate [...] but, contrary to this presumptuous conception, history and life teach us otherwise. In situations of real crisis, the weak woman is stronger than the man. [...] Here, [...] is the career of Ilona Zrinyi. She combines great spirit and great heart with the allure of physical charm. The high social position to which her birth and her marital relations had brought her seemed to ensure her undisturbed happiness, although this was the real source of her misfortunes from her early youth to her grave. The rank of princess, the glittering splendour, the opulence and comfort, were replaced by the miseries of exile, the privations of poverty, and the longings for a lost country, a wiped-out clan, a family torn from its bosom. What a fall! what a great, what a terrible turn! [...] And yet, [...] we are seized with a fiercer awe of the admiration with which we must accompany the steps of this great, this heroic soul. [...] The tragedy of her fate is astonishing, but her proud conduct in the midst of so much misfortune is a veritable apotheosis [...].”[[43]](#endnote-43) “Here is the life of a true woman, a true mother, an exemplary patriotic woman, truly worthy of her gender and her century, indeed of all centuries. [...].”[[44]](#endnote-44) At the Historical Exhibition held between 15 August and 1 September 1886 to mark the bicentenary of the reconquest of Buda from the Turks, the great heroines of the past were depicted in life-size pictures, and Ilona Zrínyi’s clothing was created according to a painting of her.[[45]](#endnote-45)

Later – without the need for completeness – the figure of Countess Ilona Zrínyi usually appeared in connection with her son, Ferenc Rákóczi II and her second husband. In the former case, she was referred to mainly as a caring mother,[[46]](#endnote-46) in the latter as a loyal and faithful companion supporting her husband,[[47]](#endnote-47) but it was also implied that the marriage was clearly advantageous to Thököly in both rank and wealth.[[48]](#endnote-48) Of particular interest was the emergence and evaluation of a rarity of historical data and sources.[[49]](#endnote-49) The princess’s greatest single achievement was undoubtedly the defence of the castle of Munkács, which became a subject of art,[[50]](#endnote-50) science[[51]](#endnote-51) and heritage conservation[[52]](#endnote-52).

**2.6. Viewed from abroad**

Given the international reputation the countess once enjoyed, it is particularly remarkable how the assessment of posterity was interpreted by a contemporary 19th-century French eyewitness to the French audience – some of whom may have raised their heads at hearing the name of Ilona Zrínyi, a name they too knew. “The Hungarian woman, besides the natural self-sacrifice which is the universal property of woman, is at the same time similar to the men of the nation in her aspiration to an independent and free way of life. [...] In their dwellings [...] Some paintings or engravings, portraits of great patriots in general, or scenes from national history, notably the heroic act of Ilona Zrinyi, who led the envoys who called for the surrender of the castle of Munkács with a burning torch to the gunpowder tower, letting them know that she would rather blow up the castle than surrender. [...] patriotism overrides all other feelings among their ladies, and it has created many heroines among them. [...].”[[53]](#endnote-53) The British writer and artist Ellen Creathorn Clayton (1834–1900) described the struggles of the countess in her book on the warrior heroines of history, published in London in 1879 (pp. 218–220).

The motif of the family-loving patriotic woman has become a permanent epithet of Hungarian women. Towards the end of the century, the journalist Adolf Kohut (1848–1917) summarised the qualities of Hungarian women for the Berlin *Familienblatt* as follows: “After describing Mária Széchy, Cecilia Rozgonyi, Ilona Zrinyi, Dorottya Kanizsai, Zsuzsanna Lorántfy, he moves on to the characterisation of modern Hungarian woman. He recounts cases relating to the nobleness of Hungarian women, he writes with enthusiasm about their beauty, their family life giving an interesting list of typical examples. The Hungarian woman, he writes, is slender in youth, a little stout in her old age, but she never loses her grace. Her fire, her passion, manifests itself mainly in her csardas dance.” [[54]](#endnote-54)

# 2.7. Tribute

In 1871, on the anniversary of the execution of Count Péter Zrínyi, the *Vasárnapi Ujság* – following another newspaper – drew attention to the fact that the resting places of the Zrínyi family were located far apart and in different places.[[55]](#endnote-55) The issue of bringing home the remains of the great figures of Hungarian history buried abroad was raised more and more frequently and received wider publicity, especially in the pages of the *Vasárnapi Ujság*.[[56]](#endnote-56)

An indispensable part of the cult that perpetuates the memory of a hero’s extraordinary or glorious deeds is the homage affirmation of the identity of values and interests (community of destiny) of later generations, of the emotional identification with the ideal to be followed, at the social (or national), group and family levels of the community. It is also a way of praising the sacrifices made, a kind of “reparation”, to show that the fate undertaken or suffered was not in vain. The weekly, therefore, published, as soon as it had the opportunity, the accounts of travellers who had visited the graves or other memorials of notable personalities linked to the homeland.[[57]](#endnote-57)

The turn of events in the past cast many of Hungary’s great figures to the East, such as Ilona Zrínyi, her second husband and son. In 1876, after a pilgrimage to their tomb, the orientalist Béla Erődi-Harrach (1846–1936) began his report this way: “In a foreign land, under foreign soil, the most glorious champions of our country’s struggle for freedom are buried. These holy ashes should rest in native soil, so that their descendants could make a pilgrimage to their graves to learn patriotism. Their graves, lying far from their homeland, are covered not with the moss of patriotic reverence but of forgetfulness, and the heart of a patriot who rarely visits them is doubly pained when he sees the simple graves in their abandoned state.”[[58]](#endnote-58) The illustrated communication gave a graphic description of the graves and the author noted that Thököly had wished to be buried in a Lutheran church in Hungary or Transylvania, but that his will had not been fulfilled. The issue has been raised in speeches in Parliament, and MPs agreed that the ashes should be buried in native soil.[[59]](#endnote-59) But by 1889, a full delegation of scientists representing the Academy had mapped out the other sources in Constantinople and the people buried there.[[60]](#endnote-60) One of the initiators of the endeavour, Kálmán Thaly, honoured the *Vasárnapi Ujság* with an illustrated account of the company’s journey to the East,[[61]](#endnote-61) and also a book written about it (Thaly, 1893). The painter Kálmán Beszédes (1839–1893), who left Trieste on 18 September 1878 on his journey to the East,[[62]](#endnote-62) contributed to the revival of the cause of homage and at the same time to its domestic settlement. Soon after his arrival in Constantinople, he visited the “holy tombs”[[63]](#endnote-63) in commemoration of the death of Ferenc Rákóczi II on 8 April 1735.

In 1903, the bicentenary year of the countess’s death, the *Vasárnapi Ujság* paid tribute to her memory with an illustrated biography.[[64]](#endnote-64) However, 1903 was also the bicentenary of the War of Independence led by Ferenc Rákóczi II, on the occasion of which posterity shed unvarnished light on the dark side of the noblewoman’s second marriage. “To the many troubles and worries, a new and even greater problem was added: the Turks began to distrust Thököly. These events confronted Ilona Zrínyi with a delicate spiritual crisis: they brought her feelings as a wife into conflict with her motherly love. Her husband wanted her to send her son, the little Ferencz Rákóczy, to the sultan’s court as a surety. The mother did not want to part with her son at any price. Thököly himself went to Nagyvárad, where he was imprisoned and the couple did not see each other for seven years.”[[65]](#endnote-65) “This marriage was a great disaster for the family’s financial situation, as the imperial government considered the princess as Thököly’s wife a rebel and persecuted her.”[[66]](#endnote-66) Between 26 July and 20 September 1903, a major exhibition of the Rákóczi heirlooms was held in Kassa,[[67]](#endnote-67) where the reburial of Countess Ilona Zrínyi and Ferenc Rákóczi II took place in 1906.[[68]](#endnote-68)

And from this point onwards, the historical memory of the monarchy – and especially of the unanimously pro-independence Hungarians – was almost entirely filled with the history of the persons (including Ilona Zrínyi and Imre Thököly), objects and events that could be associated with the anti-Habsburg struggle for freedom led by Rákóczi. Around this time, the historical and memorial interpretations – along with the arguments of acceptance and criticism – became established in public and academic circles alike.

# 3. Conclusion

To draw conclusions, the analysis here simply indicates that the 17th-century conception of the role of women was centred on the institution of marriage, i.e. the role of women was to maintain the social and economic unity of the family and to promote its advancement, and that they could fulfil these duties as wives in the role of spouses, as mothers in the upbringing of children and as housewives in household, economic and representational activities. All these requirements required erudition over and above literacy. The Enlightenment, while proclaiming the equality of men and women, left the two sexes in the space of their traditional roles. In the 19th century, at the beginning of the societal transformation of the modern age, the Hungarian reform era assigned women the task of organising the cultural spheres of the social public sphere. In the course of embourgeoisement after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, the extension of rights opened the way for independent, working women. The change subverted the previously accepted norms of traditional gender roles within the sheltered walls of the home. According to the general perception of the time, social publicity, a situation in which norms were violated, was an aggressive environment, since it was too crude and vulgar not to damage the sensitivity of women, who “lost their charm”, their integrity and moral purity, as Gyula Pauler pointed out in his review of the book on the life of Countess Ilona Zrínyi. It was also believed that women lacked the knowledge and stamina to stand their ground. In the 20th century, it seemed that women were able, with varying degrees of success, to achieve a standard-bearing balance between their private roles as wives and mothers and the professional and work-related obligations of the public sphere. By the 21st century, however, adherence to the norm was being challenged in relation to all female roles. This shift in norms led to a resurgence of domestic violence and aggression, weakening the sense of security around the institution that frames the maternal and spousal roles. This paper, however, focuses on the period in which opinion-makers, through the life of Countess Ilona Zrínyi, began to expand the room for manoeuvre of women by elevating traditional female roles.

Countess Ilona Zrínyi’s most famous deed was defending the castle of Munkács. The greatness of her life lies in the fact that she maintained her moral bearing – her dignity, she never humbled herself (Russell, 1938, pp. 188–189). The countess fulfilled the most elementary feminine roles necessary for human existence – motherhood and marriage – while at the same time she protected her homeland. The nobility of her stand against the violence of power is all the more emphasised by the fact that as a clever and beautiful woman she defended fundamental values such as the child, the father or husband, the family, the home and, in the wider context, the homeland. The authority and legitimacy of power was therefore weakened throughout, because its intention and will was enforced by the elimination of these elementary moral standards (Coing, 1996, p. 276). The heroic nature of her behaviour derived from the imbalance of power and the consistent and principled representation of the values defended. In other words, it was precisely in the role of the moral woman that she was able to turn the disadvantages of her womanhood to her advantage. The reputation of her courage and perseverance spread throughout Europe at the time. The moral grandeur of the adherence to the norms, under attack for a lifetime, was a positive counterpoint to the violence of the powers against her.

In the second half of the 19th century, the Habsburg power was forced to tolerate the Hungarian pro-independence public opinion in order to keep the monarchical, but partly separate, state structures of Austria and Hungary in operation. In their interpretation of Countess Ilona Zrínyi’s life, the predominantly liberal (pro-freedom) opinion-makers of Hungary, with limited autonomy, focused on the most essential norms mentioned above, namely the feminine, maternal and patriotic virtues. They emphasised these general values in order to make history, historical examples and the study of history attractive to the female members of the society in order to involve women in the social process of modernisation – embourgeoisement – along the values derived from the past. The thinkers of the time were aware that social change, with its major extensions of rights, could bring unforeseen difficulties, which needed to be overcome by a strengthened set of values. Contemporary scholars and the press (*Vasárnapi Ujság, Fővárosi Lapok, Századok*) found an ideal archetype of femininity and female morality in the figure of Ilona Zrínyi and communicated it to the public.

**References**

Arendt, H. (2011), “Hatalom és erőszak [Power and Violance]”, in Gulyás, G. and Széplaky, G. (Ed.s), Az árnyék helye. Tanulmányok a hatalom, a morál és az erőszak kérdéseiről [The place of the shadow. Studies on power, morality and violence.], Kalligram, Pozsony, pp. 173–196.

Coing, H. (1996), A jogfilozófia alapjai [Foundations of the philosophy of law], Transl. by Szabó, B., Osiris Kiadó, Budapest.

Demeter, Zs. (2014), Költői tradíció és könyvkiadás. Gyöngyösi István példája [Poetic tradition and publishing. The example of István Gyöngyösi], Erdélyi Múzeum Egyesület, Kolozsvár.

Jankovics, J. and Nyerges, J. (2000), Thököly Imre és Zrínyi Ilona házassága – Palinódia (Kesergő Nimfa) [The marriage of Imre Thököly and Ilona Zrínyi – Palinode (The Lamenting Nymph)], Balassi Kiadó, Budapest.

Katona, A. (2010), A magyar történelemtanítás történetéből: Kis magyar tankönyvtörténet [From the history of Hungarian history teaching: A small history of Hungarian textbooks.], Országos Pedagógiai Könyvtár és Múzeum, Budapest. <https://tanaritagozat.tortenelmitarsulat.hu/doc/Kis%20magyar%20tank%C3%B6nyvt%C3%B6rt%C3%A9net.pdf> (accessed 18 September 2024).

Luhmann, N. (1994), “Widerstandsrecht und politische Gewalt”, in Luhmann, N., Soziologische Aufklärung. 4. Bd., Westdeutscher Verlag, Opladen, pp. 161–170.

Márki, S. (1917), Horváth Mihály 1809–1878 [Mihály Horváth 1809–1878].Magyar Történelmi Társulat, Budapest. <https://mek.oszk.hu/05700/05790/html/05.htm#d1e6966> (accessed 18 September 2024).

Mészáros, I. (1981), Az iskolaügy története Magyarországon 996–1777 között [The history of school education in Hungary between 996–1777], Tankönyvkiadó, Budapest.

Navarro Díaz, L. R. and Romeno-Moreno, M. C. (2016), The concepts of power and violence in Hannah Arendt: an analysis from the point of view of communication,Pensamiento Americano, Vol. 9, No. 17, pp. 58–70. http://dx.doi.org/10.21803%2Fpenamer.9.17.359

Pamlényi, E. (1989), “Horváth Mihály [Mihály Horváth]”, in Pemlényi, E., Pályák és irányok. Historiográfiai és művelődéstörténeti tanulmányok [Paths and Directions. Studies in Historiography and Cultural History], Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, pp. 13–77.

Pezenhoffer, A. (2002), A magyar nemzet történelme. (A mohácsi vésztől napjainkig.) Történelmi apologetika [The history of the Hungarian nation. (From the Mohács disaster to the present day.) Historical apologetics]. Vol. 5, Út, Igazság, Élet Kiadója, Pilisszentlélek.

R. Várkonyi, Á. (2008), “Európa legbátrabb asszonya” [“The bravest woman in Europe”], Magyar–Török Baráti Társaság, Budapest.

R. Várkonyi, Á. (1973), Pozitivista történetszemlélet a magyar történetírásban. I. A pozitivista történetszemlélet Európában és hazai értékelése 1830–1945 [A positivist approach to history in Hungarian historiography. I. The positivist approach to history in Europe and its evaluation in Hungary 1830–1945], Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest.

Russell, B. (1938), Power: A new social analysis, Routledge, New York.

Szebenyi, P. (1990), A történelemmetodika kezdetei Magyarországon (1650–1848). Eszközök és módszerek a tantárgyi önállósodás korában [The beginnings of history methodology in Hungary (1650–1848). Tools and methods in the age of subject autonomy], Pedagógiai Szemle, 40/2, pp. 128–138.

Végh, F. (2022), “Domina Helena Zriniana [...] mortem eluctata [...] anno Salutis MDCCIII. aetatis LX. die XVII. Februarii”. Mikor és hol született Zrínyi Ilona? [“Domina Helena Zriniana [...] mortem eluctata [...] anno Salutis MDCCIII. aetatis LX. die XVII. Februarii”. When and where was Ilona Zrínyi born?], in Bagi, D., Barabás, G., Fedeles T. and Kiss, G. (Ed.s), Ruscia – Hungaria – Europa. Ünnepi kötet Font Márta professzor asszony 70. születésnapjára [Ruscia – Hungaria – Europa. Festive volume for the 70th birthday of Professor Márta Font], Kronosz Kiadó, Pécs.

**Sources**

Clayton, E. C.: (1879), Female warriors. Memorials of female valour and heroism, from mythological ages to the present era. Tinsley Brothers, London, 1879.

Endrődi, S. (1886), “Zrinyi Ilona. Született 1643., meghalt 1703. [Ilona Zrinyi. Born in 1643., died in 1703.]”, in Endrődi, S. (Ed.): Magyar hölgyek életrajzai [Biographies of Hungarian ladies],Publ. Stampfel Károly, Pozsony, Budapest, pp. [34–57.] 1–24.

Gyöngyösi, I. (1796), Gyöngyösi István költeményes maradványai [Remnants of István Gyöngyösi’s poems], Preface by Dugonics, A., Vol. 2, Landerer, Pozsony – Pest.

Horváth, M. (1844), A magyarok története [The history of the Hungarians], 3. Református Főiskola, Pápa.

Horváth, M. (1862), A magyarok története rövid előadásban [The history of the Hungarians in a short lecture], Landerer és Heckenast, Pest.

Horváth, M. (1869), Zrínyi Ilona életrajza [Biography of Ilona Zrínyi], Ráth Mór, Pest.

Komáromi, J. (1861), Magyarországi s erdélyi bújdosó fejedelem késmárki Thököly Imre secretariusának, Komáromi Jánosnak törökországi diariumja s experientiaja [The diary and experiences in Turkey of János Komáromi, secretary to Imre Thököly de Késmárk, exiled prince of Hungary and Transylvania].Közli Nagy Iván. Ráth Mór, Pest, 1861.

[Mányoki] Losontzi, I. (1773), Hármas Kis Tükör, melly I. a’ Szent Históriát, II. Magyar Országot, III. Erdély Országot, annak földével, polgári-állapatjával, és históriájával, gyenge elmékhez alkalmaztatott módon, a’ nemes tanúlóknak summásan, de világosan elö-adja és ki-mutatja [Triple Small Mirrors, which shortly but clearly explains and demonstrates I. the’ Holy History, II. the Hungarian Kingdom, III. the Transylvanian Kingdom, with its land, civil state and history, in a manner suitable for weak minds, to noble students], Nyomtattatott Landerer Mihály’ költségével, és betüivel, Pozsonyban.

Pauler, Gy. (1869), Zrínyi Ilona életrajza. Irta Horváth Mihály. Pest, 1869. Kiadja Ráth Mór. 8.-rét. 122 lap [Biography of Ilona Zrínyi. Written by Mihály Horváth. Pest, 1869. Published by Mór Ráth. Octavo. 122 pages], Századok, Vol. 3, No. 6, pp. 397–399.

Sárváry, E. (1861), Történelmi képek [Historical pictures],Sárváry Elek, Debreczen.

Századok, “Magyar vezérek kora [The age of Hungarian leaders]”, (1869), Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 135.

Századok, “Történetirodalmi újdonságok [Novelties in historical literature]”, (1869), Vol.3, No. 4, p. 274.

Századok, “Zrínyi Ilona [Ilona Zrínyi]”, (1869), Vol.3, No. 3, p. 203.

Századok, “Zrínyi Ilona élete [The life of Ilona Zrínyi]”, (1869), Vol. 3, No. 1. p. 68.

Századok, “Zrínyi Ilona Életrajza. Történelmi könyvtár [Biography of Ilona Zrínyi. Historical Library]”, (1869), Vol. 3, No. 4, p. 280.

Thaly, K. (1893), Rákóczi-emlékek Törökországban és II. Rákóczi Ferencz fejedelem hamvainak föltalálása [Rákóczi relics in Turkey and the discovery of the ashes of Prince Ferenc Rákóczi II], Athenaeum, Budapest.

Zsilinszky, M. (1871), Magyar hölgyek: történelmi élet- és jellemrajzok [Hungarian ladies: historical life and character sketches], Heckenast, Pest.

**Newspapers**

*Fővárosi Lapok, Vasárnapi Ujság, Századok*

*(Hazai ’s Külföldi Tudósítások, Regélő)*

This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License (https://creativecommons. org/licenses/by/4.0/) which permits any use, reproduction and distribution of the work without further permission provided the original work is attributed as specified on the WCSA Journal by World Complexity Science Academy (https://www.wcsaglobal.org/ethics-policy/).

1. The most recent research and analysis of sources suggest a probable birth year of 1649 (Végh, 2022, pp. 641–652). [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Federico Cornaro (1638–1708) [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Eustache Le Noble (1634–1711) [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Jean Le Clerc (1657–1734) [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. John Locke (1632–1704) [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Hazai ’s Külföldi Tudósítások, “Konstantinápolyból” [From Constantinople], (17 July 1839), Term 2, No, 5, p. 37; Regélő. Pesti Divatlap, “Galatában. Hirszekrény. Pesti vizsgáló” [In Galata. News. Pest Examiner], (18 July 1839), Vol. 9, No. 57, p. 454. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Vasárnapi Ujság, “Becses nemzeti ereklye” [Precious national relic], (11 August 1861), Vol. 8, No, 32. p. 383. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Vasárnapi Ujság, “Horváth Mihály, a volt csanádi püspök” [Mihály Horváth, the former Bishop of Csanád], (11 August 1861), Vol. 8, No, 32. pp. [373]–374. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. The life of Countess Ilona Zrínyi and her role in the events divides historiography, as there are interpretations that express reservations about the intentions of the princess and her entourage, and evaluations that are accepting and understanding in explaining the countess’s actions. Due to the choice of topic, this paper necessarily presents an interpretation from the latter perspective (see Pezenhoffer, 2002, pp. 166–184; R. Várkonyi, 2008). [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Mártonffy, K. (1861), “Pontok Magyarország multjából. (Emlékeztetőül költőinknek, művészeinknek.)” [Points from Hungary’s past. (A reminder to our poets and artists.)], Vasárnapi Ujság, Vol. 8, No. 1, p. 2. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Mártonffy, K. (1861), “Pontok Magyarország multjából. (Emlékeztetőül költőinknek, művészeinknek.)” [Points from Hungary’s past. (A reminder to our poets and artists.)], Vasárnapi Ujság, Vol. 8, No. 6, p. 64. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Vasárnapi Ujság, “Péntek, május 24. Szinházi napló” [Friday, 24 May Theatre diary], (2 June 1861), Vol. 8, No. 22, p. 264. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Vasárnapi Ujság, “Debreczen. Irodalom és művészet” [Debreczen. Literature and art], (21 July 1861), Vol. 8, No. 29. p. 345; Sárváry, 1861. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Vasárnapi Ujság, “Egy csinos kiállításu füzetben. Irodalom és művészet” [In a handsome booklet. Literature and art], (19 September 1861), Vol. 8, No. 39. p. 564[!464]; Komáromi, 1861. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Vasárnapi Ujság, “(Madarász Győző.) Irodalom és művészet” [(Győző Madarász.) Literature and art],(1 December 1861), Vol. 8, No. 48, p. 578. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Vasárnapi Ujság, “A sárospataki. Mi ujság?” [From Sárosptak. Whats’s the news?], (5 May 1861), Vol. 8, No. 18, p. 215. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. [Pákh, A.] P. A. (1857), “Jókainé” [Mrs Jókai], Vasárnapi Ujság, Vol. 4, No. 10, pp. 81–82; [Szász, K.] –á–r– (1869), “Jókainé” [Mrs Jókai], Vasárnapi Ujság, Vol. 16, No. 17, pp. [225]–226; Vasárnapi Ujság, “Régibb szinészeink” [Our older actors], (17 August 1890), Vol. 37, No. 33, pp. 530–531. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. [Pákh, A.] P. A. (1857), “Jókainé” [Mrs Jókai], Vasárnapi Ujság, Vol. 4, No. 10, p. 81. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. Ábrai, K. (1868), “A nikomédiai sir. (Történeti elbeszélés.)” [The Nicomedia sir. (Historical narrative.)], Fővárosi Lapok, 28 February, p. [193], 29. February, p. [99], 1 March, p. [201], 4 March, p. [209], 5 March, p. [213], 6 March, p. [217], 7 March, p. [221], 8 March, p. [225], 11 March, p. [233], 12 March, p. [238], 13 March, p. [241], 14 March, p. [245], 15 March, p. [249], 17 March, p. [253]. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Thaly, K. (1865), “Költői ereklye Zrinyi Ilonáról” [A poetic relic of Ilona Zrinyi],Vasárnapi Ujság, Vol. 12, No. 27, p. 334. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Ibid. p. 335. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. Inkey, Á. (1865), “Nagy kort ért embereink, többnyire a XIX. századból” [Our long-lived people, mostly from the 19th century], Vasárnapi Ujság, Vol. 12, No. 36, p. 450. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. – i. – s., (1866), “Gróf Tökölyi Imre. (1658–1705.)” [Count Imre Tökölyi (1658–1705.)], Vasárnapi Ujság, Vol. 13, No. 10, pp. [109]–110. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Thaly, K., (1867), “II. Rákóczi Ferencz. (1676–1755.)” [Ferenc Rákóczi II. (1676–1755.), Vasárnapi Ujság, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. [1]–3. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. Idem. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. Soós, M., (1867), “A ‘fekete leves’” [The ‘black soup’], Vasárnapi Ujság, Vol. 14, No. 4, p. 38. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. Reményi, K., (1867), “Guyon sírja a hárem-iszkeleszi angol temetőben, Scutari mellett” [Guyon’s grave in the English cemetery of Harem Iskeles, next to Scutari], Vasárnapi Ujság, Vol. 14, No. 44, pp. 542–543. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. Vasárnapi Ujság, “(Rákóczi bölcsője.) Egyveleg” [(The Cradle of Rákóczi.) Miscellany], (8 December 1867), Vol. 14, No. 49, p. 603. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. Vasárnapi Ujság, “A Kisfaludy-társaság XIX. közgyűlése, febr. 14-én” [19th General Assembly of the Kisfaludy Society, 14 Feb.], (21 February 1869), Vol. 16, No. 8, p. 104. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. Századok, “Zrínyi Ilona élete” [Life of Ilona Zrínyi], (1869), Vol. 3, No. 1. p. 68. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. Századok, “Magyar vezérek kora” [The age of Hungarian leaders], (1869), Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 135. [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. Századok, “Történetirodalmi újdonságok” [Historical-literary novelties], (1869), Vol.3, No. 4, p. 274; Századok, “Zrínyi Ilona Életrajza. Történelmi könyvtár” [Biography of Ilona Zrínyi. Historical Library], (1869), Vol. 3, No. 4, p. 280. [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. Mihály Horváth was one of the initiators of the launch of the journal *Századok*. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. “The exhibition will be very ornate, and to cater to the tastes of the female reading public, it will be presented in the 16-panel format favoured by ladies. Indeed, we cannot think of a more soul-stirring, heartwarming and enlightening read for a Hungarian lady. *This attractive work by Horváth is destined to make our ladies love Hungarian history!* So, it is a new field for our Hungarian historiography.” – Századok, “Zrínyi Ilona” [Ilona Zrínyi], (1869), Vol.3, No. 3, p. 203. [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. [Szász, K.,] –á–r–, (1869), “Zrinyi Ilona. (1643–1703.)” [Ilona Zrinyi. (1643–1703.)], Vasárnapi Ujság, 16. (26. September 1869), Vol. 16, No. 39, pp. [529]–531. [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. Ibid. 531. [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. Vasárnapi Ujság, “II. Rákóczi Ferencz születési háza” [The birth house of Ferencz Rákóczi II], (4 April 1869) Vol. 16, No. 16, p. [181]. The picture was engraved by Gusztáv Morelli based on a drawing by János Greguss. [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. Varró, S., (1870), “Töredékes vázlat országgyüléseink időnkénti képéről” [A fragmentary sketch of the views of our national parliaments from time to time], Vasárnapi Ujság, (29 May 1870), Vol. 17, No. 22, p. 275. [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. Vasárnapi Ujság, “(A vallás- és közoktatási miniszter). Irodalom és művészet. Tárház” [(Minister of Religion and Public Education). Literature and art. Repository], (14 August 1870.), Vol. 17, No. 33, p. 421. [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. Vasárnapi Ujság, “(Miklós Izsó). Irodalom és művészet. Tárház” [(Miklós Izsó). Literature and art. Repository], (7 July 1872), Vol. 19, No. 27, p. 337. [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. Vasárnapi Ujság, “‘Magyar hölgyek’. Irodalom és művészet. Tárház” [‘Hungarian ladies’. Literature and art. Repository], (28 May 1871), Vol. 18, No. 22, p. 281; Zsilinszky, 1871. [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
42. Vasárnapi Ujság, “Magyar hölgyek életrajzai. Irodalom és művészet” [Biographies of Hungarian ladies. Literature and art], (14 March 1886), Vol. 33, No. 11, p. 175. – Endrődi, 1886. [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. Ibid pp. [34–35] 1–2. [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
44. Ibid p. [57] 24. [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
45. Madarassy, L. (1886), “A történelmi kiállitás képei” [Pictures of the historical exhibition], Fővárosi Lapok, 19 August 1886, pp. 1668–1669. [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
46. Vasárnapi Ujság, “II. Rákóczi Ferencz gyermekkorából” [From the childhood of Ferenc Rákóczi II],(2 January 1881), Vol. 28, No. 1, p. [1]–2; Szalay, J. (1882), “II. Rákóczi Ferencz ifjuságából” [From the youth of Ferenc Rákóczi II],Vasárnapi Ujság, (18 June 1882), Vol. 29, No. 25, p. 397–398; Jókai, M. (1887), “Olympi verseny” [Olympic competition]. Vasárnapi Ujság, (2 October 1887), Vol. 34, No. 40. p. 662. [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
47. Illyés, B. (1887), “Zrínyi Ilona” [Ilona Zrínyi], Vasárnapi Ujság, (9. January 1887), Vol. 34, No. 2, pp. 22; Vasárnapi Ujság. “A Magyar Történeti Életrajzok. Irodalom és művészet” [The Hungarian Historical Biographies. Literature and art], (15 April 1888), Vol. 35, No. 16, p. 268; [Szalay, L.] Sz. L. (1888), “Thököly Imre ifjusága” [Imre Thököly’s youth], Vasárnapi Ujság, (10 June 1888), Vol. 35, No. 24, p. 394–395; [Szádeczky, L.?] Sz. (1889), “Thököly utolsó évei” [The last years of Thököly], Vasárnapi Ujság, (8 December 1889), Vol. 36, No. 49, pp. 799–800; Vasárnapi Ujság, “A Magyar Történeti Életrajzokból. Irodalom és művészet” [From the Hungarian Historical Biographies. Literature and art], (8 December 1889), Vol. 36, No. 49, p. 806, (22 December 1889), Vol. 36, No. 51, pp. 845–846. [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
48. Vasárnapi Ujság, “A történelmi társulat. Közintézetek és egyletek” [The historical society. Public institutions and associations], (7 May 1882), Vol. 29, No. 19, p. 301; Szádeczky, L. (1888), “Thököly Imre s a bujdosó kuruczok. (1679–1682.)” [Imre Thököly and the hiding kurucs. (1679–1682.)], Vasárnapi Ujság, (25 November 1888), Vol. 35, No. 48, p. 778. [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
49. Vasárnapi Ujság, “(Meghívó Rákóczy Ferencz menyegzőjére.) Egyveleg” [(Invitation to the wedding of Ferencz Rákóczy.) Miscellany], (6 August 1871), Vol. 18, No. 32, p. 408; Vasárnapi Ujság, “A magyar tud. akadémia. Közintézetek és egyletek” [The Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Public institutions and associations], (12 February 1882), Vol. 29, No. 7, p. 107; [Szalay, J.] Sz. J. (1882), “Nevezetes embereink névaláirásai” [Signitures of our famous people], Vasárnapi Ujság, (9 July 1882), Vol. 29, No. 28, p. 446; Ballagi, A. (1887), “Egy fiatal magyar tudós Keleten” [A young Hungarian scientist in the East.], Vasárnapi Ujság, (31 July 1887), Vol. 34, No. 31, pp. 518–519. [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
50. Weber, F. (1888), “Halálozások” [Deaths], Vasárnapi Ujság, (8 June 1888), Vol. 35, No. 2, p. 34; Pataky, L. (1896), “Zrínyi Ilona feladja Munkács várát. Képek az ezredévi kiállitásból” [Ilona Zrínyi gives up the castle of Mukachevo. Pictures from the millennium exhibition], Vasárnapi Ujság, (16 August 1896), Vol. 43, No. 33, p. 545. [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
51. Szilágyi, S. (1880), “Zrinyi Ilona Munkácson. 1686 tavaszán. (A fejedelemasszony sajátkezű levelei alapján.)” [Ilona Zrinyi in Mukachevo. Spring 1686. (Based on the princess’s own handwritten letters.)], Fővárosi Lapok, 15 January 1880, p. [51]. [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
52. Vasárnapi Ujság, “A munkácsi ünnep” [The feast of Munkachevo], (26 July 1896), Vol. 43, No. 30, pp. 496–498. [↑](#endnote-ref-52)
53. Dr. Grósz, L. (1877), “A magyar nők. (Julias Alfred leirása.)” [Hungarian women. (Description by Alfred Julias.)], Fővárosi Lapok, 26 October 1877, p. 1175. [↑](#endnote-ref-53)
54. Fővárosi Lapok, “A magyar nőkről. Vegyesek” [About Hungarian women. Mixed], 5 November 1893, p. 2522. [↑](#endnote-ref-54)
55. Vasárnapi Ujság, “(Zrinyiek sirja.) Egyveleg” [(Zrinyiek sirja.) Miscellany], (7 May 1871), Vol. 18, No. 19, p. 240. [↑](#endnote-ref-55)
56. Vasárnapi Ujság, “Rákóczi hamvai. Mi ujság?” [Ashes of Rákóczi. Whats’s the news?], (21 October 1888), Vol. 35, No. 43, p. 710. [↑](#endnote-ref-56)
57. Csillag, Gy. (1872), “Egy magyar társaság Konstantinápolyban” [A Hungarian company in Constantinople], II. Vasárnapi Ujság, (27 October 1872), Vol. 19, No. 43, pp. 529–530. [↑](#endnote-ref-57)
58. Erődi[-Harrach], B. (1876), “II. Rákóczy Ferencz és Zrinyi Ilona sirja” [The tomb of Ferenc Rákóczy II and Ilona Zrinyi.], Vasárnapi Ujság, (23 January 1876), Vol. 23, No. 4, pp. [49]–50. [↑](#endnote-ref-58)
59. Vasárnapi Ujság, II. Rákóczy Ferencz hamvainak. Mi ujság?” [The ashes of Ferenc Rákóczy II. What’s the news?], (2 April 1876), Vol. 23, No. 14, p. 220. [↑](#endnote-ref-59)
60. Vasárnapi Ujság, “Magyar tudósok Konstantinápolyban. Mi ujság?” [Hungarian scholars in Constantinople. What’s the news?], (20 October 1889), Vol. 36, No. 42, pp. 689–690; Vasárnapi Ujság, “A magyar tudományos akadémia. Közintézetek és egyletek” [The Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Public institutions and associations], (15 December 1889), Vol. 36, No. 50, p. 826. [↑](#endnote-ref-60)
61. Thaly, K. (1890), “Rodosto. A galatai St.-Benoit egyház magyar emlékei” [Rodosto. Hungarian monuments of the church of St.-Benoit in Galata], Vasárnapi Ujság, (6 July 1890), Vol. 37, No. 27, pp. [429]–433. [↑](#endnote-ref-61)
62. Beszédes, K. (1891), “Rodosto. (Eredeti tárcák.)” [Rodosto. (Original fiction column.)], Fővárosi Lapok, 13 December 1891, p. [2557]. [↑](#endnote-ref-62)
63. Beszédes, K. (1879), “Szent sírok. (Konstantinápolyi tárca.) Emlékezés 1735 april 8-dikára” [Holy Sepulchres. (Fiction column of Constantinople.) Commemoration of 8 April 1735], Fővárosi Lapok, 11 April 1879, pp. 408–409. [↑](#endnote-ref-63)
64. Vasárnapi Ujság, “Gróf Zrínyi Ilona. 1643–1703.” [Count Ilona Zrínyi. 1643–1703.], (22 February 1903), Vol. 50, No. 8, pp. 121–122. [↑](#endnote-ref-64)
65. Ibid. 122. [↑](#endnote-ref-65)
66. Vasárnapi Ujság, “Rákóczi ifjuságáról” [About Rákóczi’s youth], (31 May 1903), Vol. 50, No. 22, p. [345]. [↑](#endnote-ref-66)
67. Lampérth, G. (1903), “Rákóczi-ünnep Kassán” [Rákóczi’s celebration in Kassa], Vasárnapi Ujság, (2 August 1903), Vol. 50, No. 31, pp. [505]–507; “A kassai Rákóczi ereklye-kiállítás plakátja” [The exhibition poster of Rákóczi relics in Kassa], ibid p. 511. [↑](#endnote-ref-67)
68. Kassa was one of the centres of the freedom-fighting Kuruc world, and several Rákóczi ancestors were buried there, so the city itself requested that the place of the reburial be theirs. However, the remains of the Protestant Thököly were interred in the Lutheran church in Késmárk. [↑](#endnote-ref-68)