The Millennial Monument in Budapest as a Bearer of Memory, National Identity and Self-Awareness

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Abstract

In the 19th century, one of the most important national events in Hungary was the 1896 millennial celebration of the Hungarian conquest of the Carpathian Basin. A central act of the festivity's symbolical episodes was the erection of the so-called Millennium Memorial (or Millennial Monument) at Heroes' Square in Budapest. The monument consists of a colonnaded architectural framework that embraces a sculpture gallery featuring Hungarian leaders and rulers. My paper presents the history of the monument from concept to completion. Besides the artistic patterns of the architectural framework designed by Albert Schickedanz, special attention is given to the sculptures of the Hungarian sculptors who worked under the direction of the artist György Zala, as well as to the relations between the sculptors and the artistic scene of Vienna, and to the models they used. In addition to these primarily art historical aspects, my paper discusses the cultural context of the Memorial. It seeks answers to the questions of how the Memorial became a symbol of national identity already at the stage of planning and what ideas about the shaping of the national self-image defined the final form of the Memorial.

Introduction

[1] The Millennial Monument on Heroes' Square in Budapest is one of the city's most important symbols (Fig. 1). I would like to take a closer look at the circumstances under which it was made and at the ideas manifested in this architectural-sculptural ensemble. Its creation is tied to an event that was of utmost importance in experiencing national consciousness, i.e. the country-wide celebration of the millennium of the so-called Hungarian conquest, in the course of which, at the end of the nineth century, the Magyars arrived in the Carpathian Basin with the last wave of the Migration Period, and settled there.[1] The thousand-year anniversary of this was celebrated in 1896 by the Hungarian state, which was part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy at the time.

1 Millennial Monument on Heroes' Square (Hősök tere), Budapest, 1894–1932 (photo © Andrew Shiva/Wikipedia, 2015)

Events prior to the Millennial celebration

[2] The events leading up to the celebration of the Millennium date back to the early 1880s:[2] Although an initiative was taken as early as the 1870s, the question of commemorating the millennium was only brought before Parliament in 1882. The representatives of the capital city turned to the Minister of Culture asking whether or not he intended to consult specialists in determining the exact date of the conquest of the Carpathian Basin, and if he deemed it necessary for the government to organize celebrations. Minister Trefort decided to consult the Academy of Sciences regarding the question of the date. The Academy commissioned three historians to pinpoint the date as closely as possible. They came up with three different intervals during which the conquest could have happened. From the 12-year period thus defined (888–900 AD), one year had to be chosen for the celebration of the anniversary. The Academy, for practical reasons, proposed the year 1894 as the date for the festivities and asked a group of historians to provide scientific proof that the conquest had indeed happened in the selected year. A few years

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[1] László Kontler, *Millennium in Central Europe: A History of Hungary*, Budapest 1999.

[2] Ferenc Vadas has traced the preparations for the Millennial celebration on the basis of three documents from 1893. See: Ferenc Vadas, "Programtervezetek a Millennium megünneplésére (1893)" [Draft Programmes for the Millennium Celebrations], in: *Ars Hungarica* 24 (1996), no. 1, 3-55.

later, also for practical reasons, the date for the millennial celebrations was moved forward to 1895, and then to 1896.[3]

[3] Parallel to these ventures, many different plans regarding the anniversary of the conquest were made and submitted to the ministry, some of them by private individuals. While some of the proposals alluded directly to the event of the conquest, others were entirely independent of it. One, for example, called for erecting a national pantheon on the Buda side, on top of Gellért Hill, with an enormous statue of Hungaria holding a torch in her hand. – The concept of the pantheon had been widespread throughout Europe since the beginning of the nineteenth century.[4] In Hungary, István Széchenyi had first proposed building a pantheon of the nation's great figures on Gellért Hill as early as the 1840s.[5] – There was also a proposal to construct a pyramid one thousand metres high, its floors representing the centuries built on top of each other. While this latter proposal belonged entirely to the realm of fantasy as it was impossible to carry out, the idea behind it perfectly reflects the spirit of the era. It considers the Hungarian millennium – which was supposed to be the anniversary of a state that had existed continuously for a thousand years, and its constitutionalism, as well as the anniversary of the conquest – to be a unique moment, essentially a world sensation. This kind of historicist approach manifested itself not only in the projection of such contemporary institutions onto the past, but also in the ability to look at their own present as, ultimately, the past of a far-off future. With these ideas, all the planners aimed to arouse the pride of their successors. The demand for a monument is strongly connected to this historicist aspect. Among the numerous initiatives of this kind, there was also one that wanted to compile a list of all legal names in the Hungarian language known from these thousand years. Others wanted to record the voices of the most influential figures of their time on wax cylinders for posterity. Another event, which was actually realized, although ephemeral, was a costume pageant intended to represent the historical continuity of the aristocracy. The originator was Jenő (Eugen) Zichy (1832–1906), a count with an interest in archeology and the fine arts, concerned with improving domestic industry, and president of the National Industrial Association.[6]

[4] However, all the plans and proposals remained dormant for a decade. It was not until the early 1890s that the government addressed the upcoming millennium. At that time, a private

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[3] Vadas, "Programtervezetek", 4 f.

[4] Lars Völcker, *Tempel für die Großen der Nation. Das kollektive Nationaldenkmal in Deutschland, Frankreich und Großbritannien im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt/Berlin/Wien 2000; Reinhard Alings, *Monument und Nation. Das Bild vom Nationalstaat im Medium Denkmal – zum Verhältnis von Nation und Staat im deutschen Kaiserreich 1871–1918*, Berlin 1996.

[5] István Széchenyi, *Üdvlelde*, Pest 1843.

[6] Zichy inherited his interest in art collecting and art patronage from his father. Edmund Zichy was the Hungarian commissioner of the 1873 Vienna World's Fair. He was one of the founders of the Austrian Museum of Art and Industry (Österreichisches Museum für Kunst und Industrie, today Museum für Angewandte Kunst Wien), and a member of the Künstlerhaus in Vienna. His son was the chief organiser of the 1879 National Exhibition at Székesfehérvár. Eugen Zichy was also involved in the exploration of the origins and homeland of the Hungarians. He organized expeditions to Russia and the Caucasus. In 1901 he founded a private museum in Budapest for the objects that he had acquired during his travels and later bequeathed his collection to the Hungarian capital.

organisation named *Műbarátok köre* (Circle of Art Lovers) and its board (consisting of aristocrats including Count Eugen Zichy) decided to take it upon themselves to organise the millennial festivities. The government could not afford to ignore this matter any longer, summarised the plans from earlier years and decided on an exact date for the celebration.

[5] The centrepiece of *Műbarátok köre*'s agenda for the celebrations was to be an exhibition of national interest in Budapest. Count Eugen Zichy, the architect of the idea, who had organised many trade exhibitions in the previous years, possessed a special talent for representing different social classes and for social action that appealed not only to the aristocracy but also to the wider population. The intention was to create a retrospective, historic ambience in which the relics of the past were presented right next to the economic achievements of the present. The most inventive part of this idea was the architectural styles employed in this "historical exhibition": The individual sections of the building complex were to mirror famous Hungarian architectural monuments, each of them in a different style, presenting the most important mementoes of the country's art and culture in harmony with the respective architectural style.[7] What became known as Vajdahunyadvár (Vajdahunyad Castle) was built in the city's largest park, Városliget, first, in 1896, as a temporary structure and then, from 1901–1907, as a permanent building.

[6] The flair of the Millennial was to be enhanced by timing the inauguration of new public buildings (some of them especially significant for fostering a sense of national identity) to coincide with the celebrations. That is how the consecration of the Church of the Assumption, also known as Matthias Church, in Buda, the topping-out ceremony of the Parliament building and the opening of the Museum of Applied Arts became part of the programme of the millennial celebrations.[8]

[7] In the hierarchy of historicist sculpture, memorial statues occupied the top position. It is no coincidence that many such statues were erected at the time of the millennium. Public squares in the capital city were adorned with memorials of important historical figures. Some of these statues were presented as gifts by Emperor Franz Joseph.[9] Furthermore, in 1896 an equestrian

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[7] Gábor György Papp, "'Királyaink korának lehellete'. A Millenniumi kiállítás történelmi épületei és szerepük a nemzeti identitás formálásában" ['Breath of the Time of our Kings'. The Historical Buildings of the Millennial Exhibition and their Role in Shaping National Identity], in: *Nemzet és tudomány Magyarországon a 19. században* [Nation and Science in Hungary in the 19th Century], eds. Adrienn Szilágyi and Ádám Bollók, Budapest 2017, 224-248.

[8] Péter Farbaky et al., eds., *Mátyás templom. A budavári Nagyboldogasszony-templom évszázadai (1246–2013)* [Matthias Church. Centuries of the Church of the Assumption in Buda (1246–2013)], exh. cat., Budapest, 2015; József Sisa, "From the Competition Design to the Definitive Design", in: *Az ország háza. Buda-pesti országháza-tervek 1784–1884. The House of the Nation. Parliament Plans for Buda-Pest 1784–1884*, eds. Eszter Gábor and Mária Verő, exh. cat., Budapest 2000, 394-408; József Sisa, *Ödön Lechner the Creative Genius*, Budapest 2014; Zsombor Jékely, Zsuzsa Margittai and Klára Szegszárdy-Csengery, eds., *Ödön Lechner in Context: Studies of the International Conference on the Occasion of the 100th Anniversary of Ödön Lechner's Death*, Budapest 2015.

[9] These were: Barnabás Holló: *István Bocskai*, Károly Sennyei: *General János Pálffy*, György Vastagh Jnr.: *Gábor Bethlen*, József Róna: *Miklós Zrínyi*, Gyula Jankovics: *St Gellert*, Gyula Bezerédy: *Sebestyén Tinódi*, Miklós Ligeti: *Anonymus* [common name of the notary and chronicler of a Hungarian king, probably Béla III],

statue of the first Hungarian king, St Stephen, was erected in Buda Castle, the joint work by Alajos Stróbl and Frigyes Schulek, which was particularly important for the establishment of a national self-image. Furthermore, Kálmán Thaly, historian and member of the Hungarian Parliament, initiated the erection of seven monuments throughout the country commemorating the conquest and deeds of the leaders of the nomadic Hungarian society (known as the Seven Chiefs of the Hungarian Tribes). The locations (Zimony/Zemun, Brassó/Brașov, Nyitra/Nitra, Dévény/Devín, Munkács/Munkachevo, Pusztaszer, Pannonhalma) were chosen to reflect the areas believed to have been inhabited by each tribe. A committee nominated by the parliament chose the places and organized the installations.[10]

[8] And finally, in 1893, the pantheon-memorial concept of the 1880s was revived. The Prime Minister's proposal and the finalized version of the programme that followed were the first to include "the unveiling of a statue of historical relevance, for example one that represents the founding of the Hungarian state". This phrasing seems to have put an end to the dispute between two different historical perspectives relating to the historical figures Árpád and István respectively (see below).

Designing the Millennial Monument

[9] In August 1893, Prime Minister Sándor Wekerle (Fig. 2) was working on the concept for the Millennial Monument.[11] His ideas may even have influenced the exposés for the millennial ceremony that had been written in the ministry in the previous months. It seems that he alone chose the artists who were to work on the monument. He most likely met the architect Albert Schickedanz (Fig. 3) and the sculptor György Zala (Fig. 4) during the summer, and personally commissioned them to make plans for the monument.[12]

István Tóth: *János Hunyadi*, Gyula Donáth: *István Werbőczy*, Béla Radnai: *Péter Pázmány*. See: Albert Petrik, "A tíz királyszobor" [The Ten Statues Given by the King], in: *Építő Ipar – Építő Művészet* 38 (1914), 325-326, 331-332, 337-339, 343-344, 347-349; Márta Kovalovszky, "'Bronzba öntött halhatatlan'. A historizmus emlékműszobrászata" ['Immortal Cast in Bronze'. Historicist Monument Sculpture], in: *A historizmus művészete Magyarországon. Művészettörténeti tanulmányok* [The Art of Historicism in Hungary. Studies in Art History], ed. Anna Zádor, Budapest 1993, 79-98.

[10] Mór Erdélyi, *A Magyar Állam fennállását megörökítő hét vidéki emlékmű: 896–1896* [Seven Monuments Throughout the Country Commemorating the Existence of the Hungarian State: 896–1896], Budapest 1897.

[11] Gábor and Verő, *Az ország háza*, 22-24.

[12] Eszter Gábor, ed., *Schickedanz Albert (1846–1915). Ezredévi emlékművek múltnak és jövőnek / Millennial Monuments for the Past and the Future*, Budapest 1996, 38.

2 Prime Minister Sándor Wekerle, photograph by Károly Koller, ca. 1892–1895. Fővárosi Szabó Ervin Könyvtár (Metropolitan Ervin Szabó Library, hereinafter FSzEK), Budapest Collection, inv. no. 040833 (© FSzEK)

3 Albert Schickedanz (1846–1915), *Self-portrait*, 1890s. Budapesti Történeti Múzeum, Fővárosi Képtár (Budapest History Museum, Picture Gallery of the Capital, hereinafter BTM, Fővárosi Képtár), inv. no. 24.170 (photograph © BTM, Fővárosi Képtár)
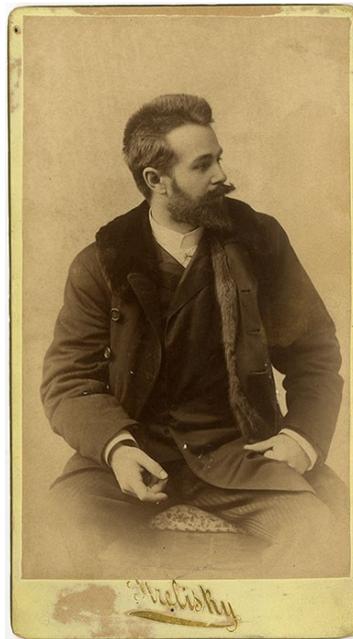
4 György Zala (1858–1937), photograph by Sándor Strelisky, 1887. FSzEK, Budapest Collection, inv. no. 040764 (© FSzEK)

[10] Wekerle had become acquainted with the architect through *Eintracht*, the cultural association of the community of Germans living in Budapest, and it is possible that this influenced his decision as well.[13] Schickedanz, a Budapest architect of great renown, was in his forties at the time. His first big success was his design for the tomb of the first independent Hungarian Prime Minister, Lajos Batthyány (in 1870). In the years that followed he designed tenement houses, apartment buildings, exhibition pavilions, the interiors of public buildings, and also pedestals and monuments. He even submitted a design for the Parliament building, which was, however, rejected. He began working on assignments of a larger scale in the 1890s: first he designed the Palace of Art (*Műcsarnok*), inaugurated in 1895, then, from 1900, the Museum of Fine Arts (*Szépművészeti Múzeum*) – on opposite sides of the square where Andrássy Street runs into Városliget (Figs. 5 and 6).

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[13] The association had been founded in Budapest in 1863 as *Deutscher geselliger Verein Eintracht* and had its seat in Deák Ferenc Street 5.

5 *Műcsarnok* (Palace of Art), Budapest, architect: Albert Schickedanz, inaugurated in 1895. Photograph by Georg Klösz, ca. 1900, Budapest Főváros Levéltára (Budapest City Archives, hereinafter BFL), XV.19.d.1.08.080 (© BFL)
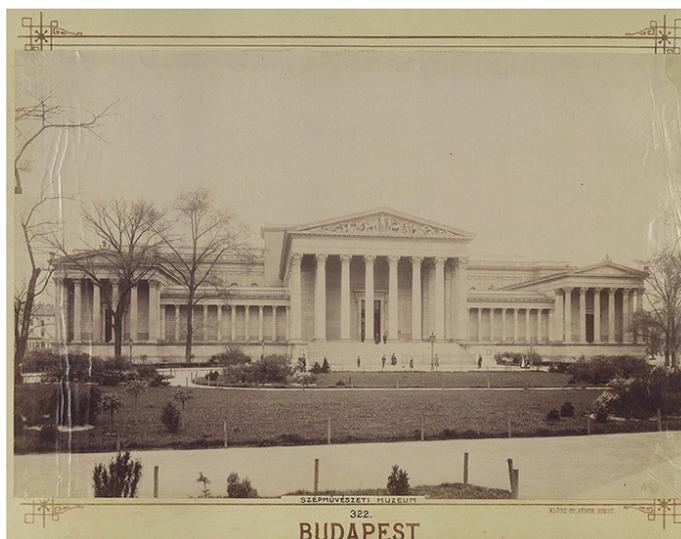
6 *Szépművészeti Múzeum* (Museum of Fine Arts), Budapest, architect: Albert Schickedanz, 1900–1906. Photograph by Georg Klösz, BFL (Budapest City Archives), XV.19.d.1.08.113 (© BFL)

[11] This is the same square in the middle of which the Millennial Monument was to be erected. With this commission, Schickedanz had the opportunity to create a public space with a homogenous architectural style. The architect also played an important role in designing the historical pavilions of the Millennial Exhibition. György Zala, however, was still a young sculptor, having returned only ten years earlier from his studies in Munich and Vienna, where he had already been quite successful. In Budapest, his first work to achieve wider recognition was a sculpture of the Virgin and St Mary Magdalene (1884; Hungarian National Gallery). Following that, after the death of Adolf Huszár he completed the *Memorial to the 13 Martyrs of Arad* in Arad (1885–1890). In 1889, the Honvéd Association in Buda commissioned Zala to create the statue on the memorial to the soldiers who had died during the War of Independence in 1849. This so called

Honvéd memorial stands on Dísz square in Buda and was made in collaboration with Schickedanz, who designed the pedestal of the monument (Fig. 7).[14]
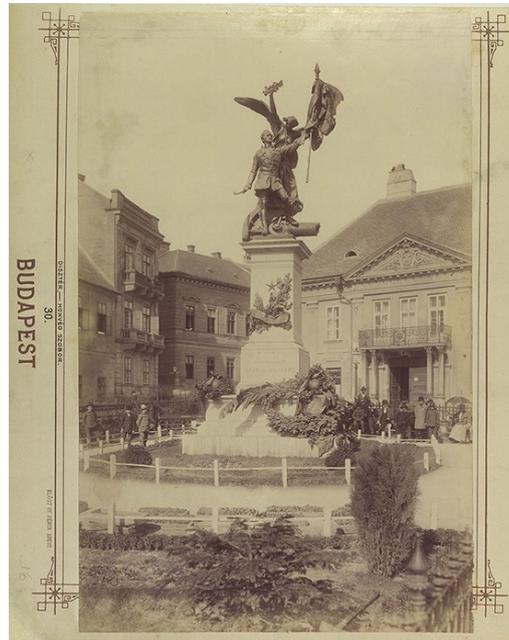
7 György Zala and Albert Schickedanz, *Memorial of the War of Independence, 1849 (Honvéd memorial)*, Budapest, Dísz square, 1893. Photograph by Georg Klösz, ca. 1900, BFL (Budapest City Archives), XV.19.d.1.07.031 (© BFL)

[12] Following a direct order from the Prime Minister in 1893, matters of content, composition, style, implementation, and later sculptural detail were the responsibility of the Parliament and its Millennial Committee. The reason for this was the fact that the project was anything but an everyday task. Not only was it a work that would come to define the cityscape, but would also play a significant part in shaping national consciousness – a sort of essence of the historicist image of the nation. Wekerle's first accounts tell of the idea of a classical triumphal arch, with a quadriga and war insignia on top. In the second version there were to be statues of Chief Árpád and St Stephen in front, with reliefs depicting the more notable events of national history. A third, revised version of the project – according to Wekerle's report from January 1894 – was an arched colonnade with paired columns and with reliefs of historical scenes, statues of Árpád and Stephen, and groups of statues representing the nation. In the centre of the monument there was to be a figure of *Hungaria* on a pedestal, and in front of the pedestal statues of the seven chiefs of the Hungarian tribes.

[13] It was at this point in the planning process that the demand that the monument be built in a "national" style first surfaced. More versions of this idea were conceived during the course of the following year. Based on the reports by the Prime Minister, the parliamentary committee produced a detailed programme on how the monument should look. A work symbolic of the nation's history, at a hub of the city to boot, had to radiate permanence through its size. In terms

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[14] Gábor, ed., *Schickedanz Albert (1846–1915)*, 38.

of subject, it was to represent the great events and figures of the past, with an equestrian statue of Árpád in the middle. The two artists based their designs on these suggestions, using the requirements as guidelines, but also changing and improving them. By October of the same year as Wekerle recounts the main elements of the final work had been clarified: a colonnade consisting of two parts, with statues of Hungary's greatest kings between the columns, and a single large column at the centre of the monument, the figures of the seven chiefs in front of it and a statue of archangel Gabriel holding Saint Stephen's crown on top. In this report, the Prime Minister discussed the question of the style of the monument once again. He wrote that it was necessary that both the architectural and the sculptural aspect of the work should "emphasise the national characteristics, both in the details and as a whole".[15] What this meant to his contemporaries, we can only guess. At that time, national architecture was closest to the medieval styles: Romanesque and Gothic.[16]

[14] The first official drafts we know of were created between 1893 and 1894.[17] Variations of the concepts outlined in the proposals described previously reappear in their compositions. There is a lighter version of the triumphal arch composition, accompanied by a colonnade with round-arched arcades, and also a heavier one, terminated by an architrave. The central element of the latter is derived from the *Brandenburger Tor* in Berlin. An improved version, with an arched colonnade instead of the triumphal arch, and a colossal *Hungaria* statue, is quite closely related to the *Bavaria* monument in Munich, the work of Klenze and Schwanthaler. Schickedanz created a national style of architecture by combining Romanesque and Gothic forms, while Zala tried to do the same with the details of the clothing of the medieval kings. In November 1894, the two creators presented the progress of their plan to what was known as the *Otthon Kör* (Home Circle), a group of writers and journalists.[18] Among other things, they talked about the style they had chosen: "after studying medieval art in Hungary, they created a fusion of styles that would reflect the most glorious eras of Hungarian history. This was called the Romano-Gothic style (*Übergangsstil*)."[19] Two such drafts were made and presented at the same time. In these, the back walls of the niches in the two quarter circles are punctuated by trefoil arches. Statues of the kings stand in these niches. The exterior of the colonnade looks different in the two versions. One version has round-arched niches and a pitched roof covering the colonnade as well as piers in the

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[15] On the changing ideas in Hungary about the expression of nationality in architectural styles, see: Gábor György Papp, "Present Constructed from the Past", in: *Cultural Nationalism in a Finnish-Hungarian Historical Context*, eds. Gábor Gyáni and Anssi Halmesvirta, Budapest 2018, 146-163.

[16] Gábor, ed., *Schickedanz Albert (1846–1915)*, 142 f.; Eszter Gábor: "Az ezredéves emlék. Schickedanz Albert Millenniumi emlékmű koncepciójának kialakulása" [The Thousand-Year-Old Memory. Concept Development of Albert Schickedanz's Millennial Monument], in: *Művészettörténeti Értesítő* 34 (1985), 202-216.

[17] Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár (Hungarian National Archive, hereinafter MNL), K 26. 1895-22. 1884/1893 ME.

[18] The *Otthon Kör* was founded in 1891 at the editorial office of the journal *Magyar Szalon* (Hungarian Salon) as a representative body of Budapest journalists. Jenő Rákosi was the first president, vice-president was Sándor Bródy, both writers.

[19] "Millenniumi műemlékek Budapesten" [Millennial Monuments in Budapest], in: *Vasárnapi Újság* vol. 41, no. 45 (11 November 1894), 752.

centre. In the other, the niches have pointed arches, with gables and turrets. The tower-like piers are topped by tall spires. Presumably Schickedanz did not submit these plans to the parliamentary committee, only the classical versions.[20]

[15] The presentation made to the Otthon circle stirred up a huge storm. The Association of Hungarian Engineers and Architects called for a public competition and for a different location – without any success. Issues of content were not raised in the debate. One of the architects who was against the plan, Frigyes Schulek, decided to draw up a "counterplan". He wanted a monument of Árpád and the six chiefs to be erected on the Fisherman's Bastion, next to the recently completed statue of St Stephen. However, the protest was futile. At its meeting on December 10 of the same year, the parliamentary committee agreed that the monument should be made in the originally chosen location and in the classical style. The question of a national style was raised only in connection with the column in the centre:

[…] the capital of the main column was to be carved to imitate the two columns on St Mark's Square in Venice, as these show Scythian/Hun origins. Similarly, close attention should be paid to the clothing, armor and the harnesses of the horses, for they need to be authentic as well.[21]

(In the end the column was given with a Corinthian capital). It is interesting that the 'national style' here no longer draws on the historic European repertoire of forms, but uses motifs that supposedly illustrate the oriental, pagan origins of the Hungarian people.[22]

The realization of the monument

[16] In the spring of 1895, the parliamentary committee signed the contract with Zala and Schickedanz. Scheduled to be finished within seven years, the completion of the monument eventually took 34 years. It was a combination of two earlier concepts: The rear part is an upgraded version of the early idea of two arched colonnades accentuated by piers at either end and with a king between each of the columns. Allegorical groups of figures stand on top of the piers, and the pedestals below the statues of the kings are decorated with reliefs depicting scenes from their reigns. The colossal Corinthian column at the centre of the monument first appeared in the plan presented to the committee in October 1894. On top of it is a statue of Archangel Gabriel holding a cross and the Hungarian royal crown, on the base there are statues of the chieftains. The colonnade behind the central column was also well suited because it allowed the figures to be presented as equals.

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[20] Gábor, ed., *Schickedanz Albert (1846–1915)*, 143-150.

[21] The two columns on St. Mark's Square were believed to have originated in Syria. At the end of the 19th century, it was regarded as a historical fact that these columns were procured by Doge Domenico Michiel of Venice in the Crusade of 1127. Hungarian scolars considered their fragmentary inscriptions to be Hun or Hungarian. However, we do not know how or why their Middle Eastern origin was mistakenly interpreted as hunnic connections. See: MNL (Hungarian National Archive), K26. 1895.22/712/387; Székely Nemzet, 24. Dezember 1892.

[22] Gábor, "Az ezredéves emlék", 214; Lilla Farbakyné Deklava, *Schulek Frigyes*, Budapest 2017, 114 f.

[17] The search for the sources of the final design – both stylistically and as a piece of urban architecture –, should look in two directions. The arched colonnade was a commonplace element in the architecture of 19th century parks, as it separates and connects parts of the scenery at the same time – the Park of Versailles can be considered a prominent ancestor for this. The delicate gates from the 1885 (industrial) exhibition in the Városliget belong to this category as well. So does the design for a statue commemorating former prime minister Gyula Andrássy, accompanied by a colonnade, from 1890, which Schickedanz intended for the very same spot, but which was never realized. Official state memorials of the 19th century provide us with only formal parallels for the most part, as they do not typically express a national past and identity. Examples include a plan for the Vittorio Emmanuele memorial in Rome with colonnades by French architect P. H. Nénot, or the various versions of a memorial to emperor Wilhelm II in Berlin. In terms of content, the *Musée des Monuments français* in Paris (located in the convent of the Petits Augustins from 1795–1816) should be mentioned here, as the garden surrounding it was populated by statues of the great figures of French history.[23] Other important parallels include the *Ruhmeshalle* linked to the *Bavaria* statue in Munich, or the *Feldherrnhalle* of the Vienna Arsenal, where statues of important figures of national history are displayed.[24] The *Heldenplatz* in Vienna, the idea of which originated from Gottfried Semper, also offers a good analogy for *Hősök tere* in Budapest, which features a national monument placed between two museum buildings. Monuments serving as a setting for federal ceremonies were also built in Berlin, Saint Petersburg and Milan.[25]

[18] In accordance with the parliamentary decree, construction works began after the millennial celebrations, towards the end of 1896. By the end of 1897, the colonnade had been built, along with the colossal column bearing the statue of Archangel Gabriel. In 1900, an iron rod was inserted inside the column to make it more stable. This led to the accidental breakage of two

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[23] See Katalin Sinkó, "A továbbélő historizmus. A Millenniumi emlékmű mint szimbolikus társadalmi akciók színtere" [The Persistence of Historicism. The Millennium Monument as a Site of Symbolic Social Action], in: *A historizmus művészete Magyarországon. Művészettörténeti tanulmányok* [The Art of Historicism in Hungary. Studies in Art History], ed. Anna Zádor, Budapest 1993, 277-293: 280 f. For halls of honour in museums, see Rainer Kahsnitz, "Museum und Denkmal. Überlegungen zu Gräbern, historischen Freskenzyklen und Ehrenhallen in Museen", in: *Das kunst- und kulturgeschichtliche Museum im 19. Jahrhundert: Vorträge des Symposions im Germanischen Nationalmuseum, Nürnberg*, eds. Bernward Deneke and Rainer Kahsnitz, Munich 1977, 152-175.

[24] Andreas Huber, *Kontroversen um österreichische Heerführer am Beispiel von drei Denkmälern im Wiener Arsenal*, diploma thesis, University of Vienna, 2012, DOI: 10.25365/thesis.19157; Werner Telesko, "Der österreichische 'Denkmalkult' im 19. Jahrhundert im Spannungsfeld von Zentrum und Peripherie", in: *Die Besetzung des öffentlichen Raumes. Politische Plätze, Denkmäler und Straßennamen im europäischen Vergleich*, eds. Rudolf Jaworski and Peter Stachel, Berlin 2007, 145-167; Manfried Rauchensteiner, "Das Heeresgeschichtliche Museum als Gedächtnisort", in: *Militär und Gesellschaft in der Frühen Neuzeit* 6 (2002), no. 1, 29-38; Stefan Riesenfellner, "Die 'Ruhmeshalle' und die 'Feldherrnhalle' – das k.(u.)k. 'Nationaldenkmal' im Wiener Arsenal", in: *Steinernes Bewußtsein*, vol. 1: *Die öffentliche Repräsentation staatlicher und nationaler Identität Österreichs in seinen Denkmälern*, hg. v. Stefan Riesenfellner, Vienna 1998, 63-75.

[25] On the relationship with monuments of the late 19th century in Germany, see: Rudy Koshar, *From Monuments to Traces. Artifacts of German Memory, 1870–1990*, Berkeley 2000, 15-79 ("Monuments").

parts of the column. It was reconstructed in 1901, and by autumn of that year the statue of Archangel Gabriel was standing in its proper place again. Thus, the architectural setting of the monument was ready (Fig. 8). The next phase was the creation of the sculptures to be placed around the central column and in the colonnades. These were completed between 1905 and 1929.[26]

8 *Millennial Monument*, Budapest, architect: Albert Schickedanz. Photograph by Georg Klösz, ca. 1900-1905, BFL (Budapest City Archives), XV.19.d.1.08.064 (© BFL)

[19] In 1905, two allegorical groups of statues were put in place on top of the architrave: one representing *Labour and Welfare* (Fig. 9), the other *Knowledge and Glory*, both the works of György Zala.[27]

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[26] Katalin Sinkó, "Die Geschichte des Millennium-Denkmals", in: *Populäre Bildmedien. Vorträge des 2. Symposiums für Ethnologische Bildforschung Reinhausen bei Göttingen 1986*, hg. v. Rolf Wilhelm Brednich und Andreas Hartmann, Göttingen 1989, 73-90.

[27] Both of them were exhibited and acclaimed at the 1900 Paris World's Fair. *Exposition Universelle de 1900. Catalogue officiel illustré de l'Exposition Décennale des Beaux-Arts de 1889 à 1900*, Paris 1900, 308.

9 György Zala, *Labour and Welfare*, 1905, Millennial Monument, Budapest (reprod. from: *Új Idők* 27 [1907], 3)

Several of the statues of the kings were ready in the same year: *Matthias Hunyadi*, also the work of György Zala; *Béla IV*, by Miklós Köllő (Fig. 10); *Charles Robert*, by György Kiss; *Ferdinand I*, by Ede Margó, and *Leopold II*, by Richárd Füredi (Fig. 11).[28]

10 Miklós Köllő, *Béla IV*, 1905, Millennial Monument, Budapest (photograph © Tünde Kotricz, 2016, https://www.kozterkep.hu/, id. no. 269328)

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[28] The selection of the sculptors and the evaluation of the sculpture models was carried out by the Országos Képzőművészeti Tanács (National Council for the Arts).

11 Richárd Füredi, *Leopold II*, 1905, Millennial Monument, Budapest. Photograph by Nándor Kiszer, FSzEK (Metropolitan Ervin Szabó Library), Budapest Collection, inv. no. AN031289 (© FSzEK)

The latter two were destroyed in World War II. They were replaced by the statues of *István Bocskai*, Prince of Transylvania (the work of Barnabás Holló; it had stood on Körönd square in Budapest since 1900), and *Ferenc Rákóczi II* (by Zsigmond Kisfaludy Strobl).

[20] The sculptors included a number of well-known, acknowledged artists, but many of them were still at an early stage in their career. For them the commission meant recognition. György Kiss (1852–1919) and Károly Senyei (1854–1919) belonged to the older generation. Kiss had studied at the *Akademie der Bildenden Künste* in Munich. After some years in Rome he returned to Budapest, where he got in touch with György Zala. As well as complex public sculptures, he also made sculptures for the facade and the interior of the House of Parliament in Budapest. Senyei had studied in Vienna and Munich, settling down in Budapest in 1886. His first major works were portrait busts and sculpture groups (*War and Peace*) for the (former) Royal Palace in Buda, followed by the *triga* on the pediment of the *Curia* (the supreme court). This and his two statues on the Millenium Monument depicting *St Stephen* and *King Andrew II* (Fig. 12) are considered his most successful works.

12 Károly Senyei, *King Andrew II*, 1905, Millennial Monument, Budapest (photograph © Sándor Pinczés, 2010, https://www.kozterkep.hu/, id. no. 63417)

[21] Most of the younger artists were pupils of György Zala and Alajos Stróbl, the two leading scuptors of the time. Miklós Köllő (1861–1900) was an apprentice of György Zala. Later on, he made decorative sculptures for the (former) Royal Palace at Buda, as well as for the House of Parliament and the *Curia*. Ede Margó (1872–1946) studied in Budapest under Alajos Stróbl as well as in Vienna and Paris before he started working in Budapest. In addition to the sculptures for the Millennial Monument, he made portrait busts of Chopin and Pista Dankó, a famous gipsy violinist. Richárd Füredi (1873–1947) gained recognition with his statue of *King Coloman the Learned* on the Millennial Monument. In the late 1920s and 1930s he made memorial sculptures that reflected the political ideology of the time: the so-called Flagpole (*Ereklyés Országzászló*, 1928) with national imagery in Szabadság square, and the *Memorial to the National Martyrs* (1934) in Vértanúk square in Budapest. Ede Telcs (1872–1948) went to Vienna in 1888 to gain experience as a sculptor in the studio of Edmund von Hoffmann. He was offered a place by Ferdinand Hellmer to study at the *Akademie der bildenden Künste*. Later he became a member of Caspar von Zumbusch's *Spezialschule für Bildhauer*. He returned to Budapest in 1885, where, with the help of Hellmer's letter of recommendation, he was accepted in the master school of György Zala. A number of his smaller works were sold during the Millennial Exhibition. After World War I, he moved to the Netherlands, but later returned to Budapest.

[22] In 1906, another of the statues on the architrave, the *Chariot of War* by György Zala, was installed, in addition to the statue of *King Coloman the Learned* by Richard Füredi mentioned above, and the figure of *János Hunyadi* by Ede Margó. In 1908, the allegorical sculpture of the *Chariot of Peace*, the work of György Zala, was put up, along with the statue of *Emperor Franz Joseph*, again by Zala, which was replaced after World War II by a statue of *Lajos Kossuth* by Zsigmond Kisfaludy Strobl. In 1911, the statues of *St Ladislaus* by Ede Telcs, *St Stephen* by Károly Senyei (Fig. 13), and *Maria Theresia* by György Zala were installed (Fig 14).

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13 Károly Senyei, *St Stephen*, 1908, Millennial Monument, Budapest (unknown photographer, 1942, https://www.kozterkep.hu/, id. no. 160725)

14 György Zala, *Empress Maria Theresia*, 1908, Millennial Monument, Budapest (photograph © Hungarian National Gallery – Museum of Fine Arts, Sculpture Collection, Photo Archive, inv. no. 4716)

The latter figure was replaced by the statue of *Imre Thököly* by Jenő Grantner after World War II. In 1912, the statues of *King Andrew II* by Karoly Senyei, and *King Charles III* by Ede Telcs were put in place. The latter was replaced after World War II by the statue of *Gábor Bethlen*, the work of György Vastagh Jr., which had also been standing on Körönd square since 1900. In the same year, one of the statues at the foot of the colossal column was also completed: the figure of *Chief Árpád riding his horse* (the work of György Zala, Fig. 15).

15 György Zala, *Chief Árpád*, 1912, Millennial Monument, Budapest (photograph © Tünde Kotricz, 2016, https://www.kozterkep.hu/, id. no. 269640)

[23] The next few years saw something of a lull in construction due to World War I and the political and economic uncertainty that followed it, and also because of the death of the architect Albert Schickedanz in 1915. The classicist architectural setting was ready before the start of the war. In the new political situation that followed World War I, it was not the monument as a work of architecture, but rather the political reality embodied in the iconography of the sculpture gallery with Habsburg rulers that became problematic. The work continued in 1927, beginning with the statue of *Louis the Great*. Then followed the installation of what is called the *Memorial Stone of National Heroes* (which later became known as the *Monument to the Unknown Soldier*). This was the last step in the process that transformed the monument from a site to experience national identity through the figures of the common past into a symbolic place for the nation. The statues of the other six chiefs were completed during the next two years, and thus the monument was ready to be unveiled in 1929. The square bordered by the two museums was named Heroes' Square in 1932.[29]

The Millennial Monument as a shaper of national identity

[24] The purpose of political rituals is akin to that of religious rites: strengthening the community and integrating people by recalling their common roots, by "travelling back to the time of origins". Monuments that portray national history and origin myths have a kind of sacred quality.[30] The

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[29] Gábor, ed., *Schickedanz Albert (1846–1915)*, 150-152.

[30] Katalin Sinkó, "'A História a mi erős várunk'. A millenniumi kiállítás, mint Gesamtkunstwerk" ['History is Our Strong Castle'. The Millennial Exhibition as a Gesamtkunstwerk], in: *A historizmus művészete Magyarországon. Művészettörténeti tanulmányok* [The Art of Historicism in Hungary. Studies in Art History], ed. Anna Zádor, Budapest 1993, 132-147; Katalin Sinkó, "A továbbélő historizmus. A Millenniumi emlékmű mint szimbolikus társadalmi akciók színtere".

Millennial Monument embodies two opposing ideas: pagan continuity and the victory of Christianity. The first one considers Árpád and the Hungarian tribes to be the source of a tradition that extends to the present day and therefore makes the conquest the focus of the celebrations. – In this context it is important to recall the memorial columns that, as part of the millennial celebrations, were erected in seven different places across the country, where, according to tradition, conquering Hungarian troops entered the Carpathian Basin. These columns (some of them are still standing today) represented the symbolic affiliation of the people of the country.[31] – The other puts more emphasis on settling down and establishing the state. Instead of the pagan roots, it uses St Stephen's efforts to create a Christian state and assimilate to the West as the role model.

[25] Árpád and the pagan Magyars were important to those who derived their own social identity and the constitutional establishment of the present from a historical continuity that went all the way back to the tribes. This same Protestant lesser nobility, or rather gentry (which, essentially, was one and the same with the political opposition at the time) belonged to a tradition that upheld the idea that the right of the nobility to elect a king is the basis of his legitimate rule. This view, while it expressed the opposition's inherent dislike of the Habsburg dynasty, also supported the Hungarians' assertion that they had so-called "historical rights" as a result of conquering the country, and underlined the claimed supremacy of the Hungarian race. It was precisely because of the influence of this group, the delegates of the Independence Party, that Árpád and the chiefs were given such a prominent place in the monument. Zala originally intended them to be standing statues, and only depicted them mounted on horses in response to the protest of the politician Kálmán Thaly. A dynastic monument was created – but instead of the common equestrian statue of the king or monarch, the centre is occupied by the equestrian chieftains, with the kings standing behind them, not unlike infantry.[32]

[26] The other ideology is embodied by Archangel Gabriel holding the crown (Fig. 16). The source of this is the legend of St Stephen. The story is that Archangel Gabriel appeared to Pope Sylvester in a dream, giving him a crown and telling him to give it to the emissaries of the pagan ruler who would come before him the next day. So while the Archangel Gabriel formally corresponds to the winged Victory on top of the *Colonne de la Victoire* (1808) on the Place du Châtelet in Paris, the meaning behind this figure expresses a dynastic-national approach.

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[31] Mór Erdélyi, *A Magyar Állam fennállását megörökítő hét vidéki emlékmű: 896–1896* [Seven Monuments Throughout the Country Commemorating the Existence of the Hungarian State: 896–1896], Budapest 1897; György Szűcs, "A Millennium emlékműszobrászata" [The Millennium Memorial Sculpture], in: *A bánhidai turul* [The *Turul* from Bánhida], ed. Sándor Csőke, Tatabánya 1992, 43 f.

[32] Katalin Sinkó, "Árpád Versus Saint István. Competing Heroes and Competing Interests in the Figurative Representation of Hungarian History", in: *Ethnologia Europaea* 19 (1989), 67-84, and id., "Árpád kontra Szent István" [Árpád Versus St Stephen], in: *Janus* 6 (1989), no. 1, 42-52.

16 György Zala, *Archangel Gabriel*, 1905, Millennial Monument, Budapest (photograph © FSzEK [Metropolitan Ervin Szabó Library], Budapest Collection, inv. no. 4584)

A whole system of doctrines of public law is built around the Hungarian Holy Crown, the essence of which is that the king and the nation unite under the Holy Crown to form a single legitimate executive power. Power comes from the crown, which is a separate legal entity. The king is the head of the crown (*caput sanctae regni coronae*), and his head and limbs together form the body of the crown (*totum corpus sacrae regni coronae*).[33] This, while an expression of independence and autonomy in the first place, could also be used to support the ideology of the Habsburg Empire. The kings are no more than temporary manifestations of the thousand-year-long executive power derived from the unity of the chiefs and the crown.

[27] The idea made up of all these different historical viewpoints, that is embodied in the monument, went through significant changes in the following decades. Obviously, the ensemble of statues was not left untouched by shifts in history and politics – neither ideologically nor in its physical state. At the end of World War I, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy collapsed, leading firstly to a peaceful and democratic revolution, and then, in the spring of 1919, to a dictatorship of the proletariat in Hungary. At the end of 1918, the Habsburg monarchs were exiled from the pantheon of the Millennial Monument – and, figuratively, from national history as well. In the language of public sculpture, this was a symbolic act of breaking all ties with the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. On 1 May 1919, the monument received a special temporary decoration: it was covered from top to bottom with a red drape to symbolize the erasure of history and the past by the communist government; the colossal column was fashioned into an obelisk and a plaster statue of Marx was placed in front of it – the work of none other than György Zala![34]

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[33] László Péter, "The Holy Crown of Hungary, Visible and Invisible", in: *The Slavonic and East European Review* 81 (2003), no. 3, 421-510: 477 f., 484 f.

17 Unveiling of the *Memorial Stone of the Heroes of World War I*, 1929, in front of the Millenial Monument, Budapest. Postcard, Zempléni Múzeum, Szerencs, accession no. 0114701 (photo: https://gallery.hungaricana.hu/hu/SzerencsKepeslap/1180185/?img=0)

[28] After the Treaty of Trianon (1920), the monument had to be modified in accordance with the new national ideology; one could say it had to be "reshaped". In 1929, the *Memorial Stone of Heroes* was unveiled, turning the monument into a kind of national cultic place (Fig. 17). From that time on, ceremonies were commonly held there, some of them organized by the government. They evoked the past, while simultaneously expressing the political pursuits of the present. As a cultic place, it was repeatedly used as a background for ephemeral decorations. Not all events that took place here were related to the monument and its sculpture gallery: on the occasion of the 34th International Eucharistic Congress in May 1938, it was covered up once more, creating an enormous baldachin around the main column. After 1945, it became the scene of official government parades and youth meetings.

[29] The example of the Millennial Monument demonstrates how monuments are typically created for the widest public, and thus become instruments of communication between the holders of power and the masses. We can say that their purpose is mainly political rather than aesthetic. Monuments usually fall outside the realm of autonomous art. Even though they are normally intended for "eternity", it is because of their political role that they so often fall victim to "iconoclasm".

About the Author

Gábor György Papp works as a research fellow at the Institute for Art History of the Research Centre for the Humanities of the Lorand Eötvös Research Network (formerly: of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences) in Budapest. His fields of study include the history of art, architecture, sculpture and urban planning in the 19th century as well as art historiography. Earlier, he

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[34] Katalin Sinkó, "A Millenniumi emlékmű mint kultuszhely" [The Millennial Monument as a Cult Place], in: *Medvetánc* 2 (1987), 28-50: 33-36; Csilla Markója, "'Vörös posztó'. Városinstalláció 1919. május 1-én a források tükrében" ['Red Drape'. Installation in the City on 1 May 1919 in the Light of the Sources], in: *Enigma* 25 (2018), no. 94, 147-215: 189-191.

investigated the interrelationships of Central European architects and sculptors and the transfer of knowledge among them. His current research focuses on the emergence of the national idea and its reflections in art and architecture in Central Europe in the 19th century. Articles that have resulted from his current research are: "Can There Be Such a Thing as National Style? Otto Wagner and National Architecture in Hungary", in: *Acta Historiae Artium* 59 (2018), no. 1, 285-297; "Renaissance Architecture and the Search for the Hungarian National Style in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries", in: *Forging Architectural Tradition: National Narratives, Monument Preservation and Architectural Work in the Nineteenth-Century*, eds. Alexander Lupienko and Dragan Damjanović, New York 2021 (forthcoming).

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