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**HUNGARIAN AND SLOVAK ISSUES IN THE TEXTS  
OF LAJOS HAAN IN THE BACKGROUND  
OF CULTURAL AND LITERARY SCIENCE**



Slovaks living abroad form an integral part of the Slovak national cultural context. They create values that need to be preserved, enhanced and point out their versatility and use for contemporary forms of cultural identification. Slovaks in Hungary, who have been living in the vicinity of Békéscsaba for more than three hundred years, are also an important component of the Slovak minority of Hungarian Lowland. From this “Slovak Palestine”, as Ján Kollár named it, in the 18th and 19th century a historical-religious-cultural center of Slovaks (and also Hungarians) was created, which can still be rightfully proud of its heritage. Being a part of it, as a kind of pioneer, even as a historical basis, is also the personality of Lajos Haan (1818–1891), who performed his versatile activity in the chronotope of “Hungarian and Slovak” Békéscsaba. In this spirit, the article interprets his letters, his diary, “Pamätnosti” (Memoirs) and “Dejiny” (History), while presenting material and immaterial sources, monuments, inspirations that have been, are and will certainly be useful in artistic, cultural and literary “communication”. It is based on the attributes of cultural and literary science, which is thus an integrative model of literature research: a set of approaches that focus on cultural topics, theories and methods. The region of Békéscsaba (*pars pro toto*: contemporary Hungary) is its focus. In selected texts of his material writings, Lajos Haan reflects his closer understanding of cooperation with the environment, from a broader point of view the intra- and interculturality of Hungarians and Slovaks: their coexistence, cooperation and diverse creative efforts. It points out the importance of Haan’s personal contacts within the contemporary social environment, which is also specified in his personal letters. Memoirs are a testimony of an intellectual from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; to today’s reader they will reveal the “strange, interesting, Hungarian” atmosphere of the time – in the background of social, political, historical, cultural and literary attributes. The description of the characteristic features of the city is a symbol of the peaceful coexistence of nations and nationalities in the Lowlands. In fact, the article presents the complex activity of an unusual personality: a Hungarian historian and a Slovak priest in one person, Lajos Haan, whose texts are interesting and current for today.

*Keywords:* Slovaks of Hungarian Lowland, Southeastern Hungary, Hungarians, Lajos Haan, national (minority) identity, cultural science, literary science, interpretation.

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*Dedicated to the memory of Lajos Haan, the first serious historian of Lowland Slovaks on the occasion of the 130th anniversary of his death*

*Quis leget pro honore hungarorum slavorum?*

(An appeal by Adolf Molitoris, teacher of Lajos Haan at the Gymnasium in Mezőberény)

Cultural-literary aspects are important attributes of a nation's existence. Throughout the world, they create values that reflect the maturity of the human community in space and time. This is no

different on the European continent, where artistic artifacts have been established in ancient Greece that are impressive to this day. Of course, different geopolitical determinants also influenced these processes: national borders changed, different interests were emphasized. The nation has so easily become a nationality: in another state, in a different social environment. The existence of ethnic being is thus an eminently specific issue. However, this territorially differentiated but ideologically connected bond with the “mother” country evokes different feelings in people's souls. And these are the points of contact in revealing the phenomenon of national existence of this or that (smaller or larger) human community. It is directly the duty of culturally active individuals to “protect the fire” of their own identity, their own language – and thus contribute to the common being of the wider geographical environment or to the general culture as such (on a global scale). Protestant religion and language have resulted in cohesion and the consolidation of identity among the population. Of course, linguistically different variants – dialects have developed in this region as well. These were also investigated to a lesser extent by Lajos Haan (around 1845), who in his publications also wrote about Hungarian-Slovak linguistic relations in general form [for more details, see Tóth 2008, 24]. On the other hand, this existence demands from the “majority” nation empathy and benevolence not only in ideas but also in actions and deeds. It is therefore necessary to create a wide range of possibilities, which makes visible, strengthens (i.e. creates) the creative perspective of the minority in the societal (thus also cultural) field. Writings also play a role in this – in our case, especially from the cultural point of view. This is consistently true of the literary sphere as well, whereas poets and writers have long constituted the memory of the nation. These (cultural) documents and their concretizations give us signals, remind us of important milestones and show the (possible) path of the future.

Mutual interactions are studied by cultural and literary science, which perceives literary texts as communicative manifestations of the self-reflection of culture itself. The Institute of World Literature of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (together with selected university departments) has, as part of its project activities, recently developed and published the so-called Hyperlexikon of literary terms on the Internet ([www.hyperlexikon.sav.sk](http://www.hyperlexikon.sav.sk)), which states that the goals of this area are to point out the reciprocal relationships between literary texts and cultural phenomena of various kinds. This means that it is not just a question of interpreting literary works, but also of identifying historically identifiable cultural patterns that can be traced in given literary texts. The field of subjects of its research is so wide and complex, it contains practically every cultural phenomenon, which is the subject of reflection and (in our case literary, intercultural) communication based on cultural memory research. Within European civilization (and thus within historical memory as a pillar of cultural science literary science), Central Europe is an important chronotope, as the core of Europe without all the peninsulas and without the Eastern European Plain. According to the geographical-historical definition, this includes Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia and Croatia. This means that in terms of the choice of our topic, the former Austria-Hungary was an integral part of this chronotope as a territory of constant clashes, interactions, historical and social turbulence. And it was there that Lajos Haan also worked.

Lajos Haan was an important figure: for almost four decades he served as a priest in the largest Hungarian Evangelical ecclesiastical community in the Lowlands, Békéscsaba (1855–1891); he was the chief notary of the church and the author of important works on local history; as an intellectual working with the Slovak mother tongue, but in adulthood having a Hungarian identity, he witnessed the contemporary Slovak national movement and the creation of Hungarian-Slovak relations. Significant sources remain after him: more than a hundred letters, a diary (memoirs) and about twelve manuscripts. His correspondence or memoirs are important testimonies of 19<sup>th</sup> century Békéscsaba, Hungarian scientific life, the life of the Evangelical Church or the national movement. It is therefore part of not only Hungarian but also Slovak history and literature. The inspiration for his diligence was, in particular, a desire for self-realization or creative ambition and the resulting internal need to respond to external stimuli and leave important statements behind. That's why we consider Haan: “... a personality who revealed the Lowland roots of Slovakia, except in a broad historical context, in



other words, his interest in Lowland Slovaks was part of the interest in history in general” [Andruška 2007, 187].

He was born on August 13, 1818 in Sámsonháza to the family of the evangelical pastor János Haan (1779–1855) and Judit Mária (born Petényi; 1793–1862). He graduated from the folk school in Békéscsaba. Already in this period, he became interested in history. Over the years, he argued that the primary source of national awakening was the following (subjectively described) experience: “He was interested in history as a student. While his peers played games, he preferred to retreat to his father's study and flip through the registers. When he was nine years old, he became friends with 90-year-old Matej Sekerka. They enjoyed each other's company for long hours, the old man talked about how life had once been, and the boy asked about everything. He wondered what Csaba had always looked like, who the first preachers and teachers were, what they were like, where the first schools stood...” [Borguľa, Švihran 1979, 142]. He later studied at the lower senior evangelical Gymnasium in Mezőberény (1829–1834) and in the Prešov (Hung. Eperjes) Evangelical College (1834–1839). Studying in this city enabled him to actively participate in Hungarian and Slovak self-education society. He was “... not only one of the most active members of the Slovak Society, but he also served as secretary in this society and was the most productive poet in it” [Jančovic 2012, 49]. This five-year stay was of great importance for the formation of his personality (interest in theology, philosophy, history, folklore, translation, poetry). He maintained written contact with Ján Kollár and Samo Bohdan Hroboň; every day he tried to cooperate and coexist with Slovak and Hungarian students. He became a librarian in the educational association, then a secretary and later a vice-president. After graduating from the College of Prešov (Hung. Eperjes), he worked for a year as an educator and chief servant in the Békés county. In 1841 he traveled via Prague, Teplice, Dresden, Leipzig and Altenburg to Jena, where he enrolled at the university and lived through an “unforgettable half year”. In Prague, he met several representatives of the Czech national revival: Jungmann, Palacký, Šafárik. He studied his second semester at the University of Berlin. Despite attending philosophy lectures with Friedrich Wilhelm Schelling, he did not particularly inspire him to do so (he considered it impractical, difficult to digest for the Hungarian stomach). In addition to studying theology, he also devoted himself to several areas: he attended lectures on Hegel's logic, Slovak folk poetry, and became acquainted with popularized ideas about Slavic reciprocity. He also participated in the activities of the Hungarian Student Association, which we consider a testimony to his (temporary) departure from the Slovak national beliefs. However, he left Berlin in 1842: he traveled to Germany and Austria, and later to Pozsony (Pressburg, contemporary Bratislava). That same year, he returned to Békéscsaba and became a Hungarian teacher at a middle-class burgher school. Not only in this immediate form, but also in his overall activity, he contributed to the creation of social (i.e. Hungarian and Slovak) bilingualism in Békéscsaba. This “... bilingual linguistic and dual cultural model advocated by Lajos Haan has proved its worth in this area...” [Žiláková 2018, 116]. In 1843 he was ordained an evangelical priest in Banská Štiavnica (Hung. Selmecebánya) and became an assistant chaplain of his father. On October 1, 1846, he married Karolína Vilim (married by a prominent Lowland priest and cultural historian Daniel Brozman), who soon died (1849). He took part in the Revolution (1848) as a military priest in Nagybecskerek. In the same year (September 20), his only daughter Karolína was born. He later received an offer from the church in Nagylak, where he was unanimously elected priest. He lived through the years 1849–1855 as a Slovak evangelical priest in Nagylak [for more details, see: Saják 1994, 131–134]. After his wife's death, he remarried (May 1, 1850), this time to his sister-in-law Amália Vilim (they were married by his father János Haan; according to the tombstone Amália Wilim; she died exactly on the day of her seventieth birthday on November 12, 1898). It was in Nagylak that he began to systematically devote himself to regional and ecclesiastical history, in connection with it also to ethnography, archeology and the history of art. His father died on September 12, 1855, and so he was called to his priesthood in Békéscsaba, which was then the largest evangelical parish in Hungary. Haan gradually developed into a renowned historian (he became a member of the Hungarian Historical Society). Around 1855, therefore, Haan began to devote himself to more thorough, more

serious writing (as we identify, for example, from his memoirs; before that he took it as a kind of hobby, filling breaks in his priestly vocation). In this period, we actually record his symbolic and concrete transformation into a professional historian, which gradually gained a proper place in the national (i.e. Hungarian) scientific life. Thanks to that "... the Békéscsabian topographer became a nationally known and respected historian" [Demmel 2018, 108]. After the establishment in the home region, he began to tend more towards the so-called double identity. He first wrote in Latin, German, Hungarian, Czech, and later in Slovak. His Czech is actually biblical and Slovakized Czech. In 1858 he was elected a member of the Learned Estonian Society (*German Gelehrte Estnische Gesellschaft, Estonian Õpetatud Eesti Selts*) in the city of Tartu. In 1877 he became a corresponding member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences; he was later awarded the Knight's Cross by the Council of Ferenc József (1881). He died in Békéscsaba on August 12, 1891; he is buried in the evangelical cemetery Kastélyi. [Thus, in 2021 we commemorate the 130th anniversary of his death. For a more detailed biobibliography of Lajos Haan, see: Šenkár 2018, 84–88, Štefanko 2004, 198–201 and Kmet' 1991, 167–174.]

In contemporary Békéscsaba two equal collaborating priests served at the same time: Gusztáv Szeberényi and Lajos Haan. Thanks to their cooperation (but also certain disagreements), the Evangelical Church (and thus the writings) developed significantly in the region. As an amateur historian, Haan wrote his first work at the request of the presbytery on the occasion of the centenary of the consecration of the so-called small church in Békéscsaba (he published fragmentary data about the city and the church). However, the commission of the church community motivated him to further research, which led to the publication of the first large monograph on the county of Békés (1870). In addition, he collected and published a list and short biographies of up to 1434 students from Hungary who studied in Jena. He was the first to identify the Hungarian ancestors of the German Renaissance painter Albrecht Dürer and proved that he came from an aristocratic Ajtósi family that lived in Ajtósfalva near the town of Gyula. He also founded the Archaeological and Cultural-Historical Society of Békés County in the background of this research.

Lajos Haan grew up in Békéscsaba basically in the Slovak language environment. His parents used Slovak as their mother tongue, but in adulthood the family language of communication was Hungarian. He later – although he consistently defined himself as a Slovak in his diary – clearly identified with the Hungarian national identity. In the late 1940s, he became a supporter of the Hungarian reform movement. However, his Slovakness is (until today) understood in the evangelical ecclesiastical and social context. He was thus "... as a part of the evangelical social network and as an evangelical priest a Slovak, as a publicly active man, intellectual and historian a Hungarian. Haan's two identities manifested themselves in other social networks, which he also himself expresses ... that ... he is a Slovak priest, but a Hungarian writer" [Demmel 2016, 21]. This attribute is also fully reflected in his writings.

As a certain interesting note, Lajos Haan as the chaplain of the Evangelical Church and a professor at the college in Békéscsaba wrote the verse (1847) "Píseň" (Song) on the occasion of redemption, i.e. liberation of subjects from landowners (abolition of landowners' burdens). In the contemporary context, the Slovak prototype and Hungarian translation were authentic and well-known in the region. In it, Haan based it, in the background of the modernization ambitions of the city elite, on the Békéscsabian synergy where, thanks to the peaceful coexistence of Hungarians and Slovaks there were, "... not only internal multiple links, but also the formation of systemic links with neighboring and other regions, these links were multiple, multifaceted and led to the formation of new, more qualitatively complex system levels, while individual regions retained internal identity and became components of higher systemic complexes" [Zajac 1993, 132]. It emphasizes the importance (even extraordinariness) of the city and the unusual event of the mentioned redemption: "*Daloljunk arról, mi történt / Amit jó Csabának most megért. / S mert csodadolgok történtek, / Azért ide figyeljete...*" – "Let's sing about what happened / What good Békéscsaba lived through now. / And because miraculous things happened, / Hence watch here..." [Dedinszky 1987, 118–119]. In the background of the social disposition of inhabitants, he



primarily emphasizes freedom, respectively an effort to obtain liberation from servitude (also thanks to the help of God, who is the best lord). However, the “exchange from the right of the Lord” is at the expense of the indebtedness of the whole city, but it is still a certain redemption. Freedom is intellectual wealth – in the background the lyrical subject states: “*Habár szegény vagyok, / Mégis szabad vagyok, / A szegénység nem fáj / Annak, ki szabad már. / Jobb a száraz kenyér / Elnyert szabadságban, / Mint a puha kalács / Kemény szolgaságban.*” – “Though I am poor, / I am still free, / Poverty does not hurt / To who is free already. / Better dry bread / Won in freedom, / Than soft cake / In hard servitude” [Dedinszky 1987, 118–119]. It was a text that historically legitimized local burghers, strengthened and improved their versatility. After all, from this “song” we also identify Haan’s versatile talent and interest in public affairs.

From the aspect of choosing our topic, the most important are his letters, diary, “Memoirs” and his publication *History of the Old and New Nagylak* (“*Dejepis starého a nového Nadlaku*”). These prototexts point not only to the complex personality of Lajos Haan, but also to the contemporary (not only regional, but also Hungarian) colors.

Haan’s life story and all-round creative activity represent a certain archetype of the Lowland Slovak intellectual. He was “the first serious historian of the Lowland Slovaks ... making a great effort to understand the Hungarian and Slovak people” (Ján Sirácky, 1979), who correctly realized that “... his own position and the position of the Lowland Slovak collective predestines him to decipher the way to reconcile languages and cultures, to raise the issue of dual culture” [Divičanová 2002, 487]. Anna Divičanová thus does not consider his dual culture to be accidental, but a natural and lawful manifestation that grew out of an environment where the coexistence of different nationalities was a matter of course, or an everyday reality, thus facilitating good interaction between people of different ethnicities. In addition, in the Slovak language islands, Haan was perhaps the only one who brought together evangelical pastors who took a deeper interest in their Slovak collective, in its past, but also in everyday life and customs. It was he who, in terms of complex identity “... went through an interesting journey from an ardent Slovak (and Slavic) student of the Kollár type through a pragmatically acting member of the Csaba honoration and an opponent of the Štúr movement and its program, to the ideologue of the so-called double identity, i.e. at the same time intellectually mastered Hungarian and ancestrally inherited Slovak identity” [Kmet’ 2010, 54]. In the background of these attributes, Rudolf Chmel rightly considers him “... a peculiar author, at best a bilingualist, who ... represents a hybrid national case, which was conditioned on the one hand by his life in the Lowlands and on the other hand by the specific Hungarian conditions that shaped him” [Chmel 1973, 48].

Haan has “... earned a place in literary history, not only in the Lowland national minoritarian, but also in the Slovak literary context and received recognition from Hungarian educational circles ... created a remarkable work and thus contributed to the enrichment and development of regional historiography” [Andruška 2009, 30–31]. This is also evidenced by his publication, which is genre-wise and thematically part of the material work, entitled *The History of the Old and New Nagylak*, which he published with Daniel Zajac (Sarvaš; 1853; 40 pages). Both were “... among those Lowland Slovak scholars who realized that Slovaks immigrating to the Lowlands in the 18<sup>th</sup> century settled here permanently and created a peculiar branch of the Slovak nation. And the feeling of pride, that only those have, who have created new life, new settlements, new communities, new spiritual values, has led them to write and record in chronicles, books, articles not only these manifestations of the new, different than in Slovakia, in the “Uplands” of Slovak civilization, but also the connection and growth of these newly created communities with their new homeland” [Štefanko 2004, 191]. It is actually a period-specific documentary about purposeful first steps in Slovak-Romanian relations, despite the fact that the Nagylak community at that time remained in the position of a secondary actor, but this work “... conveys information about the way of life, customs, the existence of Slovak folk culture, as well as interethnic relations. For the Slovaks in Nagylak, it had the value of a founding act...” [Anoca 2010, 43]. Haan as a historian was mainly a self-taught person with a clear inclination to a descriptive (empirical) understanding of historiography, while he was primarily concerned with strict recording, or description of facts, data, events. Evidently – *pars pro toto* – he

preferred chronology, historical statistics or the search for and collection of historical sources. There, too, lies the diachronic value of this work. [However, we have already written about this publication in more detail. For more information, see: Šenkár 2018, 84–89].

Lajos Haan's letters have not only cultural or literary, but also narrative and documentary value for the present. Throughout his life, he addressed them not only to Slovak (Samo Bohdan Hroboň, Jozef Miloslav Hurban, František Vítázoslav Sasinek and others), but also to Hungarian personalities. He complains to Hroboň about the loss of national consciousness, while he emphasizes to this "Slovak brother" the need for some kind of self-determination in the background of the proverb "God helps those who help themselves". He describes (or more precisely: acknowledges) his status as a regional cultural actor, who, however, only furtively finds time to work in the literary field. He always enjoys a well-thought-out response; in his letter he recognizes his addressees of Hungarian nationality as a devoted admirer. He is respectful to Slovaks: he asks Hurban for a critical reading of his manuscript. He subscribes to his ecclesiastical letters, sends charity to the fraternal church, and thanks his own sister for her noble deed for the poor. Haan's social sensitivity is evident, with: "I do not do good to be praised, but because I love goodness" [letter to Samo Bohdan Hroboň – Katona, Demmel 2016, 29]. Like other scholars of the time, he is pleased that the Cithara sanctorum, the Békés-Csaba Memorial or reports on schools in the region have been published. He thinks of the Gymnasium in Nagyróce (Slk. Revúca), which is afflicted by high politics. Overall, however, we can say that in cultural politics he submits to God's will for the benefit of the church, but he is also a moderate patriot. He sometimes directs his gaze backwards (for example to his friendship with Ján Kollár) and forwards (a gift for the construction of the church organ in the village called Sielnica, Hung. Szélnye). He calls for his "brothers" to cooperate, while his humanism is also evident: "One can be both a Hungarian and a Slovak writer and yet a good patriot" [letter to Samuel Bodorovský – Katona, Demmel 2016, 47]. In his understanding, the life and upbringing of the young should be subordinated to the Church, so that the good servants of the Lord may be brought up, thus actually combining the secular and professional branch of the evangelicals in the Lowlands. From a cultural point of view, Haan mentions the beneficial influences of Hungarian and (partly) Slovak associations for the region. He criticizes the politics of social circles, but also highlights their overall cultural work in the area. He proclaims spiritual unity, which is symbolized by the three evangelical churches in Békéscsaba: the largest was being built at the time, the second would not fit local believers on Sunday, and the third was just being restored. In the minds of Lajos Haan himself and the addressees of his letters, the past, present and future are united. The need for learning is also emphasized thanks to his own personal library. Haan lives and longs to live for his people of Békéscsaba in the Lowlands – it is this extremely emotional sound from his letters.

Lajos Haan addresses most of his letters to Hungarian intellectuals, friends, acquaintances, or he deals with the personalities of this cultural environment (Miklós Aranyádi, Ferenc Balogh, János Pálffy, Gábor Prónay, István Pajor, Frigyes Pesty, József Szinnyei, Kálmán Thaly and others). At the same time, he is, naturally, more forgiving and personal to the addressees from the family circle – he acquaints them with the joys and worries of his own microspace. He emphasizes to his sister-in-law Vilma Haan that he put into press a Hungarian prayer book. He informs her about the social situation of the poor in the city and sends an official form of recognition from – the power of his Hungarian office – the chief mayor. He gives his friend the evangelical pastor Gusztáv Steinacker a picture of contemporary conditions in Békéscsaba. In letters written in Hungarian, attention is paid to a historical topic: Haan often addresses his writings to Iván Nagy, the founder of Hungarian scientific genealogy. He asks him to inform him immediately of any information about Békés county that he comes across in Pest libraries. He accentuates his personal efforts to go on a trip to Pest, which would be connected with his visit to scientific libraries and academies. This actually symbolically and realistically creates a branch of the Hungarian community (via research, interaction, contacts). In cooperation, Haan is reciprocal: always accommodating to the other side. At the same time, he is constantly looking for various information in newspapers (Hon, Koszorú, Magyar Gazda, Magyarország és a Nagyvilág,



Pesti Napló, Szarvas, Vasárnapi Ujság, Üstökös etc.). He highlights books and libraries (King Mátyás, Academia Istropolitana, Tinódi, Révai etc.). He is also interested in the history of the Protestant university in Gyula. He often mentions the newly formed historical society and their traveling sessions (for example in the ancient Pannonhalma). For this reason too, it is evident that Lajos Haan respects history (both Hungarian and Slovak), but he does not find enough time in the literary field to – in his own words – “spread his love for the Hungarian language”. Based on the proclamation of his Hungarian identity, he highlights through the connection between the state – the religion – the individual the fact: how in a purely Slovak church he founded “... during my tenure, a Hungarian grammar school, two purely Hungarian elementary schools, introduced special Hungarian services on Sunday and published a special Hungarian prayer book for my own needs” [Katona, Demmel 2016, 41]. On the other hand, he promotes and declares the need for Hungarian-Slovak coexistence, which he also concretizes in the memory of Ján Kollár and the translations of his sonnets in his work called *Jena Hungarica*. On the other hand, he criticizes the Russians. He also supports his claims about the historical peculiarity of the Hungarians by mentioning archeological excavations from the Late Stone and Bronze Ages in the surrounding settlements of Békés County. In the field of culture, he emphasizes the need to establish a library of the mentioned association, as: “Trust me that the many beneficial effects that such associations have on the region in which they were formed cannot be overstated. First of all, the elite of the county intelligentsia, regardless of the party, will unite for a noble goal, which in itself is a great achievement, especially in today's conditions...” [Katona, Demmel 2016, 50]. The fact that the members of this association always meet in other cities of the contemporary multinational Hungary (Temesvár ~ Rom. Timișoara, Kassa ~ Slk. Košice, Szombathely) is mentioned as a renewed symbol of coexistence. The personality of Mátyás Bél is also important in the life of Lajos Haan, as he also devoted himself to this “great ornament of Hungary” in his introductory speech as part of his membership at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

He often directs his correspondence to his son-in-law Mihály Zsilinszki, a historian and politician. In it, he criticizes the alienation of the Nazarenes from the Evangelical Church, he writes about the reluctance of the Békéscsaba inhabitants towards their deputy. He highlights some personalities of Hungarian history and the present, which he subsequently cites as role models (Albert Apponyi, András Áchim, János Bethlen, János Hunyadi, Ferenc Rákóczi). He also mentions the importance of building a Hungarian Gymnasium and establishing cooperation between the church of Békéscsaba and church of Zólyom (Slk. Zvolen). Even in the background of this effort, it is important to be aware of the need to travel (i.e. to use the services of the Hungarian Royal State Railways). Thus, Haan wants to get not only prints of Slovak views (Slk. *Slovenské pohľady*), but also to important works of factual writing of Hungarian and Slovak provenance (*pars pro toto*: to the printed sermons of Daniel Krman or to the books of the Pallas publishing house). With his ideas, he is able to go as far as the minister, as, according to him, it would serve the Hungarianization of Békéscsaba. As a role model, therefore, he mentions his younger brother Antal Haan, who hangs a Hungarian flag on top of the bastion in his house on the island of Capri, to inform the surrounding inhabitants of his identity and the fact that he has a Hungarian guest. In this way, even far from Békéscsaba, souls are saved for the needs of the Hungarian homeland. In his letters, Lajos Haan often tried to do this one way or another.

Lajos Haan's diary is formally a memoir. The author began writing it on January 16, 1870, the last records are from 1890; in his life's description, Haan got as far as 1883. Thanks to his text, the reader can, of course, also become acquainted with the contemporary world of the predominantly Slovak Békéscsaba. Using his memoirs “... we can point out what previous worlds meant to former concrete participants and how much different experience has arisen about these past human worlds. Thanks to them, history will be a history of multivocality and plurality” [Gyáni 1997, 28]. Haan's diary suits this context. On the other hand, some criticism is also identifiable in metatexts: “It is strange that Lajos Haan, who was in the pulpit, in public life, a master of the language in his letters, who wrote nice poems in three languages and who was seduced by attractive lectures and always stunned the audience, almost never used his ability to narrate in literature itself and never tried about

a nice style” [Székely 1991, 10]. On the other hand, Haan’s bilingualism also had a positive effect on his work itself, as several works were published simultaneously in Hungarian and Slovak. However, his style was often not colorful and readable to readers, which means that he did not adhere to the romantic lures of the 19th century and did not submit to the nationalist branch of historiography. He could also afford it as a person with a German-sounding surname, living in a bilingual Hungarian-Slovak environment with a double identity. He does not want to push forward in his diary texts, his statements are (especially for the future) often “only” self-affirming with an effort to document everything he has experienced. His work is so rich especially in the facts of the narrower or wider region. He never judges, but sometimes his mild cynicism (even sour humor) can be identified in the background. However, his sarcasm is never hateful, but apt. The diary thus served him perhaps as a kind of psychological valve for subjective considerations or statements. In the individual statements, however, a kind of “naughty” feature of his personality also comes to the fore, which, however, is thwarted by his wider applied creative efforts for the gnomic. He is not sentimental, but forgiving, without unnecessary emotions. He expresses his judgments without a doubt even at tragic moments. [For more interesting attributes of a special creative portrait – and especially the style of writing – see: Katona 2016, 130–135 in Slk. and Katona 2017, 352–363 in Hung.; the Hungarian variant contains extended and supplemented information]. As an evangelical priest, he understands the fate of himself and his nation (his nationality), accepts the will of God and does not keep anger in his heart. After all, despite the various pitfalls of life, he remained with two feet on the ground and, like a priest, turned his mind and eyes, naturally, to God.

In his diary, Lajos Haan, of course, bases the text on his own chronological biography: he was born thirty-one years after the battle at Világos, which he considers a mourning day for the Hungarian nation. He also highlights his father János Haan, who did not know Hungarian at all when he arrived in Békéscsaba. However, he later learned, and so from Sámuel Tessedik he was actually the first priest to write in such a complexity the more significant regional events of his church. The fact that they had a mourning speech over his grave in both Hungarian and Slovak also testifies to his true multiculturalism.

In his text, Haan describes in more detail his own childhood memories. Of the young years, he criticizes the absence of school curricula within the evangelical ecclesiastical education. It highlights stylistic school exercises, in which students could optionally choose the language of instruction (German, Hungarian or Slovak). In a reader effective way he clarifies the time during his studies in Prešov (Hung. Eperjes) with regard to the relationship between Hungarian and Slovak – within the city and the school. He liked Rákóczi’s Song in the local educational association; he often recited poems by Miklós Zrínyi, Mihály Vörösmarty and József Bajza. The emergence of the Prešov (Hung. Eperjes) Learned Society (1833) is in fact a testament to the overall Hungarianization. In the background, Haan also mentions contemporary political events and especially personalities: Lajos Kossuth, Klemens Wenzel Lothar von Metternich, Imre Vahot, Kálmán Lisznyai, Ferenc Kölcsey, Dániel Irányi, Tivadar Pauler, Ferenc Pulszky, Gábor Döbrentey. At the same time, he criticizes the growing hatred between Hungarians and Slovaks in the city, and therefore he and his teacher come to the conclusion that the mutual rapprochement of these two nations could be effective, especially thanks to the knowledge of their literatures. In this student period, we record a kind of zealous zeal for Hungarian, also highlighting its historical, diachronic aspect: *“De ismered-e keleten a magyarok / Vérrel kivívott, drága hazáját, / Ahol egykor Hunyadi és bátor csapatai, / erős kézzel fojtották el a törökök dühét? / Ahol a zefír ringatja az aranylő vetést? / A magas, aranyban gazdag Kárpátok országát?”* – “But do you know in the east / The Hungarians' blood-fought precious homeland, / Where Hunyadi and his brave troops, / Once stifled the anger of the Turks with a strong hand? / Where the zephyr rocks the golden sowing? / The high, gold-rich country of the Carpathians?” [Demmel, Katona 2017, 46 – it is a poem by Lajos Haan, originally written in German in the memorial book of his friend from his student period].

The author analyzes the reasons for the (non)presence of Hungarian students at universities in cities such as Jena, Halle, Berlin. At the same time, he criticizes Pan-Slavism: he mentions its roots and the possible fight against it, especially thanks to the establishment of Hungarian societies and





libraries. From time immemorial, Haan devotes himself to books and their collection. Gradually, he created the largest private library of an evangelical priest in Hungary. He also used some of them when he and his students committed themselves to paintings from the life of the Hungarians and the history of the Árpád family. These “journalistic” attributes were perhaps ingrained, as his father – as the odd one in the city – subscribed to up to three Hungarian newspapers. Thus, Hungarian identity has been indicated in Haan since childhood: symbolically from the moment he saw a painted portrait of King Mátyás in his parents' bedroom.

Haan concretizes the busy “regional” moments of the 1848–1849 period: the individual sermons of the national awakeners that led to the revolution. According to him, however, everything should come from the church, where it is necessary to be a good Hungarian and thus serve the Hungarian homeland. He identifies with the bold ideas (also of independent Hungary) of Sándor Petőfi and his tumultuous poem “Talpra magyar!” (Eng. *Arise, Hungarian!*, Slk. *Hor sa, Maďar!*). He criticizes Slovaks of Békéscsaba who resisted mobilization and did not go into battle (like the Hungarians). So it was a time of clear goals and enthusiasm: Hungarian flags hung in the church towers, bells were donated for war purposes and zealous stanzas were written. In one of them, Lajos Haan himself combines his religious beliefs with a strong Hungarian national identity: “Ezen házban pap lakozik, / A ki gyakran imádkozik; / Amde az ő legszentebb imája: / Legyen áldott a magyar hazája.” – “In this house dwells a priest, / Who often prays; / But his most sacred prayer is: / May the homeland of the Hungarian be blessed!” [Demmel, Katona 2017, 89]. Haan also mentions his Nagylak colleague Daniel Zajac, with whom he co-published *History of the Old and New Nagylak* in 1853 (it was the first written opinion about Slovaks in Nagylak – note P. Š.). It was in Zajac’s person that the Hungarian-Slovak understanding and mutual scientific cooperation were properly combined. Haan’s extracurricular activities are thus a peaceful period, highlighting the positive features of the smaller local church and the possibility of deeper scientific work. However, the author expresses some criticism of his colleague Gusztáv Szeberényi: he leans towards Slavism, pampers the common people and is cynical about honorability. He criticizes his nationally double-edged character: on the one hand, he is a Pan-Slav and a friend of Jozef Miloslav Hurban, whose books he also promotes, on the other hand, he presents himself among Hungarians as a Hungarophile. He issued a controversial local ordinance stating that where until now the registries were conducted exclusively in Slovak, they should now be written in Hungarian. In addition, in the fifth and sixth grades, in addition to reading and religion, each subject is to be taught in Hungarian. In the background of these facts, Haan also describes the unfortunate efforts of Bach's absolutism and its impact on the complex reduction of Hungarian. He emphasizes the need for Hungarian ministries and later rejoices in the Austro-Hungarian settlement (on this occasion, the whole of Békéscsaba was enlightened). He also mentions the coronation of the emperor/king and Lajos Kossuth's concerns about this settlement, which he addressed to Ferenc Deák. To some extent, it is embracing Kossuth's radicalism; he applies it to the people in the background of the idea that the priest must keep his people in check in order to maintain order. On the other hand, in parallel with historical events, he presents his personal, often tortuous, vicissitudes. With Kálmán Thaly, he walks through the archives of Banská Štiavnica (Hung. Selmechánya) and Krupina (Hung. Korpona), reads some “shameless” Slovak magazines (which are often claimed to magyarize Slovaks of Békéscsaba), mentions intrigues related to his (non)election as a member of the academy and the like. As part of archival research, it was grandiose that Kálmán Thaly found lost poems by Bálint Balassi in the archives of Radvaň (Hung. Radvány). After the aforementioned political settlement, Haan’s scope also takes on a broader dimension: he fights for public readings on winter Sundays and he lobbies with Minister Ágoston Trefort for the award in the form of the title of Royal Counselor for his colleague-rival Gusztáv Szeberényi. The time of new events is coming, thanks to which Haan realizes that even as a poor evangelical priest he is able to arrange something. For this reason and in spite of everything, he is in favor of peaceful coexistence of Hungarians and Slovaks.

It is interesting to look at the “Slovak” features of this text. It therefore emphasizes the need for culture and the constant cultivation of one's own mind through books and communication. In his

life, it is in this aspect that we identify the impulse to love history. In terms of education, he is most grateful to Slovak and Hungarian societies. At school, he is at first fully committed to the authorities; he takes their attention to his person as an honor that he would “not exchange for anything”. Haan’s first attempts at newspaper articles date back to his student years. At the same time, we perceive the statement about his correspondence to the newspapers in the Békés county as a certain self-praise. However, he also contributed to several Hungarian newspapers, magazines and anthologies; from the Slovak ones to magazines such as *Evanjelické cirkevné noviny*, *Evanjeliik*, *Korouhev na Zionu*, *Obzor* and others. He also points to his own sympathy towards Russians, which is, however, criticized by his classmates. He emphasizes that he also understands his identity as Slovak, which is respected by his entire school environment. The fact about his meeting with *Ludovít Štúr* (who lent him ten forints) sounds interesting from a reader’s perspective. As a certain pendant of Slovakness is the fact that in the city school Haan tried to teach children Hungarian in the spirit of the political situation of the time. On the other hand, later, when writing memoirs, he realizes in relation to his own profession that: “In Hungarian, I even taught religion, which I now admit was a mistake, I had to lecture it in my mother tongue” [Katona, Demmel 2016, 89]. At the same time, he emphasizes the necessary self-identification of the identity of Slovak pupils and mentions the type of his own pedagogical work with a didactically determined goal. With a positive nostalgia for the beautiful times of 1848, his literary efforts to publish a monograph on two Békéscsaban churches and the town, especially from the point of view of the history of the local evangelical church, are also concretized. Haan actually mentions positive critical responses in various languages to this monograph. As a certain interesting thing, let us mention that *Ján Kollár* and *Ludovít Štúr* were in favor of it. It is also a sign of a wider flow of information between the Lowlands and Uplands.

The question of the position of the nobility and his surroundings towards Haan’s person is interesting, especially in relation to *Gusztáv Szeberényi*, a colleague pastor, against whom he could only fight with his literary pen. Even Haan – paradoxically at the time – was criticized for Hungarianizing Slovaks in Békéscsaba. His mentioned double identity of a Slovak priest and a Hungarian historian is interesting. In the background, he compares the language of Upland and Lowland Slovaks, while, of course, associating with his own people: “... the Upland compatriots talk in such a flowery style and so arrogantly that when I left the church, I could hardly say what the sermon was about. And the common people, how can they grow through such dandified sermons? We, the Lowland parishioners, speak in a completely different way: popular so that everyone understands us. If we spoke like our Upland Brethren, the church would soon be empty” [Katona, Demmel 2016, 98]. The church is, of course, a holy place for him, nevertheless, he focuses his perspective on the technical achievements of the time (construction of the railway). His slightly ambivalent relationship to *Matica slovenská* – i.e. to the center of Hungarian Slavism and Pan-Slavs – is expressed by the idea that in the spirit of *Národné noviny*, under the literary pretext, *Matica* pursues political goals and consistently evokes hatred towards the Hungarians. Haan notes that he is not ashamed to be a Slav, he knows all the *Matica* members, but “... I consider Christianity and religion to be a much more sublime idea than nationality” [Katona, Demmel 2016, 101]. However, he speaks out against national struggles, believes in a calmer future and in a global language that would be a scientific and communicative tool of all mankind. In his understanding, the Slavs have a historical mission: to complete a borderless Europe on the basis of mutual understanding. The executors should be pastors, who are first and foremost good Christians, then faithful Hungarian patriots and only then good Slovaks. Thus, (symbolically) a diamond can be created hidden in the desert, understood in his mind as a triune personality of the Lowlands.

The most significant and most important work of Haan – intended for Slovaks and the only one written in Slovak – is his “*Pamätnosti Békés-Čabianske*” (Memoirs from Békés-Csaba – 1866; 82 pages). The Hungarian version, which was also published in Pest in the same year, is not a complete copy of the Slovak text. It is a typical example of the genre – a biography of the city, which flourished in Hungary, especially at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Haan handles historical facts very well in the text; records the history and civilizational activity of the Slovaks from Békéscsaba (1717–1866).



This work has retained its historical value to this day: as a specific concept we can realize from it what actually “Csabianness” (Slk. *čabianstvo*, *čabänstvo*) is meant to be, generally aware of its linguistic, cultural, mental peculiarity in the Hungarian environment, which was strengthened by the Evangelical faith. A *čabän* is thus primarily Slovak for Haan. He also expresses this in this work, in which specific local patriotism for Slovaks has its historical and linguistic-literary significance. Haan lived in the environment of the Slovak word from Békéscsaba and since the local dialect is also of Central Slovak origin, the codified Slovak was close to him. Overall, Lajos Haan was able to lay the lasting foundations of the local history and self-awareness of the population of his region in the 19th century. As proof of this, he published an evangelical prayer book, a book of Christian stories and also edited the list of names of the Hungarian Evangelical pastors. With his comprehensive activities, he was one of the most important socio-cultural personalities of his time in the Békés county.

In the work “Pamätnosti Békéš-Čabianske”, he presents basic attributes from the history of the country, the county and Békéscsaba. He expresses his idea in the preface: “My purpose in this work is: to teach my fellow citizens about the past of their residence and its surroundings; – then a more extensive description of my homeland, if possible, to contribute to the patriotic historical-statistical literature; – and finally: to leave behind, to the church entrusted to me, a kind of monument from which it would remember me even if I am no longer in the middle of it” [Haan 1991, 87]. He has an empathic, warm relationship with his locality, i.e. “the largest village in Europe”. He points to the ancient Hungarian origin of the name Békéscsaba and mentions the various nations that have been “established in our Békéscsaba” over the centuries. He places the current development thus within the historical framework of diachronic development (going back to the period before the arrival of the Hungarians). He describes, but also compares, while noting the undeniable progress of the settlement. Gnomically, it cites more memorable events from the beginning of the 18th century. The chapter on the Békéscsaba area is intertwined by the Lowland “spirit”. In the text, however, it sometimes slips down to exotic attributes (whales and other sea monsters have been swimming here for a long time), but overall it is objective and rational. He highlights the interesting dynamics of the surrounding plain, points to the farmsteads and vineyards, which are the focus of everyday creative work, i.e. the existence of the “Čabäns”. They “multiply considerably and live long” also thanks to healthy weather; they are socially conscious (they also founded a municipal hospital), but they do not block the path to technical progress (they perceive the railway as an advantage). The great merit of Lajos Haan himself is emphasized, which was that “... he also wrote about the everyday life and the way of life of Čabäns with scientific precision, he included in his point of view not only the leading strata of Békéscsaba but also agriculture, which also made up a quantitative majority of the people” [Szabó 1987, 279]. Since the Lowland man is not only full of spirit but also of body, Haan also points to the quality soil of the Békéscsaba land, which gives a rich harvest. A significant symbol of this is Lowland hemp, which is especially fond of sowing, weaving and spinning. The author provides a statistical overview of the population by religion, occupation, status, language, age, housing. His imaginary intention reaches dwellings of Békéscsaba habitations, especially nice peasant houses, where he examines the origin of families, states the attributes of their residence (shape, cleanliness, etc.). He periodically highlights the presence of *Tranoscius*, the Bible and other religious books in every cultivated family in Békéscsaba. He does not deny his point of view even when describing the language of the local population: its specifics, attributes and distinctive features. Overall, it is a declaration (in the background of numerous examples) that the people of Békéscsaba kept their Slovak language. In addition, special emphasis is placed on his diligence, exemplary religion and comprehensive teaching at school. It is the Lowland patriarchal world that is not really concerned with politics, but respects its priests and teachers. In the background, Haan details the names of mayors, notaries, inspectors, church curators, evangelical teachers and brief biographies of past church preachers and their contributions to Békéscsaba. Already at that time, the ecumenism of the Evangelical, Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Jewish religious communities was proclaimed. On this basis, the stratification of the time is evident, thanks to which

the tame people of Békéscsaba: "... they are reconciled with their destiny, they do not run to secularity, if an illness or any accident afflicts them, they accept it as the visitation of God" [Haan 1991, 142]. At the end of his text, Haan presents the current state of Békéscsaba, describes its (already mentioned) evident development, i.e. advancing huge steps thanks to the orphan's office, pharmacy, hospitals, funeral homes, funeral society, steam baths, mills, distilleries, breweries, shops, guilds or casino. This actually closes a kind of circle of realities and subjective thoughts of Lajos Haan about the place of his long-term work, which can be an example of the creative existence of a man of culture to this day.

All the above-mentioned works of Lajos Haan can be perceived as determining sources of (literary) communication with an open structure, which can be defined as "... transmission of ideological-aesthetic information through a communication channel between two communicating structures with unequal order" [Popovič 1983, 21]. This fulfills the attributes (mentioned in the introduction) of cultural and literary science (and its concretization in the work of Lajos Haan). So the intellectual and material legacy of Lajos Haan is also important in this respect, because: "Similar to tangible cultural heritage, traditional performing arts as an intangible cultural heritage of humanity are valuable resources for development of heritage..." [Mura, Kajzar 2019, 42]. In this way, nowadays, too, many people can still encounter all kinds of treasures even in Békéscsaba.

In conclusion, we can say that Lajos Haan was also called "the decoration of Lowland Slovaks" by Dagmar Mária Anoca and Oldřich Kníchal, because his work went beyond enlightenment activity and entered the world of regional and Hungarian science. He was actually a "Lowland historian priest and teacher" (Andrej Mráz). He was one of the most receptive, hard-working and most prolific authors of his time in his region – that is why he still deserves our attention and diverse treatment. And not just during jubilees.

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#### PICTURE APPENDICES

The photographs are from the collection of the Mihály Munkácsy Museum in Békéscsaba; collector: Ján Kocsor; originally also published in the book *Slovenský kňaz, maďarský historik*; however, the manuscript of the diary is kept in the Széchényi National Library in Budapest.



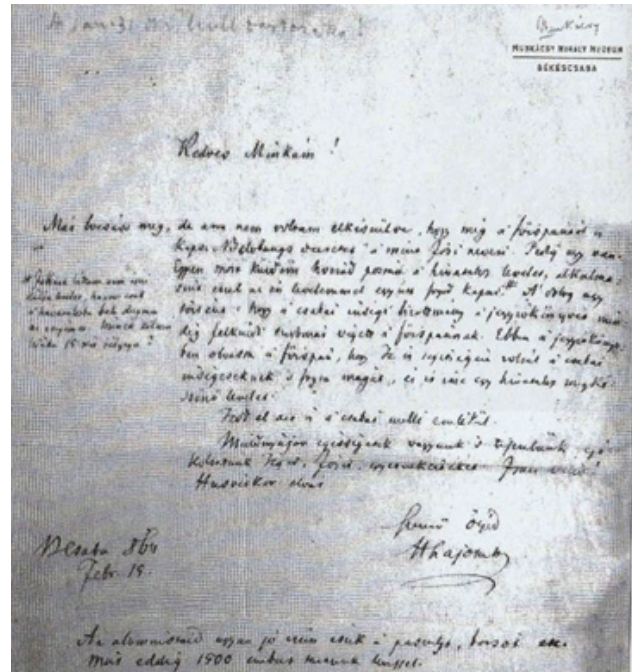
Portrait of Lajos Haan in 1880



Lajos Haan, Karolína Haan and his second wife  
Amália Vilim in 1866



Daughter and son-in-law of Lajos Haan (Mihály Zsilinszky and Karolína Haan) in 1867 at the wedding



Letter from Lajos Haan to his sister Vilma Haan from 1864



Manuscript of the diary of Lajos Haan

**Шэнкар Патрик**  
**ВЕНГЕРСКИЙ И СЛОВАЦКИЙ ВОПРОС**  
**В ТЕКСТАХ ЛАЙОША ХААНА НА ФОНЕ**  
**КУЛЬТУРОЛОГИИ И ЛИТЕРАТУРОВЕДЕНИЯ**

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Словаки, проживающие за рубежом, являются неотъемлемой частью Словацкого национально-культурного контекста. Они создают ценности, которые необходимо сохранить, улучшить и подчеркнуть их универсальность и использование для современных форм культурной идентификации. Важной составной частью словацкого меньшинства Венгерской равнины являются словаки, которые живут в окрестностях Бекешчабы более 300 лет. Из этой «словацкой Палестины», как назвал ее Ян Коллар, в XVIII–XIX вв. был создан историко-церковно-культурный центр словаков (в том числе венгров), который по праву может гордиться своим наследием. Его частью и своего рода первопроходцем, и историческим основателем является личность Лайоша Хаана (1818–1891), осуществлявшего свою разностороннюю деятельность в хронотопе “венгерского и словацкого” Бекешчабы. Статья излагает его письма, дневник и исторические документы; представляет материальные и нематериальные источники, памятники, вдохновляющие идеи, которые были и будут использованы в художественной, культурной и литературной «коммуникации». Она основана на атрибутах культурологической и литературной науки, которая представляет собой интегративную модель исследования литературы с набором подходов, ориентированных на культурную тематику, теорий и методов. В центре внимания находится регион Бекешчаба (*pars pro toto*: современная Венгрия). В избранных текстах своих материальных сочинений Лайош Хаан отражает свое глубокое понимание взаимодействия с окружающей средой, с более широкой точки зрения – внутрикультурные и межкультурные отношения венгров и словаков: их сосуществование, сотрудничество и разнообразную творческую деятельность.

Статья указывает на важность личных контактов Л. Хаана в современной социальной среде, что также прослеживается в его личных письмах. Мемуары являются свидетельством высокообразованного человека второй половины XIX в.; сегодняшнему читателю они откроют «странную, интересную» атмосферу Венгрии того времени на фоне социальных, политических, исторических, культурных и литературных событий. Описание характерных черт города является символом мирного сосуществования народов и народностей на низменной равнине. На самом деле, в статье представлена сложная деятельность необычной личности – венгерского историка и словацкого священника в одном лице, Лайоша Хаана, труды которого интересны и актуальны и сегодня.

*Ключевые слова:* словаки Венгерской равнины, Юго-Восточная Венгрия, венгры, Лайош Хаан, национальная идентичность меньшинства, культурология, литературоведение, интерпретация.

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